

The Trinity

by
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Chapter VI

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And now I would state my next proposition and briefly sketch the testimony on which it rests:--*That Scripture, in the Old and the New Testament alike, proves the coequal Godhead of the Holy Spirit with that of the Father and of the Son.*

May the same Spirit grant us reverence and humility and godly fear in this solemn inquiry.

The reader will not fail to observe what strong collateral evidence of the possible plurality in unity, and therefore of the possible coequal Deity of the Father and of the Son, we shall obtain if another be revealed in Scripture, [1] as one who is to be distinguished from the Father and the Son; [2] as one to whom such personal properties and actions are assigned as prove independent and intelligent personality; [3] as one to whom Divine attributes are ascribed and by whom Divine offices are exercised; [4] as one worshiped in parity with the Father and the Son; [5] as one declared to be Jehovah and God.

Here indeed we might expect the evidence to be more subjective, for the peculiar office of the Holy Ghost in the economy of redemption is ever represented as the quickening and fostering of the hidden lie within. It is, however, none the less conclusive. If as we gaze on the sun shining in the firmament we see any faint adumbration [resemblance] of the doctrine of the Trinity in the fontal¹ orb, the light ever generated, [and] the heat proceeding from the sun and its beams (three-fold and yet one: the sun, its light, and its heat). [then] that luminous globe and the radiance ever flowing from it are both evident to the eye; but the vital warmth is felt, not seen, and is only manifested in the life it transfuses [imparts] through creation. The proof of its real existence is self-demonstrating.

(1) That the Divine Spirit is to be distinguished from the Father and the Son appears from all those passages in Holy Scripture which reveal to us the simultaneous cooperation of three infinite agents.

Thus we read at our Lord's baptism of the voice of the Father, of the human presence of Jesus, [and] of the visible descent of the Spirit: for "the heaven was opened and the Holy

1 Pertaining to or being the source of something.

Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:21,22). We are [thus] compelled to say that the descending Spirit is distinct from the baptized Saviour and from the approving Father.

And when Jesus says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16); and when this promise being fulfilled on the day of Pentecost we find that the Holy Ghost appeared seated on the disciples as cloven tongues of fire (Acts 2:3), we are constrained to acknowledge that the apparent Spirit is distinct from the mediating Saviour and the Father who decreed the gift.

And when we read of "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19), and again of "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor. 13:14), it is impossible to deny the necessary distinction here affirmed.

And when the saints are described as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2), Scripture leads us to conclude that as the bleeding Saviour is distinct from the predestinating Father, so the sanctifying Spirit is himself distinct.

And when the benediction of grace and peace is implored from (ἀπὸ) him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from (καὶ ἀπὸ) "the seven spirits which are before the throne;"² and from (καὶ ἀπὸ) Jesus Christ, the faithful witness" (Rev. 1:4,5), we are assured that as there is a distinction intended between the eternal Father and the Lord Jesus, so is there likewise between them and the seven-fold Spirit of God.

In this stage of our inquiry it will be enough to ask ourselves, In the cases cited above, was the cooperating Spirit identical with the Father or with the Son? Could you say it was the Father or the Son who descended on Christ at his baptism or on the apostles at Pentecost? Could you assert that we are baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of one who likewise is the Father or the Son? Or that grace and peace are besought from the eternal Father, and from one who under another name is also the Father, and from Jesus Christ? No one could maintain this for a moment. The Holy Ghost, therefore, cannot be identified or confounded either with the eternal Father or with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

(2) I proceed, then, to consider that such personal properties and actions are ascribed to the Spirit as prove independent and intelligent personality.

But, it is asked, Do we not read of the Spirit of God being "poured out" and "given in

² Read this footnote at the end of the chapter.

greater or less degree"? If he were a Person, how could he be thus effused or divided? Here we fully admit that the terms "spirit" and "holy spirit" do *sometimes* denote not the person but the operations, the gifts, the influences of the Holy Ghost; as, for example, when it is said, "I will take of the spirit which is upon thee" (Num. 11:17). But the question is not whether some passages may not be brought forward which denote the operations and influences of the Spirit, and therefore do *not* establish the point, but whether besides these there are not very numerous portions of Scripture which *do* positively and unanswerably establish his personality.

[It is] just as if I were studying a work on horticulture; and because the writer here-and-there used the term "sun" to denote the influences of the sun, directing me to place certain plants *in the sun* or that *more or less sun* should be admitted, I were to contend that the author could not believe there was actually such a globe of light in the heavens, although in many other parts [of his work] he had spoken in strictly astronomical language of our planetary system. You would justly assure me that the occasional recurrence of such familiar phrases as "more or less sun," etc., was no valid argument against his conviction of the sun's real existence, stated elsewhere in the volume plainly and positively. Now, we admit that by "the spirit" are sometimes intended the gifts and graces of the Spirit. These graces may be poured out, these gifts distributed. But "one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as he wills" (1 Cor. 12:11).³

Now if (altogether apart from this investigation) you had been asked to name those qualities which evidence personal existence, you would have been quite content to answer, "Show me that which has mind and affection and will, which can act and speak and direct; and that sentient, loving, determining agent, speaker and ruler, must possess personality, or personality cannot exist.

But we read in Scripture of

[1] *The mind of the Spirit.* "He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind (or intention) of the Spirit, because he makes intercession" (Rom. 8:27).

[2] *The infinite comprehension of the Spirit.* "The things of God knows no one, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11). (See next section, where this passage is referred to more at length.)

[3] *The foreknowledge of the Spirit.* "He will show you things to come" (John 16:13).

[4] *The power of the Spirit.* "That ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13). If the Spirit were a metonymy⁴ for the power of God, this would be a

3 The substance of the above paragraph is taken from a valuable sermon of the Rev. J. E. Bates, "On the Holy Spirit."

4 A figure of speech that consists of the use of the name of one object or concept for that of another to

most unlikely combination.

[5] *The love of the Spirit.* "I beseech you for the love of the Spirit" (Rom. 15:30), (διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Πνεύματος): a plea exactly corresponding with one he had used shortly before, "I beseech you, by the mercies of God" (Rom. 12:1), (διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ).

[6] *The self-determining will of the Spirit.* "Distributing to each one individually as he wills" (1 Cor. 12:11).

[7] We find [that] *He creates and gives life.* "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life" (Job 33:4). And again, "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath (Spirit) of his mouth" (Psa. 33:6).

[8] *He strives with the ungodly.* "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6:3).

[9] *He convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment* (John 16:8).

[10] *He new-creates the soul.* "Born of the Spirit" (John 3:5-8).

[11] *He commands and forbids.* "The Spirit said to Philip, Go near" (Acts 8:29); "The Spirit bade me go with them" (Acts 11:12); "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 13:2); "Being forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach" (Acts 16:6); "The Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:7).

[12] *He appoints ministers in the church.* "The flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers" (Acts 20:28).

[13] *He inspired the sacred writers.* "Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21).

[14] *He speaks expressly of events "in the latter times"* (1 Tim. 4:1).

[15] *He speaks to the churches the messages of the Son of man* (Rev. 2:7, etc.).

[16] *He performs miracles.* "Then the Spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice" (Ezek. 3:12); "The Spirit lifted me up, between the earth and the heaven" (Ezek. 8:3); "As the Spirit gave them utterance (at Pentecost)" (Acts 2:4); "The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip" (Acts 8:39); "Mighty signs and wonders (were done) by the power of the Spirit of God" (Rom. 15:19).

which it is related, or of which it is a part, as "scepter" for "sovereignty," or "the bottle" for "strong drink," or "count heads (or noses)" for "count people" (Dictionary.com).

[17] *He caused the virgin Mary to conceive* (Luke 1:35).

[18] *He works in all saints, dispensing divers gifts with independent spontaneity of choice* (1 Cor. 12:4-11).

[19] *He regenerates and seals his people;* for we are saved by his renewing (Tit. 3:5), and are "sealed unto the day of redemption" by the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. 4:30).

[20] *He intercedes for us in prayers;* for he "helps our infirmities . . . and makes intercession for us" (Rom. 8:26).

[21] *He teaches and comforts and guides us into all truth.* For Christ promises, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He (ἐκείνος) shall teach you all things" (John 14:26); "shall guide you into all truth" (John 16:13); "shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14).

[22] *He can be vexed and grieved.* "They returned and vexed his Holy Spirit" (Isa. 63:10); "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:30).

[23] *He is designated by the use of masculine pronouns, though the noun itself, Spirit, is neuter.* "When he, the Spirit (ἐκεῖνος τὸ Πνεῦμα) of truth, is come, he will guide you" (John 16:13), and so continually in this context, where it might be rendered, "That person the Spirit." Thus, likewise: "That Holy Spirit of promise, who (ὁς) is the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13,14).

[24] *He testifies with personal witnesses.* "He shall testify (μαρτυρεῖτε) and ye shall testify (μαρτυρήσει)" (John 15:26); "We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost" (John 15:27).

[25] *He approves with personal counsellors.* "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts 15:28).

[26] *He invites with personal messengers.* "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'" (Rev. 22:17).

[27] *He is personally present in a sense in which Jesus is personally absent.* "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7).

[28] *He can be personally blasphemed* (as Christ may be personally blasphemed), *but only*

upon peril of eternal condemnation. "Whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matt. 12:32).

[29] *He cries in our hearts, 'Abba, Father'"* (Gal. 4:6).

[30] *He repeats the beatitude pronounced on those who sleep in Jesus.* "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours" (Rev. 14:13).

Surely, from a calm and comprehensive study of this testimony, we must conclude that if these qualities and actions do not prove personality, there are none, however explicit and exact, which can do so. Unitarians are wont to speak of the Spirit as an effusion or emanation separate from God, or an influence or power exercised by God. Can you speak of the mind of an effusion? of an emanation, knowing the depths of him from whom it distils? of an influence or power or aught [anything whatever] impersonal revealing future events, possessing a power and love and will of its own, creating, striving, convincing, recreating? enjoining, prohibiting, commissioning? inspiring, speaking expressly, addressing the church? performing miracles, transporting, giving utterance? energizing, regenerating, sealing? interceding, teaching, comforting, guiding? being vexed and grieved? testifying, approving, inviting? being present as a personal Comforter who may be personally blasphemed, crying in us until he teaches us to cry Abba, Father, and repeating on earth the heaven-sent benediction on departed saints? If in some few instances you might thus personify an influence, most of these adduced, taken singly, resist such an interpretation; and taken collectively, would, if thus understood, confuse all the laws of language and thus derange the first principles of truth.

It is not easy to translate into our own tongue the proof we obtain from a study of the original here. But suppose in a volume of history you met with the following passage:

The prince, having left this province, thought [it] good that his Majesty's power should occupy his room. As for this power, he knew the secret counsels of the king, he had an independent will, he strove with the ill-affected and was grieved and vexed with the obstinacy of some, while others he convinced of their infatuation and was enabled to train as good citizens. He consoled the well-disposed. He issued commands and restrictions at his own pleasure. He appointed subordinate officers. He spoke expressly of the certain issue of some incipient plots. He accomplished prodigies of benevolence. Indeed, such was the authority of this power that whoever willfully insulted him was by the king's command imprisoned for life, while on the other hand he was accustomed to repeat assurances which came direct from court of the favour awarded there to faithful subjects."

Would you, could you, doubt for a moment whether or not this power was a personal intelligent agent? And if, a few pages further on in the book you read, "And thus his Majesty's power was extended and his dominion consolidated," would you, because of the

repetition of the term *power*, or *his Majesty's power*, confuse the latter abstraction with the former person? Would you gainsay [deny] your previous unhesitating conclusion that the power left in that province was a living person? It is impossible. You would say [that] honest language--though capable of metaphor--is incapable of such delusive impersonations. So likewise the witness of Scripture which we have heard is unequivocal that the Holy Spirit is a living Agent working with consciousness, will, and love.

(3) Now, to this agent Divine attributes are ascribed, and by him Divine offices are exercised towards us.

[1] *He is eternal.* "Christ through the eternal (*αἰωνίου*) Spirit offered himself" (Heb. 9:14). This is the same word which is used of the self-existence from everlasting to everlasting of Jehovah (Rom. 16:26).

[2] *He is omnipresent.* "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there" (Psa. 139:7). Having proved his distinct personality, this establishes his omnipresence, which truth is indeed self-evident from the simultaneous work he is carrying on in ten thousand hearts throughout the universe.

[3] *He is omniscient.* For he alone, with the infinite Son, comprehends the incomprehensible Jehovah. "God has revealed them to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of man save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knows no one but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:10,11). The word *search*, as used in Scripture, does not necessarily imply that successive acquisition of knowledge which belongs to a finite being, for Jehovah says, "I the LORD, search the heart" (Jer. 17:10). "And that the Spirit here is not a mere quality of Divine nature, as consciousness is of the human mind, appears from the first clause, 'God has revealed them to us by his Spirit,' which clearly implies a personal distinction; for it could not be said that a man makes anything known to others by his consciousness" (P. Smith, Appendix II).

[4] *He is prescient and unveils futurity.* "It was revealed unto him (Simeon) by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26). "He will show you things to come" (John 16:13). And John "was in the Spirit" (Rev. 1:10) when he was enabled to cast his eye across the chart of providence (Rev. 4:1,2).

[5] *He is absolutely free and independent.* "The wind blows where it wishes . . . So is everyone that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). "Distributing . . . as he wills" (1 Cor. 12:11). "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

[6] *He is infinitely good and holy.* "Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them" (Neh. 9:20). "Thy Spirit is good" (Psa. 143:10). He is called in the Old Testament, emphatically,

the Holy Spirit of God (Psa. 51:11; Isa. 63:10,11). He is repeatedly styled by our Lord, the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). And this is his distinctive designation by the apostles through the New Testament (John 14:17 etc.). He is likewise called "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17) and "the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4), as the fountain of verity and goodness.

[7] *He is the Almighty Creator of all things.* Here it may suffice to quote one passage which may well set the question at rest forever. "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor has taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him?" (Isa. 40:12-14). No words could express more plainly an intelligent Creator, inferior to none, whose wisdom was his own, whose counsel was underived, whose omnipotence was inherent. What reflex light this casts on the simple declaration of Genesis, "The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters!" (Gen. 1:2).

[8] *In his hands are the issues of life and death.* "The Spirit of God has made me" (Job 33:4). "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created" (Psa. 104:30). "The grass withers, the flower fades, because the Spirit of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass" (Isa. 40:7).

[9] And then, as to the life of God within us, *he is the author and finisher of it.* He begets and quickens the soul, once dead in trespasses and sins (John 3:6). He teaches us to pray (Rom. 8:26). He dwells in us, as in his temple (1 Cor. 3:16). He produces his own celestial fruits (Gal. 5:22,23). He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts [Rom. 5:5]. He seals us unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). He works in us, educates us, comforts us, leads us, and bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:9-16). He carries on the work of sanctification, changes us into the Divine image from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18). And by him, as the One who quickened Christ our Head (1 Pet. 3:18), will God quicken our mortal bodies at the last day (Rom. 8:11).

Now I venture to ask, as I asked respecting the testimony of Jesus, Who can believe those explicit declarations of the character and work of the Holy Spirit and not repose their whole confidence in him, resting on him with supreme reliance and loving him with entire devotion? Consider [that] he is eternal, everywhere present, infinite in wisdom, prescient, absolutely just, and is perfect in goodness and grace and truth! Consider, further, so close and necessary is our relationship to him that he is the Almighty Creator of that world in which we live, that he gives us every breath we draw, and that he suspends that breath when we die. Consider [that] the whole work of the spiritual life within us, from its earliest germ to its latest development, is his operation. What frail and finite creature like man, believing this testimony, could in the presence of such a One refuse to render him adoring trust and love?

If Scripture forbade these emotions as due only to Deity, we should be rent in twain. But

does Scripture forbid them? Nay, verily. You cannot find the faintest hint against depending on the Holy Spirit too absolutely. There is no jealousy of his claims. The most humble submission to his education is ever enforced. Any violation of reverent regard is deprecated with a plaintive earnestness of expostulation; and willful blasphemy against him is fenced with the most awful warning in the whole word of God. Such is the efficacy of his personal presence that it is represented as compensating the personal absence of Jesus. Every affectionate and trustful desire is awakened in you; for in the comfort he imparts, as explained by Christ, is comprised the communication of every Divine blessing. The claims of no benefactor can transcend those of him who gives us life and light, emancipating us from the thralldom of sin, and bringing us into the freedom of love. Only believe these Scriptures and you must, perforce [of necessity], trust and love this Divine Spirit supremely. This homage belongs to God alone, whose name is Jealous, who will not give his glory to another. Therefore we conclude and confess that the Holy Ghost is one with God, and is himself God, himself Jehovah.

(4) This is further established by the fact that the Spirit of God is revealed in Scripture as the object of religious worship in parity with the Father and the Son.

The sixth chapter of Isaiah compared with John 12:41 has already proved to us that God manifested himself to the prophet by the express image of his person, his only begotten Son. The voice which spoke is distinctly said to be the voice of Jehovah (Isa. 6:8). But the message then sent is again recorded by Paul, and is prefaced with this remarkable introduction, "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet" (Acts 28:25). The glory of Jehovah of hosts was then revealed by Jesus Christ, and the voice of Jehovah was the utterance of the Holy Ghost. Now we decipher the true significance of the threefold adoration of the veiled seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts" (Isa. 6:3), and dimly apprehend why it was asked, "Who will go for us" ((ver 8). The angels of light, therefore, worship the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son.

I would mention in passing, without laying stress upon it, the impressive vision of Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones, in which he is commanded to address the wind (*πνεῦμα*--LXX): "Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, Son of man, and say to the wind, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live" (Ezek. 37:9). The wind is evidently typical of the Spirit, for it is said in the interpretation of the vision, "I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live" (ver. 14). And to my own mind the proclamation to the wind is typical of prayer to the Spirit for his energizing power in quickening dead souls to the life of God (compare 36:27 with 37).

The baptismal formulary, however, affords an unambiguous testimony. For "baptism is a solemn act of worship, denoting entire consecration to him in whose name we are baptized. It is the stipulation (*ἐπερώτημα* Greek legal term) of a good conscience toward God. Now the existence of a stipulation implies the presence, or in some way the knowledge and acceptance, of the person to whom the engagement is made. It supposes

then, in this case, the presence or cognizance of the Son and the Spirit equally with that of the Father" (Pye Smith). Here again we have, by our Lord's express command, adoring homage paid to the Holy Ghost in union with the Father and himself, at this sacred profession of every Christian's faith.

I would also ask you to compare:

O come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.
For he is our God; and we are the
people of his pasture, and the sheep
of his hand. Today if ye will hear his
voice, harden not your hearts, as in the
provocation, and as in the day of
temptation in the wilderness: when your
fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw
my work (Psa. 95:6-9).

Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost says,
Today, if ye will hear his voice,
harden not your hearts, as in the
provocation, in the day of temptation
in the wilderness when your fathers
tempted me (Heb. 3:7-9).
They vexed his Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:10).
Your fathers resisted the Holy Ghost
(Acts 7:51).
The context in the last two shows it
refers to the provocation in the
wilderness.)

We may fairly conclude that the One whom the psalmist calls upon us to worship is the same One whom, he says, the Israelites provoked. This One, the parallel passages assure us, was eminently the Eternal Spirit. I say eminently, for I do not think these and other like Scriptures warrant us in excluding thoughts of the Father and the Son. While establishing the personal Deity of the Spirit, we must not forget his essential unity with the Father and the Son. To those who believe this, every simple command [of] "worship God" embraces the worship of the Holy Spirit; but in the above it was *eminently* the Spirit. The Spirit was the One of the sacred Trinity most prominently tempted and grieved by the Israelites and therefore the One most prominently to be supplicated.⁵

5 Since the above was written, I have found the following passages in the Life of Thomas Scott the commentator, which present in a condensed form the arguments for the truth which I am here endeavoring to advocate. "The form of blessing, *into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, seems to me to recognize God our Saviour as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In this view, when God is addressed without personal distinction, I consider the address as made to the God of salvation; and the Holy Spirit *included* whether prayer or praise be offered. The *trishagion* or threefold ascription of holiness to *Jehovah* both in the Old and New Testament, seems an act of worship to the Holy Spirit together with the Father and the Son. The form of blessing appointed by Moses, in this view, implies a prayer to the Holy Spirit, Numb. 6:24-27; as does the apostolical benediction, 2 Cor. 13:14. I have no hesitation in my mind as to the express act of adoration, in Rev. 1:4, being offered personally to the Holy Spirit, according to the emblematical language of that book. . . . If, then, we be fully convinced that the Holy Spirit of God, and that all Divine perfections and operations, together with every personal property, are ascribed to him, there can be no doubt but he is the object of Divine adoration. Where God is addressed without distinction of persons, the Holy Spirit is virtually addressed: all that dependence, gratitude, love and honour, which are required as due to our God, are required towards the Holy Spirit; and therefore worship and adoring praise and prayer cannot be improper." Life of Scott, pp. 338,339.

Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he will thrust forth laborers into his harvest (Matt. 9:38).

The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work ... So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost ... (Acts 13:2-4).

Here Christ himself enjoins prayer to him, who sends forth ministers. That this is one special office of the Holy Ghost we learn from the Acts; and we have, therefore, Christ's warrant for praying to the Spirit.

Again, bearing in mind that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 5:5), this being his peculiar office, I pray you to ponder the following prayers:

"The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you, to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 3:12,13).

"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2 Thess. 3:5).

In both these supplications we have the Father and Christ named besides the One to whom the prayer is addressed. May we not be assured that this One is especially the blessed Spirit of love?

The Book of Revelation seals the testimony. For, as we have seen, the bestowal of grace and peace is implored equally from the eternal Father and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:4,5). This is direct supplication. And, lastly, we have in the fourth and fifth chapters a view couched in symbolic but most expressive language of the celestial worship. A throne is set in heaven. It is then a question of absorbing interest who is the adorable Being, who there concentrates around himself this homage of saints and angels. So singular and sublime a revelation must needs draw the closest regards of every reverent mind; for though "the secret things belong to the LORD our God, the things which are revealed belong to us and to our children" (Deut. 29:29). Is then the unity of the One there worshipped so simple a unity as to preclude any plurality subsisting therein?

The throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. But is this One alone in infinite solitariness? The Lord enable us to keep our foot as we draw near to his unutterable glory. What says the Scripture? The voice of the Son of man was only now silent. "I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). (An evident distinction is here drawn between the throne of Christ, which his people were admitted to share, and the throne of the Father, the supreme glories of which the son

alone partakes.) And in strict accordance with this we find, "Lo, in the midst of the throne⁶ . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6), and the universal worship of heaven is addressed equally "to him that sat on the throne and unto the Lamb forever."

But is this all? Have we now reached the limit of that revealed? I think not. The question must press on every reflective student, What position do the "seven Spirits of God" hold amid this tide of celestial adoration? Are they among the worshippers, or are they worshipped? In the benediction of the first chapter they mysteriously intervene between the Father and the Son as one of the blessed Three who are the fountain of grace and peace. In the third chapter the Son of man describes himself as having the seven Spirits of God. In the fourth chapter they appear as seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. But what {are they} when next we read of them? "In the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God⁷ sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6). This implies their closest union with the Lamb. Therefore, when he, together with the eternal Father, received that wondrous universal homage, the sevenfold Spirit of God must have received it with him. How beautiful now appears the harmony with the opening benedictory prayer! And how appropriate now the threefold cherubic adoration, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come!" (Rev. 4:8, here only and in Isa. 6:3.) The vision is symbolic, but it symbolizes truth. And it is most suggestive of the highest adoration being received on the eternal throne by the Father, and by the Son, and by the Holy Ghost.

Divine worship is, therefore, on the authority of Scripture, rendered to the Spirit. I admit that in some of the cases the evidence is rather circumstantial than direct. But this we should have, *a priori*, expected; for in the economy of redemption it is the office of the Holy Ghost to kindle in us "the spirit of grace and of supplications" (Zech. 12:10), to intercede for us and with us (Rom. 8:26,27); and to enable us, in the spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15) to pray as Jesus taught his disciples, "Our Father which art in heaven."

6 If any object that in chap. 4:6 it is said, "the living creatures were in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne," I believe the answer is given in the parallel vision of Ezekiel 1:5,22,26, where the throne is on the firmament, and the firmament rests on the heads of the living creatures; "so that to one approaching the throne they would seem to be around it, though their bodies were *under* or "in the midst" of it as a support" (Barnes). That they did not occupy the throne and receive adoration is plain; for [in] ch. 5:6 the Lamb appears in the midst of the living creatures, as well as in the midst of the elders; and, ver. 8, they, with the elders fall down before him.

7 If one passing mention only had been made of them, as of the seven horns, we might have said these shadowed forth perfect knowledge, [in like manner] as those [horns shadowed forth] perfect power. But the repeated and varied way in which they are introduced prevents our resting in this abstract interpretation; and hence the conjunction of the seven horns in this verse seems equivalent to such expressions as "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee" (Luke 4:14)--the same personal Spirit who had descended on him at his baptism (Luke 3:22) and led him into the wilderness (Luke 4:1)--or, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:38).

(5) Finally, the comparison of Scripture with Scripture demonstrates that the Divine Spirit⁸ is Jehovah and God.

And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man (Gen. 6:3).

The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah (1 Pet. 3:20).

It was then the forbearance of God the Spirit with which they, before the flood, contended.

They vexed His Holy Spirit . . . Where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him? . . . that led them through the deep . . . The Spirit of Jehovah caused him to rest (Isa. 63:10-14).

Jehovah said to Moses, How long will this people provoke me (Num. 14:11).
Jehovah alone did lead him (Deut. 32:12).

Here we learn that the One provoked was the Holy Spirit and was Jehovah. Therefore the Spirit is Jehovah.

The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue (2 Sam. 23:2).

The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me (2 Sam. 23:3).

Therefore, unless you admit that there were three, or at least two, Divine speakers who inspired David, the Spirit of Jehovah is the God and the Rock of Israel.

Well spoke the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the Prophet (Acts 28:25).

The Lord God of Israel . . . spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began (Luke 1:69-70).

Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1:21).

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16).

The Spirit, therefore, is God, yea, the Lord God of Israel. I append a few other passages (selected from many), the conclusion from which is similarly self-evident.

That which is born of the Spirit (τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος) (John 3:6).
Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Ghost (Rom. 15:19).
The Comforter (ὁ Παράκλητος) which is

That which is born of God (τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ) (1 John 5:4).
Jehovah ... the Lord of lords ... the God of gods ... alone does great wonders (Ps. 136:1-4).

⁸ This appellative is not modern. Thrice, at least, is the Hebrew "Spirit of God" rendered by the LXX Πνεῦμα Θεῖον (Ex. 31:3; Job 27:3; 33:4).

the Holy Ghost (John 14:26).

Walking ... in the comfort of the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:31).

Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? (Acts 5:3).

How is it that ye have agreed to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? (Acts 5:9).

Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6:19).

The Spirit of God dwells in you (1 Cor. 3:16).

I, even I, am he that comforts

(ὁ παρακαλῶν--LXX) you (Isa. 51:12).

The God of all comfort, who comforts us (2 Cor. 1:3,4).

Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God (Acts 5:4).

Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God (Matt. 4:7).

Ye are the temple of the living God; as God as said, I will dwell in them (2 Cor. 6:16).

These passages might be greatly multiplied. But from this comparison, observing the way in which the names and offices of God and of the Holy Spirit are interchanged, we conclude that this same Eternal Spirit is Jehovah, the God of Israel, the Lord God, the Lord of lords, the God of gods, the living God, the Divine Being who quickens and comforts. In one word, he is God.⁹ Once more, Paul affirms, "We are changed into the same image AS BY THE LORD THE SPIRIT" (2 Cor. 3:18), (καθάπερ ἀπὸ Κυρίου πνεύματος).

The Greek should, doubtless, be thus rendered. (For construction, compare Gal. 1:3 (ἀπὸ Θεοῦ πατρός). He thus places the word LORD, which he had used, ver. 16, to designate Jehovah in direct and immediate apposition with SPIRIT. The whole context, which so beautifully illustrates the threefold work of the Holy Trinity in the believer's soul, proves at the same time that the Holy Ghost is one with the Father and the Son--very and Eternal God.

If any object that he is said to be sent by the Father and the Son, and that this mission implies inferiority, we answer that, even among men, the being sent is by no means always a mark of subordination. "The members of a senate consult together relative to some negotiation, in executing which great wisdom judgment, and experience are required. It is resolved to send one of their number. Is it any mark of inferiority to be selected and sent on such a service? And the mission of the Comforter is spoken of regarding the office he has undertaken in the economy of grace--the work of sanctifying the elect people of God--a work which none less than God can effect, and the glorious accomplishment of

⁹ I might here add two remarks: (1) The Deity of Christ being proved, the very fact of the Holy Spirit anointing this infinite Saviour for all the work of redemption proves his own Divine Infinitude; for who but God could empower God? (2) As in the Old Testament we find Christ as the Angel of God's presence saying, "I am the God of thy father,--I will send thee" (Ex. 3:6,10)--thus claiming supreme authority--and as from thence we may securely infer the Deity of this glorious leader, so in the New Testament, when we find the Spirit said to Peter, "Arise, go, for I have sent them" (Acts 10:19,20), thus in his own right setting aside the ceremonial law, we may safely argue [that] this is a Divine person who, in the absence of the Son of God, according to his promise, acts in his place and governs his church.

which will redound to his praise through the countless ages of eternity" (Bates).

If, again, any ask why the ambiguity inseparable from the name *Spirit of God* when compared with the phrase *spirit of a man* (an ambiguity which, unless explained would have tended to conceal his personality) was permitted, I would suggest that his name is no arbitrary choice; that it is the only one which would reveal to us the distinctive character of this holy Being, as the name *the Son* could alone describe the Eternal Word; and that the very similarity of designation may be needful to express his fellowship with us, his spiritual indwelling, and the high communion carried on, while the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16). This similarity testifies to us our union with the Divine Comforter who renews us, as our common humanity testifies our union with the Divine Saviour who redeemed us.

And if once more it is asked why he is not more prominently set forth in Scripture as the object of adoration, besides the answer given above there seems in this, if I may venture so to express myself, a principle of Divine equipoise [balance] in the parts sustained in our salvation by the co-equal and co-eternal Three. The love of the Father, loving us so that he gave his Son to redeem and his Spirit to sanctify us, shines preeminent. It bathes the sacred page with light and commands our homage and compels our love. The grace of the Lord Jesus--for us incarnate, for us crucified, for us interceding--absorbs every thought and attracts every affection; and a large portion of Scripture is taken up with setting forth the eternal Deity of Emmanuel and requiring us to regard him with equal love and with equal confidence.

Once more, a third is revealed--the Divine Comforter. The glories of his Person are beyond doubt affirmed, but they are only rarely disclosed in full view. His worship is enjoined, but it is comparatively withdrawn from observation. When, however, we look into the subjective work carried on by him, there is an amplitude and plenitude of evidence from Holy Writ which entirely compensates any seclusion of his visible majesty. The variety of his Divine operations in us as far exceeds in glory as the brightness of his presence is concealed. The ministration of the Spirit is as mighty as his voice is mysteriously still.

But here, even when we would feel our way with the utmost reverence, how soon are we beyond our depth! The waters are risen, waters to swim in, a river that cannot be passed over (Ezek. 47:5). Thanks be to God, the necessary truth is clear as the light:--that the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son; that such personal properties are assigned to him as demonstrate intelligent personality; that all Divine attributes, such as self-existence from eternity, omnipresence, infinite wisdom and foreknowledge, absolute freedom and goodness, creative providential and spiritual power--attributes any one of which would prove his Deity--are assigned to him; that he is associated in Divine offices with the Father and the Son; that he with them is worshipped and glorified; that he is Jehovah and God. These things are written as with a sunbeam in the Scriptures of truth.

But here I would remind myself and my readers that no evidence, however conclusive, can insure a saving belief in the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. The understanding may be convinced while the heart may rebel. For the Lord Jesus says to his disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it sees him not, neither knows him" (John 14:16,17). And the apostle Paul--while in conscious integrity he declares, We speak the things freely given to us of God, "not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:12,13)--seems to chasten his hopes with the humbling recollection [that] "the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (ver. 14). And therefore rather, seeing we have a High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, let us kneel together at the throne of grace and plead in prayer his own royal promise, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!" (Luke 11:13), that we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit.

FOOTNOTE 2

The phrase is emblematical but not the less definitive and precise when compared with other Scriptures. Indeed, emblems are a kind of universal language for every age and country. After all that has been written on this subject, I feel persuaded that the word is here its own interpreter. The principal passages bearing on this are:

(1) "The Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah, and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of Jehovah" (Isa. 11:2,3). I do not think any stress can be laid on the *number* here, as the Hebrew only enumerates six, repeating the last with a preposition (though the Septuagint distinguishes seven, πνεῦμα σοφίας; συνέσεως; βουλή; ισχύος; γνώσεως; εὐσεβείας; adding as the seventh, πνεῦμα φόβου Θεοῦ); but on the *multiplicity* of perfections designated by various names and comprised in one, the Spirit of Jehovah.

(2) "Upon one stone shall be seven eyes" (Zech 3:9). Those seven, they are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth. The Septuagint translates the seven in the same clause with the eyes, ἑπτὰ οὗτοι ὀφθαλμοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐπιβλέποντες ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.

(3) "And from the seven Spirits which are before his throne" (Rev. 1:4).

(4) "These things saith he that has the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. 3:1).

(5) "And seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God" (Rev. 4:5).

(6) "In the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6), (ὀφθαλμούς ἑπτὰ οἳ εἰσι τὰ ἑπτὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ πνεύματα τὰ ἀπεσταλμένα εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν). No one can fail remarking the designed coincidence between this and the Septuagint version, given above, of Zech. 4:10.

Here we learn, from (3) and (5) *the distinction* to be observed between God and the seven Spirits, for they are said to be before the throne. Therefore you could not identify them with the Father or the Lamb. From (2) and (4) and (6) [we learn] *the mysterious union* between God and them, for they are called the eyes of Jehovah, the spirits whom the Son of man has, the eyes of the Lamb. From (3) again [we learn] that they denote a willing intelligence and not an abstract power, for to imagine that John prays to seven abstractions in parity with the Father and the Son for grace and peace is inconceivable. That they cannot be angels is manifest, for the worshipping of angels is expressly forbidden (Col. 2:13).

Comparing, therefore, the other passages with (1), remembering how Jesus Christ says that the Scripture (Isa. 61:1)--"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me"--was fulfilled in himself (Luke 4:21); and knowing that "in the Oriental style the perfection of any quality is expressed by the number seven," we may fairly conclude this expression represents to us "this heavenly Agent, the Holy Ghost, in his own original and infinite perfection, in the consummate wisdom of his operations, and in the gracious munificence of his gifts" (Pye Smith).

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