

The Holy Spirit

by James Arminius

James Arminius explores the nature, role, and significance of the Holy Spirit within the context of the Holy Trinity.

Scripture: 1 Timothy 3:1

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Faith And Obedience"

Description

Marvin Vincent and W. E. Vine discuss the Greek word 'oregomai,' which means to stretch out or reach after, metaphorically symbolizing desire, ambition, and longing. The patriarchs, like Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob, exemplified this heavenly mindset of desiring a better country. The Bible describes this desire as a reflection of faith in God's promise, leading to reliance on His promises and obedience. John MacArthur and D. Edmond Hiebert emphasize the importance of having a strong internal desire that drives outward action, contrasting legitimate aspirations with the love of money that leads to spiritual wandering and self-inflicted sorrows.

Transcript

DISPUTATION 6

ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

RESPONDENT: JAMES MAHOT

As the preceding Disputation treated of God the Father and God the Son, order requires us now to enter on the subject of the Holy Ghost.

I. The word Spirit signifies primarily, properly, and adequately, a thing which in its first act and essence is most subtle and simple, but which in its second act and efficacy is exceedingly active, that is, powerful and energetic. Hence it has come to pass, that this word is received, by way of distinction and opposition, sometimes for a personal and self-existing energy and power, and sometimes for an energy inhering to some other thing according to the mode of quality or property: but this word belongs primarily and properly to a self-existing power; and to an inhering power or energy, only secondarily and by a metaphorical communication. (John iii, 8; Psalm civ, 4; Luke i, 35; Kings ii, 9.)

II. But it is, in the first place, and with the greatest truth, ascribed to God, (John iv, 24,) both because He according to Essence is a pure and most simple act; and because according to Efficacy he is most active,

and most prompt and powerful to perform, that is, because He is the first and Supreme Being, as well as the first and Supreme Agent. But it is with singular propriety attributed to the hypostatical energy which exists in God, and which is frequently marked with an addition, thus, "The Spirit of Elohim," (Gen. i, 9,) "The Spirit of Jehovah," (Isa. xi, 2,) and "His Holy Spirit." (Ixiii, 10.) By these expressions is signified, that He is the person by whom God the Father and the Son perform all things in heaven and earth, (Matt. xii, 28; Luke xi, 20,) and that He is not only Holy in himself, but likewise the Sanctifier of all things which are in any way holy and so called. Our present discourse is concerning the Holy Spirit understood according to this last signification.

III. We may not attempt to define the Holy Spirit, (for such an attempt is unlawful,) but we may be allowed in some degree to describe Him according to the Scriptures, after the following manner: He is the person subsisting in the Sacred and undivided Trinity, who is the Third in order, emanates from the Father and is sent by the Son; and therefore He is the Spirit proceeding from both, and, according to his Person, distinct from both; an infinite, eternal illimitable Spirit, and of the same Divinity with God the Father and the Son. This description we will now consider in order, according to its several parts. (Matt. xxviii, 19; John i, 26; and Luke iii, 16; John xiv, 16; 1 Cor. ii, 10, 11; Gen. i, 2; Psalm cxxxix, 7-12.)

IV. On this subject four things come under our consideration and must be established by valid arguments. (1.) That the Holy Spirit *ufisamenon* is subsistent and a Person; not something after the manner of a quality and property, (suppose that of goodness, mercy, or patience,) which exists within the Deity. (2.) That He is a Person proceeding from the Father and the Son, and therefore is in order the Third in the Trinity. (3.) That according to his Person He is distinct from the Father and the Son. (4.) That He is infinite, eternal, immeasurable, and of the same Divinity with the Father and the Son, that is, not a creature, but God.

V. The first is proved by those attributes which the whole of mankind are accustomed to ascribe to a thing that has an existence, and which they conceive under the notion of "a Person:" for we assert, that all those things belong to the Holy Spirit, whether they agree with a person in the first Act or in the second. (1.) From those things which agree in the first Act with a thing that has an existence and is a Person, we draw the following conclusion: That to which belongs Essence or Existence, Life, Understanding, Will and Power, is justly called "a Person," or nothing whatever in the nature of things can receive that appellation. But to the Holy Spirit belong: (i.) Essence or Existence: for He is in God, (1 Cor. ii, 11,) emanates from God and is sent by the Son. (John xv, 26.) (ii.) Life: for He "brooded over the waters," (Gen. i, 2,) as a hen covers her chickens with her wings; and He is the Author of animal and of spiritual life to all things living. (Job xxxiii, 4; John iii, 5; Rom. viii, 2, 11.) (iii.) Understanding: "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii, 10.) (iv.) Will: for He "distributes his gifts to every man severally as He will." (1 Cor. xii, 11.) (v.) Lastly, Power: with which, the prophets, and other holy persons, and in particular the Messiah himself, were furnished and strengthened. (Micah iii, 8; Ephes. iii, 16; Isa. xi, 2.)

VI. The same thing is proved (2.) from those things which are usually attributed to a Person in the second Act. For of this description are the actions which are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, and which usually belong to nothing except a subsistence and a person. Such are to create, (Job xxxiii, 4; Psalm civ, 30,) to preserve, to vivify or quicken, to instruct or furnish them with knowledge, faith, charity, hope, the fear of the Lord, fortitude, patience, and other virtues; to "rush mightily upon Sampson;" (Judges xiv, 6;) to "depart from Saul;" (1 Sam. xvi, 14;) to "rest upon the Messiah;" (Isa. xi, 2;) to "come upon and overshadow Mary;" (Luke i, 35;) to send the prophets; (Isa. lxi, 1;) to appoint bishops; (Acts xx, 28;) to descend in a bodily appearance like a dove upon Christ, (Luke iii, 22,) and similar operations. To these may also be added

those metaphorical expressions which attributes such passions to Him as agree with no other thing than a subsistence and a person, and as are signified in the following passages: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." (Joel ii, 28.) "Jesus breathed on them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John xx, 22.) "They vexed his Holy Spirit. (Isa. lxiii, 10.) "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Ephes. iv, 30.) To blaspheme and speak a word against the Holy Ghost. (Matt. xii, 31, 32.) "He hath done despite to the Spirit of Grace," (Heb. x, 29.)

VII. A similar bearing have those passages of Scripture which reckon the Holy Spirit in the same series with the Father and the Son. Of which class is that commanding men "to be baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" (Matt. xxviii, 19;) that which says, "There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." (1 John v, 7;) that which declares, "The same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God, effect the diversities of operations, institute the differences of administrations, and pour out the diversities of gifts; (1 Cor. xii, 4 -- 6;) and that which beseeches, "that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost may be with all believers." (2 Cor. xiii, 13.) For it would be absurd to number an inly-existent quality, or property, in the same series with two subsistences or persons.

VIII. The second topic of consideration [§ 15.] contains three members: (i.) of which the first, that is, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, is proved by those passages of Scripture in which he receives the appellation of "the Spirit of God and of the Father," and of "the Spirit who is of God;" and by those in which the Spirit is said to proceed and go forth from, to be given, poured out, and sent forth by the Father, and by whom the Father acts and operates. (John xiv, 16, 26; xv, 26; Joel ii, 28; Gal. iv, 6.) (ii.) The second member, that is, the procession from the Son, is proved by similar passages, which style Him "the Spirit of the Son," (Gal. iv, 6,) and which declare, that He is given and sent by the Son, (John xv, 26,) and that He therefore receives from the Son and glorifies Him. (xvi, 14.) To which must likewise be added, from another passage, (xx, 22,) a mode of giving, which is called "breathing," or inspiration. (iii.) The third member, that is, His being the third person in the Holy Trinity in order, but not in time and degree, appears principally from the fact, that the Spirit of the Father and the Son is said to be sent and given by the Father and the Son, and that the Father and the Son are said to work by Him. It is also manifest from the order which was observed in the institution of Baptism, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii, 19.)

IX. All those passages of Scripture which have been produced in the preceding Theses for another purpose, prove "that the Holy Spirit is distinguished from the Father and the Son, not only according to name, but likewise according to person," which is the third part of the description which we have given. [§ 4.] Among other passages, the following expressly affirm this distinction: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." (John xiv, 16.) "That Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name." (xiv, 26.) "When that Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father." (xv, 26.) "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath annointed me," &c. (Isa. lxi, 1.) There are numerous other passages in confirmation of this distinction: so that the blindness of Sabellius was most wonderful, who could possibly be in darkness amidst such a splendour of daylight.

X. Lastly. The fourth part comes now to be considered. (1.) The Infinity of the Holy Spirit is proved, both by his Omniscience, by which he is said to "search all things, yea, the deep things of God," and to know all the things which are in God; (1 Cor. ii, 10, 11; John xvi, 13;) and by his Omnipotence, by which He hath created and still preserves all things, (Job. xxxiii, 4) and according to both of which He is styled "the Spirit of wisdom and of knowledge," and "the power of the Highest." (Luke i, 35.) (2.) His Eternity is established,

(Isa. xi, 2) both by the creation of all things; for whatsoever is before all things which have been made, that is eternal; and by the titles with which He is signalized, for he is called "the power of the Highest," and the finger of God." (Luke xi, 20.) These titles cannot apply to a thing that has its beginning in time. (3.) A most luminous argument for His Immensity lies in this. It is said, that "no one can flee from the Spirit of God; (Psalm cxxxix, 7;) and that the Spirit of the Lord dwells in all his saints, as in a temple. (1 Cor. vi, 19.)

XI. From all these particulars it clearly appears, that the Holy Ghost is of the same Divinity with the Father and the Son, and is truly distinguished by the name of God. For He who is not a creature, and yet has a real subsistence, must be God; and He who is from God, and who proceeds from the Father, not by an external emanation, nor by a creation performed through the intervention of any other Divine power, but by an internal emanation, He, being the power of God, by what right shall He be despoiled of the name of "God?" For when He is said to be given, poured out, and sent; this does not betoken any diminution of his Divinity, but is an intimation of his origin from God, of his procession from the Father and the Son, and of his mission to his office. A clear indication of his Deity is also apparent from its being said, that He also with plenary power distributes Divine gifts according to his own will, (1 Cor. xii, 11,) and he bestows his gifts with an authority equal to that with which "God" the Father is said to "work his operations," (4.) and to that with which the Son, who is called "the Lord," is said to "institute administrations."

XII. This doctrine of the sacred and undivided Trinity contains a mystery which far surpasses every human and angelical understanding, if it be considered according to the internal union which subsists between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and according to the relation among them of origin and procession. But if regard be had to that economy and dispensation by which the Father and the Son, and both of them through the Holy Spirit, accomplish our salvation; the contemplation is one of admirable sweetness, and produces in the hearts of believers the most exuberant fruits of faith, hope, charity, confidence, fear, and obedience, to the praise of God the Creator, the Son the Redeemer, and of the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier. May "the Love of God the Father, the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us," and with all saints. Amen! (2 Cor. xiii, 14.)

"If the Spirit be third in dignity and order, what necessity is there for his being also the third in nature? Indeed the doctrine of piety has perhaps taught that He is third in dignity. But to employ the expression 'the third in nature,' we have neither learned out of the Holy Scriptures, nor is it possible to collect it as a consequence from what precedes. For as the Son is in truth Second in order, because He is from the Father, and Second in dignity, because the Father exists that He may be himself the principle and the cause, and because through the Son there is a procession and an access to God the Father; (but He is no more second in nature, because the Deity is one in both of them.) So, undoubtedly, is likewise the Holy Spirit, though He follows the Son both in order and dignity, as we completely grant, yet He is not at all resembling one who exists in the nature of another. Basilus Eversor 3.

"In brief, in things to be distinguished, the Deity is incapable of being divided; and resembles one vast attempered mass of effulgence proceeding from three suns which mutually embrace each other. Wherefore when we have had regard to the Deity itself, or to the first cause, or to the monarchy, we have formed in our minds a conception of some one thing. Again, when I apply my mind to these things in which Deity consists, and which exist from the first cause itself, flowing from it with equal glory and without any relation to time, I discover three things as the objects of my adoration." Gregory Nazianzen, Orat. 3 De Theolog.

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