

Treatise on Grace Chapter III

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CHAPTER III. SHEWING HOW A PRINCIPLE OF GRACE IS FROM THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

I. That this holy and Divine principle, which we have shewn does radically and summarily consist in Divine Love, comes into existence in the soul by the power of God in the influences of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the blessed Trinity, is abundantly manifest from the Scriptures.

Regeneration is by the Spirit: John iii. 5, 6—" Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And verse 8 - " The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The renewing of the soul is by the Holy Ghost: Titus iii 5— " Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." A new heart. is given by God's putting His Spirit within us: Ezekiel 36: 26, 27—"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Quickening of the dead soul is by the Spirit: John vi. 63 - " It is the Spirit that quickeneth." Sanctification is by the Spirit of God: 2 Thess. ii 13—" God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." Romans xv. 16 - " that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. vi 11—"Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are

justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Peter i. 2—' Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." All grace in the heart is the fruit of the Spirit: Gal. v. 22, 23 - " But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Eph. v 9—" The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." Hence the Spirit of God is called the Spirit of grace, (Heb. x. 29.)

This doctrine of a gracious nature being by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, is not only taught in the Scriptures, but is irrefragable to Reason. Indeed there seems to be a strong disposition in men to disbelieve and oppose the doctrine of true disposition, to disbelieve and oppose the doctrine of immediate influence of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men, or to diminish and make it as small and remote a matter as possible, and put it as far out of sight as may be. Whereas it seems to me, true virtue and holiness would naturally excite a prejudice (if I may so say) in favour of such a doctrine; and that the soul, when in the most excellent frame, and the most lively exercise of virtue,—love to God and delight in Him,— would naturally and unavoidably think of God as kindly communicating Himself to him, and holding communion with him, as though he did as it were see God smiling on him, giving to him and conversing with him; and that if he did not so think of God, but, on the contrary, should conceive that there was no immediate communication between God and him, it would tend greatly to quell his holy motions of soul, and be an exceeding damage to his pleasure.

No good reason can be given why men should have such an inward disposition to deny any immediate communication between God and the creature, or to make as little of it as possible. 'Tis a strange disposition that men have to thrust God out of the world, or to put Him as far out of sight as they can, and to have in no respect immediately and sensibly to do with Him. Therefore so many schemes have been drawn to exclude, or extenuate, or remove at a great distance, any influence of the Divine Being in the hearts of men, such as the scheme of the Pelagians, the Socinians, &c. And therefore these doctrines are so much ridiculed that ascribe much to the immediate influence of the Spirit, and called enthusiasm, fanaticism, whimsy, and distraction; but no mortal can tell for what.

If we make no difficulty of allowing that God did immediately make the whole Universe at first, and caused it to exist out of nothing, and that every individual thing owes its being to an immediate voluntary, arbitrary act of Almighty power, why should we make a difficulty of supposing that He has still something immediately to do with the things that He has made, and that there is an arbitrary influence still that God has in tile Creation that He has made?

And if it be reasonable to suppose it with respect to any part of the Creation, it is especially so with respect to reasonable creatures who are the highest part of the

Creation, next to God, and who are most immediately made for God, and have Him for their next Head, and are created for the business wherein they are mostly concerned. And above all, in that wherein the highest excellency of this highest rank of beings consist, and that wherein he is most conformed to God is nearest to Him, and has God for his most immediate object.

It seems to me most rational to suppose that as we ascend in the order of being we shall at last come immediately to God, the First Cause. In whatever respect we ascend, we ascend in the order of time and succession.

II. The Scripture speaks of this holy and Divine principle in the heart as not only from the Spirit but as being spiritual. Thus

saving knowledge is called spiritual understanding: Col 1:9 i. 9—"We desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." So the influences, graces, and comforts of God's Spirit are called spiritual blessings: Eph. i. 3—"Blessed be the God and [father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." So the imparting of any gracious benefit is called the imparting of a spiritual gift: Rom. 1:11 "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift." And the fruits of the Spirit, which are offered to God, are called spiritual sacrifices: 1 Peter ii. 5—"A spiritual priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And a spiritual person signifies the same in Scripture as a gracious person and sometimes one that is much under the influence of grace: I Cor. ii. 15—"He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man;" and iii. 1—"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal." Gal. 5:1 1—"If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." And to be graciously minded is called in Scripture a being spiritually minded: Rom. viii 6—"To be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Concerning this, two things are to be noted.

1. That this Divine principle in the heart is not called spiritual, because it has its seat in the soul or spiritual part of man, and not in his body. It is called spiritual, not because of its relation to the spirit of man, in which it is, but because of its relation to the Spirit of God, from which it is. That things are not called spiritual because they appertain not to the body but the spirit of man is evident, because gracious or holy understanding is called spiritual understand in the forementioned passage, (Col. i. 9.) Now, by spiritual understanding cannot be meant that understanding which has its seat in the soul, to distinguish it from other understanding that has its seat in the body, for all understanding has its seat in the soul; and that things are called spiritual because of their relation to the Spirit of God is most plain, by the latter part of the 2nd chapter of 1st Corinthians. There we have both those expressions, one immediately after another, evidently meaning the same thing: verses 1:3, 14 "Which things also we speak, not in the

words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." And that by the spiritual man is meant one that has the Spirit is also as plainly evident by the context: verses 10-12 " God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man," &c. Also ver. 15 " He that is spiritual judgeth all things," by which is evidently meant the same as he that hath the Spirit that " searcheth all things," as we find in the foregoing verses. So persons are said to be spiritually minded, not because they mind things that relate to the soul or spirit of man, but because they mind things that relate to the Spirit of God: Romans 8:5, 6-- "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

2. It must be observed that where this holy Divine principle of saving grace wrought in the mind is in Scripture called spiritual, what is intended by the expression is not merely nor chiefly that it is from the Spirit of God, but that it is of the nature of the Spirit of God. There are many things in the minds of some natural men that are from the influence of the Spirit, but yet are by no means spiritual things in the scriptural sense of the word. The Spirit of God convinces natural men of sin, (John 16:8.) Natural men may have common grace, common illuminations, and common affections that are from the Spirit of God, as appears by Hebrews 6:4. Natural men have sometimes the influences of the Spirit of God in His common operations and gifts, and therefore God's Spirit is said to be striving with them, and they are said to resist the Spirit, (Acts 7:51;) to grieve and vex God's Holy Spirit, (Eph. 4:30; Isaiah 63:10;) and God is said to depart from them even as the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul: 1 Sam. 16:14-- "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him."

But yet natural men are not in any degree spiritual. The great difference between natural men and godly men seems to be set forth by this, that the one is natural and carnal, and the other spiritual; and natural men are so totally destitute of that which is Spirit, that they know nothing about it, and the reason given for it is because they are not spiritual, (1 Cor. 2:13-15.) Indeed sometimes those miraculous gifts of the Spirit that were common are called spiritual because they are from the Spirit of God; but for the most part the term seems to be appropriate to its gracious influences and fruits on the soul, which are no otherwise spiritual than the common influences of the Spirit that natural men have, in any other respect than this, that this saving grace in the soul, is not only from the Spirit, but it also partakes of the nature of that Spirit that it is from, which the common grace of the Spirit does not. Thus things in Scripture language are said to be earthly, as they partake of an earthly nature, partake of the nature of the earth; so things are said to be heavenly, as they in their nature agree with those things that are in heaven; and so saving grace in the heart is said to be spiritual, and therein

distinguished from all other influences of the Spirit, that it is of the nature of the Spirit of God. It partakes of the nature of that Spirit, while no common gift of the Spirit doth so.

But here an enquiry may be raised, viz.--

Enq. How does saving grace partake of the nature of that Spirit that it is from, so as to be called on that account spiritual, thus essentially distinguishing it from all other effects of the Spirit? for every effect has in some respect or another the nature of its cause, and the common convictions and illuminations that natural men have are in some respects [of] the nature of the Spirit of God; for there is light and understanding and conviction of truth in these common illuminations, and so they are of the nature of the Spirit of God--that is, a discerning spirit and a spirit of truth. But yet saving grace, by its being called spiritual, as though it were thereby distinguished from all other gifts of the Spirit, seems to partake of the nature of the Spirit of God in some very peculiar manner.

Clearly to satisfy this enquiry, we must do these two things:-- 1. We must bear in mind what has already been said of the nature of saving grace, and what I have already shewn to be that wherein its nature and essence lies, and wherein all saving grace is radically and summarily comprised viz., a principle of Divine Love. 2. We must consider what the Scripture reveals to be in a peculiar manner the nature of the Holy Spirit of God, and in an enquiry of this nature I would go no further than I think the Scripture plainly goes before me. The Word of God certainly should be our rule in matters so much above reason and our own notions.

And here I would say--

(1.) That I think the Scripture does sufficiently reveal the Holy Spirit as a proper Divine Person; and thus we ought to look upon Him as a distinct personal agent. He is often spoken of as a person, revealed under personal characters and in personal acts, and it speaks of His being acted on as a person, and the Scripture plainly ascribes every thing to Him that properly denotes a distinct person; and though the word person be rarely used in the Scriptures, yet I believe that we have no word in the English language that does so naturally represent what the Scripture reveals of the distinction of the Eternal Three,--Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,--as to say they are one God but three persons.

(2.) Though all the Divine perfections are to be attributed to each person of the Trinity, yet the Holy Ghost is in a peculiar manner called by the name of Love -- A)ga/ph, the same word is that translated charity in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians. The Godhead or the Divine essence is once and again said to be Love: 1 John 4:8 -- "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." So again, ver. 16-- "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." But the Divine essence is thus called in a peculiar manner as

breathed forth and subsisting in the Holy Spirit; as may be seen in the context of these texts, as in the 12th and 13th verses of the same chapter-- "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." It is the same argument in both these verses: in the 12th verse the apostle argues that if we have love dwelling in us, we have God dwelling in us; and in the 13th verse he clears the face of the argument by this, that his love which is dwelling in us is God's Spirit. And this shews that the foregoing argument is good, and that if love dwells in us, we know God dwells in us indeed, for the Apostle supposes it as a thing granted and allowed that God's Spirit is God. The Scripture elsewhere does abundantly teach us that the way in which God dwells in the saints is by His Spirit, by their being the temples of the Holy Ghost. Here this apostle teaches us the same thing. He says, "We know that he dwelleth in us, that he hath given us his Spirit;" and this is manifestly to explain what is said in the foregoing verse-- viz., that God dwells in us, inasmuch as His love dwells in us; which love he had told us before--ver. 8--is God himself. And afterwards, in the 16th verse, he expresses it more fully, that this is the way that God dwells in the saint-- viz.. because this love dwells in them, which is God.

Again the same is signified in the same manner in the last verses of the foregoing chapter. In the foregoing verses, speaking of love as a true sign of sincerity and our acceptance with God, beginning with the 18th verse, he sums up the argument thus in the last verse: "And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."

We have also something very much like this in the apostle Paul's writings.

Gal. 5:13-16-- "Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Here it seems most evident that what the apostle exhorts and urges in the 13th, 14th, and 15th verses,-- viz., that they should walk in love, that they might not give occasion to the gratifying of the flesh,--he does expressly explain in the 16th verse by this, that they should walk in the Spirit, that they might not fulfil the lust of the flesh; which the great Mr Howe takes notice of in his "Sermons on the Prosperous State of the Christian Interest before the End of Time," p. 185, published by Mr Evans. His words are, "Walking in the Spirit is directed with a special eye and reference unto the exercise of this love; as you may see in Galatians 5, the 14th, 15th, and 16th verses compared together. All the law is fulfilled in one word, (he means the whole law of the second table,) even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, (the opposite to this love, or that which follows on the want of it, or from the opposite principle,) take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, (observe the inference,) Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. To walk in the Spirit is to walk in the exercise of this love."

So that as the Son of God is spoken of as the wisdom, understanding, and Logos of God, (Proverbs 8; Luke 11:49; John 1, at the beginning,) and is, as divines express things, the personal wisdom of God; so the Spirit of God is spoken of as the love of God, and may with equal foundation and propriety be called the personal love of God. We read in the beloved disciple's writings of these two -- Logos and A)ga/ph, both of which are said to be God, (John 1:1; 1 John 4:8-16.) One is the Son of God, and the other the Holy Spirit. There are two things that God is said to be in this First Epistle of John--light and love: chap. 1:5--"God is light." This is the Son of God, who is said to be the wisdom and reason of God, and the brightness of His glory; and in the 4th chapter of the same epistle he says, "God is love," and this he applies to the Holy Spirit.

Hence the Scripture symbol of the Holy Ghost is a dove, which is the emblem of love, and so was continually accounted (as is well known) in the heathen world, and is so made use of by their poets and mythologists, which probably arose partly from the nature and manner of the bird, and probably in part from the tradition of the story of Noah's dove, that came with a message of peace and love after such terrible manifestations of God's wrath in the time of the deluge. This bird is also made use of as an emblem of love in the Holy Scriptures; as it was on that message of peace and love that God sent it to Noah, when it came with an olive-leaf in its mouth, and often in Solomon's Song: Cant. 1:15-- "Thou hast doves' eyes": Cant. 5:12-- "His eyes are as the eyes of doves:" Cant. 5:2-- "Open to me, my love, my dove," and in other places in that song.

This bird, God is pleased to choose as the special symbol of His Holy Spirit in the greatest office or work of the Spirit that ever it has or will exert--viz., in anointing Christ, the great Head of the whole Church of saints, from which Head this holy oil descends to all the members, and the skirts of His garments, as the sweet and precious ointment that was poured on Aaron's head, that great type of Christ. As God the Father then poured forth His Holy Spirit of love upon the Son without measure, so that which was then seen with the eye--viz., a dove descending and lighting upon Christ--signified the same thing as what was at the same time proclaimed to the Son--viz., This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. This is the Son on whom I pour forth all my love, towards whom my essence entirely flows out in love. See Matt. 3:16,17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:22; John 1:32-33.

This was the anointing of the Head of the Church and our great High Priest, and therefore the holy anointing oil of old with which Aaron and other typical high priests were anointed was the most eminent type of the Holy Spirit of any in the Old Testament. This holy oil, by reason of its soft-flowing and diffusive nature, and its unparalleled sweetness and fragrancy, did most fitly represent Divine Love, or that Spirit that is the deity, breathed forth or flowing out and softly falling in infinite love and delight. It is mentioned as a fit representation of holy love, which is said to be like the precious ointment on the head, that ran down upon

the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments. It was from the fruit of the olive-tree, which it is known has been made use of as a symbol of love or peace, which was probably taken from the olive-branch brought by the dove to Noah in token of the Divine favour; so that the olive-branch and the dove that brought it, both signified the same thing--viz., love, which is specially typified by the precious oil from the olive-tree.

God's love is primarily to Himself, and His infinite delight is in Himself, in the Father and the Son loving and delighting in each other. We often read of the Father loving the Son, and being well pleased in the Son, and of the Son loving the Father. In the infinite love and delight that is between these two persons consists the infinite happiness of God: Prov. 8:30.--"Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;" and therefore seeing the Scripture signifies that the Spirit of God is the Love of God, therefore it follows that Holy Spirit proceeds from or is breathed forth from, the Father and the Son in some way or other infinitely above all our conceptions, as the Divine essence entirely flows out and is breathed forth in infinitely pure love and sweet delight from the Father and the Son; and this is that pure river of water of life that proceeds out of the throne of the Father and the Son, as we read at the beginning of the 22nd chapter of the Revelation; for Christ himself tells us that by the water of life, or living water, is meant the Holy Ghost, (John 7:38, 39.) This river of water of life in the Revelation is evidently the same with the living waters of the sanctuary in Ezekiel, (Ezek. 47:1, etc. ;) and this river is doubtless the river of God's pleasure, or of God's own infinite delight spoken of in Ps. 36:7-9-- "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life." The river of God's pleasures here spoken of is the same with the fountain of life spoken of in the next words. Here, as was observed before, the water of life by Christ's own interpretation is the Holy Spirit. This river of God's pleasures is also the same with the fatness of God's house, the holy oil of the sanctuary spoken of in the next preceding words, and is the same with God's love, or God's excellent loving-kindness, spoken of in the next preceding verse.

I have before observed that the Scripture abundantly reveals that the way in which Christ dwells in the saint is by His Spirit's dwelling in them, and here I would observe that Christ in His prayer, in the 17th chapter of John, seems to speak of the way in which He dwells in them as by the indwelling of the love wherewith the Father has loved Him: John 17:26 "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." The beloved disciple that wrote this Gospel having taken [such] particular notice of this, that he afterwards in his first epistle once and again speaks of love's dwelling in the saints, and the Spirit's dwelling in them being the same thing.

Again, the Scripture seems in many places to speak of love in Christians as if it were the same with the Spirit of God in them, or at least as the prime and most natural breathing and acting of the Spirit in the soul. So Rom. 5:5-- "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us:" Col. 1:8-- "Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit:" 2 Cor. 6:6-- "By kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned:" Phil. 2:1-- "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

The Scripture therefore leads us to this conclusion, though it be infinitely above us to conceive how it should be, that yet as the Son of God is the personal word, idea, or wisdom of God, begotten by God, being an infinitely perfect, substantial image or idea of Himself, (as might be very plainly proved from the Holy Scripture, if here were proper occasion for it;) so the Holy Spirit does in some ineffable and inconceivable manner proceed, and is breathed forth both from the Father and the Son, by the Divine essence being wholly poured and flowing out in that infinitely intense, holy, and pure love and delight that continually and unchangeably breathes forth from the Father and the Son, primarily towards each other, and secondarily towards the creature. and so flowing forth in a different subsistence or person in a manner to us utterly inexplicable and inconceivable, and that this is that person that is poured forth into the hearts of angels and saints.

Hence 'tis to be accounted for, that though we often read in Scripture of the Father loving the Son, and the Son loving the Father, yet we never once read either of the Father or the Son loving the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit loving either of them. It is because the Holy Spirit is the Divine Love itself, the love of the Father and the Son. Hence also it is to be accounted for, that we very often read of the love both of the Father and the Son to men, and particularly their love to the saints; but we never read of the Holy Ghost loving them, for the Holy Ghost is that love of God and Christ that is breathed forth primarily towards each other, and flows out secondarily towards the creature. This also will well account for it, that the apostle Paul so often wishes grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, in the beginning of his epistles, without even mentioning the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Ghost is Himself the love and grace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the deity wholly breathed forth in infinite, substantial, intelligent love: from the Father and Son first towards each other, and secondarily freely flowing out to the creature, and so standing forth a distinct personal subsistence.

Both the holiness and happiness of the Godhead consists in this love. As we have already proved, all creature holiness consists essentially and summarily in love to God and love to other creatures; so does the holiness of God consist in His love, especially in the perfect and intimate union and love there is between the Father and the Son. But the Spirit that proceeds from the Father and the Son

is the bond of this union, as it is of all holy union between the Father and the Son, and between God and the creature, and between the creatures among themselves. All seems to be signified in Christ's prayer in the 17th chapter of John, from the 21st verse. Therefore this Spirit of love is the "bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:14) throughout the whole blessed society or family in heaven and earth, consisting of the Father, the head of the family, and the Son, and all His saints that are the disciples, seed, and spouse of the Son. The happiness of God doth also consist in this love; for doubtless the happiness of God consists in the infinite love He has to, and delight He has in Himself; or in other words, in the infinite delight there is between the Father and the Son, spoken of in Prov. 8:30. This delight that the Father and the Son have in each other is not to be distinguished from their love of complacence one in another, wherein love does most essentially consist, as was observed before. The happiness of the deity, as all other true happiness, consists in love and society.

Hence it is the Spirit of God, the third person in the Trinity, is so often called the Holy Spirit, as though "holy" were an epithet some way or other peculiarly belonging to Him, which can be no other way than that the holiness of God does consist in Him. He is not only infinitely holy as the Father and the Son are, but He is the holiness of God itself in the abstract. The holiness of the Father and the Son does consist in breathing forth this Spirit. Therefore He is not only called the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit of holiness: Rom. 1:4-- "According to the Spirit of holiness."

Hence also the river of "living waters," or waters of life, which Christ explains in the 7th [chapter] of John, of the Holy Spirit, is in the forementioned Psalm [36:8] called the "river of God's pleasures;" and hence also that holy oil with which Christ was anointed, which I have shewn was the Holy Ghost, is called the "oil of gladness": Heb. 1:9--"Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Hence we learn that God's fulness does consist in the Holy Spirit. By fulness, as the term is used in Scripture, as may easily be seen by looking over the texts that mention it, is intended the good that any one possesses. Now the good that God possesses does most immediately consist in His joy and complacence that He has in Himself. It does objectively, indeed, consist in the Father and the Son; but it doth most immediately consist in the complacence in these elements. Nevertheless the fulness of God consists in the holiness and happiness of the deity. Hence persons, by being made partakers of the Holy Spirit, or having it dwelling in them, are said to be "partakers of the fulness of God" as Christ. Christ's fulness, as mediator, consists in His having the Spirit given Him "not by measure," (John 3:34.) And so it is that He is said to have "the fulness of the Godhead," [which] is said "to dwell in him bodily," (Col. 2:9.) And as we, by receiving the Holy Spirit from Christ, and being made partakers of His Spirit, are said "to receive of his fulness, and grace for grace." And because this Spirit, which is the fulness of God, consists in the love of God and Christ; therefore we, by knowing the love of Christ, are said "to be filled with all the fulness of God," (Eph. 3:19.) For the way that we know the love

of Christ, is by having that love dwelling in us, as 1 John 4:13; because the fulness of God consists in the Holy Spirit. Hence our communion with God the Father and God the Son consists in our possessing of the Holy Ghost, which is their Spirit. For to have communion or fellowship with either, is to partake with Them of Their good in Their fulness in union and society with Them. Hence it is that we read of the saints having fellowship and communion with the Father and with the Son; but never of their having fellowship with the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Ghost is that common good or fulness which they partake of in which their fellowship consists. We read of the communion of the Holy Ghost; but not of communion with Him, which are two very different things.

Persons are said to have communion with each other when they partake with each other in some common good; but any one is said to have communion of anything, with respect to that thing they partake of, in common with others. Hence, in the apostolical benediction, he wishes the "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion or partaking of the Holy Ghost." The blessing wished is but one--viz., the Holy Spirit. To partake of the Holy Ghost is to have that love of the Father and the grace of the Son.

From what has been said, it follows that the Holy Spirit is the summum of all good. 'Tis the fulness of God. The holiness and happiness of the Godhead consists in it; and in communion or partaking of it consists all the true loveliness and happiness of the creature. All the grace and comfort that persons here have, and all their holiness and happiness hereafter, consists in the love of the Spirit, spoken of Rom. 15:30; and joy in the Holy Ghost, spoken of Rom. 14:17; Acts 9:31, 13:52. And, therefore, that which in Matt. 7:11-- "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?" is in Luke 11:13, expressed thus: "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?" Doubtless there is an agreement in what is expressed by each Evangelist: and giving the Holy Spirit to them that ask, is the same as giving good things to them that ask; for the Holy Spirit is the sum of all good.

Hence we may better understand the economy of the persons of the Trinity as it appears in the part that each one has in the affair of redemption, and shews the equality of each Person concerned in that affair, and the equality of honour and praise due to each of Them. For that work, glory belongs to the Father and the Son, that They so greatly loved the world. To the Father, that He so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, who was all His delight, who is His infinite objective Happiness. To the Son, that He so loved the world, that He gave Himself. But there is equal glory due to the Holy Ghost on this account, because He is the Love of the Father and the Son, that flows out primarily towards God, and secondarily towards the elect that Christ came to save. So that, however wonderful the love of the Father and the Son appear to be, so much the more

glory belongs to the Holy Spirit, in whom subsists that wonderful and excellent love.

It shews the infinite excellency of the Father thus:--That the Son so delighted in Him, and prized His honour and glory, that when He had a mind to save sinners, He came infinitely low, rather than men's salvation should be the injury of that honour and glory. It shewed the infinite excellency and worth of the Son, that the Father so delighted in Him, that for His sake He was ready to quit His own; yea, and receive into favour those that had deserved infinitely ill at His hands. Both shews the infinite excellency of the Holy Spirit, because He is that delight of the Father and the Son in each other, which is manifested to be so great and infinite by these things.

What has been said shews that our dependence is equally on each Person in this affair. The Father approves and provides the Redeemer, and Himself accepts the price of the good purchased, and bestows that good. The Son is the Redeemer, and the price that is offered for the purchased good. And the Holy Ghost is the good purchased; [for] the Sacred Scriptures seem to intimate that the Holy Spirit is the sum of all that Christ purchased for man, (Gal. 3:13-14.)

What Christ purchased for us is, that we might have communion with God in His good, which consists in partaking or having communion of the Holy Ghost, as I have shewn. All the blessedness of the redeemed consists in partaking of the fulness of Christ, their Head and Redeemer, which, I have observed, consists in partaking of the Spirit that is given Him not by measure. This is the vital sap which the creatures derive from the true vine. This is the holy oil poured on the head, that goes down to the members. Christ purchased for us that we should enjoy the Love: but the love of God flows out in the proceeding of the Spirit; and He purchased for them that the love and joy of God should dwell in them, which is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The sum of all spiritual good which the saints have in this world, is that spring of living water within them which we read of, (John 4:10;) and those rivers of living waters flowing from within them which we read of, (John 7:38,39,) which we are there told is the Holy Spirit. And the sum of all happiness in the other world, is that river of living water which flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, which is the river of God's pleasures, and is the Holy Spirit, which is often compared in Sacred Scripture to water, to the rain and dew, and rivers and floods of waters, (Isa. 44:3; 32:15; 41:17,18, compared with John 4:14; Isa. 35:6,7; 43:19,20.)

The Holy Spirit is the purchased possession and inheritance of the saints, as appears, because that little of it which the saints have in this world is said to be the earnest of that purchased inheritance, (Eph. 1:13,14; 2 Cor. 1:22, v.5.) 'Tis an earnest of that which we are to have a fulness of hereafter. The Holy Ghost is the great subject of all gospel promises, and therefore is called the Spirit of promise, (Eph.1:13.) He is called the promise of the Father, (Luke 24:49.)

The Holy Ghost being a comprehension of all good things promised in the gospel, we may easily see the force of the Apostle's inquiry: Gal. 3:2-- "This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? " So that in the offer of redemption 'tis of God of whom our good is purchased, and 'tis God that purchases it, and 'tis God also that is the thing purchased. Thus all our good things are of God, and through God, and in God, as Rom. 11:36-- "For of him, and through him, and to him, and in him, [as ei/V is rendered in 1 Cor. 8:6,] are all things: to whom be glory for ever." All our good is of God the Father, and through God the Son, and all is in the Holy Ghost, as He is Himself all our good. And so God is Himself the portion and purchased inheritance of His people. Thus God is the Alpha and Omega in this affair of Redemption.

If we suppose no more than used to be supposed about the Holy Ghost, the honour of the Holy Ghost in the work of Redemption is not equal in any sense to the Father and the Son's; nor is there an equal part of the glory of this work belonging to Him. Merely to apply to us, or immediately to give or hand to us blessing purchased, after it is purchased, is subordinate to the other two Persons,--is but a little thing to the purchaser of it by the paying an infinite price by Christ, by Christ's offering up Himself a sacrifice to procure it; and 'tis but a little thing to God the Father's giving His infinitely dear Son to be a sacrifice for us to procure this good. But according to what has now been supposed, there is an equality. To be the wonderful love of God, is as much as for the Father and the Son to exercise wonderful love; and to be the thing purchased, is as much as to be the price that purchases it. The price, and the thing bought with that price, answer each other in value; and to be the excellent benefit offered, is as much as to offer such an excellent benefit. For the glory that belongs to Him that bestows the gospel, arises from the excellency and value of the gift, and therefore the glory is equal to that excellency of the benefit. And so that Person that is that excellent benefit, has equal glory with Him that bestows such an excellent benefit.

But now to return: from what has been now observed from the Holy Scriptures of the nature of the Holy Spirit, may be clearly understood why grace in the hearts of the saints is called spiritual, in distinction from other things that are the effects of the Spirit in the hearts of men. For by this it appears that the Divine principle in the saints is of the nature of the Spirit; for as the nature of the Spirit of God is Divine Love, so Divine Love is the nature and essence of that holy principle in the hearts of the saints.

The Spirit of God may operate and produce effects upon the minds of natural men that have no grace, as He does when He assists natural conscience and convictions of sin and danger. The Spirit of God may produce effects upon inanimate things, as of old He moved on the face of the waters. But He communicates holiness in His own proper nature only, in those holy effects in the

hearts of the saints. And, therefore, those holy effects only are called spiritual; and the saints only are called spiritual persons in Sacred Scripture.

Men's natural faculties and principles may be assisted by the operation of the Spirit of God on their minds, to enable them to exert those acts which, to a greater or lesser degree, they exert naturally. But the Spirit don't at all communicate Himself in it in His own nature, which is Divine Love, any more than when He moved upon the face of the waters.

Hence also we may more easily receive and understand a doctrine that seems to be taught us in the Sacred Scripture concerning grace in the heart--viz., that it is no other than the Spirit of God itself dwelling and acting in the heart of a saint,-- which the consideration of these things will make manifest:--

(1.) That the Sacred Scriptures don't only call grace spiritual, but "spirit."

(2.) That when the Sacred Scriptures call grace spirit, the Spirit of God is intended; and that grace is called "Spirit" no otherwise than as the name of the Holy Ghost, the Third Person in the Trinity is ascribed to it.

1. This holy principle is often called by the name of "spirit" in Sacred Scripture. So in John 3:6-- "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Here by flesh and spirit, we have already shewn, are intended those two opposite principles in the heart, corruption and grace. So by flesh and spirit the same things are manifestly intended in Gal. 5:17-- "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This that is here given as the reason why Christians cannot do the things that they would, is manifestly the same that is given for the same thing in the latter part of the 7th chapter of the Romans. The reason there given why they cannot do the things that they would is, that the law of the members war with [and] against the law of the mind; and, therefore, by the law of the members and the law of the mind are meant the same as the flesh and Spirit in Galatians. Yea, they are called by the same name of the flesh and Spirit there, in that context, in the continuation of the same discourse in the beginning of the next chapter:-- "Therefore there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Here the Apostle evidently refers to the same two opposite principles warring one against another, that he had been speaking of in the close of the preceding chapter, which he here calls flesh and Spirit as he does in his Epistle to the Galatians.

This is yet more abundantly clear by the next words, which are, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Here these two things that in the preceding verse are called "flesh and spirit," are in this verse called "the law of the Spirit of life" and "the law of sin and death," evidently speaking still of the same law of our mind and the law of sin spoken of in the last verse of the preceding chapter. The Apostle goes on in the 8th chapter

to call aversation and grace by the names of flesh and Spirit, (verses 4-9, and again verses 12,13.) These two principles are called by the same names in Matt. 26:41-- "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." There can be no doubt but that the same thing is intended here by the flesh and spirit as (compare what is said of the flesh and spirit here and in these places) in the 7th and 8th chapters of Romans, and Gal. 5. Again, these two principles are called by the same words in Gal. 6:8. If this be compared with the 18th verse of the foregoing chapter, and with Romans 8:6 and 13, none can doubt but the same is meant in each place.

2. If the Sacred Scriptures be duly observed, where grace is called by the name of "spirit," it will appear that 'tis so called by an ascription of the Holy Ghost, even the third person in the Trinity, to that Divine principle in the hearts of the saints, as though that principle in them were no other than the Spirit of God itself, united to the soul, and living and acting in it, and exerting itself in the use and improvement of its faculties.

Thus it is in the 8th chapter of Romans, as does manifestly appear by verses 9-16-- "But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you," etc. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," etc.

Here the apostle does fully explain himself what he means when he so often calls that holy principle that is in the hearts of the saints by the name "spirit." This he means, the Spirit of God itself dwelling and acting in them. In the 9th verse he calls it the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ in the 10th verse. He calls it Christ in them in the 11th verse. He calls it the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelling in them; and in the 14th verse he calls it the Spirit of God. In the 16th verse he calls it the Spirit itself. So it is called the Spirit of God in 1 Cor. 2:11,12. So that that holy, Divine principle, which we have observed does radically and essentially consist in Divine love, is no other than a communication and participation of that same infinite Divine Love, which is GOD, and in which the Godhead is eternally breathed forth; and subsists in the Third Person in the blessed Trinity. So that true saving grace is no other than that very love of God-- that is, God, in one of the persons of the Trinity, uniting Himself to the soul of a creature, as a vital principle, dwelling there and exerting Himself by the faculties of the soul of man, in His own proper nature, after the manner of a principle of nature.

And we may look back and more fully understand what the apostle John means when he says once and again, "God is Love," and "He that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him," and "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us," and "His Love is perfected in us," [and] "Hereby we know that we dwell in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit."

By this, also, we may understand what the apostle Peter means in his 2nd Epistle 1:4, that the saints are made "partakers of the Divine nature." They are not only partakers of a nature that may, in some sense, be called Divine,

because 'tis conformed to the nature of God; but the very deity does, in some sense, dwell in them. That holy and Divine Love dwells in their hearts, and is so united to human faculties, that 'tis itself become a principle of new nature. That love, which is the very native tongue and spirit of God, so dwells in their souls that it exerts itself in its own nature in the exercise of those faculties, after the manner of a natural or vital principle in them.

This shews us how the saints are said to be the "temples of the Holy Ghost" as they are.

By this, also, we may understand how the saints are said to be made "partakers of God's holiness," not only as they partake of holiness that God gives, but partake of that holiness by which He himself is holy. For it has been already observed, the holiness of God consists in that Divine Love in which the essence of God really flows out.

This also shews us how to understand our Lord when He speaks of His joy being fulfilled in the saints: John 17:13-- "And now I come unto thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." It is by the indwelling of that Divine Spirit, which we have shewn to be God the Father's and the Son's infinite Love and Joy in each other. In the 13th verse He says He has spoken His word to His disciples, "that His joy might be fulfilled;" and in verse 26th He says, "And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

And herein lies the mystery of the vital union that is between Christ and the soul of a believer, which orthodox divines speak so much of, Christ's love--that is, His Spirit is actually united to the faculties of their souls. So it properly lives, acts, and exerts its nature in the exercise of their faculties. By this Love being in them, He is in them, (John 17:26;) and so it is said, 1 Cor. 6:17-- "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."

And thus it is that the saints are said to live, "yet not they, but Christ lives in them," (Gal. 2:20.) The very promise of spiritual life in their souls is no other than the Spirit of Christ himself. So that they live by His life, as much as the members of the body live by the life of the Lord, and as much as the branches live by the life of the root and stock. "Because I live, ye shall live also," (John 14:19.) "We are dead: but our life is hid with Christ in God," (Col. 3:3.) "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear," (Col 3:4.)

There is a union with Christ, by the indwelling of the Love of Christ, two ways. First, as 'tis from Christ, and is the very Spirit and life and fulness of Christ; and second, as it acts to Christ. For the very nature of it is love and union of heart to Him.

Because the Spirit of God dwells as a vital principle or a principle of new life in the soul, therefore 'tis called the "Spirit of life," (Rom. 8:2;) and the Spirit that "quickeneth." (John 6:63.)

The Spirit of God is a vital principle in the soul, as the breath of life is in the body: Ezek. 37:5--"Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live;" and so verses 9,10...

That principle of grace that is in the hearts of the saints is as much a proper communication or participation of the Spirit of God, the Third Person in the Trinity, as that breath that entered into these bodies is represented to be a participation of the wind that blew upon them. The prophet says, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live," is now the very same wind and the same breath; but only was wanted to these bodies to be a vital principle in them, which otherwise would be dead. And therefore Christ himself represents the communication of His Spirit to His disciples by His breathing upon them, and communicating to them His breath, (John 20:22.)

We often, in our common language about things of this nature, speak of a principle of grace. I suppose there is no other principle of grace in the soul than the very Holy Ghost dwelling in the soul and acting there as a vital principle. To speak of a habit of grace as a natural disposition to act grace, as begotten in the soul by the first communication of Divine light, and as the natural and necessary consequence of the first light, it seems in some respects to carry a wrong idea with it. Indeed the first exercise of grace in the first light has a tendency to future acts, as from an abiding principle, by grace and by the covenant of God; but not by any natural force. The giving one gracious discovery or act of grace, or a thousand, has no proper natural tendency to cause an abiding habit of grace for the future; nor any otherwise than by Divine constitution and covenant. But all succeeding acts of grace must be as immediately, and, to all intents and purposes, as much from the immediate acting of the Spirit of God on the soul, as the first; and if God should take away His Spirit out of the soul-- all habits and acts of grace would of themselves cease as immediately as light ceases in a room when a candle is carried out. And no man has a habit of grace dwelling in him any otherwise than as he has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him in his temple, and acting in union with his natural faculties, after the manner of a vital principle. So that when they act grace, 'tis, in the language of the apostle, "not they, but Christ living in them." Indeed the Spirit of God, united to human faculties, acts very much after the manner of a natural principle or habit. So that one act makes way for another, and so it now settles the soul in a disposition to holy acts; but that it does, so as by grace and covenant, and not from any natural necessity.

Hence the Spirit of God seems in Sacred Scripture to be spoken of as a quality of the persons in whom it resided. So that they are called spiritual persons; as when we say a virtuous man, we speak of virtue as the quality of the man. 'Tis the

Spirit itself that is the only principle of true virtue in the heart. So that to be truly virtuous is the same as to be spiritual.

And thus it is not only with respect to the virtue that is in the hearts of the saints on earth, but also the perfect virtue and holiness of the saints in heaven. It consists altogether in the indwelling and acting of the Spirit of God in their habits. And so it was with man before the Fall; and so it is with the elect, sinless angels. We have shewn that the holiness and happiness of God consist in the Holy Spirit; and so the holiness and happiness of every holy or truly virtuous creature of God, in heaven or earth, consist in the communion of the same Spirit.

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