

Honoring the Spirit

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It seems fitting that we should close this lengthy discussion upon the Person, office, and operations of the Holy Spirit by dwelling upon what is due Him from those in whom He has wrought so graciously, for it is very evident that some *recognition and response* must be made Him by us.

There is, however, the more need for us to write something thereon, because there are quite a number who belong to a company which refrains from all direct worship of the Third Person in the Godhead, deeming it unscriptural and incongruous to do so. It seems strange that the very ones who claim to give the Spirit a freer and fuller place in their meetings than any branch of Christendom, should, at the same time, demur at prayer being immediately directed to Him. Yet it is so: some of them refuse to sing the Doxology because it ends with "Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

From time to time one and another of our readers have written, taking exception to occasional statements made by us, such as "what praise is due the Spirit for His grace and goodness unto us!" challenging us to point to any definite passage wherein we are bidden to worship or pray to the Spirit distinctively.

First, let us point out that there are many things clearly *implied* in Scripture which are not formally and expressly stated, and to assert we must for that reason reject them is absurd—some have refused the canonicity of the book of Esther because the name of God is not found therein, yet His superintending Providence, His overruling power, His faithfulness and goodness, shine forth in each chapter! We build not our faith on any isolated texts, but on the Word of God as a whole, rightly and spiritually interpreted. We have begun thus not because we are unable to find any definite statements in the Word which obviously warrant the position we have taken, but because we deemed it well to refute an erroneous principle. Even if there were no clear cases recorded of prayer and praise being offered immediately to the Holy Spirit, we should surely require some *strong positive proof* to show the Spirit is *not* to be supplicated.

But where, we ask, is there anything in Holy Writ which informs us that one Person in the Godhead must be *excluded* from the praises that we make unto the Lord? Here we are meeting the objector on his own ground: if what we are about to advance fails to convince him, he must at least allow that he knows of no texts which refute or condemn us, no verse which warns us *against* rendering to the blessed Spirit that recognition and honor to which we consider He is fully entitled.

Worshipping The Spirit As A Member Of The Trinity

"Thou shalt fear (worship—Matthew 4:10) the LORD thy God, and serve Him" (Deuteronomy 6:13). Now the Lord our God is a Unity in Trinity, that is, He subsists in three Persons who are co-essential and co-glorious. Therefore the Holy Spirit, equally with the Father and the Son, is entitled to and must receive devout homage, for we are here commanded to render the same to Him.

This is confirmed by the "holy, holy, holy," of Isaiah 6:3, where we find the seraphim owning separately and worshipping distinctively the Eternal Three. The words that follow in verse 8, "Who will go for *Us*?" make it quite clear that the threefold "holy" was ascribed to the Blessed Trinity. Still further confirmation is found in Acts 28:25, 26, where the Apostle prefaces his quotation of Isaiah 6:9 with "well spake *the Holy Spirit* by Isaiah the Prophet." If, then, the angels ascribe glory and render worship to the Holy Spirit, shall we, who have been regenerated by Him, do less!?

"O come, let us *worship* and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our Maker" (Psalm 95:6). *Who* is our "Maker?" Perhaps you answer, Christ, the eternal Word, of whom it is said, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3 and cf. Colossians 1:16). That is true, yet Christ is not our "Maker" (either naturally or spiritually) *to the exclusion* of the Holy Spirit. The Third Person of the Godhead, equally with the Father and the Son, is our "Maker." In proof of this assertion, we quote, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the Breath of the Almighty hath given me life"

(Job 33:4). Let the reader carefully compare Job 26:13 with Psalm 33:6. Let it also be duly noted that this 95th Psalm (vv. 7-11) is quoted in Hebrews 3:7-11 and prefaced with, “Wherefore as the Holy Spirit saith.” Thus not only *may* we worship the blessed Spirit, but here in Psalm 95:6 we are *commanded* to do so.

It does indeed seem strange that any professing Christian should raise any objection and question the propriety of worshipping the Spirit. Are we not to acknowledge our dependence upon and obligations unto the Holy Spirit? Surely! Surely! He is as much the Object of faith as is the Father and the Son: He is so in His Being and perfections, His Deity and personality, His offices and operations. Moreover, there are particular acts of trust and confidence to be exercised on Him. As He is God, He is to be worshipped, and that cannot be done aright without faith. We are to trust Him for His help in prayer and the discharge of every duty! We are to exercise confidence that He will complete the good work which He has begun in us. Especially should ministers of the Word look to Him for His help in and blessing upon their labors. “Then said He unto me, Prophecy unto the Wind (Breath), prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live” (Ezekiel 37:9).

We sincerely trust that none of our readers will suppose that the Lord bade His servant to perform an *idolatrous* act by invoking the *literal* “wind.” No, a comparison of verses 9 and 10 with verse 14 shows plainly that it was *the Holy Spirit* Himself who was referred to—see John 3:8. Nor does this passage stand alone. In Song of Solomon 4:16 we find the Spouse praying to the Spirit for renewal and revival: “Awake, O north Wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.” She expressed her desires metaphorically, but this is what she breathed after. It is the Spirit of life, then, we should always apply to for quickening, for the enlivening and exciting of His graces in us.

Worshipping The Spirit Directly

This subject is (alas) new to many. Not a few seem to have been misled through a wrong understanding of that word concerning the Spirit in John 16:13, as though, “He shall not speak of Himself,” signified He shall never occupy the saints with His own Person and work, but always direct them to Christ. It is true that the Spirit is here to glorify Christ, yet *that* by no means exhausts His mission. His first work is to direct the attention of sinners to God *as God*, convicting them of rebellion against their Creator, Ruler, and Judge. Then, too, He occupies the saints with the Father: His love, grace, and providential care. But John 16:13 no more means that the Spirit does not magnify Himself than Christ’s, “I have not spoken for Myself” (John 12:49) meant that He never occupied people with His own Person—His “come unto Me” (Matthew 11:28, John 7:37) proves otherwise.

Others create difficulty out of the fact that in the economy of redemption the Spirit now occupies the place of *Servant* of the Godhead, and as such it is incongruous to *worship* Him. Such a cavil hardly deserves reply. But lest some of our readers have been misled by this sophistry, let it be pointed out that during the days of His flesh, Christ occupied the place of “Servant,” the *One* who came here not to be ministered unto, but to minister—nevertheless, even during that season of His humiliation we are told, “Behold there came a leper and *worshipped* Him” (Matthew 8:2). And have we not read that when the wise men from the east entered the house where He was, they “fell down and *worshipped* Him” (Matthew 2:11)?

Thus, the fact that the Holy Spirit is the Executive of the Godhead by no means debars Him of His title to our love and homage. Some say that because the Spirit is *in* us, He is not a suitable Object of worship, as the Father and Son without us. But is the Spirit within the *only* relation He sustains to us? Is He not omnipresent, infinitely above us, and as such an appropriate Object of worship?

That the Holy Spirit *is to be* publicly owned and equally honored with the Father and the Son is very evident from the terms of the great commission, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, *and of the Holy Spirit*” (Matthew 28:19). Now to be baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit is either a real act of *worship*, or otherwise it would be a mere formality—which of the two is not difficult to determine. In view of this verse, no one need have the slightest

hesitation in rendering homage to the Spirit as he does to the Father and the Son. This is not a case of reasoning on our parts nor of drawing an inference, but is a part of Divinely-revealed Truth. If we praise and revere the Son for what He has done for us, shall not the Spirit be adored for what He has wrought *in* us!? The Spirit Himself loves us (Romans 15:30), by whose authority, then, are we to stifle our love for Him!?

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. *Amen*” (2 Corinthians 13:14). Here again the Holy Spirit is honored equally with the Father and the Son—the Apostles certainly did not slight Him as do some of our moderns. Let it be duly weighed that “communion” is a *mutual* thing, a giving and receiving. In our communion with the Father, we receive from Him, and then return to Him love and obedience. From the Son we receive life, and acknowledge it in our praises. From the Spirit we receive regeneration and sanctification; shall we render Him nothing in return? We understand this verse to signify, “O Lord Jesus Christ, let Thy *grace* be with us; O God the Father, let thy *love* be manifested unto us; O Holy Spirit, let Thy saints enjoy much of thy *communion*.” This invocatory benediction revealed the longings of Paul’s heart unto the Corinthian saints, and those longings prompted his petition on their behalf.

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ” (2 Thessalonians 3:5). What could be plainer? Here each of the three Divine Persons is distinguished, and the Apostle prays directly *to the Lord the Spirit*—obviously “the Lord” here cannot refer to the Son, for in such case it would signify “The Lord (Jesus) direct your hearts into the patient waiting for Christ.” As it is the Spirit’s office to “*guide* us into all truth” (John 16:13), to “*lead* us into the paths of righteousness” (Psalm 23:3), so to “direct” our hearts into the love of God and longings after Christ. He it is who communicates God’s love to us (Romans 5:50), and He it is who stirs us up to the performance of duty by inflaming our hearts with apprehensions of God’s tenderness toward us—and for this we are to pray to Him! It is just as though the Apostle said, “O thou Lord the Spirit, warm our cold hearts with a renewed sense of God’s tender regard for us, stabilize our fretful souls into a patient waiting for Christ.”

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness” (Revelation 1:4, 5). This is as much a prayer—an invocation of blessing—as that recorded in Numbers 6:24-26. The Apostle John desired and supplicated God the Father (“Him who is,” etc.), God the Holy Spirit in the plenitude of His power (“the seven Spirits”), and God the Son, that the seven churches in Asia might enjoy *Their* grace and peace. When I say “The Lord *bless* you, dear brother,” I should utter empty words unless I also *pray* the Lord *to* bless you. This “grace and peace be unto you,” then, was far more than a pleasantry or courtesy: John was making known to the saints his deep *longings* for them, which found expression in ardent supplication for these very blessings to be conferred upon them. In conclusion let us say that every verse of the Bible which bids us “Praise the Lord” or “worship God” has reference to *each* of the Eternal Three.

“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:38). Here is something very plain and expressive, the only point needing to be determined is, *Who is* “The Lord of the harvest?” During the days of His earthly ministry, Christ Himself sustained that office, as is clear from His calling and sending forth of the Twelve; but after His ascension, *the Holy Spirit* became such. As proof thereof, we refer to “The Holy Spirit said, Separate *Me* Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them... so they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, departed” (Acts 13:2, 4)!

So again we read, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which *the Holy Spirit* hath made you overseers” (Acts 20:28). It is the Holy Spirit who now appoints the laborers, equips them, assigns their work, and blesses their efforts. In 1 Corinthians 12:5 and 2 Corinthians 3:17, the Holy Spirit expressly is designated “Lord.”

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all you creatures here below. Praise Him above you heavenly hosts—praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.” Amen!