

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 *Psalms 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 *Psalms 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. *Psalms 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

this too has been denied, but by a wrong interpretation. And to the reply, "But our interpretation is as good as yours," we answer that Jesus and the apostles are our authorities; the Church received its confession from their lips.

Secondly, we deny that "His Spirit" does not refer to the Holy Ghost, for the reason that in the New Testament similar expressions occur that undoubtedly do refer to Him, *e.g.*, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son" ([Gal. iv. 6](#)); "Whom the Lord shall consume by the Spirit of His mouth" ([2 Thess. ii. 8](#)); etc.

Thirdly, judging from the following passages,—“By the *Word* of the Lord were the heavens made” ([Psalm xxxiii. 6](#)); “And God *said*, Let there be light” ([Gen. i. 3](#)); and “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made” ([John i. 3](#)),—there can be no doubt that [Psalm xxxiii. 6](#); refers to the Second Person in the Godhead. Hence also the second clause of the same verse, “And all their host by the Spirit of His mouth,” must refer to the Third Person.

Finally, to speak of a Spirit of God that is not the Holy Spirit is to transfer to the Holy Scripture a purely Western and human idea. We *as men* often speak of a wrong spirit which controls a nation, an army, or a school, meaning a certain tendency, inclination, or persuasion—a spirit that proceeds from a man *distinct* from his person and being. But this may not and can not apply to God. Speaking of Christ in His humiliation, one may rightly say, "To have the mind of Christ," or "to have the spirit of Jesus," which indicates His disposition. But to distinguish the divine *Being* from a *spirit* of that Being is to conceive of the Godhead in a human way. The divine consciousness differs wholly from the human. While in us there is a difference between our persons and our consciousness, with reference to God such distinctions disappear, and the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit takes their place.

Even in those passages where "the breath of His mouth" is added to explain "His Spirit," the same interpretation must be maintained. For all languages show that our breathing, even as the "breathing of the elements" in the wind which blows before God's face, corresponds to the being of spirit. Nearly all express the ideas of spirit, breath, and wind by cognate terms. Blowing or breathing is in all the Scripture the symbol of spirit-communication. Jesus breathed on them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" ([John xx. 22](#)). Thus the breath of His mouth must signify the Holy Spirit.

The ancient interpretation of the Scripture should not be hastily abandoned. Accept the dictum of modern theology that the distinction of the three divine Persons is not found in the Old Testament, and allusions to the work of the Holy Spirit in Genesis, Job, Psalms, or Isaiah are out of the question. Consequently nothing is more natural for the supporters of this modern theology than to deny the Holy Spirit altogether in the passages referred to.

But if from inward conviction we still confess that the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is clearly seen in the Old Testament, then let us examine these passages concerning the Spirit of the Lord with discrimination, and gratefully maintain the traditional interpret-

ation, which finds at least in many of these statements references to the work of the Holy Spirit.

These passages show that His peculiar work in creation was: 1st, hovering over chaos; 2d, creation of the host of heaven and of earth; 3d, ordering the heavens; 4th, animating the brute creation, and calling man into existence; and last, the operation whereby every creature is made to exist according to God's counsel concerning it.

Hence the material forces of the universe do not proceed from the Holy Spirit, nor did He deposit in matter the dormant seeds and germs of life. His special task begins only *after* the creation of matter with the germs of life in it.

The Hebrew text shows that the work of the Holy Spirit moving upon the face of the waters was similar to that of the parent bird which with outspread wings hovers over its young to cherish and cover them. The figure implies that not only the earth existed, but also the germs of life within it; and that the Holy Spirit impregnating these germs caused the life to come forth in order to lead it to its destiny.

Not by the Holy Spirit, but by the *Word* were the heavens created. And when the created heavens were to receive their host, then only did the moment come for the exercise of the Holy Spirit's peculiar functions. What "the host of heaven" means is not easily decided. It may refer to sun, moon, and stars, or to the host of angels. Perhaps the passage means not the *creation* of the heavenly bodies, but their reception of heavenly glory and celestial fire. But [Psalm xxxiii. 6](#) refers certainly not to the creation of the matter of which the heavenly host are composed, but to the production of their glory.

[Gen. i. 2](#) reveals first the creation of matter and its germs, then their quickening; so [Psalm xxxiii. 6](#) teaches first the preparation of the being and nature of the heavens, then the bringing forth of their host by the Holy Spirit. [Job xxvi. 13](#) leads to a similar conclusion. Here is the same distinction between the heavens and their ordering, the latter being represented as the special work of the Holy Spirit. This ordering is the same as the brooding in [Gen. i. 2](#), by which the formless took form, the hidden life emerged, and the things created were led to their destiny. [Psalm civ. 30](#) and [Job xxxiii. 4](#) illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit in creation still more clearly. Job informs us that the Holy Spirit had a special part in the making of man; and [Psalm civ.](#) that He performed a similar work in the creation of the animals, of the fowls and the fishes; for the two preceding verses imply that [verse 27](#)—"Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created"—refers not to man, but to the monsters that play in the deep.

Grant that the matter out of which God made man was already present in the dust of the earth, that the type of his body was largely present in the animal, and that the idea of man and the image after which he was to be created existed already; yet from [Job xxxiii. 4](#) it is evident that he did not come to be without a special work of the Holy Spirit. So [Psalm](#)



[civ. 30](#) proves that, altho the matter existed out of which whale and unicorn were to be made, and the plan or model was in the divine counsel, yet a special act of the Holy Spirit was needed to cause them to be. This is still plainer in view of the fact that neither passage refers to the *first* creation, but to a man and animals formed *later*. For Job speaks not of Adam and Eve, but of himself. He says: “The spirit of God hath made *me*, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” ([Job xxxiii. 4](#)) In [Psalm civ.](#) David means not the monsters of the deep created in the beginning, but those that were walking the paths of the sea while he was singing this psalm. If, therefore, the bodies of existing man and of mammals are not immediate creations, but are taken from the flesh and blood, the nature and kind of existent beings, then it is more evident that the hovering of the Holy Spirit over the unformed is a present act; and that therefore His creative work was to bring out the life already hidden in chaos, *i.e.*, in the germs of life.

This agrees with what was said at first of the general character of His work. “To lead to its destiny” is to bring forth the hidden life, to cause the hidden beauty to reveal itself, to rouse into activity the slumbering energies.

Only let us not represent it as a work performed in successive stages—first by the Father, whose finished work was taken up by the Son, after which the Holy Spirit completed the work thus prepared. Such representations are unworthy of God. There is *distribution*, no *division* in the divine activities; wherefore Isaiah declares that the Spirit of the Lord, *i.e.*, the Holy Spirit, throughout the entire work of creation from the beginning—yea, from *before* the beginning—directed all that was to come.



## VII.

## The Creaturely Man.

“The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” — [Job xxxiii. 4.](#)

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The Eternal and Ever-blessed God comes into vital touch with the creature by an act proceeding not from the Father nor from the Son, but from the Holy Spirit.

Translated by sovereign grace from death unto life, God’s children are conscious of this divine fellowship; they know that it consists not in inward agreement of disposition or inclination, but in the mysterious touch of God upon their spiritual being. But they also know that neither the Father nor the Son, but the Holy Spirit, has made their hearts His temple. It is true Christ comes to us through the Holy Spirit, and through the Son we have fellowship with the Father, according to His word, “I and the Father will come unto you, and make Our abode with you”; yet every intelligent Bible student knows that it is more especially the Holy Spirit who enters into his person and touches his innermost being.

That the Son incarnate came into closer contact with us proves nothing to the contrary. Christ never entered into a human *person*. He took upon Himself our human *nature*, with which He united Himself much more closely than the Holy Spirit does; but He did not touch the *inward man* and his hidden *personality*. On the contrary, He said that it was expedient for the disciples that He should go away; “for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you.” ([John xvi. 7](#)) Moreover, the Incarnation was not accomplished without the Holy Spirit, who overshadowed Mary; and the blessings that Christ imparted to all around Him were largely owing to the gift of the Holy Spirit, which was given Him without measure.

Hence the principal thought remains intact: When God comes into direct contact with the creature it is the work of the Holy Spirit to effect such contact. In the visible world this action consists in the kindling and fanning of the spark of life; hence it is quite natural and in full harmony with the general tenor of the teaching of Scripture that the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters, that He brings forth the host of heaven and earth, ordered, animated, and resplendent.

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Besides this visible creation there is also an invisible, which, so far as our world is concerned, concentrates itself *in the heart of man*; hence, in the second place, we must see how far the work of the Holy Spirit may be traced in man’s creation.

Of the animal world we do not speak. Not as tho the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with their creation. From [Psalm civ. 30](#) we have proven the contrary. Moreover, no one can deny the admirable traits of cunning, love, fidelity, and thankfulness in many of the animals. Not that we would be foolish on that ground to call the dog *half human*; for these higher animal properties are evidently but instinctive preformations, sketches of the Holy Spirit, carried