

## CHAPTER 9

*Definitive conceptions about the Spirit which conform to the teaching of the Scriptures.*

**22.** LET us now investigate what are our common conceptions concerning the Spirit, as well those which have been gathered by us from Holy Scripture concerning It as those which we have received from the unwritten tradition of the Fathers. First of all we ask, who on hearing the titles of the Spirit is not lifted up in soul, who does not raise his conception to the supreme nature? It is called “Spirit of God,” “Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father,” “right Spirit,” “a leading Spirit.” Its proper and peculiar title is “Holy Spirit;” which is a name specially appropriate to everything that is incorporeal, purely immaterial, and indivisible. So our Lord, when teaching the woman who thought God to be an object of local worship that the incorporeal is incomprehensible, said “God is a spirit.” On our hearing, then, of a spirit, it is impossible to form the idea of a nature circumscribed, subject to change and variation, or at all like the creature. We are compelled to advance in our conceptions to the highest, and to think of an intelligent essence, in power infinite, in magnitude unlimited, unmeasured by times or ages, generous of Its good gifts, to whom turn all things needing sanctification, after whom reach all things that live in virtue, as being watered by Its inspiration and helped on toward their natural and proper end; perfecting all other things, but Itself in nothing lacking; living not as needing restoration, but as Supplier of life; not growing by additions; but straightway full, self-established, omnipresent, origin of sanctification, light perceptible to the mind, supplying, as it were, through Itself, illumination to every faculty in the search for truth; by nature unapproachable, apprehended by reason of goodness, filling all things with Its power, but communicated only to the worthy; not shared in one measure, but distributing Its energy according to “the proportion of faith;” in essence simple, in powers various, wholly present in each and being wholly everywhere; impassively divided, shared without loss of ceasing to be entire, after the likeness of the sunbeam, whose kindly light falls on him who enjoys it as though it shone for him alone, yet illumines land and sea and mingles with the air. So, too, is the

Spirit to every one who receives it, as though given to him alone, and yet It sends forth grace sufficient and full for all mankind, and is enjoyed by all who share It, according to the capacity, not of Its power, but of their nature.

**23.** Now the Spirit is not brought into intimate association with the soul by local approximation. How indeed could there be a corporeal approach to the incorporeal? This association results from the withdrawal of the passions which, coming afterwards gradually on the soul from its friendship to the flesh, have alienated it from its close relationship with God. Only then after a man is purified from the shame whose stain he took through his wickedness, and has come back again to his natural beauty, and as it were cleaning the Royal Image and restoring its ancient form, only thus is it possible for him to draw near to the Paraclete. And He, like the sun, will by the aid of thy purified eye show thee in Himself the image of the invisible, and in the blessed spectacle of the image thou shalt behold the unspeakable beauty of the archetype. Through His aid hearts are lifted up, the weak are held by the hand, and they who are advancing are brought to perfection. Shining upon those that are cleansed from every spot, He makes them spiritual by fellowship with Himself. Just as when a sunbeam falls on bright and transparent bodies, they themselves become brilliant too, and shed forth a fresh brightness from themselves, so souls wherein the Spirit dwells, illuminated by the Spirit, themselves become spiritual, and send forth their grace to others. Hence comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of mysteries, apprehension of what is hidden, distribution of good gifts, the heavenly citizenship, a place in the chorus of angels, joy without end, abiding in God, the being made like to God, and, highest of all, the being made God. Such, then, to instance a few out of many, are the conceptions concerning the Holy Spirit, which we have been taught to hold concerning His greatness, His dignity, and His operations, by the oracles of the Spirit themselves.

## CHAPTER 16

*That the Holy Spirit is in every conception separable from the Father and the Son, alike in the creation of perceptible objects, in the dispensation of human affairs, and in the judgment to come.*

**37.** LET us then revert to the point raised from the outset, that in all things the Holy Spirit is inseparable and wholly incapable of being parted from the Father and the Son. St. Paul, in the passage about the gift of tongues, writes to the Corinthians, “If ye all prophesy and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of the heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God and report that God is in you of a truth.” If then God is known to be in the prophets by the prophesying that is acting according to the distribution of the gifts of the Spirit, let our adversaries consider what kind of place they will attribute to the Holy Spirit. Let them say whether it is more proper to rank Him with God or to thrust Him forth to the place of the creature. Peter’s words to Sapphira, “How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Ye have not lied unto men, but unto God,” show that sins against the Holy Spirit and against God are the same; and thus you might learn that in every operation the Spirit is closely conjoined with, and inseparable from, the Father and the Son. God works the differences of operations, and the Lord the diversities of administrations, but all the while the Holy Spirit is present too of His own will, dispensing distribution of the gifts according to each recipient’s worth. For, it is said, “there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” “But all these,” it is said, “worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” It must not however be supposed because in this passage the apostle names in the first place the Spirit, in the second the Son, and in the third God the Father, that therefore their rank is reversed. The apostle has only started in accordance with our habits of thought; for when we receive gifts, the first that occurs to us is the distributor, next we think of the sender, and then we lift our thoughts to the fountain and cause of the boons.

**38.** Moreover, from the things created at the beginning may be learnt the fellowship of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. The pure, intelligent, and supermundane powers are and are styled holy, because they have their holiness of the grace given by the Holy Spirit. Accordingly the mode of the creation of the heavenly powers is passed over in Silence, for the historian of the cosmogony has revealed to us only the creation of things perceptible by sense. But do thou, who hast power from the things that are seen to form an analogy of the unseen, glorify the Maker by whom all things were made, visible and invisible, principalities and powers, authorities, thrones, and dominions, and all other reasonable natures whom we cannot name. And in the creation bethink thee first, I pray thee, of the original cause of all things that are made, the Father; of the creative cause, the Son; of the perfecting cause, the Spirit; so that the ministering spirits subsist by the will of the Father, are brought into being by the operation of the Son, and perfected by the presence of the Spirit. Moreover, the perfection of angels is sanctification and continuance in it. And let no one imagine me either to affirm that there are three original hypostases or to allege the operation of the Son to be imperfect. For the first principle of existing things is One, creating through the Son and perfecting through the Spirit. The operation of the Father who worketh all in all is not imperfect, neither is the creating work of the Son incomplete if not perfected by the Spirit. The Father, who creates by His sole will, could not stand in any need of the Son, but nevertheless He wills through the Son; nor could the Son, who works according to the likeness of the Father, need co-operation, but the Son too wills to make perfect through the Spirit. "For by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath [the Spirit] of His mouth." The Word then is not a mere significant impression on the air, borne by the organs of speech; nor is the Spirit of His mouth a vapor, emitted by the organs of respiration; but the Word is He who "was with God in the beginning" and "was God," and the Spirit of the mouth of God is "the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father." You are therefore to perceive three, the Lord who gives the order, the Word who creates, and the Spirit who confirms. And what other thing could confirmation be than the perfecting according to holiness? This perfecting expresses the confirmation's firmness, unchangeableness, and fixity in good. But there is no sanctification without the Spirit. The powers of the heavens are not holy by nature; were it so there would in

this respect be no difference between them and the Holy Spirit. It is in proportion to their relative excellence that they have their need of holiness from the Spirit. The branding-iron is conceived of together with the fire; and yet the material and the fire are distinct. Thus too in the case of the heavenly powers; their substance is, peradventure, an aerial spirit, or an immaterial fire, as it is written, "Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire;" wherefore they exist in space and become visible, and appear in their proper bodily form to them that are worthy. But their sanctification, being external to their substance, superinduces their perfection through the communion of the Spirit. They keep their rank by their abiding in the good and true, and while they retain their freedom of will, never fall away from their patient attendance on Him who is truly good. It results that, if by your argument you do away with the Spirit, the hosts of the angels are disbanded, the dominions of archangels are destroyed, all is thrown into confusion, and their life loses law, order, and distinctness. For how are angels to cry "Glory to God in the highest" without being empowered by the Spirit? For "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, and no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed;" as might be said by wicked and hostile spirits, whose fall establishes our statement of the freedom of the will of the invisible powers; being, as they are, in a condition of equipoise between virtue and vice, and on this account needing the succor of the Spirit. I indeed maintain that even Gabriel in no other way foretells events to come than by the foreknowledge of the Spirit, by reason of the fact that one of the boons distributed by the Spirit is prophecy. And whence did he who was ordained to announce the mysteries of the vision to the Man of Desires derive the wisdom whereby he was enabled to teach hidden things, if not from the Holy Spirit? The revelation of mysteries is indeed the peculiar function of the Spirit, as it is written, "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." And how could "thrones, dominions, principalities and powers" live their blessed life, did they not "behold the face of the Father which is in heaven"? But to behold it is impossible without the Spirit! Just as at night, if you withdraw the light from the house, the eyes fall blind and their faculties become inactive, and the worth of objects cannot be discerned, and gold is trodden on in ignorance as though it were iron, so in the order of the intellectual world it is impossible for the high life of Law to abide without the Spirit. For it so to abide were as likely as

that an army should maintain its discipline in the absence of its commander, or a chorus its harmony without the guidance of the coryphaeus. How could the Seraphim cry “Holy, Holy, Holy,” were they not taught by the Spirit how often true religion requires them to lift their voice in this ascription of glory? Do “all His angels” and “all His hosts” praise God? It is through the co-operation of the Spirit. Do “thousand thousand” of angels stand before Him, and “ten thousand times ten thousand” ministering spirits? They are blamelessly doing their proper work by the power of the Spirit. All the glorious and unspeakable harmony of the highest heavens both in the service of God, and in the mutual concord of the celestial powers, can therefore only be preserved by the direction of the Spirit. Thus with those beings who are not gradually perfected by increase and advance, but are perfect from the moment of the creation, there is in creation the presence of the Holy Spirit, who confers on them the grace that flows from Him for the completion and perfection of their essence.

**39.** But when we speak of the dispensations made for man by our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who will gainsay their having been accomplished through the grace of the Spirit? Whether you wish to examine ancient evidence; — the blessings of the patriarchs, the succor given through the legislation, the types, the prophecies, the valorous feats in war, the signs wrought through just men; — or on the other hand the things done in the dispensation of the coming of our Lord in the flesh; — all is through the Spirit. In the first place He was made an unction, and being inseparably present was with the very flesh of the Lord, according to that which is written, “Upon whom thou shall see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is” “my beloved Son;” and “Jesus of Nazareth” whom “God anointed with the Holy Ghost.” After this every operation was wrought with the co-operation of the Spirit. He was present when the Lord was being tempted by the devil; for, it is said, “Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted.” He was inseparably with Him while working His wonderful works; for, it is said, “If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils.” And He did not leave Him when He had risen from the dead; for when renewing man, and, by breathing on the face of the disciples, restoring the grace, that came of the inbreathing of God, which man had lost, what did the Lord say.? “Receive

ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever ye retain, they are retained.” And is it not plain and incontestable that the ordering of the Church is effected through the Spirit? For He gave, it is said, “in the church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues,” for this order is ordained in accordance with the division of the gifts that are of the Spirit.

**40.** Moreover by any one who carefully uses his reason it will be found that even at the moment of the expected appearance of the Lord from heaven the Holy Spirit will not, as some suppose, have no functions to discharge: on the contrary, even in the day of His revelation, in which the blessed and only potentate will judge the world in righteousness, the Holy Spirit will be present with Him. For who is so ignorant of the good things prepared by God for them that are worthy. as not to know that the crown of the righteous is the grace of the Spirit, bestowed in more abundant and perfect measure in that day, when spiritual glory shall be distributed to each in proportion as he shall have nobly played the man? For among the glories of the saints are “many mansions” in the Father’s house, that is differences of dignities: for as “star differeth from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead.” They, then, that were sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption, and preserve pure and undiminished the first fruits which they received of the Spirit, are they that shall hear the words “well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.” In like manner they which have grieved the Holy Spirit by the wickedness of their ways, or have not wrought for Him that gave to them, shall be deprived of what they have received, their grace being transferred to others; or, according to one of the evangelists, they shall even be wholly cut asunder, — the cutting asunder meaning complete separation from the Spirit. The body is not divided, part being delivered to chastisement, and part let off; for when a whole has sinned it were like the old fables, and unworthy of a righteous judge, for only the half to suffer chastisement. Nor is the soul cut in two, — that soul the whole of which possesses the sinful affection throughout, and works the wickedness in co-operation with the body. The cutting asunder, as I have observed, is the separation for aye of the soul from the Spirit. For now, although the Spirit does not suffer admixture with the

unworthy, He nevertheless does seem in a manner to be present with them that have once been sealed, awaiting the salvation which follows on their conversion; but then He will be wholly cut off from the soul that has defiled His grace. For this reason “In Hell there is none that maketh confession; in death none that remembereth God,” because the succor of the Spirit is no longer present. How then is it possible to conceive that the judgment is accomplished without the Holy Spirit, wherein the word points out that He is Himself the prize of the righteous, when instead of the earnest is given that which is perfect, and the first condemnation of sinners, when they are deprived of that which they seem to have? But the greatest proof of the conjunction of the Spirit with the Father and the Son is that He is said to have the same relation to God which the spirit in us has to each of us. “For what man” it is said, “knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.”

On this point I have said enough.

## CHAPTER 18

*In what manner in the confession of the three hypostases we preserve the pious dogma of the Monarchia. Wherein also is the refutation of them that allege that the Spirit is subnumerated.*

**44.** In delivering the formula of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, our Lord did not connect the gift with number. He did not say “into First, Second, and Third,” nor yet “into one, two, and three, but He gave us the boon of the knowledge of the faith which leads to salvation, by means of holy names. So that what saves us is our faith. Number has been devised as a symbol indicative of the quantity of objects. But these men, who bring ruin on themselves from every possible source, have turned even the capacity for counting against the faith. Nothing else undergoes any change in consequence of the addition of number, and yet these men in the case of the divine nature pay reverence to number, lest they should exceed the limits of the honor due to the Paraclete. But, O wisest sirs, let the unapproachable be altogether above and beyond number, as the ancient reverence of the Hebrews wrote the unutterable name of God in peculiar characters, thus endeavoring to set forth its infinite excellence. Count, if you must; but you must not by counting do damage to the faith. Either let the ineffable be honored by silence; or let holy things be counted consistently with true religion. There is one God and Father, one Only-begotten, and one Holy Ghost. We proclaim each of the hypostases singly; and, when count we must, we do not let an ignorant arithmetic carry us away to the idea of a plurality of Gods.

**45.** For we do not count by way of addition, gradually making increase from unity to multitude, and saying one, two, and three, — nor yet first, second, and third. For “I,” God, “am the first, and I am the last.” And hitherto we have never, even at the present time, heard of a second God. Worshipping as we do God of God, we both confess the distinction of the Persons, and at the same time abide by the Monarchy. We do not fritter away the theology in a divided plurality, because one Form, so to say, united in the invariableness of the Godhead, is beheld in God the Father, and in God the Only begotten. For the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son; since such as is the latter, such is the former, and such as is the

former, such is the latter; and herein is the Unity. So that according to the distinction of Persons, both are one and one, and according to the community of Nature, one. How, then, if one and one, are there not two Gods? Because we speak of a king, and of the king's image, and not of two kings. The majesty is not cloven in two, nor the glory divided. The sovereignty and authority over us is one, and so the doxology ascribed by us is not plural but one; because the honor paid to the image passes on to the prototype. Now what in the one case the image is by reason of imitation, that in the other case the Son is by nature; and as in works of art the likeness is dependent on the form, so in the case of the divine and uncompounded nature the union consists in the communion of the Godhead. One, moreover, is the Holy Spirit, and we speak of Him singly, conjoined as He is to the one Father through the one Son, and through Himself completing the adorable and blessed Trinity. Of Him the intimate relationship to the Father and the Son is sufficiently declared by the fact of His not being ranked in the plurality of the creation, but being spoken of singly; for he is not one of many, but One. For as there is one Father and one Son, so is there one Holy Ghost. He is consequently as far removed from created Nature as reason requires the singular to be removed from compound and plural bodies; and He is in such wise united to the Father and to the Son as unit has affinity with unit.

**46.** And it is not from this source alone that our proofs of the natural communion are derived, but from the fact that He is moreover said to be "of God;" not indeed in the sense in which "all things are of God," but in the sense of proceeding out of God, not by generation, like the Son, but as Breath of His mouth. But in no way is the "mouth" a member, nor the Spirit breath that is dissolved; but the word "mouth" is used so far as it can be appropriate to God, and the Spirit is a Substance having life, gifted with supreme power of sanctification. Thus the dose relation is made plain, while the mode of the ineffable existence is safeguarded. He is moreover styled 'Spirit of Christ,' as being by nature closely related to Him. Wherefore "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Hence He alone worthily glorifies the Lord, for, it is said, "He shall glorify me," not as the creature, but as "Spirit of truth," dearly shewing forth the truth in Himself, and, as Spirit of wisdom, in His own greatness revealing "Christ the Power of God and the wisdom of God." And as

Paraclete He expresses in Himself the goodness of the Paraclete who sent Him, and in His own dignity manifests the majesty of Him from whom He proceeded. There is then on the one hand a natural glory, as light is the glory of the sun; and on the other a glory bestowed judicially and of free will '*ab extra*' on them that are worthy. The latter is twofold. "A son," it is said, "honoreth his father, and a servant his master." Of these two the one, the servile, is given by the creature; the other, which may be called the intimate, is fulfilled by the Spirit. For, as our Lord said of Himself, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;" so of the Paraclete He says "He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." And as the Son is glorified of the Father when He says "I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again," so is the Spirit glorified through His communion with both Father and Son, and through the testimony of the Only-begotten when He says "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men."

**47.** And when, by means of the power that enlightens us, we fix our eyes on the beauty of the image of the invisible God, and through the image are led up to the supreme beauty of the spectacle of the archetype, then, I ween, is with us inseparably the Spirit of knowledge, in Himself bestowing on them time love the vision of the truth the power of beholding the Image, not making the exhibition from without, but in Himself leading on to the full knowledge. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son." And so "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." For it is not said through the Spirit, but by the Spirit, and "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," as it is written "in thy light shall we see light," namely by the illumination of the Spirit, "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It results that in Himself He shows the glory of the Only begotten, and on true worshippers He in Himself bestows the knowledge of God. Thus the way of the knowledge of God lies from One Spirit through the One Son to the One Father, and conversely the natural Goodness and the inherent Holiness and the royal Dignity extend from the Father through the Only-begotten to the Spirit. Thus there is both acknowledgment of the hypostases and the true dogma of the Monarchy is not lost. They on the other hand who support their sub-numeration by

talking of first and second and third ought to be informed that into the undefiled theology of Christians they are importing the polytheism of heathen error. No other result can be achieved by the fell device of sub-numeration than the confession of a first, a second, and a third God. For us is sufficient the order prescribed by the Lord. He who confuses this order will be no less guilty of transgressing the law than are the impious heathen.

Enough has been now said to prove, in contravention of their error, that the communion of Nature is in no wise dissolved by the manner of sub-numeration. Let us, however, make a concession to our contentious and feeble minded adversary, and grant that what is second to anything is spoken of in sub-numeration to it. Now let us see what follows. "The first man "it is said "is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven." Again "that was not first which is spiritual but that which is natural and afterward that which is spiritual." If then the second is subnumerated to the first, and the subnumerated is inferior in dignity to that to which it was subnumerated, according to you the spiritual is inferior in honor to the natural, and the heavenly man to the earthy.