

V.

**The Principle of Life in the Creature.**

“By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent.”— *Job xxvi. 13.*

We have seen that the work of the Holy Spirit consists in leading all creation *to its destiny*, the final purpose of which is the glory of God. However, God’s glory in creation appears in various degrees and ways. An insect and a star, the mildew on the wall and the cedar on Lebanon, a common laborer and a man like Augustine, are all the creatures of God; yet how dissimilar they are, and how varied their ways and degrees of glorifying God.

Let us therefore illustrate the statement that the glory of God is the ultimate end of every creature. Comparing the glory of God to that of an earthly king, it is evident that nothing can be indifferent to that glory. The building material of his palace, its furniture, even the pavement before its gate, either enhance or diminish the royal splendor. Much more, however, is the king honored by the persons of his household, each in his degree, from the master of ceremonies to his prime minister. Yet his highest glory is his family of sons and daughters, begotten of his own blood, trained by his wisdom, animated by his ideals, one with him in the plans, purposes, and spirit of his life. Applying this in all reverence to the court of the King of heaven, it is evident that while every flower and star enhance His glory, the lives of angels and men are of much greater significance to His Kingdom; and again, while among the latter they are most closely related to His glory whom He has placed in positions of authority, nearest of all are the children begotten by His Spirit, and admitted to the secret of His pavilion. We conclude, then, that God’s glory is reflected most in His children; and since no man can be His child unless he is begotten of Him, we confess that His glory is most apparent in His elect or in His Church.

His glory is not, however, confined to these; for they are related to the whole race, and live among all nations and peoples with whom they share the common lot. We neither may nor can separate their spiritual life from their national, social, and domestic life. And since all differences of national, social, and domestic life are caused by climate and atmosphere, meat and drink, rain and drought, plant and insect—in a word, by the whole economy of this material world, including comet and meteor, it is evident that all these affect the outcome of things and are related to the glory of God. Hence as connected with the task of leading creation to its destiny, the whole universe confronts the mind as a mighty unit organically related to the Church as the shell to the kernel.

In the accomplishment of this task the question arises in what way the *fairest, noblest, and holiest* part of the creation is to attain its destiny; for to this all other parts must be made subservient.



Hence the question, How are the multitude of the elect to attain their final perfection? The answer to this will indicate what is the Holy Spirit's action upon all other creatures.

The answer can not be doubtful. God's children can never accomplish their glorious end unless God dwell in them as in His temple. It is the love of God that constrains Him to live in His children, by their love for Him to love Himself, and to see the reflection of His glory in the consciousness of His own handiwork. This glorious purpose will be realized only when the elect know as they are known, behold their God face to face, and enjoy the felicity of closest communion with the Lord.

Since all this can be wrought in them only by His indwelling in their hearts, and since it is the Third Person in the Holy Trinity who enters the spirits of men and of angels, it is evident that God's highest purposes are realized when the Holy Spirit makes man's heart His dwelling-place. Who or what ever we are by education or position, we can not attain our highest destiny unless the Holy Spirit dwell in us and operate upon the inward organism of our being.

If this His highest work had no bearing upon anything else, we might say that it consists merely in finishing the perfection of the creature. But this is not so. Every believer knows that there is a most intimate connection between his life *before* and *after* conversion; not as tho the former determined the latter, but in such a way that the life in sin and the life in the beauty of holiness are both *conditioned* by the same *character* and *disposition*, by similar *circumstances* and *influences*. Wherefore, to bring about our final perfection the Holy Spirit must influence the previous development, the formation of character, and the disposition of the whole person. And this operation, altho less marked in the natural life, must also be traced. However, since our personal life is only a manifestation of human life in general, it follows that the Holy Spirit must have been active also in the creation of man, altho in a less marked degree. And finally, as the disposition of man as such is connected with the host of heaven and earth, His work must touch the formation of this also, tho to a much less extent. Hence the Spirit's work reaches as far as the influences that affect man in the attaining of his destiny or in the failure to attain it. And the measure of the influence is the degree in which they affect his perfecting. In the departure of the redeemed soul every one acknowledges a work of the Holy Spirit; but who can trace His work in the star-movements? Yet the Scripture teaches not only that we are born again by the power of the Spirit of God, but that: "by the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them *by the breath* [Spirit] *of His mouth*." (Psa. xxxiii. 6)

Wherefore the Spirit's work leading the creature to its destiny, includes an influence upon all creation from the beginning. And, if sin had not come in, we might say that this work is done in *three* successive steps: first, *impregnating* inanimate matter; second, *animating* the rational soul; third, *taking up His abode* in the elect child of God.



But *sin* entered in, *i.e.*, a power appeared to keep man and nature *from their destiny*. Hence the Holy Spirit must *antagonize* sin; His calling is to annihilate it, and despite its opposition to cause the elect children of God and the entire creation to reach their end. Redemption is therefore not a *new work added* to that of the Holy Spirit, but it is *identical* with it. He undertook to bring all things to their destiny either *without* the disturbance of sin or *in spite of it*; first, by saving the elect, and then by restoring all things in heaven and on earth at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Things incidental to this, such as the inspiration of *Scripture*, the preparation of the *Body of Christ*, the extraordinary *ministration of grace to the Church*, are only connecting-links, connecting the beginning with its own predetermined end; that in spite of sin's disturbance the destiny of the universe to glorify God might be secured.

Condensing all into one statement, we might say: Sin having once entered, a factor which *must* be taken into account, the Holy Spirit's work shines most gloriously in gathering and saving the elect; prior to which are His operations in the work of *redemption* and in the economy of the *natural* life. The same Spirit who in the beginning moved upon the waters has in the dispensation of grace given us the *Holy Scripture*, the *Person of Christ*, and the *Christian Church*; and it is He who, in connection with the original creation and by these means of grace, now regenerates and sanctifies us as the children of God.

Regarding these mighty and comprehensive operations, it is of first importance to keep in view the fact that in each He effects only that which is *invisible* and *imperceptible*. This marks all the Holy Spirit's operations. Behind the visible world lies one invisible and spiritual, with outer courts and inner recesses; and underneath the latter are the unfathomable depths of the soul, which the Holy Spirit chooses as the scene of His labors—His temple wherein He sets up His altar.

Christ's redemptive work also has visible and invisible parts. Reconciliation in His blood was visible. The sanctification of His Body and the adorning of His human nature with manifold graces were invisible. Whenever this hidden and inward work is specified the Scripture always connects it with the Holy Spirit. Gabriel says to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." (Luke i. 35) It is said of Christ: "That He had the Spirit without measure."

We observe also in the host of heaven a life material, outward, tangible which in thought we never associate with the Holy Spirit. But, however weak and impalpable, the visible and tangible has an invisible background. How intangible are the forces of nature, how full of majesty the forces of magnetism! But life underlies all. Even through the apparently dead trunk sighs an imperceptible breath. From the unfathomable depths of all an inward, hidden principle works upward and outward. It shows in nature, much more in man and angel.



And what is this quickening and animating principle but the Holy Spirit? “Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; Thou takest away Thy breath, they die.” (Psalm civ. 29, 30)

This inward, invisible something is God’s direct touch. There is in us and in every creature a point where the living God touches us to uphold us; for nothing exists without being *upheld* by Almighty God from moment to moment. In the elect this point is their spiritual life; in the rational creature his rational consciousness; and in all creatures, whether rational or not, their life-principle. And as the Holy Spirit is the Person in the Holy Trinity whose office it is to effect this direct touch and fellowship with the creature in his inmost being, it is He who *dwells* in the hearts of the elect; who *animates* every rational being; who sustains the *principle of life* in every creature.



## VI.

### The Host of Heaven and of Earth.

“The Spirit of God hath made me.”—[Job xxxiii. 4](#).



Understanding somewhat the characteristic note of the work of the Holy Spirit, let us see what this work was and is and shall be.

The Father brings forth, the Son disposes and arranges, the Holy Spirit perfects. There is one God and Father of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things; but what does the Scripture say of the special work the Holy Spirit did in creation and is still doing?

For the sake of order we examine first the account of the creation. God says in [Gen. i. 2](#): “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the waters.” See also [Job xxvi. 13](#): “By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent [the constellation of the Dragon, or, according to others, the Milky Way].” And also [Job xxxiii. 4](#): “The Spirit of God hath made me; and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” And again [Psalm xxxiii. 6](#): “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.” So also [Psalm civ. 30](#): “Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created, and Thou renewest the face of the earth:” And with different import, in [Isa. xl. 13](#): “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord [in creation], or being His counselor hath taught Him?”

These statements show that the Holy Spirit did a work of His own in creation.

They show, too, that His activities are closely connected with those of the Father and the Son. [Psalm xxxiii. 6](#) presents them as almost identical. The first clause reads: “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made”; the second: “And all the host of them by the breath [Spirit] of His mouth.” It is well known that in Hebrew poetry parallel clauses express the same thought in different ways; so that from this passage it appears that the work of the *Word* and that of the *Spirit* are the same, the latter adding only that which is peculiarly His own.



It should be noticed that hardly any of these passages mention the Holy Spirit by *His own name*. It is not the *Holy Spirit*, but the “Spirit of His mouth,” “His Spirit,” “the Spirit of the Lord.” On account of this, many hold that these passages do not refer to the Holy Spirit as the Third Person in the Holy Trinity, but speak of God as One, without personal distinction; and that the representation of God as creating anything by His hand, fingers, word, breath, or Spirit is merely a human way of speaking, signifying only that God was thus engaged.

The Church has always opposed this interpretation, and rightly so, on the ground that even the Old Testament, not merely in a few places but throughout its entire economy, bears undoubted testimony to the three divine Persons, coequal yet of one essence. It is true that