

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD
Part III: The Ancient Church (The Holy Spirit)

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I. INTRODUCTION.

The discussion of the development of Theology Proper has essentially dealt with the pre-incarnate relationship of the Son to the Father (i.e., binarianism). This, of course, is the major emphasis of the scholars when discussing the topic of Trinitarianism in the Ancient Church. The purpose of this lesson is to deal with the development of Pneumatology within the context of the historical development of Trinitarianism. The clue to our parenthetical study is given by Cunningham (*Historical Theology*. I, 305): “There is nothing said in the original Nicene Creed about the Holy Ghost, except the simple mention of His name, because, up to that time, the Scripture doctrine concerning Him had not been made a matter of controversial discussion.”

II. THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH FATHERS.

A general summary of the understanding of the Apostolic Fathers, given their characteristic simplicity and naiveté, is provided by Sheldon: (*History of Christian Doctrine*. I, 89): “As practical Christianity, preceded the speculative, so naturally an acknowledgement of the Trinity of revelation preceded an acknowledgement of an essential Trinity, or the Trinity pertaining to the Godhead as such. The earliest references to the subject among Christian writers include little else than Scriptural phraseology, and speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as revealed and operative in the world.”

A. Clement of Rome (d. ca. 120)

Clement, in the letter to the Corinthians, speaks of the Spirit ten times, mostly in reference to the Spirit's inspiration of the Old Testament. Only two references are helpful for our study: in chapter two, he speaks of the outpouring of the spirit ("an abundant outpouring of the spirit fell upon all") and he uses the tri-part formula ("Have we not one God and one Christ and one Spirit of Grace who was poured upon us all?"). Dewar wrote (*The Holy Spirit and Modern Thought*, 85), "Taking this epistle as a whole, therefore, it may fairly be said that it does not add anything to the New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit, or reveal any further insight."

N.B. II Clement, which is not to be confused in authorship with Clement's letter to the Corinthians, has one reference to the Spirit (14:3). There the writer identifies Christ as the Holy Spirit ("the spirit is Christ").

B. Ignatius of Antioch (d. ca. 112)

Apart from the trinitarian formula (it is noticeable that the order is Son, Father, and Spirit (*To the Magnesians*, 13.1), there is only one passage relative to the Holy Spirit (*To the Philadelphians*, 7): "For even though certain persons desired to deceive me after the flesh, yet the Spirit is not deceived, being from God; for it knoweth whence it cometh and where it goeth; and it searcheth out the hidden things. I cried out, when I was among you; I spake with a loud voice, with God's own voice, Give ye heed to the bishop and the presbytery and deacons. Howbeit there were those who suspected me of saying this, because I knew beforehand of the division of certain persons. But He in whom I am bound is my witness that I learned it not from flesh of man; it was the preaching of the Spirit who spake on this wise; Do nothing without the bishop; keep your flesh as a temple of God; cherish union, shun divisions, be imitators of Jesus Christ, as He Himself also was of His Father."

Thus, the Spirit is cast in the role of a personal revealer, one sent from God.

C. Hermas (d. ca. 130)

The *Shepherd of Hermas* abounds in allusions to the Spirit, but the writer has no consistent pneumatology.

1. He is beset by a confusion that is seen in second and third century writers; he fails to distinguish between the Son and the Spirit. In “Similitude”, 9.1 he stated “that the Spirit is the Son of God.” Similarly (“Similitude”, 5.6): “The Holy Pre-existent Spirit, Which created the whole creation, God made to dwell in flesh that He desired. This flesh, therefore, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, was subject unto the Spirit, walking honourably in holiness and purity, without in any way defiling the Spirit. When then it had lived honourably in chastity, and had laboured with the Spirit, and had cooperated with it in everything, behaving itself boldly and bravely, He chose it as a partner with the Holy Spirit; for the career of this flesh pleased [the Lord], seeing that, as possessing the Holy Spirit, it was not defiled upon the earth. He therefore took the son as adviser and the glorious angels also, that this flesh too, having served the Spirit unblameably, might have some place of sojourn, and might not seem to have lost the reward for its service; for all flesh, which is found undefiled and unspotted, wherein the Holy Spirit dwelt, shall receive a reward. Now thou hast the interpretation of this parable also.”

2. Also, he confuses the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. He speaks on the one hand of the Holy Spirit, but reverses himself and speaks of its defilement (“Mandate”, 5:1-3): “Be thou longsuffering and understanding,’ he saith, ‘and thou shalt have the mastery over all evil deeds, and shalt work all righteousness. For if thou art long-suffering, the Holy Spirit that abideth in thee shall be pure, not being darkened by another evil spirit, but dwelling in a large room shall rejoice and be glad with the vessel in which he dwelleth, and shall serve God with much cheerfulness, having prosperity in himself. But if any angry temper approach, forthwith the Holy Spirit, being delicate, is straitened, not having [the] place clear, and seeketh to retire from the place; for he is being choked by the evil spirit, and has no room to minister unto the Lord, as he desireth, being polluted by angry temper.”

- N.B.** In the remaining Apostolic Fathers little is relevant to our purpose as most speak of Him as the inspiration of the O.T. and state the baptismal formula (*Didaché*, 7.1). It may safely be said of the Fathers that:
 1. The doctrine of the full deity and personality of the

Holy Spirit is by no means universally grasped. So far as the personality of the Spirit is recognized, it is confused with that of the Logos (i.e., Christ).

2. There are no traces of the vital distinction between natural and supernatural operations of the Spirit.

III. THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE APOLOGISTS.

The Apologists did clearly advance the understanding of the Spirit, but still evidence some of the confusion manifest in the Fathers.

A. The Apologists of the Eastern Church

1. **Justin Martyr** calls the Holy Spirit the gift come down from heaven, which Christ imparted to believers after His glorification, and to the prophets before His incarnation. He wrote (*Address to the Greeks*, 23): “And if any one will attentively consider the gift that descends from God on the holy men—which gift the sacred prophets call the Holy Ghost—he shall find that this was announced under another name by Plato in the dialogue with Meno. For, fearing to name the gift of God “the Holy Ghost,” lest he should seem, by following the teaching of the prophets, to be an enemy to the Greeks, he acknowledges, indeed, that it comes down from God, yet does not think fit to name it the Holy Ghost, but virtue. For as the sacred prophets says that one and the same spirit is divided into seven spirits, so he also, naming it one and the same virtue, says this is divided into four virtues; wishing by all means to avoid mention of the Holy Spirit, but clearly declaring in a kind of allegory what the prophets said of the Holy Spirit. For to this effect he spoke in the dialogue with Meno towards the close: ‘From this reasoning, Meno, it appears that virtue comes to those to whom it does come by a divine destiny. But we shall know clearly about this, in what kind of way virtue comes to men, when, as a first step, we shall have set ourselves to investigate, as an independent inquiry, what virtue itself is.’ You see how he calls only by the name of virtue, the gift that descends from above; and yet he counts it worthy of inquiry, whether it is right that this [gift] be called virtue or some other thing, fearing to name it openly the Holy Spirit, lest he should seem to be following the teaching of the prophets.”

Having said this Martyr makes the following points:

- a) He distinguishes the Logos (i.e., The Word, Christ) from the Spirit, though he sometimes confounds them. He calls the Spirit the Logos of O.T. inspiration. (*First Apology*, 33): “And the angel of God who was sent to the same virgin at that time brought her good news, saying, ‘Behold, thou shalt conceive of the Holy Ghost, and shalt bear a Son, and He shall be called the Son of the Highest, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins,’—as they who have recorded all that concerns our Saviour Jesus Christ have taught, whom we believed, since by Isaiah also, whom we have now adduced, the Spirit of prophecy declared that He should be born as we intimated before. It is wrong, therefore, to understand the Spirit and the power of God as anything else than the Word, who is also the first-born of God, as the foresaid prophet Moses declared; and it was this which, when it came upon the virgin and overshadowed her, caused her to conceive, not by intercourse, but by power.”

- b) Also, he seems to place the Spirit below angels. He states (*First Apology*, 1:6): “Hence are we called atheists. And we confess that we are atheists, so far as gods of this sort are concerned, but not with respect to the most true God, the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues, who is free from all impurity. But both Him, and the Son who came forth from Him and taught us these things, and the host of the other good angels who follow and are made like to Him, and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore, knowing them in reason and truth, and declaring without grudging to every one who wishes to learn, as we have been taught.”

This view is confirmed in *Dialogue to Trypho* where he describes the Spirit as the Angel of God, a power which is sent to our aid from God. Neander wrote (*Lectures on the History of Christian Dogmas*. I, 173), “Hence Justin might ascribe the third place in the triad to the Holy Spirit, although he places him at the head of angels.”

2. **Theophilus of Antioch**, the first Christian writer to speak of God as a Triad, at times separates the Spirit from the Logos. He

wrote (*To Autolycus*, 2.15): “On the fourth day the luminaries were made; because God, who possesses foreknowledge, knew the follies of the vain philosophers, that they were going to say, that the things which grow on the earth are produced from the heavenly bodies, so as to exclude God. In order, therefore, that the truth might be obvious, the plants and seeds were produced prior to the heavenly bodies, for what is posterior cannot produce that which is prior. And these contain the pattern and type of a great mystery. For the sun is a type of God, and the moon of man. And as the sun far surpasses the moon in power and glory, so far does God surpass man. And as the sun remains ever full, never becoming less, so does God always abide perfect, being full of all power and understanding, and wisdom, and immortality, and all good. But the moon wanes monthly, and in a manner dies, being a type of man; then it is born again, and is crescent, for a pattern of the future resurrection. In like manner also the three days which were before the luminaries are types of the Trinity, of God and His Word and His Wisdom.”

Theophilus however at other times identifies Christ and the Spirit as one (*To Autolycus*, 2.10): “And first they taught us with one consent that God made all things out of nothing; for nothing was coequal with God: but He being His own place, and wanting nothing, and existing before the ages, willed to make man by whom He might be known, for him, therefore, He prepared the world. For he that is created is also needy; but he that is uncreated stands in need of nothing. God, then, having His own Word internal within His own bowels, begat Him, emitting Him along with His own wisdom before all things. He had this Word as a helper in the things that were created by Him, and by Him He made all things. He is called “governing principle” [arch], because he rules, and is Lord of all things fashioned by Him. He, then, being Spirit of God, and governing principle, and wisdom, and power of the highest, came down upon the prophets, and through them spake of the creation of the world and of all other things.”

3. **Athenagoras’ *Plea for Christians*** stressed the unity of the divine essence, yet admits to a division of persons in a certain order that includes subordinationism. He, like Martyr, refers to angels as objects of worship.
4. **Origen** affirmed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is not a creature, though the Spirit is said to have begun in

eternity. The same error is evident with the Spirit as with the Son, subordinationism is evident. Kelley wrote (*Early Christian Doctrines*, 131), “It is not altogether fair to conclude, as many have done, that Origen teaches a triad of disparate beings rather than a Trinity, but the strongly pluralistic strain in his Trinitarianism is its salient feature.”

B. The Apologists of the Western Church

1. **Tertullian** is looked upon as a pioneer in trinitarian theology. His views are most clearly evidenced in his writing against the unitarian Praxeas. He speaks of the Son and Spirit as being a part of the Godhead (*Against Praxeas*, 9 and 26). The Spirit is subordinated in rank to the Father through the Son. He employed such illustrations as the fountain, stream and river or root, branch and fruit to explain the triade of persons.
2. **Irenaeus**, like the Fathers, conceived of the Spirit as the inspiration of the O.T. Scriptures. He appears to be the first to grasp the full equality of the Spirit with the Son (“two hands of the Father”). He wrote (*Against Heresies*, 1.2.1), “Now man is a mixed organism of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God and molded by His hands; that is by the Son and the Holy Spirit, to whom also He said “Let us make man.” Elsewhere he wrote (*Against Heresies*, 4.34.1): “For God did not stand in need of these [i.e., the angels] in order to perform what He had determined with Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess His own hands. For with Him are always present the Word and the Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, through whom and in whom He made all things fully and of His own will, to whom also He speaks, saying: ‘Let us make man after our image and likeness.’”

Neander wrote (*Lectures*. I, 175): “He applied the theory of Subordination to the Holy Spirit: by such steps we attain to the Son through the Spirit, through the Son we ascend to the Father . . . He comprehends the whole doctrine of the Trinity in the words—The One God of whom are all things; the Son through whom all things; the Holy Spirit who reveals the dispensations of the Father and the Son among mankind as the Father wills.”

3. **Novatian**, the Presbyter has a doctrine of the Spirit that is insightful. He regards Him as the divine power which works in prophets, apostles and the church, but makes no mention of His

subsistence as a person. He wrote (*Trinity*, 29): “Next, well-ordered reason and the authority of our faith bid us (in the words and the writings of our Lord set down in orderly fashion) to believe, after these things, also in the Holy Spirit, who was in times past promised to the Church and duly bestowed at the appointed, favorable moment. (2) He was indeed promised by the prophet Joel but bestowed through Christ. ‘In the last days,’ says the prophet, ‘I will pour out from My spirit upon My servants and handmaids.’ And the Lord said: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.’ (3) Now the Lord sometimes calls the Holy Spirit the Paraclete and at other times proclaims Him to be the Spirit of truth, He is not new in the Gospel, nor has He been given in a novel way. For it was He who in the prophets reprov’d the people and in the apostles gave an invitation to the Gentiles. Therefore, it is one and the same Spirit who is in the prophets and in the apostles. He was, however, in the former only for awhile; whereas He abides in the latter forever. In other words, He is in the prophets but not to remain always in them in the apostles, that He might abide in them forever. He has been apportioned to the former in moderation; to the latter, He has been wholly poured out, He was sparingly given to the one; upon the other, lavishly bestowed. He was not, however, manifested before the Lord’s Resurrection but conferred by Christ’s Resurrection. (7) In fact, Christ said: ‘I will ask the Father, and He will give another Advocate that He may be with you forever, the Spirit of truth’; and ‘When the Advocate has come whom I will send you from My Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from My Father’, and ‘If I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you’; and ‘when the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you to all truth.’ (8) Since the Lord was about to go to heaven, He had to give the Paraclete to His disciples, that He might not leave them as orphans, as it were, and abandon them without a defender or some sort of guardian. That would not have been proper at all. In Christ alone He dwells fully and entirely, not wanting in any measure or part; but in all His overflowing abundance dispensed and sent forth, so that other men might receive from Christ a first outpouring, as it were, of His graces. For the fountainhead of the entire Holy Spirit abides in Christ, that from Him might be drawn streams of grace and wondrous deeds because the Holy Spirit dwells affluently in Christ. Grounded in this Spirit, ‘no one’ ever ‘says ‘Anathema’ to Jesus’, no one has denied that Christ is the Son of God, nor has rejected God the Creator; no one utters any words against the

Scriptures: no one lays down alien and sac-religious ordinances; no one makes contradictory laws. (25) Whoever ‘shall have blasphemed’ against Him, ‘does not have forgiveness, either in this world or in the world to come.’ (26) It is He who in the apostles renders testimony to Christ, in the martyrs manifests the unwavering faith of religion, in virgins encloses the admirable continence of sealed chastity. In the rest of men, He keeps the laws of the Lord’s teaching uncorrupted and untainted. He destroys heretics, corrects those in error, reproves unbelievers, reveals impostors, and also corrects the wicked. He keeps the Church uncorrupted and inviolate in the holiness of perpetual virginity and truth.”

Subordinationism appears to be implied, although he does not deal with the distinction between the persons in the singular essence, nor did anyone through the third century (NOTE, however, that Novatian has a rather full conception of the work of the Spirit.).

4. **Hippolytus of Rome**, who is to be closely identified with Irenaeus and Tertullian, affirmed plurality in the Godhead (*A Refutation of All Heresies*, 10.33): “Though alone, He was multiple, for He was not without His Word and His Wisdom, His Power and His Counsel”). No subordinationist strain is evident (i.e., one substance in multiple forms), but he speaks of the Son with little reference to the Spirit.

The point to make in the brief survey is that the confusion of the identity of the Spirit with the Son was resolved. He is seen as a separate person with an increasingly defined ministry. On the question of substance, the East was heavily subordinationist, while the West in Tertullian and Hippolytus began to develop a full orthodox trinitarian faith.

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE THEOLOGIANS.

It was in the context of the Arian-Athanasian controversy that focus was placed upon the Holy Spirit and progress was made in understanding clearly the full implications of Trinitarianism.

A. Athanasius, Nicea, and the Macedonians.

1. **Athanasius and the Holy Spirit.** Athanasius’ major

contribution in the Trinitarian debate focused upon the deity of Christ—the discussion regarding the Spirit was pushed into the background. Later, with the rise of the Macedonians, Athanasius developed his views affirming that the Spirit is of the same substance as the Father. Athanasius' delineation of the full consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Father and Son in a singular essence is stated in his famous four letters to Serapion, bishop of Thumir. He stated in his first letter to Bishop Serapion concerning the Holy Spirit (23): "But now, the one who is not sanctified nor has partaken [shared] of (the) sanctification, but is uncreated by the one who has sanctified all creatures, how could he be from all (things) or be from those who have partaken of him?...But (the) creatures, as was said, are quickened through him. Now, he who will be a possessor [heir] of life but (is) a maker—cf. possessors and a quickener of (the) creatures, what affinity would he have with the originated (things), or how would he dwell with [a, how could he be of the same essence as] the creatures, which by him and through the Word become quickened? Neander (*Lectures*. I, 305) summarized his arguments as follows: "How can the Holy Spirit belong to the same class as the beings who are sanctified by him? The Holy Spirit is the source of true life; when he is imparted to us, we attain to communion with God. This would be impossible if the Holy Spirit were foreign to the divine nature. If he were not divine but of a created nature, then something created would be admitted into the Trinity. Arianism could not be logically rejected if the Homoousion were not also ascribed to him."

2. **The Council of Nicea (325 A.D.)** did not focus on the Spirit but solely upon the deity of Christ. Hence what the Nicene Creed says is merely an undefined postscript ("And we believe in the Holy Spirit"). The Spirit was tangential to the discussions.
3. **The Macedonians.** It was apparently taken for granted that if the personality and deity of the Son were confessed, that of the Spirit would be acknowledged also. Harnack is instructive when he wrote (*History of Dogma*. IV, 111-12): "The doctrine of Origen that the Holy Spirit is an individual hypostasis and that it is a created being included within the sphere of the Godhead itself, found only very partial acceptance for more than a century. And even in the cases in which, under the influence of the baptismal formula, reference was made to a Trinity in the Godhead—which came to be more and more the practice—the third Being was still left in the vague, and, as at an earlier

period, we hear of the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless the philosophical theologians became more and more convinced that it was necessary to assume the presence not merely of a three-fold economy in the Godhead, but of three divine beings or substances. In the first thirty years after the commencement of the Arian controversy, the Holy Spirit is scarcely ever mentioned, although the Lucianists and consequently Arius too regarded it as indeed a divine hypostasis, but at the same time as the most perfect creature, which the Father had created through the Son and which therefore was inferior to the Son also in nature, dignity, and position. In their Confessions they kept to the old simple tradition 'and we believe in the Holy Spirit given to the believers for consolation, and sanctification, and perfection.' They recognized three graduated hypostases in the Godhead. The fact that Athanasius did not in the first instance think of the Spirit at all, regarding which also nothing was fixed at Nicea, is simply a proof of his intense interest in his doctrine of the Son."

After 350 A.D. a heated controversy over the Spirit emerged around the lead of one Macedonius, a semi-Arian bishop of Constantinople. At the Synod of Alexandria in 362 A.D. Athanasius saw to the first formal condemnation of the denial of the deity of the Spirit which was universalized at the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople (381 A.D.). The period prior to 381 A.D. was a period of confusion in the East over this issue as Homoiousians were becoming Homoousians. Gregory of Nazianzus noted (*Theological Oration*, 5.31): "Of the wise amongst us some consider the Holy Spirit to be an energy, others a creature, others God, while others again cannot make up their minds to adopt any definite view out of reverence for Scripture, as they put it, because it does not make any very definite statement on the point. On this account they neither accord to Him divine adoration nor do they refuse it to Him, and thus take a middle road, but which is really a very bad path. Of those again who hold Him to be God, some keep this pious belief to themselves, while others state it openly. Others to a certain degree measure the Godhead since like us they accept the Trinity, but they put a great distance between the three by maintaining that the first is infinite in substance and power, the second in power, but not in substance, while the third is infinite in neither of these two respects."

B. The Cappadocian and Constantinople.

The conclusion to the theological discussion relative to trinitarianism, particularly it has to do with Pneumatology, was brought about by the famous Cappadocians. Of them Harnack stated (*History of Dogma*. IV, 115), "They had apparently learned something from the letters of Athanasius Ad Serapion for they repeat his arguments and give them more formal development."

1. **Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386)** is not to be identified with the Cappadocians, but he did provide several major treatises on the Spirit. Cyril had a fully developed, high view of the work of the distinct work of the Holy Spirit, but did not tangle with the difficulties of His nature and substance. He believed in His deity, but as a product of unknowing, unsearching faith. He stated (*Catechetical Lectures*, 16.24): "He heralded Christ in the Prophets; He wrought in the Apostles; and to this day He seals souls in Baptism. The Father gives to the Son, and the Son shares with the Holy Spirit. Not I but Jesus says: 'All things have been delivered to me by my Father', and of the Holy Spirit He says: 'When he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will teach you all the truth,' and what follows; 'He will glorify me, because he will receive of what is mine and declare it to you.' The Father, through the Son, with the Holy Spirit, bestows all gifts. The gifts of the Father are not different from the gifts of the Son or those of the Holy Spirit. For there is one Salvation, one Power, one Faith. There is one God, the Father; One Lord, His Only-begotten Son; One Holy Spirit, the Advocate. It is enough for us to know this much; inquire not curiously into His nature and substance. For if it had been written, we would have spoken about it; what is not written let us not essay. It is enough for salvation for us to know that there is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. **Basil of Caesarea (d. 379)** advanced the Orthodox understanding of the trinity in the East by differentiating essence and persons. He wrote (*Epistle*, 236.6): "The distinction between ousia and upostasi" is the same as that between the general and the particular; as, for instance, between the animal and the particular man. Wherefore, in the case of the Godhead, we confess one essence or substance so as not to give a variant definition of existence, but we confess a particular hypostasis, in order that our conception of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit may be without confusion and clear. If we have no distinct

perception of the separate characteristics, namely, fatherhood, sonship, and sanctification, but from our conception of God from the general idea of existence, we cannot possibly give a sound account of our faith. We must, therefore, confess the faith by adding the particular to the common. The Godhead is common; the fatherhood particular. We must therefore combine the two and say, 'I believe in God the Father.' The like course must be pursued in the confession of the Son; we must combine the particular with the common and say 'I believe in God the Son,' so in the case of the Holy Ghost we must make our utterance conform to the appellation and say 'in God the Holy Ghost.' Hence it results that there is a satisfactory preservation of the unity by the confession of the one Godhead, while in the distinction of the individual properties regarded in each there is the confession of the peculiar properties of the Persons. On the other hand those who identify essence or substance and hypostasis are compelled to confess only three Persons, and, in their hesitation to speak of three hypostases, are convicted of failure to avoid the error of Sabellius."

Again he wrote (*On the Holy Spirit*, 45): "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 his 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."

This treatise of Basil's is considered a landmark for the defeat of Arian conceptions of the Holy Spirit.

3. **Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 389)** clearly affirms that the Spirit is God, that all the predicates of deity are to be attributed to Him (*Theological Oration*, 5.4): "If ever there was a time when the Father was not, then there was a time when the Son was not. If ever there was a time when the Son was not, then there was a time when the Spirit was not. If the One was from the beginning, then the Three were so too... what Godhead can there be if It is not perfect? And how can that be perfect which lacks

something of perfection? And surely there is something lacking if it hath not the Holy, and how would it have this if it were without the Spirit? For either holiness is something different from Him, and if so let some one tell me what it is conceived to be; or if it is the same, how is it not from the beginning, as if it were better for God to be at one time imperfect and apart from the Spirit? If He is not from the beginning, He is in the same rank with myself, even though a little before me; for we are both parted from Godhead by time. If He is in the same rank with myself, how can He make me God, or join me with Godhead?"

Again he clearly wrote (5.9): "What then, say they, is there lacking to the Spirit which prevents His being a Son, for if there were not something lacking He would be a Son? We assert that there is nothing lacking—for God has no deficiency. But the difference of manifestation, if I may so express myself, or rather of their mutual relations one to another, has caused the difference of their Names. For indeed it is not some deficiency in the Son which prevents His being Father (for Sonship is not a deficiency), and yet He is not Father. According to this line of argument there must be some deficiency in the Father, in respect of His not being Son. For the Father is not Son, and yet this is not due to either deficiency or subjection of Essence; but the very fact of being Unbegotten or Begotten, or Proceeding has given the name of Father to the First, of the Son the Second, and of the Third, Him of Whom we are speaking, of the Holy Ghost that the distinction of the Three Persons may be preserved in the one nature and dignity of the Godhead. For neither is the Son Father, for the Father is One, but He is what the Father is; nor is the Spirit Son because He is of God, for the Only-begotten is One, but He is what the Son is. The Three are One in Godhead, and the One Three in properties; so that neither is the Unity a Sabellian one."

4. **The Council of Constantinople (381)** was the climax in the church's discussion of trinitarianism. Kelly wrote (*Early Christian Doctrines*, 263): "The climax of the developments we have been studying was the reaffirmation of the Nicene faith at the council of Constantinople in 381. At this the consubstantiality of the Spirit as well as of the Son was formally endorsed. The theology which prevailed, as exemplified by the great Cappadocians themselves and by teachers like Didymus the Blind (c. 398) and Evagrius Ponticus (399), may be fairly described as in substance that of Athanasius. It is true that

their angle of approach was somewhat different from his. Emerging from the Homoiousian tradition, it was natural that they should make the three hypostases, rather than the one divine substance, their starting-point. Hence, while the formula which expresses their position is ‘one ousia in three hypostaseis’, their emphasis often seems to be on the latter term, connoting the separate subsistence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, rather than on the former, which stood for the one invisible Godhead common to Them. Like Athanasius, however, they were champions of the homoousion both of the Son and (as we have just seen) of the Spirit.”

The creedal statement concerning the Spirit simply reads (Leith [ed], *The Creeds of the Churches*, 33): “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, Who proceeds from the Father, Who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and Son, Who spoke through the prophets; and in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead the life of the world to come. Amen.

N.B. As indicated previously, the penultimate statements of the Trinity in the West were made by Hilary of Poitiers and Augustine, both of whom heavily borrowed from the Cappadocians. One statement will sustain this point (Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 4.21): “But with respect to the sensible showing of the Holy Spirit, whether by the shape of a dove, or by fiery tongues, when the subjected and subservient creature by temporal motions and forms manifested His substance co-eternal with the Father and the Son, and alike with them unchangeable, while it was not united so as to be one person with Him, as the flesh was which the Word was made; I do not dare to say that nothing of the kind was done aforetime. But I would boldly say, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of one and the same substance, God the Creator, the Omnipotent Trinity, work indivisibly; but that this cannot be indivisibly manifested by the creature, which is far inferior, and least of all by the bodily creature: just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot be named by our words, which certainly are bodily sounds, except in their own proper intervals of time, divided by a distinct separation, which intervals the proper syllables of each word occupy. Since in their proper substance wherein

they are, the three are one, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the very same, by no temporal motion, above the whole creature, without any interval of time and place, and at once one and the same from eternity to eternity, as it were eternity itself, which is not without truth and charity. But, in my words, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are separated, and cannot be named at once, and occupy their own proper places separately in visible letters. And as, when I name my memory, and intellect, and will, each name refers to each severally, but yet each is uttered by all three; for there is no one of these three names that is not uttered by both my memory and my intellect and my will together [by the soul as a whole]; so the Trinity together wrought both the voice of the Father, and the flesh of the Son, and the dove of the Holy Spirit, while each of these things is referred severally to each person. And by this similitude it is in some degree discernible, that the Trinity, which is inseparable in itself, is manifested separably by the appearance of the visible creature; and that the operation of the Trinity is also inseparable in each severally of those things which are said to pertain properly to the manifesting of either the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit.”

PARENTHESIS: The Holy Spirit and Procession. Since the church formulated its definite statement on the Spirit in the Godhead, one change, more accurately one addition, has been made at a provincial synod (Toledo, 589). The Western church, following the lead of Augustine added to the phrase in the Constantinopolitan Creed, “proceeds from the Father,” the phrase, “and the Son” (filioque = from the son). This was not acceptable in the East because, with its starting point in the trinitarian discussion at persons, it hinted in their minds at subordinationism (in the West the trinitarian starting point was a single “*ousia*”).

It was not until 867 that procession actually came to divide the church when Photius charged the West with introducing innovations into doctrine of the Trinity. He sustained his charge against the West by stating that it had falsified the most holy creed of Constantinople by adding the filioque clause (“worst of evils is the addition to the holy creed”). Harnack (*History_of Dogma*. IV, 128) has agreed that such an insertion was an innovation.

N.B. Photius was patriarch of Constantinople. He was an adversary of the Nicholas I, Pope of Rome, and as such sought to discredit him and his claims as the universal bishop of all the churches. Procession of the

Spirit was a secondary issue in the on-going power struggle between Rome and Constantinople. It does provide a clue to the eventual East-West schism of the church in 1054.

V. CONCLUSION.

The purpose of this lesson has been to focus on the issue of the Holy Spirit in the Trinitarian debate. The deity of the Holy Spirit was taken up because of its implications relative to the full deity of Christ. After the Council of Nicea (325) and with the rise of the Macedonians, Athanasius and the Cappadocians forged the full trinitarian statement that became the Creed of Constantinople (381). The only addition relative to the Spirit has been that of procession (stated at Toledo in 589 and controverted by Photius in 867) which was a major source of East-West tensions (and eventual schism). The development of the doctrine of the Spirit can be graphed as follows:

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE ANCIENT CHURCH

THE CHURCH FATHERS
THEOLOGIANs

THE APOLOGISTS

THE

150

300

Confusion on His Person
Confusion on His Work

Confusion on His Person
Clarification on His Work

Clarification of
His Person