



The Holy Spirit and the Finished Work of Redemption

The mystery of the Godhead will never be completely understood throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity, for created beings can never comprehend the limitless resources and qualities of their Creator. But we can study for eternity what God has revealed to us about Himself without ever coming to an end. The best place to start this study is in the beginning of the revealed word of God.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

"And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day,' and the darkness he called 'night.' And there was evening, and there was morning -- the first day." Gen. 1:1-5.

The Hebrew word that is used here is Elohim, the plural word for God. This of course indicates that what we are seeing here is the concerted work of the entire GODHEAD in the creation of this world. When something of great importance is transpiring, all three members of the Godhead are personally involved and present. Examples of this include the speaking of the law from Mt. Sinai, the baptism of Jesus, and the cross.

"When the law was spoken, the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth, stood by the side of His Son, enshrouded in the fire and the smoke on the mountain." 1 BC 1103.

"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'" Matt. 3:16, 17.

"God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son yet His presence was not revealed." DA 753, 754.

So, in the creation of the world and its inhabitants, the entire Godhead was present and actively involved.

"The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate,— a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings.... Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,--

one in nature, in character, and purpose,—the only being that could enter into all the councils and purposes of God....

"The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings. 'By Him were all things created, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him.' Angels are God's ministers,.. speeding on rapid wing to execute His will. But the Son, the anointed of God, the 'express image of His person,' 'the brightness of His glory,' 'upholding all things by the word of His power,' holds supremacy over them all." PP 34.

So we see the visible members of the Godhead working together in perfect harmony in everything they do. But what about the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit? It is evident that by the time of creation week, the Godhead had counseled together concerning even the most minute details of the creation of this world and its inhabitants.

"After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God said to His Son, 'Let us make man in our image.'" SR 20.

"In their original perfection all created things were an expression of the thought of God." COL 18.

Now let's return briefly to the creation scene in Gen. 1:1-5. God the Father and God the Son are somewhere above the surface of the earth. But where is the Holy Spirit? He is hovering above the waters where the creative action is about to take place. This is vital to the understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Godhead, whether in creation or in recreation.

"The work of God's Spirit must have some connection with the activity that was presently to be initiated, an activity bringing order out of chaos. The Spirit of God was already present, ready to act as soon as the order should be given. The Holy Spirit has always been doing this very work. This divine agent has ever been present to assist in the work of creation and redemption, to reprove and strengthen wayward souls, to comfort the sorrowing, and to present the believer's prayers in an acceptable form to God." 1 BC 209. [Not EGW.]

Next, consider the creation of Adam. God fashioned his body out of the dust of the earth, but not until He breathed into him the breath of life did he become a living soul.

"God is a being, and man was made in His image. After God created man in His image, the form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it had no vitality. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, breathing, intelligent being. All parts of the human machinery were put in motion. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the perceptions of the mind, the senses, were placed under physical law. It was then that man became a living soul." TD 273.

Not only was the Holy Spirit active and essential in creation, but He is just as essential in the process of redemption and re-creation.

Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.

"Of the Spirit Jesus said, 'He shall glorify me.' The Savior came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.

"When He [the Spirit of truth] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continued presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life.... Unless the Holy Spirit sets home the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken. No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the cooperation of the Spirit of God....

"Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord's promise; they talk about Christ and about the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people 'to will and to do of His good pleasure.' Phil. 2:13. But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive." DA 671, 672.

The Holy Spirit has always been present in the long history of the world since Adam and Eve sinned. He sought out those whose hearts were open to His influence, and enabled them to live lives of godliness and obedience. But when Christ came, a new era of the Spirit was now open to mankind. The Spirit was essential to make effective what Jesus had done by living a perfect life, which could now be applied to His followers.

"The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his

personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Savior would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high....

"At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer." DA 269, 270.

Many books could be written about the Holy Spirit, and not exhaust the subject. But the importance of understanding the work of the Spirit at this time in history is a matter of life and death. Just before Jesus went back to heaven He breathed upon His disciples and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit." John 20:22. This reminds us of the creation of Adam, when "the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." Gen. 2:7. In both cases, the Holy Spirit brings life, both physical and spiritual.

But the Holy Spirit never works or operates on His own. In both creation and redemption, the three persons of the Godhead always work in conjunction and cooperation with each other. When Jesus was on earth and functioned as man must function, He arose early in the morning and sought His Father for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit for His work and ministry that day. Only on the cross was the voice of the Holy Spirit silent, for Jesus had to go through the experience that the wicked will feel when they have sinned away their day of grace, and the Holy Spirit no more speaks to them or in their behalf. That is what broke His heart and caused Him to cry out to His Father, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" Mark 15:34.

"The dark cloud of human transgression came between the Father and the Son. The interruption of the communion between God and His Son caused a condition of things in the heavenly courts which cannot be described by human language. Nature could not witness such a scene as Christ dying in agony while bearing the penalty of man's transgression. God and the angels clothed themselves with darkness, and hid the Savior from the gaze of the curious multitude while He drank the last dregs of the cup of God's wrath....

"In the scenes that transpired in the judgment hall and at Calvary, we see what the human heart is capable of when under the influence of Satan. He submitted to crucifixion, although the heavenly host could have delivered Him. The angels suffered with Christ. God himself was crucified with Christ; for Christ was one with the Father. Those who reject Christ, those who will not have this man to rule over them, choose to place themselves under the rule of Satan, to do his work as his bondslaves. Yet for them Christ yielded up His life on Calvary." 5 BC 1108.

Heaven did all of this for fallen mankind, and yet how few appreciate this unspeakable sacrifice. But when the Holy Spirit is at last withdrawn from the wicked at the end of time, how they will long to have what they have forever rejected!

"I was shown that but a small portion of those who now profess the truth will be sanctified by it and be saved. Many will get above the simplicity of the word. They will conform to the world, cherish idols, and become spiritually dead. The humble, self-sacrificing followers of Jesus will pass on to perfection, leaving behind the indifferent and lovers of the world." 1T 608.

"Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us -- the perfection of His character? When the Lord's people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, 'It is finished.'" OHC 150.

"I... saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.

"I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of refreshing and the latter rain to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God." EW 71.

"I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble; and every soul that was decided on the truth and was pure in heart was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty." EW 43.

"As mercy's sweet voice died away, fear and horror seized the wicked.... Those who had not prized God's word were hurrying to and fro, wandering from sea to sea, and from north to east, to seek the word of the Lord.... What would they not give for one word of approval from God!" EW 281.

But what they now long to receive has been forever taken from their grasp, for the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain has already descended upon God's faithful remnant who have prepared their hearts to receive it by cooperating with Jesus in the cleansing work of removing every vestige of sin during the judgment of the living experience. During this time of cleansing, God's true people sought deliverance from every lie of the devil that had been planted in their minds by the evil one throughout their entire lives, and prayed for the Holy Spirit to reveal to them anything they accepted or believed that had come from the great deceiver, Satan. And as they cooperated with this cleansing experience, the power of the Holy Spirit -- the Spirit of Truth -- filled the void and reproduced the character of Christ in their lives and minds. Thus the plan of salvation is completed in the lives of God's true people, the remnant that is spoken of in Zephaniah 3:13-20:

"The remnant of Israel will do no wrong; they will speak no lies, nor will deceit be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid.

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The Lord, the King of Israel is with you; never again will you fear any harm. On that day they will say to Jerusalem, 'Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing...."

"At that time I will deal with all who oppressed you; I will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame. At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home."

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