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# BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

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## THE HOLY SPIRIT

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PEABODY, MASSACHUSETTS

THE EDITOR

Since the printing of this issue of BIBLIOTHECA SACRA, Dr. G. Frederick Wright, its honored editor since 1884, died on April 20 of cardiac asthma after an illness of five weeks. Later there will be a biographical sketch, and tributes to his memory.

As a result of this widespread neglect, erroneous conceptions about the Holy Spirit are afloat everywhere. Some think of Him simply as the influence of God in human life. Others identify Him with conscience. Still others consider Him merely the personification of the attributes of God.

But the Bible teaches plainly that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person. To Him are ascribed all the distinctive attributes of personality: knowledge (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11), will (1 Cor. xii. 11), mind (Rom. viii. 27), and love (Rom. xv. 30). To Him are attributed acts ascribable only to a person: searching (1 Cor. ii. 10), speaking (Rom. ii. 7), and commanding (Acts xvi. 6).

Our treatment of the subject lies in the field of speculative rather than of Biblical theology. The latter field  
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has been well covered by such able Bible students as R. A. Torrey, G. C. Morgan, and others. Assuming that our readers are familiar with and accept what the Bible reveals about the Holy Spirit, we shall attempt to show the baselessness of the contention often made that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is utterly irreconcilable with reason. The psychological reasonableness of the doctrine is the dominant undercurrent of our thinking. The views advanced are almost entirely our own. We have endeavored to make our thesis an original contribution.

#### THE TRINITY

The doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity are so closely intertwined that neither can be understood except in the light of the other.

Many have been the attempted explanations of the Trinity. It has been very difficult for theologians to avoid drifting upon the shoals of Sabellianism or Tritheism. The former theory teaches that the Trinity is a threefold modal manifestation of one person: the latter would give us three Gods. Both views contradict the Scripture teaching that God is three Persons, yet one in substance. Psychological analogies have been employed in the endeavor to illumine the subject. Augustine used the analogy of memory, understanding, and will united in one person. Other thinkers have pointed out that in man there is a trinity analogous to that in the Godhead; namely, the person himself, his body, and his personality acting upon other lives. These analogies are hardly satisfactory. They show how one nature in God may express itself in three ways; they do not make clear how there may be one nature in three Persons.

The Scriptures teach that in the Godhead there is one personality and three Persons. This doctrine is not unreasonable. Personality may be said broadly to consist of thought, feeling, and will. Now let us draw an hypothetical analogy. Here is a family of three. They share perfectly each other's thoughts, feelings, and purposes.

Nothing is hidden from one another. Perfect harmony prevails. Yet each member is a distinct person. Would there not, then, be one personality in three persons? Of course in human life such a perfect sharing of spirit is impossible. We see only approaches to it. But what appears only in degree in an earthly family exists in all its fullness in the Godhead. The Father, Son, and Spirit perfectly read each other's thoughts, experience the same emotions, and pursue the same objects. Yet at the same time they are three distinct self-conscious agents. Therefore they are Three in One.

Not only is the Trinity a possibility: it is a psychological necessity. It is inconceivable to my mind that three Persons perfect in every respect should not be One. We could perfectly share each other's spirit were it not for such human limitations as sin, ignorance, and weakness. Holiness makes for clearness of insight and depth of sympathy. As two friends advance in holiness they become more nearly one. Since the Father, Son, and Spirit are all perfect in knowledge, power, goodness, and love, there is no barrier that can possibly stand between them. Therefore they must be Three in One.

We are taught in the Scriptures that the three Members of the Trinity live in each other. How is this possible? Let us attempt an explanation. Self-consciousness when carried to an extreme cramps personality. Not until we are transported out of ourselves by some great and compelling object do we realize our full powers. Sometimes we seem almost to share the very consciousness of another. Still we retain our identity. Such an experience requires an object great enough to draw us out of ourselves, and powers in ourselves great enough to appreciate the object. Men differ greatly in their powers of comprehension. Only genius can fully appreciate genius. The members of the Trinity are great enough both to evoke and comprehend the infinite greatness of each other. They live in one another.

## THE OMNIPRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT

The Spirit is omnipresent in the sense that the whole universe is eternally present in His consciousness, and that He projects Himself into every part of it. An illustration may shed light. A speaker is before a small audience. His vision takes in those who sit before him. Through intuition he reads much of their inner life. Through his persuasive eloquence he pours himself into the minds and hearts of his hearers. He may be said to fill the room physically with his voice and spiritually with his thought and magnetic personality. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent through His unlimited powers of comprehension and active influence.

Not only is it possible for the Spirit to be omnipresent; because of His very nature He must be. We know how greatly men differ in their power to make their personality felt in other lives. The richer a man's nature, the more surely will it overflow its banks. Spiritually impoverished souls tend strongly to be self-centered. For great souls self-repression is well-nigh impossible. Inherent power must find an outlet. Genius habitually creates up to the limit of its capacity. We can hardly imagine Beethoven composing ragtime. The infinite attributes of the Holy Spirit must find infinite expression. This necessitates omnipresence.

Because of His perfect holiness and love the Spirit is necessarily omnipresent. Adequate knowledge is essential to the full exercise of the creative faculties. It furnishes the raw material in which genius works. Ignorance at any point is a limitation of power. Growth in holiness broadens and clarifies the vision. We are all familiar with the keen insight of true love. The powers of love are called forth by the needs in human life that love reveals. Love is bound to work for its object as far and as intelligently as knowledge leads the way. Human love is greatly handicapped by ignorance and imperfect ideals. The Spirit of God, being perfectly holy, possesses perfect knowledge. For this same reason His sympathies are infinitely broad

and deep. He knows and is responsive to every human need. Because His vision embraces the heights of perfection, He ever sees improvements to be made in the souls of men. He lovingly fosters the growth of all forms of goodness everywhere. What must be the activity of infinite love impelled by perfect holiness and omniscience! It necessitates omnipresence.

#### THE PERSONALITY OF THE SPIRIT

We have already noted that the Bible teaches that the Spirit is a Person possessing knowledge, will, and love. In Him these qualities are infinite.

Let us first consider His *knowledge*. He knows Himself. Do we appreciate the necessity of such knowledge in the Deity? If we could know ourselves thoroughly, what blunders would be averted and what heights of achievement scaled! Increased power flows from deepening knowledge of self. A man must know himself in order intelligently and fully to exert his powers. God must know Himself. Otherwise His omnipotence would be subject to caprice or would come far short of being fully exercised.

Any limitation whatsoever in the Spirit's knowledge would also be a limitation in His power. He is Master of all realms of truth. His perfectly holy nature, moreover, gives Him unerring insight into the spiritual import of every conceivable fact and truth in life. He sees everything in its actual and possible relation to God. There is really no antagonism between secular and religious truth.

We now turn to *will* as it is found in the Holy Spirit. Few men have well-trained will power. Those who are able to make quick and correct decisions, rapidly hew their way to success. Efficiency is greatly promoted when the necessity for making many petty decisions is eliminated because certain choices have become habitual. God is never obliged to ponder and hesitate as men do. The will power of the Holy Spirit is based on nothing short of perfect knowl-

edge and is exerted only in the direction of holiness. We cannot conceive of an inefficient will in connection with perfect knowledge and holiness. This perfect will power makes it possible for the Holy Spirit to act instantly in all places at all times.

The third outstanding attribute in the Holy Spirit is *love*. We find it too sadly true in our experience that sin lowers the spiritual capacity for loving. As we advance in goodness we find that our love broadens and deepens. There is a close connection between the holiness of God and His boundless love.

In 1 John iv. 8 we read, "God is love." How can a God of love be happy unless through His omnipresent Spirit He can pour this infinite love into all quarters of the universe?

The omnipresence and love of God are mutually dependent and interactive. In comparison with His great love our love is sadly circumscribed. This is partly because we know such a small number of people and such tiny dribblets of the mighty river of human need. How wonderfully a pastor's love for men deepens with the growing knowledge of human need that comes through Christian service! How greatly enriched in the power to love would we be if we could enter intimately and lovingly into the lives of thousands! Who, then, can faintly conceive the wealth of love in the Holy Spirit, whose vision takes in every aspect and manifestation of human trouble and who is ever present to help?

A man is bound to appreciate wherever he sees them manifested those qualities that he himself possesses. Love is stimulated and enriched by the lovable things that it sees. The Holy Spirit, being perfect in all the elements of holiness, appreciates every imaginable form of holiness in the lives of men. Possessing in himself every quality of goodness, He cannot help cherishing and encouraging the growth of every tiniest plant of virtue that He sees. Being omnipresent, every single bit of goodness is spread out before Him.

Thus, through presenting to Him every need and every lovable thing in the lives of all men that ever have lived and ever will live, the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit eternally impels His infinite love to outward expression.

#### REGENERATION

Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Author of the New Birth, without which no man can enter Heaven (John iii. 5). Men must first realize their lost condition without Christ. The Holy Spirit is preëminently qualified for the work of convicting men of sin. His love for God makes Him extremely jealous of His honor. If men will fight bravely in defending and rescuing the property of a loved one, how much more vigorously will the Holy Spirit strive to win back from Satan the souls that Jesus bought with His own life! He alone can produce in the soul a proper realization of its sin toward God. Man at best can have but a faint conception of the real enormity of sin. The Holy Spirit alone has an adequate conception of what sin really is. Sin is essentially a matter of violated relationships. A man can realize the nature of his offense against another only in the light of the latter's character and personality. The Spirit alone knows the terribleness of sin against God, because He alone fully knows God. Being one of the Trinity, he alone fully realizes in just what ways and to what extent sin injures the Father and the Son. He alone can bring to man a proper realization of his guilt toward God.

The Holy Spirit is keenly sensitive to the presence of sin wherever it exists. In our attempts to lead men out of their sinful ways, we are constantly hampered by our own limitations in holiness. We can lift men no higher than our own ideals for them. And these ideals are necessarily far short of perfect, because of the sin inherent in our own natures. As the Holy Spirit is both omnipresent and perfectly holy, no sin can possibly be hidden from Him. Like the orchestra leader sensitive to the slightest discord in music, the Holy Spirit, with His perfect knowl-



edge of all that goes to constitute holiness, detects every slightest manifestation of sin in the whole world.

Capacity for hatred is measured by capacity for loving. The depth of our love for an individual determines how fiercely we hate that which is proving injurious to him. The intensity of our desire to lead men out of sin is limited by the weakness of human love. We yield to weak indulgence. But the Holy Spirit has both a perfect vision of the inevitable consequences of sin, such as men can never have, and an infinite love for souls, such as men can never feel. With the indomitable courage born of infinite love and omniscience, He bravely faces all the contempt and spurnings of men in His mission of saving them from eternal ruin by leading them to the Saviour. We may safely say that what the Holy Spirit cannot accomplish in the way of producing conviction of sin lies utterly beyond the confines of possibility.

The Holy Spirit regenerates the soul by bringing it into saving relation with Jesus Christ. Men too often chafe against the declaration of Christ, "Ye must be born again" (John iii. 7). But how wrong and foolish is such an attitude! The New Birth is both a necessity and a glorious opportunity. How much we have all missed in life through limitations within ourselves! What a lamentable difference there is in the treasures of life gathered by the talented and the untalented! How we covet genius, which alone can open many a door of success! Special faculties are needed for different kinds of work. To win distinction in many fields of activity it would be necessary for most of us to be born again. The Bible teaches that it is impossible for us to be righteous in God's sight unless we experience the New Birth. Is it not a wonderful opportunity that through the Holy Spirit we may be regenerated? New spiritual vitality will be ours. Quickened powers of appreciation will enable us to reap far richer harvests from the fields of life. The hope of eternal life will ever well up in our hearts to freshen and beau-

tify our lives. Through the indwelling Spirit we shall achieve the impossible.

#### THE REVEALER OF CHRIST

In His farewell talk with His disciples, Jesus comforted their sorrowing hearts with the promise of the Holy Spirit, Who should glorify and reveal Christ to them.

We are grateful to a friend who can unlock our powers of appreciation and reveal to us in a fascinating way the glories of nature, the charms of music, and the treasures of literature. But greater than all earthly blessings is that of friendship. A friend who can lead us to know and love another friend of his equally as great and good as himself releases into our lives streams of blessing that enrich and beautify our whole future life.

Is it not amazing that Jesus yearns for our friendship? How unworthy we are in ourselves! How little can we understand of Him! How fitful is our love! Do we not long to enter into richer fellowship with Him? We need One who can reveal Him to our hearts. The Holy Spirit objectively presents Christ and subjectively prepares the heart to appreciate Him.

He eloquently brings Christ before the souls. As only love can magnetically unfold to another the hidden glories of a friend, so the Holy Spirit, with His infinite love for Christ, can present Him to our hearts with gripping eloquence. He is set forth as the One Who is filled with love for every living soul and Who can meet every conceivable exigency in life.

By enriching our souls spiritually the Holy Spirit enables us better to appreciate the beauty and greatness of Christ. Deepening love for Jesus sheds a luster of glory on all that He said and did, and reveals ever new glories in Him.

Through the Holy Spirit, also, we become wonderfully sensitive to the presence of Jesus. He makes us thrillingly conscious of His nearness in our every hour of need.

He opens our hearts to perceive the many tokens of Jesus' love. He enkindles in our hearts holy ambitions that make it necessary for us to live very close to the Saviour, in order to receive the needed strength and guidance.

It is characteristic of the modesty of the Spirit that He seeks to reveal Christ rather than Himself to the soul. In enthusiastically portraying the glowing excellences of a friend, a man often best reveals himself. He shows what his heart most treasures. It is even so with the Holy Spirit.

#### THE DIVINE TEACHER

The Holy Spirit is to be our Teacher in divine things (John xiv. 26). He is preëminently qualified for such work. The real aim of education is to draw out what is in the mind and heart. Human teachers labor under the disadvantage of having only a partial knowledge of the contents of their pupils' minds. Education is bound to be more or less of a floundering process. The Holy Spirit is the perfect Teacher. He who implanted the powers in the soul, alone knows what powers can be drawn out of it. He is master of all the stores of spiritual truth. He is divinely skilled in teaching methods and passionately devoted to His task.

The teaching of the Spirit is wonderfully stimulating. All resources of knowledge are at His command for classifying and embellishing whatever He has to teach. As the Author of the Bible He can in a most attractive way open up to us its hidden treasures. Many teachers are so fond of making a display of their learning that they teach above the students' powers of comprehension. But the Spirit is so concerned with lodging His life-giving truths in Christian hearts that He perfectly adapts His messages to the individual capacity. He has something for the most untutored as well as for the most brilliant intellects. He makes us want intensely what He has to give. He reveals Christ so gloriously and sets forth such alluring goals of service that our hearts burn with eagerness to learn all we can about Jesus and divine truth.

Because He is Master of life as well as Teacher, He can lead us into experiences that make indelible the impressions of truth that He engraves upon the heart. He shows how to apply every particle of Bible truth to every need of every soul of every time and of every place. He is peerless in His ability to show us how to put religious truth into practice.

The feeling that a teacher is a master in his department inspires his students to bring their intellectual difficulties to him for solution. Mental growth is stunted where lack of confidence in a teacher causes the students' minds to become clogged up with unsolved perplexities. Many doubts of which we are hardly conscious hold us back in our spiritual progress. The confidence that the Holy Spirit is Master in all fields of knowledge will call forth from the depths of our souls many secret hindrances of which we might not otherwise be aware. If contact with a brilliant mind quickens our intellectual faculties, what must be the mental and spiritual stimulus of living in fellowship with the Holy Spirit of God?

Much of the beauty of objects seen in travels comes from their precious associations. How much more profitable and enjoyable is our journey through life when we have the Spirit ever present to reveal the tender spiritual associations and glowing possibilities that entwine many of the commonest things in life. If life is rich to the artist and poet who can discern its hidden beauty, how much richer will it be for the Christian who has the Holy Spirit to reveal its deeper spiritual significance and uncover its buried treasure!

What a privilege is ours in having the Holy Spirit as our Teacher! How fortunate is the boy whose father is a genius in the field in which the boy himself is ambitious to win distinction! Yet we as Christians are infinitely more fortunate. We have the Holy Spirit to teach us the hidden secrets of the greatest of all arts—that of enriching the world with the golden fruits of a Christlike life. The Holy Spirit yearns to lavish His treasures of

spiritual knowledge upon every receptive heart. Think of the joy that must fill His heart when Christians grow in their capacity to grasp the matchless truths He longs to impart. With such a Teacher as the Holy Spirit, how earnestly we ought to strive to be responsive and even brilliant students in spiritual things!

#### THE SANCTIFIER

The Holy Spirit sanctifies believers (2 Thess. ii. 13). We do not at conversion become immediately full-grown saints: we "grow in grace."

As the great artist will labor for years upon a masterpiece, so the Holy Spirit is ever lovingly at work beautifying lives with holiness. The slightest trace of sin distresses, and the tiniest evidence of moral and spiritual beauty rejoices Him. Many fail of their best because they habitually submit their productions in art or literature to overlenient criticism and make the flattery of friends their standard of excellence. If we wish to excel in holiness we must receive our training under the Holy Spirit, whose ideals for us are so high, and whose love is so strong and holy, that He cannot countenance the slightest blemish of sin in our lives.

The Holy Spirit illuminates the pathway of life. Some people are a light for all who come in contact with them. In their presence our spiritual vision is wonderfully clarified. To a great extent we see life in the light of some personality that has gripped our souls. The little child sees everything through his mother's eyes. Even in maturity our vision is largely made up of influences from friends that have meant a great deal to us. If we yield to the Spirit, we find that gradually His way of looking at life becomes ours. Life is illumined as more and more its varied facts and experiences are seen in their relation to God.

The Holy Spirit purifies our souls. The presence of a thoroughly good man is often like a refining fire. In his company our sins and evil thoughts shrivel up. Our sins

become truly hideous to us when we see how they appear in the eyes of one we love. A person who would be such a refining fire must be able to inspire respect and love. The Holy Spirit makes us vividly conscious of God's holy presence and enkindles in our hearts such a burning love for Christ as makes sin appear the most hateful thing in all the world.

The Holy Spirit sanctifies us by drawing us ever closer to Jesus. By constantly revealing to us our sins He keeps ever alive in our hearts a conscious need of Christ. He implants such high ideals of holiness that we realize our utter inability to reach them without the daily help of our Saviour. He causes Christ's virtues to shine so resplendently that we are filled with an inexpressible and consuming desire to become like Him. As we grow in holiness we become better able to appreciate further excellences in our Saviour. Thus through the sense of sin and rising ideals of goodness and deepening love for Christ the Holy Spirit draws us ever closer to Jesus, in whose pure and holy companionship we are bound to make marked progress in holiness.

How gently the Holy Spirit works in sanctifying souls! In our experience we find that the strongest influences from other lives have gently and silently infiltrated themselves into the depths of our lives. The Holy Spirit does not coerce nor in any way force Himself upon people. Is there anything that requires such gentle handling as the human spirit? The Spirit is more gentle in dealing with men than anyone else can possibly be, because He alone fully appreciates the preciousness of the soul and the innumerable ways in which it may suffer injury. Fineness of touch is characteristic of great genius. How easily a great piece of work may be ruined by a single slip! The Holy Spirit cannot possibly make any mistake in dealing with souls.

But just as in really great art there is an indefinable something that defies accurate analysis, so is it with the Spirit's operations upon the souls of men. Our most lucid

explanations can but throw a few feeble rays of light into the profound depths of this mysterious and holy subject.

#### POWER THROUGH THE SPIRIT

When we think of the tremendous responsibilities resting upon us as Christians, how keenly we feel our limitations! Nearly every occupation requires peculiar aptitude. Without special talent for his work a man is bound to go through a great deal of futile floundering. Many things are impossible except for men of genius. Considering the difficulties and the delicacy of the task, dare we undertake work for God without seeking the enduement of power from His Holy Spirit? God is even more anxious to confer this power than we can possibly be to receive it.

The imparting of this spiritual power is a mighty miracle. Man's efforts to explain it can but skim the surface. Through the Holy Spirit God gives us special spiritual powers resembling genius in the intellectual field. As a subject, whether it be art, music, or literature, enters into the depths of a man's being, his faculties are quickened in a wonderful way. His whole nature seems set on fire. When the Spirit fills a man's soul, he receives vast increase of power for every godly activity into which the Lord may choose to call him. Eloquent expression flows from powerful impression. The Holy Spirit, being God, makes God and spiritual things seem intensely real to the responsive heart. We feel and love these divine realities so passionately that our lives overflow in streams of spiritual power and beauty. A musician playing before a large audience reaches the heights of power only as he becomes so absorbed in the composition he is rendering that he loses all fear of the people before him. So the Holy Spirit empowers us by making Christ and the things of God more intensely real to us than anything else in all the world.

Now let us consider how we may obtain this power of the Spirit in our lives. There must, first of all, be intense desire on our part. To a great extent appetite limits a man's capacity for food. Strong yearning expands the

receptive powers of the soul. Even the most brilliant teacher can do little with inattentive pupils. Desire sharpens attentiveness and responsiveness. A deep longing for the Holy Spirit to fill our lives so clarifies the vision with expectancy that we see more openings through which He can enter. We open the doors of the soul. So far as we can we overthrow all the obstacles that block His entrance.

In the second place, there must be the prayer of faith. Since expression strengthens emotion, our yearning for the Spirit will deepen even as we pray. We come to feel how much God desires us to have the Holy Spirit. We watch more eagerly for answers to our prayers. Our faith is quickened to apprehend the Spirit by discerning the many varied ways in which He chooses to manifest Himself to us. Prayer brings us into that harmony with God's will and trust in Him that make it possible for him to pour out His Spirit in richer measure into our lives. It is inconceivable that God should give His Spirit abundantly to those whose desires have not through prayer been brought into substantial agreement with His own.

In the third place, there must be an absolute and implicit yielding of the life to God. Consecration opens the eyes to the inherent greatness of a cause. Not until we give ourselves thoroughly up to it can we appreciate the true glory of the Christian life. Such appreciation makes us feel the absolute necessity of securing the power of the Spirit. Just as we must yield ourselves to a cause if the cause is to grip us, so we must yield ourselves to the Spirit of God if He is to fill our hearts. Yielding is productive in us of a peace of mind through which God can more effectively work. He can make His will known more fully to the soul that is wholly surrendered to Him, even as the stream must be placid to receive reflections from the beauty along its banks. Spiritual consecration is analogous to mental concentration. Unyielded sins are like distracting thoughts. The Holy Spirit alone can bring the most out of our lives. Like the orchestra leader whose thorough knowledge of music enables him to lead players upon



many different kinds of instruments, so the Holy Spirit understands all the forces and factors in our lives and can cause them to work together harmoniously and productively for God.

Christians are responsible to God and men for the results they can achieve by paying the price of consecration necessary to secure the power of the Spirit. In view of the tremendous tasks for God to be performed and the crying need of the world, how can we neglect our responsibility and glorious privilege of doing everything possible to open the way for God's Holy Spirit to enter and flood our lives with beauty and power!