

SPIRIT IN GOD

Holy Spirit, no complete and perfect example (apart from Jesus Christ) of what He is in Himself. But, instead, we have a wealth of revelation that overwhelms us by its immensity. Through the centuries, from countless lives of the most varied type, He has been reflecting Himself, as if in the myriad flashing jewels on the wavelets of a sunlit sea. . . . God Who is present with men is present as Spirit, and the Holy Spirit Who is God's presence active with the fulness of Christ's personality cannot Himself be less than personal.¹

Let us be content, therefore, to accept the fact of the Spirit's personality as a matter of faith and a sublime reality; as one of those "things that were freely given to us of God." For in the final analysis of the case, God the Eternal is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

God Who is present with men as Spirit, and the Holy Spirit Who is God's presence active with the fulness of Christ's personality cannot Himself be less than personal. Our metaphors of a quasi-personal energy break down utterly when we try to conceive an "ether" itself endowed with the love whose expression it serves to transmit. If the Spirit were but a means of transmission, or a mediating "energy," then the cardinal assumption or conviction of the real presence of God with us would be denied, and we should be left with a distant and inaccessible God.²

How profoundly encouraging, then, to the faith of the saints is this conviction of the Spirit's personality! How thrilling becomes Paul's declaration that the Christian's body is a temple for the Spirit's indwelling (1 Cor. 6:19)! How vital this to the growth of the saints in righteousness and holiness! In the light of this sublime truth, the life with the Holy Spirit becomes truly a life of fellowship with God and with Christ, through the abiding presence in the souls of the redeemed, of this Divine Counselor, Companion, Guide, and Advocate. In Tennyson's well-known words,

Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with
Spirit can meet —
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands
and feet.³

4. The Deity of the Holy Spirit

It will be agreed by all Bible students, I think, that in so far as we are informed by revelation and by experience, there are three, and only three, orders of persons, namely: (1) those Persons who constitute the Godhead, to whom alone the term

1. *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*, 277-278.

2. *Ibid.*, 278-279.

3. "The Higher Pantheism."

“deity” is applicable; (2) the angels, who are described in Scripture as “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14), an order of ethereal creatures; and (3) human beings—each a body-spirit unity—who are described as “living souls” (Gen. 2:7).

Now, if the Holy Spirit is a Person, as indeed we have learned that He is, the question that arises in this connection is this: To what *rank* or *order* of persons does He belong?

This question has already been answered inferentially. We have already learned that our God is a Unity of three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is one as to essence; but this oneness embraces a triple personality. The Holy Spirit is one of the three Persons of the Godhead.

Hence, the term “deity” in reference to the Spirit, is preferable to “divinity.” Divinity may be a matter of quality or of degree: in fact the word is often used equivocally, as, for example, of Christ, in describing Him, as the Unitarian does, as a “divinely illumined man,” but a man withal. But deity is a matter of rank: it signifies a distinct order of being. Hence, *this is a word that can be used only univocally. There are no degrees in deity.*

The following facts are offered as additional evidence of the deity of the Holy Spirit:

1. *In Scripture, the Holy Spirit is explicitly recognized as God.* By correlating various Scriptures we find that what is spoken of God absolutely in one place, is elsewhere ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

(1) E.g., in Isaiah 6:8 [the prophet says], I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, etc. [By comparing v. 3 of the same chapter we find that the *Lord* here is *Jehovah of hosts*.] [In Acts 28:25-27, the Apostle Paul, quoting this passage from Isaiah, writes] Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying, etc. [Again, in Jeremiah 31:31, it is written], Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, etc. Heb. 10:15ff. [it is written], And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us, for after he hath said, etc., [and the actual words of the passage from Jeremiah are then quoted]. Lev. 26:11-12: And I will set my tabernacle among you. . . . And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. 1 Cor. 3:16-17: Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye. 1 Cor. 6:19—Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? Deut. 32:12, Jehovah alone did lead him [*i.e.*, the children of Israel]. Isa. 63:11, 14—Where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them? . . . As

the cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah caused them to rest. [Here we have a positive identification, even in Old Testament times, of the Holy Spirit with the Spirit of Jehovah]. [Also, in this connection, Psa. 78:17-19]: Yet they went on still to sin against him, To rebel against the Most High in the desert. And they tempted God in their heart, By asking food according to their desire; Yea, they spake against God, etc.

(2) Acts 5:3, 4—[Here the Apostle is represented as saying to Ananias], Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? [To this he adds in the very next breath], Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. [To lie to a Spirit-filled man is to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God.] [Cf. again 1 Cor. 3:16-17 and 1 Cor. 6:19: Here the words are addressed to Christians. If they mean anything, they surely mean that the Holy Spirit indwells the body of every true saint. If our bodies are *temples of God* because the Spirit of God indwells them, it follows that the Holy Spirit, must be, in essence, God.]

(3) Eph. 6:21, 22—Christ Jesus, in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. [Here the Apostle is writing of the church as a whole, the church catholic, consisting of all the elect of God under the New Covenant. This body, or church, he says, is *the habitation of God in the Spirit.*] 1 Pet. 2:5—ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [Now if God indwells the whole Church of Christ in the person of His Spirit, again it follows that the Holy Spirit, as to essence and rank, is God.]

(4) John 4:24—God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. [These are the words of Jesus Himself.] Heb. 9:14—the *eternal Spirit*: [God is a Spirit, the eternal Spirit; it follows, therefore, that the Holy Spirit is God.]

2. In Scripture, the attributes and perfections of God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

[(1) *Eternity or Self-Existence.*] Heb. 9:14—the eternal Spirit.

[(2) *Omniscience.*] 1 Cor. 2:9-11: But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Isa. 40:13—Who hath directed the Spirit of Jehovah, or being his counsellor hath taught him?

[(3) *Omnipotence.*] Micah 3:8—I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might. 1 Cor. 2:4—in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. 1 Cor. 12:11—but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will.

[(4) *Omnipresence.*] Psa. 139:7-10: Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there shall thy hand lead me, And thy right hand shall hold me. Jer. 23:23-24: Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him? saith Jehovah. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah.

THE ETERNAL SPIRIT — HIS PERSON AND POWERS

[(5) *Prescience.*] Acts 1:16—Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, etc. Matt. 22:43—How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord? etc. [All prophecy is evidence of the prescience of the Spirit.]

[(6) *Infinite Life.*] Rom. 8:2—the Spirit of life.

[(7) *Infinite Love.*] Rom. 5:5—the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us. Rom. 15:30—by the love of the Spirit.

[(8) *Infinite Holiness.*] Neh. 9:20—thy good Spirit. Isa. 63:11—his holy Spirit. Matt. 28:19—the Holy Spirit [and so in many instances in the New Testament].

3. *In Scripture, the Holy Spirit is represented as having shared in, or Himself performed, the works of Deity.*

[(1) *Creation.*] Gen. 1:1-3: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light; and there was light. Job 26:13—By his Spirit the heavens are garnished. Job 33:4—The Spirit of God hath made me, And the breath of the Almighty giveth me life. Psa. 33:6—By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. [Cf. Gen. 2:7].

[(2) *Preservation.*] Psa. 104:30—Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; And thou renewest the face of the ground.

[(3) *Inspiration and Revelation.*] Acts 2:4—[Here we read that the Apostles were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. [Inspiration and revelation are, in a special sense, works of the Spirit of God. See again 2 Pet. 1:21, 1 Pet. 1:10-12, 1 Cor. 2:9-16, etc.].

[(4) *Demonstration or Miracles.*] [This again is distinctively a work of the Spirit. The Father is primarily the Source of *faith*; the Son, of *doctrine*; the Spirit, of *evidence* or *proof*.] Matt. 12:28—But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Also 1 Cor. 2:4—in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and Heb. 2:4, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, etc.

[(5) *Regeneration.*] John 3:5—Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Titus 3:5—according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

[(6) *Resurrection and Immortalization.*] Rom. 8:11—But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

4. *In Scripture, the Holy Spirit is represented as receiving obedience and worship that is due only to the Deity.*

(1) Matt. 28:19—[According to the Great Commission, all believers are to be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It should be noted, in this connection, that baptism is the only act recorded in Scripture as having *the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* connected with it. The modern church is inclined to make too little of baptism rather than too much. Baptism is—cannot be, if real baptism—a mere form or ceremony;

SPIRIT IN GOD

it is not a mere ceremonial *putting away of the filth of the flesh*, but *the appeal of a good conscience toward God* (1 Pet. 3:21); to be baptism, it must be an act of faith, a profoundly spiritual, heart act.] [As Paul puts it, writing of baptism], Rom. 6:17—But thanks be to God that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient *from the heart* to that pattern of teaching whereunto ye were delivered, etc. [Now the teaching was the Gospel which consisted of three facts, namely, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4); the pattern of that teaching is baptism, which pictorializes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. To the pattern of that teaching, *i.e.*, baptism, the Roman Christians, says Paul, had been obedient *from the heart*. Baptism is a heart act, a spiritual act, an act of faith, and cannot be anything else.]

(2) 2 Cor. 13:14—the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. [Here *the communion of the Holy Spirit* is invoked for all the saints, along with *the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God.*]

(3) Rev. 1:4—the seven Spirits that are before his throne. [The *seven Spirits* here stand for the Holy Spirit; in Scripture the number seven is indicative of completeness, perfection.] Cf. Isa. 11:2—and 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.

(4) Matt. 12:31-32: Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come. [Here Jesus tells us that the only *remediless* sin is the sin against the Holy Spirit. In view of this statement, the deity of the Holy Spirit must be accepted as a necessary inference.]

5. *Finally, the Holy Spirit is represented in Scripture as being associated on a footing of equality with both the Father and the Son.*

(1) [In the baptismal formula], Matt. 28:19—baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

(2) [In the apostolic benediction], 2 Cor. 13:14—The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

(3) [In 1 Pet. 1:2]—according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

(4) [In Jude 20-21]: praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

(5) [In 1 Cor. 12:4-6]: Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all.

(6) [In Eph. 2:19-22]: ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

THE ETERNAL SPIRIT — HIS PERSON AND POWERS

(7) [In Eph. 4:4-6]: There is one body, and *one Spirit*, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; *one Lord*, one faith, one baptism, *one God and Father* of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

In view of this array of evidence, we must accept the deity of the Holy Spirit as a divinely-revealed truth, as one of the fundamentals of our Christian faith. As a matter of fact, the fundamental truths of the deity of the Spirit (Heb. 9:14—"the eternal Spirit") and the Spirithood of the Deity (John 4:24—"God is a Spirit") are in a sense identical.

But what is the practical significance of these truths? Of what value are they to Christians? What use are we to make of them in our everyday thinking and living?

"Know ye not," exclaims the Apostle, writing to Christians, "that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). Beloved, we are, *individually*, temples of the Holy Spirit "which is in us and which we have from God" (1 Cor. 6:19). We are, *collectively*, that is, as the Church or Body of Christ, "living stones, built up a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5), "builded together for a sanctuary of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). As Andrew Murray has written:

There is a Presence in the Church of Christ as Omnipotent and Divine as was Christ Himself when on earth; yea, rather, as He is now on the Throne of Power. As the Church wakes up to believe this, and rises out of the dust to put on her beautiful garments . . . her witness for Christ will be in living power. She will prove that her Almighty Lord is in her.¹

If we as Christians could in some way come to believe and to realize this truth of the God's personal indwelling of us through the agency of His Holy Spirit, to such an extent that we should actually *live* the conviction in all that we say and think and do, what would be the result? Our attitudes would be changed, our hearts would be warmed with new spiritual fires, our unused powers would be utilized, and our lives would be transformed "into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). Cares, anxieties, fears, and countless accompanying physical afflictions would be cast out of our lives, and a spiritual revival would be generated that would sweep Satan from his throne as god of this world! This is the kind of revival that the modern church needs, and must have, if she is to do the work of Christ in this

1. *The Spirit of Christ*, 143.

SPIRIT IN GOD

present world, if she is to be in deed and in truth His Bride, His Counterpart, His Spouse.

May I close this section, therefore, with Andrew Murray's eloquent prayer:

Most Holy God! In adoring wonder I bow before Thee in presence of this wondrous mystery of grace; my spirit, soul, and body Thy temple.

In deep silence and worship I accept the blessed revelation, that in me too there is a Holiest of all, and that there Thy hidden Glory has its abode.

O my God, forgive me that I have so little known it.

I do now tremblingly accept the blessed truth: God the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who is God Almighty, dwells in me.

O my Father, reveal within what it means, lest I sin against Thee by saying it and not living it.

Blessed Jesus! to Thee, who sittest upon the throne, I yield my whole being. In Thee I trust to rise up in power and have dominion within me.

In Thee I believe for the full streaming forth of the living waters.

Blessed Spirit! Holy Teacher! Mighty Sanctifier! Thou art within me. On Thee do I wait all the day, I belong to Thee. Take entire possession of me for the Father and the Son. Amen.¹

In the words of the old hymn,

Holy Spirit, all divine,
Dwell within this heart of mine;
Cast down every idol throne,
Reign supreme, and reign alone.

5. Spirit in the Godhead

"There is a spirit in man," said Elihu to Job, "and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). This "spirit" in man is, as we have learned, personal life with all its potentialities. But man is the image or likeness of God: so there is Spirit in God. Spirit in God, however, is personal life in all its actuality, in all its metaphysical and moral *wholeness*, that is, Holy Spirit. "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24), and the Spirit of God is the Eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14).

Speaking in strictly metaphysical terms, of course, the Father is also, as to essence, Spirit; hence He is said to be the "Father of spirits" (Heb. 12:9). And the Son likewise is, in His eternal nature, as to essence, Spirit: "the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17). That is to say, they are both incorporeal and of the same metaphysical essence as the Holy Spirit, who is Himself the Eternal Spirit. We must keep in mind always that

1. *Op. cit.*, 240-241.