

"And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets."

Here is the summary of this chapter taken from the Foreword.

The sixth and seventh chapters are devoted to the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and of the one Church as the Body of Christ. Since it was the Word or Son of God, not the Father or the Spirit, who became incarnate, it is only through the Son that we have knowledge of the Spirit as well as knowledge of the Father. Thus our knowledge of the Spirit like our knowledge of the Father is taken from and controlled by our knowledge of the Son. As such the doctrine of the Spirit qualifies and completes the doctrine of the Father and the Son, and deepens it in our knowledge of the Holy Trinity. Following upon the Council of Nicaea it became widely evident that denial of the Deity of the Son entailed denial of the Deity of the Spirit, so that the Nicene doctrine of the *homoousion* or *consubstantiality* of the Son called for a corresponding formulation of the doctrine of the Spirit, and that is what was given succinct credal expression at the Council of Constantinople. The doctrine of the Spirit was developed, however, not only from biblical statements or from doxological formulae, but from the essential structure of knowledge of God grounded in his own self-communication through the Son and in the unity of the Spirit. The confession of faith in the Holy Spirit emphasises the divine nature of the Spirit, and the fact that the presence of the Spirit is the presence of God in his own eternal being and reality as God. At the same time the presence of God in his mode of being as Spirit confronts us with the ineffability and sublime majesty of God, yet not in such a way that God overwhelms us by the presence of his being, for this is a presence of God that creates and sustains being and life, and acts upon us in a quiet and gentle self-effacing way which does not direct attention to himself but which reveals the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father. Through the incarnation and Pentecost the Holy Spirit comes to us from the inner communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, creates union and communion between us and the Holy Trinity. In

Chapter 6 - The Holy Spirit

Since it was the Word who became incarnate, it is only through the Son that we have knowledge of the Father and the Spirit

Our knowledge of the F and Spirit is controlled by our knowing of the Son

After Nicaea, it was clear that the doctrine of the ὁμοούσιος τῷ Πατρὶ, the consubstantiality of the Son called for the same treatment for the Spirit.

Doctrine of the Spirit developed from the essential structure of the knowledge God grounded in his own self-communication through the Son and in the Spirit

Faith in the Spirit emphasises his divine nature

When we deal with the Spirit we do meet the majesty of God but in a quiet, gentle, self-effacing way.

Spirit reveals the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father.

He creates union and communion with us and the Holy Trinity.

OBVIOUS THINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

Nicaea in 325 simply had a last sentence "we believe in the Holy Spirit". It made clear that we should not think of the Holy Spirit as detached from the being of God. He is not some gift to us who is at a distance from God, rather

"in the Holy Spirit God acts directly upon us Himself, and in giving us his Holy Spirit God gives us nothing less than himself. Since God is Spirit, the Giver of the Spirit and the Spirit are identical." Athanasius Ad. Serapion 1.30

So in the Creed, belief in the Holy Spirit is put together with belief in the Father and in the Son, as belief in the one God and Lord.

Personal, divine nature of the Spirit as Lord

[1] Holy Spirit

Made clear in the apostolic witness through the expression 'holy' [ἅγιος] which rendered the Hebrew word [קָדוֹשׁ] used in OT for the transcendent, unfathomable and inapproachable nature of God [Isaiah 6.5; Leviticus 11.45ff; 19.2; 20.7].

Indeed Isaiah makes much use of designating the Lord as the "Holy One of Israel" [Isaiah 1.4; 5.19; etc]. When, in the 3rd century BC, the translators of the Greek LXX used ἅγιος for holy as applied to God, they passed over the word ἱερός which was used 1. as an adjective meaning holy in the sense of unique, set apart. Later, in the Christian era it was also used [2] as a noun for [a] the sanctuary and thus as a metaphor for the church and [b] for the sacraments.

So the designation ἅγιος imported the immanence and transcendence of the Spirit into its meaning.

[2] "Spirit"

Hebrew for 'spirit', ruach [רוּחַ] unlike the word for 'spirit' in Greek [pneu:ma] carried an active and a concrete sense. So, when we link holy and spirit together, as the Old Testament does we get a picture of

"the mighty living God, the presence of whose Spirit is understood as at once intensely personal reality and dynamic event" Torrance, [1988] p.192

So the Spirit of God is not the emissions a divine force, detachable from God. Rather He is the confrontation of human beings and their affairs with his own Self, bringing his impact, whether it is salvation or judgment upon their lives.

[3] The intimate association between the Word [דְּבָר] and the Spirit [רוּחַ].

These two are closely connected whenever God acts insuring judgment and fulfilment of his promises. The Messiah is both the bearer of the Spirit and the Word. It is this approach which characterises the teaching of the NT which sees

"the Holy Spirit as sanctifying, life-giving and redeeming outreach of God through his Word toward mankind, drawing them into community face-to-face with himself." Torrance [1988] p.193.

Spirit as an 'imageless image' of the Son

Nicene fathers saw that faith in the Holy Spirit has to be held

[a] in a trinitarian frame

[b] in accordance with baptism into the one name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and

[c] in accord with the rule of faith handed down to them from the apostles.

[1] Insofar as we understand that "God is Spirit" and is truly known and worshipped as such, then Spirit is the specific nature of God's eternal being, whether as Father, Son or Holy Spirit. So their interrelations in themselves are to be understood as 'spiritual'.

[2] If the Son is the 'image [or form] of the invisible God', we find Athanasius, Didymus and John of Damascus speaking of the Spirit as the image of the Son. This is a puzzle until we consider that the Spirit is himself 'imageless' [John 3.8]. And since the Father, Son and Spirit are of the one and same nature, it must be that we need to think of them in an ineffable, [indescribable, unable to be expressed] imageless and wholly spiritual way. Imagelessness is

implied by God being Light [1 John 1] as well as it is of God being Spirit. In order to perceive Him

"we must use our ears rather than our eyes, for we know him only through his Word and see him only with the mind"
Epiphanius Haer. 70.4-8

We have already seen this in chapter 2, where we have to refer imagelessly to the Father and the Son, without intruding creaturely images. So it is that we have to link together in our minds the imaging of the Father by the Son and the imaging of the Son by the Spirit, that we are enabled to refer to images taken from our human relationships to the Godhead in a spiritual and not in a material or creaturely way. So emerged the doctrine of the ὁμοούσιον of the Spirit. At Nicaea, as Basil and Epiphanius spoke out, there was no controversy over the Holy Spirit being God, since the preaching and the worship of the Church the Holy Spirit was acknowledged and seen as inseparable from the praise and worship of the Father and the Son.

But in 350 AD, when it was asserted that the Holy Spirit was a creature, then the deity of the Spirit was to be asserted as above.

Triadic formulae in the NT of the Father the Son and the Spirit

We have to consider:

- Matthew 28.19 "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"
- 2 Corinthians 13.14 "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all".
- 1 Corinthians 12.4-6 "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who works all in all."

[1] The variety in the order does not detract from the full equality of the divine Persons.

- Act 2.32ff "this Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he poured out this which you see and hear."

[2] While the early liturgies reflected the order Father, Son Spirit, the liturgies of the post-apostolic period had, in main, an order which placed the Son first because the faith the Father and the Spirit came based upon the Incarnation. Athanasius realised this but opted for the order Father, Son and Spirit due to the Sabellian heresy's tendencies.

[3] Other triadic formulae:

Acts 2.32ff, 1 Per 1.2; 2 Thessalonians 2.13ff; Ephesians 2.18; 4.4-6

[4] Early hymns for morning and evening are mentioned by Basil.

[5] A definite doctrine of the Trinity was raised from a faithful exegesis of the New Testament, the experience of the Christians and the liturgies of their worship.

It was the homoousion that expressed the oneness of being between the Father and the Son and the Father and the Spirit. So that

"the incarnation and self revelation of God as Father, Son and Spirit is traced back to what God is enhypostastically and coinherently in himself, in his own eternal being as Father Son and Holy Spirit." TFT 199

db 1. "enhypostastically" points to the fact that when we speak of God as τρεῖς ὑπόστασεις ἐν μία οὐσία "three hypostases in one being" we mean by the 'hypostasis' the differentiation, the distinction between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that for all of them, each is distinct from the other.

Later this would be expressed by the Latins as "person", as for example in the Latin expression *'tres personae in una substantia'* = three persons in one substance.

2. But what is said above is balanced by "coinherently" that is, that the three distinct Persons are nevertheless, at the same time, one Being of God.

*"The Church teaches not One Divine Essence and Three Persons, but One Essence in Three Persons. Father, Son and Spirit cannot be conceived as Three separate individuals, but are in one another and form a solidaric Unity." Schaff, Philip. [1819-1893], *History of the Church, Nicene and Post Nicene Period*, Volume 2.p.672*

Denial of the Deity of the Son, implied also the denial of the Deity of the Spirit

Formally, the doctrine of the Spirit developed from the doctrine of the Son. This is laid out clearly by Basil of Caesarea *De Spiritu Sancto*.

The truth and effectiveness of the Gospel was seen to rest, not only on the oneness in being and agency between the Spirit and both the Son and the Father.

TRACING OUT A MORE RIGOROUS DEVELOPMENT ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzus and Epiphanius of Constantia developed the formulation of the doctrine of the Spirit.

Athanasius

He turned away from the idea that the logos was cosmological principle:

[1] He would not think of the Spirit as beginning from manifestations or operations that took place in humans or the world. He started his thinking on the divine side of the equation. He looked into the inner relations of God.

[2] The Holy Spirit, no less than the Son is the self-giving of God; in Him the Giver and the Gift are identical. Since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son Athanasius thought of the essential relation of the Spirit and the Father as an undivided co-activity based on the inherence in being of the eternal Son.

[3] The Spirit is not outside [ad extra] the being of the Word/Son but inherent in him as he is inherent in God the Father and as the Father is in Him.

11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 2.11 NASB 1960

[4] The Spirit is indivisible from the Father and the Son. The Father does all things through the Word and in the Spirit.

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. NASB 1960

[5] Since the activity of the Trinity is one, the operations of the Spirit were not to be regarded as 'lower' or inferior to the Father and the Son. So the doctrine of the Spirit was developed out of the inner structure of the self-communication of God as Father, Son and Spirit.

[6] So Athanasius had no difficulty in applying the homoousion to the Spirit as well as to the Son.

[7] God has communicated with us as creatures and has done so within the conditions and structures of our earthly existence: for the Son is ὁμοούσιος with the Father and is also ὁμοούσιος with us. It is on the same ground we know the Spirit for it is as we are "in the Spirit" that we know Him sent to us from the Father through the Son that our knowledge of God comes to us in reality.

[8] The Holy Spirit does not bring us any independent knowledge of God nor does he bring to us any new content of God's self-revelation. He comes to us as the Spirit of the Father and the Son, revealing the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father: so He is God through

Whom God reveals himself. Our knowledge/knowing of Father, Son and Spirit cannot be separated.

[9] This doctrine of Athanasius was common to the Cappadocian and Alexandrian theologians; it came to expression in the Epiphanius' writing the Anchoratus in 374 AD: a writing that anticipated many expressions in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 AD.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE NICENO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN DOCTRINE OF THE SPIRIT

[1] GOD IS SPIRIT AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

The creed's clause tells us two things:

[a] that the very nature of God as God is Spirit

[b] that the Spirit with the Father and the Son belongs to the eternal being and inner life of the Godhead.

[a] Spirit used in the absolute sense of God, sharply contrasts him with contingent, transient and limited nature of creaturely beings. So it speaks of his infinite, transcendent, invisible, immaterial, and unchangeable [immutable] nature. This is what is conveyed when we say that God is Spirit.

Spirit characterises what God is in himself, in the boundless perfection of his holy being and characterises what God is in his limitless freedom toward everything that is not God.

So, in this absolute sense, "Spirit" simply refers to Deity, without distinction of Persons and so is equally applicable to Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

For example, if we speak of Christ as the Son or the Word as 'Spirit' we mean not to equate him with the Holy Spirit, but to designate his given nature. Having said that, to keep the balance of the reality of God, if we do apply the word Spirit in an absolute sense to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, then it must be understood that we don't rule out the distinction between the Persons [ὑποστάσεις] of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for in using the word 'Spirit' we were simply designating the nature of the one being [οὐσία] of the Godhead which they have in common.

db [1] Serapion [d.360] was the Bishop of Thumuis on the Nile delta from 339. He was a close, younger friend and protégé of Athanasius, and before he became Bishop was a close friend of Antony, who left in his will one of his two sheepskin cloaks to Serapion; the other to Athanasius. The Letters of Athanasius to Serapion on the Holy Spirit were probably composed during Athanasius' Third Exile in the second half of 358. Athanasius trusted Serapion enough to send him on a difficult mission to the Emperor Constantius on his behalf.

[2] Athanasius writes against the **Tropici** [τρόπικοι], a group who thought of the Spirit as creature differing from the angels only in degree. So, He is unlike the Son and therefore, no relationship is conceivable within the Godhead other than the Father and the Son.

They used Amos 4.13; 1 Timothy 5.21 - reasoning that any lack of mention of the Spirit means that he is included with the angels; John 17.3; Zechariah 1.9.

[3] The **Pneumatomachi** - Thought that the Spirit is not God's co-worker nor does he create or bestow life. Like the angel he is a minister and an instrument of God. In this sense they were similar to the **Macedonians**.

Athanasius, in his letters to Serapion

makes clear that when the Scriptures refer to the Holy Spirit, in a context of distinguishing Him from the Father and the Son, the word 'spirit' is always qualified by the addition of some expression like, 'of God', 'of the Father', 'of the Son', or as 'the Spirit', or 'Holy Spirit'. Yet, this is done in such a way that the Persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are never separated in being or activity. This includes the definite article "the".

To sum up, unless the article is present or the above-mentioned addition, it cannot refer to the Holy Spirit. Take for example what Paul writes to the Galatians, "This only would I learn from you. Received ye the Spirit by the world of the law or by hearing of faith?" What had they received but the Holy Spirit who is given to those who believe and are being born again 'through the laver of regeneration?...So likewise where the Holy Spirit is with men, even of he is mentioned without addition to his name, there is no doubt that it is the Holy Spirit who is intended; especially when it has the article.' Athanasius, Letters to Serapion, 1/part 4. [Shapland trans.]

[b] God is known, not from without, but only from what he is in himself. The Arians had operated on the basis that if they could not humanly conceive a matter, then it could not be. Their limits of reality were their limits of their understanding. So in their thinking of the father and son in a way that they thought the spirit was of the son and so pictured the Father as a grandfather etc [Ad Serapion 1/parts 15-18]. Athanasius mocks this way of approach, taking them back to the Scriptures.

The decisive point "that God can only be known out of himself" brought these Arian ideas down. The doctrine of the Spirit in reference to the triune God is to be understood not from some external relations but from his unique inner relation to the Father. So:

"...the devout and accurate way to know the Holy Spirit is not by beginning with manifestations or operations of the Spirit in creaturely existence which is external to God but from the propriety of the Spirit to the eternal being of God, as the Spirit of the Father and the Son, and thus from the internal relations within the Godhead" TFT [1988] p.208

The same thing applies when we consider the fact that we are "in the Spirit". We cannot start with our own experience of the Spirit,. We have to begin with the fact of his own 'enhypostatic' relation to the triune being of God. So we begin our thinking looking objectively with respect to the Spirit himself in His situation of being. And we do this aware that even as we partake of the Spirit of God through his indwelling in us, nevertheless we begin with an objective inwardness grounded in the mutual indwelling of the Father, Son and Spirit in the Godhead.

The Holy Spirit is partaken and does not partake

We are also aware that *the Spirit dwells in us* only as he utterly transcends all creaturely existence - otherwise we have Pantheism; so we can only think of Him dwelling in ourselves as us dwelling in God. [Ad Ser. 1.23-27]. This is so because the Holy Spirit is partaken but does not partake.

"...we may see how the Holy Spirit is partaken and does not partake...For 'it is impossible, it says, for those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good Word of God...' The angels and the other creatures partake of the Spirit himself; hence they can fall away from him whom they partake. But the Spirit is always the same; he does not belong to those who partake, but all things partake of him." Athanasius, Ad. Serapion 1/part 27

So the presence of the Holy Spirit is to us the presence of the Word of God in the full reality of his divine life and being...in his ultimate glory ends power and full Deity, his utter Goodness and Holiness.

The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit [Matthew 12.31f; Mark 33.28f; Luke 12.10]

Early Church was aware of the possibility of evil speaking against the Son was forgivable, while the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit was not. Athanasius sees the issues of the Arians as dangerous to them in this way, that they called the Holy Spirit a creature - for this is the

inference of the Pharisees in the text of the gospels - attributing the work of the Spirit done through the Lord to that of Satan; an angelic creature.

Conversely, in the early Church this had the effect of re-inforcing the worship of the Spirit as truly God and confessed as God.

Two implications:

[a] The Holy Spirit *guards the ultimate mystery and ineffability of God* for He is not approachable in thought or knowable himself. For He is Spirit, not only in his being [οὐσίᾳ] but also in his personal mode of being [ὑπόστασις]. So, while the Father and Son may be known as they reciprocally make revelation the One of the Other, the Holy Spirit remains unknown in his personal ὑπόστασις. He does not show himself, so that the world cannot see Him nor know Him. He is only registered and known by indwelling. He "hides himself from us behind the Father in the Son and behind the Son in the Father" TFT p.212

He is the invisible light in whose shining we see the uncreated light of God manifest in Jesus Christ, and is known himself only in that he lights up the face of God in Jesus Christ.

"No one knows the Father but the Son" [Matt 11.27]. And "no man can say that Jesus his Lord but in the Holy Spirit" [1 Corinthians 12.3]. For it is not said through the Spirit but in the Spirit, and "god is Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth: [John 4.24]. and it is written "in they light we shall see light" [Psalm 36.9], namely by the illumination the Spirit, "the true light that enlightens every man that comes into the world" [John 1.9]" Basil, De Spiritu Sancto 47.

[b] The Spirit is the pledge that while the eternal being of God infinitely transcends our comprehension *he is not closed to us*, for the Holy Spirit is the outgoing movement of his being whereby he makes himself open to our knowing. [TFT 1988 p.214]. In that the Holy Spirit is ὁμόουσιος with the Father and the Son, assures us that the presence of the Spirit mediates to us the truth of God's self-revelation. So it is that the Word and the Spirit of God co-inhere inseparably one with another. So there is only one movement of revelation - from the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit - of God. [One revelation but the agencies are differentiated]. Only in the Holy Spirit, who searches the depths of God can God be made known to us [1 Corinthians 2].

[2] THE HOLY SPIRIT IS DISTINCTIVELY PERSONAL REALITY ALONG WITH AND INSEPARABLE FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON

The "bond of faith" [σύνδεσμος τῆς πίστεως] - Epiphanius

The homoousios, when applied to the Spirit as well as the Son became what Epiphanius called the bond of faith. This arose from the errors put forward by the semi-Arians, the Tropici and others [👉 page 69 of these notes]; they thought of the Holy Spirit as not God of God but rather as an impersonal, creaturely force emanating from God; and so detachable from Him. Athanasius reminded them of being baptised into the name of the Trinity - had they now mixed up a "God" element in that baptism with a "creaturely" element as well - a very mixed baptism indeed!

This attack on the Holy Spirit came forward at the Council of Alexandria 362 and was brought there by Eunomius as representative of the Anomoean group. The council condemned it.

db The Anomoeans - aka Aetians and the Exoucutians.

These were the extreme Arians of the 4th century. Called this because they carried the principles of Arianism to its extreme of saying that the Son was totally unlike the Father.

They were led by Aetius [d.370] and Eunomius [d.395]. Both men attended the Arian Synod of Antioch [358]: Eunomius was ordained deacon there. He went to Alexandria and became a disciple of Aetius. In the reign of Julian [361-363] Aetius was ordained Bp without a see, by the Arians..

Eunomius followed the Homoean bishops to Constantinople and was appointed Bishop of Cyzicus. Shortly afterwards he embraced Anomoean doctrine and had to resign his see - he retired to Cappadocia.

After Aetius died, Eunomius re-appeared in the East, constantly agitating for the Anomoean party which he now led. He spent his last years at Dakora, continuing to write against the Nicene faith.

Basil of Caesarea [329-379], Gregory of Nyssa [335-395] and Gregory Nazianzen [329-390]

The argument was becoming subtle, [see TFT [1988] p.217] and Athanasius urgently needed greater precision in theological terms. Basil of Caesarea [330-379], when asked by Amphilochius, the bishop of Iconium, wrote *On the Holy Spirit*. Basil showed;

1. The Spirit has the same relation to the Son as the Son has to the Father. So, one Form of the Godhead is beheld in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This implies that while they are personally distinct, they are inseparably united in the 'I am' of God both in respect of God's inner communion and also God's activity in the world.

2. Far from being an impersonal force, 'the Spirit is living being [οὐσία ζῶσα], Lord of sanctification, from which his kinship with God becomes disclosed, while his ineffable mode of existence [τρόπος ὑπάρξεως] is preserved'. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, p.46

This implies that the Holy Spirit has a real, objective existence in God, in identity of being with the undivided Trinity, exercising divine functions in his own Person.

3. Basil drew a distinction, between the οὐσία as referring to the one being of God, and ὑποστάσεις as referring to the Persons of the Trinity. This became adopted as a regular formulation, 'one being, three individual Beings' [μία οὐσία, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις]. This meant that

[a] the term οὐσία was used for the one being which is common to the three divine Persons

[b] whereas ὑποστάσεις was used to refer to them

[i] in their differences - their differentiation - from one another.

[ii] in their relations to one another in accordance with the particular modes of personal subsistence [τρόπος ὑπάρξεως] in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Basil had a way of using 'face' [πρόσωπον] and 'name' [ὄνομα] in the same way.

Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis [310-403]

Spoke in a slightly difference way to the Cappadocians. He

[a] did not speak of the different Persons of Father Son and Holy Spirit as 'modes of existence' in the one being of God. He preferred to speak of them as 'enhypostatic' [ἐνυπόστατος] in God i.e. having real, objective personal being in God, and as co-inhering hypostatically in him.

db We are already conversant with the idea that the Father and the Son coinhere in one another in the being of God: but here, with Epiphanius and as we shall see also with Didymus, they also the co-inhere 'enhypostatically' that is, in respect of their distinct personal or hypostatic realities each of which is "whole God". This means that to encounter one of Them is to encounter God.

[b] He understood the homoousion as applying not only to each Person but to the inner relations of the Trinity as a whole.

[c] The Holy Spirit *dwells in* and *flows from* the inner life of the Trinity, sharing in the communing and knowing of the Father and the Son. So He comes into the midst of us ,

proceeding from the Father, receiving from the Son, revealing God to us and making us partake in him of God's knowing of himself.

[d] Like Athanasius, Epiphanius disliked any partitive understanding of God, we should think in a unified way - so that the Giver and the Gift are one.

Didymus of Alexandria [313-398]

db **Didymus the Blind** (alternatively spelled **Dedimus** or **Didymous**) (c. 313 – 398) was a [Christian theologian](#) in the Church of [Alexandria](#), whose famous [Catechetical School](#) he led for about half a century. Despite his impaired vision, his memory was so powerful that he mastered [dialectics](#) and geometry, subjects whose study usually benefits appreciably from sight.

Didymus wrote many works: Commentaries on all the Psalms, the *Gospel of Matthew*, the *Gospel of John* as *Against the Arians*, and *On the Holy Spirit*, which [Jerome](#) translated into Latin. He also wrote on Isaiah, Hosea, Zechariah, Job, and many other topics. Didymus' biblical commentaries, which supposedly addressed nearly all the books of the Bible, survive in fragments only. His *Catholic Letters* are of dubious authenticity. He is probably the author of a treatise on the Holy Spirit that is extant in Latin translation.

He was a loyal follower of [Origen](#), and opposed [Arian](#) and [Macedonian](#) [👤 Under Pneumatichoi on p.69] teachings. Such of his writings as survive show a remarkable knowledge of scripture, and have distinct value as theological literature.

[1] Like Epiphanius,

[a] Didymus applied the homoousion to the whole Trinity. He was prepared to accept the general way of stating the relations as 'one being, three individual Beings' [μία οὐσία, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις].

[b] and he used, in considering the three Persons the concept of 'enhypostatic' [ἐνυπόστατος] in God i.e. having real, objective personal being in God, and as co-inhering hypostatically in him

[2] Unlike Epiphanius, and consistent with the Cappadocians, he did speak of the peculiar modes of existence of the Persons and used the expression [τρόπος ὑπάρξεως] "mode of existence".

db "mode of existence" as a translation of the above Greek I have taken from G.L. Prestige, [1964] *God in Patristic Thought*, SPCK.p.246. In a discussion of what is meant by the expression 'unbegotten' [ἀγέννητος] as applied to God, Basil explains that when we apply this expression 'unbegotten' to God this does not express the being [οὐσία] of God. Prestige goes on to say, by way of explanation, that what it does express is "His mode of hyparxis" using the above Greek expression.

Prestige makes clear that Basil's argument went on to say that, if objects have a different different types of hyparxis, if we mean by that that they don't have the same being, then this would mean that various members of the human race are not of the same being [homoousioi]. This is so, for Adam had one 'mode of being' [hyparxis], being formed out of the earth, and Eve another, being formed of Adam's rib, and Abel another, being born of human intercourse, and the Son of Mary another, for He was born of the Virgin alone. So *genetos* and *agennetos* do not refer to the *ousia* of the Father and the Son, but to their mode of hyparxis.

[3] He insisted on the oneness and identity in being and lordship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. i.e.. they each had a unity of being and it was the same being that each had. This was so because each Person is wholly and perfectly God.

[4] In rebutting Sabellianism, he insisted that the different are wholly alike and perfectly equal in power and honour, so that the Father is not greater than the Son¹, and, as the Scriptural use indicates, each of the divine persons may be mentioned first.

db We need to remember, marking the ¹ above, that what is under discussion is not the utterances of the Lord when He says "...the Father is greater than I ..." - which has to do with the incarnate Word speaking, as the Son who is the servant, in the world as He refers people back to the Father in heaven. Rather, what is at stake

here, in discussing the 'being' of each of the Persons in the Godhead is a consideration of their own inner relations deep within the Trinity of God. As to their being, Epiphanius can say rightly that the Father is not greater than the Son, each is equal in power and honour. Consider the expression of our Lord in John 5.22 showing it to be the intention of the Father that 'all may honour the Son as they honour the Father'.

[5] When he wrote, Didymus focussed continually on the Holy Spirit, aware that He speaks personally to individuals within the Church. In thinking of the Holy Spirit he made clear that:

[a] He is the ultimate source of holiness. He comes to dwell within us, while, at the same time, He dwells in God. He is present therefore in all divine acts of creation, revelation, redemption justification and sanctification, not in part, but in the wholeness of his Deity.

[b] In all God's gifts, he is directly present in his own being, in such a way that the divine Giver and the Gift are one. This was an intensely personal view of the Holy Spirit. It had connection with Didymus' understanding of the Holy Spirit as deriving from the Person of the Father - though timelessly and without beginning - and even from the Person of the Son [Didymus, De Spiritu Sancto, 34-367].

Cyril of Jerusalem [313-386]

For our discussion, Cyril is remembered for his 23 lectures given to catechumens [people being prepared for baptism] probably delivered about 350 while he was a priest, deputising for his bishop Maximus. At the end of 350 he succeeded Maximus as Bishop of Jerusalem.

[1] He saw the holy scriptures as inspired by the Holy Spirit, and so we need to adhere to them if we want to speak rightly and worthily of the Holy Spirit.

[2] It is only through the Spirit Himself that we can speak rightly of the Spirit. So we need to limit our speech about Him to what the Scriptures say. So Cyril, out of reverence, was unwilling to speak about the homoousion of the Spirit, since it is not a Bible word. Although he certainly rejected the Sabellian and other tritest heresies which separated or confused the three Persons of the Godhead.

[3] The Holy Spirit was not an impersonal force - but fully personal, equal in honour to the Father and the Son, and is always present with them.

This immediate presence of God, rather than overwhelming creatures, actually sustains them. That is even true for the guilty who fall under the judgment of God. So when the Holy Spirit comes to act upon us, he does not overwhelm us with violence but his coming is gentle, easy to bear and he comes with compassion of a Guardian. He comes to save, heal, teach, admonish, strengthen, exhort and enlighten the mind.

[4] Cyril's understanding, as Basil also, was that the Holy Spirit perfects rational beings, completing their excellencies. Since He cannot be separated in being or agency from the Father and the Son, he is united with them in being the source [πηγή] and cause [αἰτία] of all things, as in their original creation.

Yet Basil thought of the Father as the 'original cause' of all things; and the work the Son as an 'operative cause' and the Holy Spirit as the 'perfecting cause'. The Holy Spirit was the sovereign freedom of God to be present to his creatures to bring to completion the creative purpose of God. As such, He is the "place" [τόπος] where men and women may meet with God, have communion with Him and worship Him. In this way, said Gregory Nazianzen, God establishes a 'relation of himself to himself'.

db This notion of thinking of The Father as the primary Cause made for some difficulty in the later understanding of the procession of the Holy Spirit. 📖 page 76

The Holy Spirit and the incarnate Son

The relation of the Holy Spirit with the incarnate Son allows us to appreciate his rationalising [think of the renewing of the mind of Romans 12.1] and personalising presence in human beings as he brings them into sanctifying fellowship with God. This 'perfecting cause' of the Holy Spirit is to be taken along with the 'operative cause' in Jesus Christ.

[a] Thinking of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is through the Holy Spirit, the eternal Son became man without overriding or diminishing the reality of the human person [or ὑπόστασις] , but on the contrary, giving it a real subsistence in himself. That is, the human nature of Jesus was personalised or given 'enhypostatic' individual reality [ἐνυπόστασις] in the Person of the Son of God become man.

[b] Each of us, yet as creatures, are all persons; yet, not in an independent way but a contingent and dependent way as *personalised persons* [Latin: *persona personata*] but God alone is properly and intrinsically Person; and so He is the creative Source and Author of all other personal reality; He alone is *personalising Person* [Latin: *persona personans*].

db What this means is that our persons are derived from God's own person. This is consistent with being made in his image. But since the fall our persons have suffered deeply from brokenness, corruption and disarray. And it is not simply that God restores us to what we were in Adam. Rather, we are re-created in Christ Jesus as a new humanity made after the likeness of the incarnate Word himself. If anyone is 'in Christ' he is a new creation [2 Corinthians 5.17]. In this way He is as TFT says elsewhere the "personalising Person" for us.

[c] It is in this personalising activity that the Son of God 'came down from heaven' and 'was made flesh by the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary,' and 'was made man'.

[d] Far from the presence of the Deity of the Son overwhelming or displacing the rational human person in Jesus - his human mind and human soul - the exact opposite took place. No human being has such a full and rich personal human nature as Jesus. It is in this light that we think of the saving and renewing activity of God 'through' Jesus and 'in' his Spirit proclaimed to us in the Gospel. Far from crushing our creaturely nature or damaging our personal existence , the indwelling presence of God through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit has the effect of healing, restoring and deepening - re-creating - human personal being.

[e] Thinking of our baptism, this personalising activity of the Spirit is to be understood in connection with his naming activity in baptism. In baptism the Holy Spirit seals is with the name of God in adopting us as sons of God, and through his mysterious presence within us as the Spirit of the Son and of the Father so enabling us to cry 'Abba Father'. In this way we are "in Christ" and "in the Spirit", both at once. So we are granted personalising communion with the ever-living God.

[3] THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We are considering a number of steps in the thinking which gradually became clear.

[1] Athanasius had made clear how we found the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in his relation to God and in his own divine nature as Spirit in God. It must be taken from the Son and must apply the homoousion to the Holy Spirit as it had been applied to the Son.

"The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father [παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται] and belonging to the Son [καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἴδιον ὄν] is from him given [παρ' αὐτοῦ δίδοται] to the disciples and all who believe on him" Athanasius *Ad Serapion* 1.2; cf 3.1; 4.3

[2] Athanasius had already thought this through in his dealings with the Arians. But further ground was opened by Epiphanius when the concepts of homoousion and 'enhypostasis' were brought together in our understanding of the Triunity of God, then the doctrine of the procession of the Spirit from the being of the Father paralleled that of the Son. [👤 second **db**

note on p.72]. What became clear was that there would have to be the same double movement of thought, because there is a coinherent relation between the Holy Spirit and the Son, just as there is a coinherent relation between the Son and the Father.

So, in considering the divine acts which speak to us, enlighten, save and liberate us : these acts in the Spirit have an impact upon our creaturely beings, which is none other than the impact of the holy being of God, the almighty Creator and Source of all being.

So it is that, along these lines of thought,

"Nicene theology came to realise that the coinherent relations of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, revealed in the saving acts of God through Christ and in the Spirit, are not temporary manifestations of his nature, but are eternally grounded in the intrinsic and wholly reciprocal relations of the consubstantial Trinity." TFT 234

db 1. Notice the footnote 210 [on p.234 of my edition] with reference to the term περιχώρησις which came into parlance from Gregory Nazianzen. Orations 18.42; 22.4 Ep. 101.6. This is a doctrine that goes to express what we have been thinking of here as 'coinherence'.

2. In another of his works, "The Christian Doctrine of God" [1996], TFT makes a useful introduction to this term perichoresis. See the Endnote of this section of my notes to consider the following selection taken from page 102 of that work.

[3] Well before the Council of Nicaea, Dionysius of Alexandria had risen to defend the Monarchist understanding of God ['one God'] against the idea of three gods [tritheism] and unipersonalism [only one person]. He insisted on taking into account the Holy Spirit, including the question of "both whence and through whom he proceeded" and so he pointed to the κοινωνία [fellowship] of the Father and the Son 'in whose hands is the Spirit, who cannot be parted either from him who sends or from him who conveys him'.

[4] Athanasius agreed here, but strengthened the doctrine by the coinherence of the divine persons, "The Spirit is not outside the Word but being in the Word his is in God through Him".

For Athanasius the procession of the Spirit from the Father is bound up with the 'generation of the Son from the Father'. Athanasius thought it not reverent to ask how the Spirit proceeds from God. However he certainly understood the the Spirit's being was 'of God' and 'from God' This implied that the Spirit's procession was from the being of the Father.

[5] This Athanasian pattern was taken by the Cappadocian fathers. With them came the distinction between the being [οὐσία] and ὑπόστασις. The latter spoke of the different modes of existence and distinct particularities of each person of the Trinity. And so the specific relation of the Son to the Father i.e. begotten precisely as Son; was quite different from the relation of the Spirit to the Father i.e. from Whom he proceeds precisely as Spirit, like breath from his mouth. Such a difference between 'Filiation' and 'Spiration' shifted the focus to each individual ὑπόστασις even though they were identically divine with one being.

So we can say that the Son derives from the Father's being in an appropriate way for the Son as Son, - begotten - and the Spirit in a way that is appropriate to the Spirit as Spirit - by procession: thus the Son unoriginally begotten and the Spirit unbegottenly proceeding.

[6] The Cappadocians took up the idea of Cause to defend themselves from being seen to be speaking of three gods. [See the critique of TFT with respect to footnote 224]. Gregory of Nazianzus was more flexible.

[a] A further problem if the being or existence of the Son and Spirit is traced back to the Father - Gregory had to point out that 'God' signifies being and does not refer to the Person [πρόσωπον].

[b] The Cappadocians left the Church with a twofold problem as to [a] the significance of the fatherhood of God and [b] the oneness of the Trinity. Previously in the Church 'Father had

been used in two ways - with reference to the Godhead, and also wrt Person of the Father. The Cappadocians conflated the two senses.

[7] Didymus the Blind wisely tied the doctrine of the *one Being, three Persons* to the doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Trinity as a whole. Although he too, sometimes replace the Nicene formula "from the being of the Father" with "from the Person of the Father". Yet he identified the "procession of the Spirit from the Person of the Father as an eternal procession from God..."

[8] The problematic procession of the Spirit was clarified by Epiphanius as he returned to the Athanasian position. "The Holy Spirit is ever with the Father and the Son, proceeding from the Father and receiving from the Son". He thought in a way that made the procession not simply form these Person of the Trinity but also from their Being as a whole. It was in these terms that the formulation was taken over at Council of Constantinople in 381.

[9] So Constantinople followed the Athanasian-Epiphanian line, without any qualification along the Cappadocian line.

Conclusion - aspects of the Spirit's activity within the Church

[1] The speaking Spirit: the indissoluble union between Word and Spirit

The Lord, 'who spoke by the prophets'. This of course includes his speaking in the Old Covenant as in the New; and so in the Old and New Testaments. There is an essential Unity between the Spirit and the Word.

This implies the unity between God's self-revelation through Israel and the incarnation.

db This last point is worked out strongly through another of his books, "*The Mediation of Christ*"; where TFT makes clear that we cannot detach Jesus Christ from Israel and its revelation.

This also led, through Didymus, to a view of the Scriptures as not static sriting, but breathed by the Holy Spirit, who is present with us to understand that revelation.

[2] John 14 and 16 were central to mission of the Spirit from the Son as well as the Father. In these passages the Spirit is said not to speak of himself but of what he has 'received' from the Son.

[3] This is reflected in the epiclesis recorded in the Euchologion of Serapion. The Epiclesis [ἐπίκλησις] calling down from on high] is the invocation of the Holy Spirit. It is a prayer that asks for the Holy Spirit that the Lord Jesus and the Spirit may speak in those who worship, enabling them to declare holy mysteries.

[4] The Lord and Giver of Life - The Paraclete is the living and life-giving Spirit of God who mediates to us the life of God, glorifies Christ was the Son of the Father, by throwing his radiance upon him. Hippolytus called him the "high-priestly Spirit"

[5] Vicarious Advocacy - Romans 8.28ff

26 ¶ In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Romans 8.26-28 NASB 1960

Paul speaks of the Spirit interceding for us: So that when we pray, even as we engage in prayer, the prayers of the whole groaning creation are penetrated by the intercessory, intervening activity if the Spirit. For it is through the Spirit the heavenly Advocacy and Intercession of Christ our High Priest are made to echo inaudibly within us, so that our prayer and worship in the Spirit are upheld and made effective by Him through a relation of God to Himself."

18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

19 ¶ and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.
Ephesians 6.18-20 NASV 1960

[6] All this comes from the inner communion of the Father, Son and Spirit, into whose one name we are baptised. The personalising work of the Spirit not only makes for a communion between us and the Father and the Son, but also between one another. This is formative for the Church. For the Church to be in the Spirit in an objective and ontological sense, is to be *in God*.

An endnote on the doctrine of perichoresis.

Through the application of the *homoousion* in these ways, then, appropriate to the Spirit as well as to the Son, our thought is lifted up from the level of the economic Trinity to the level of the ontological Trinity (although without leaving the economic Trinity behind), and we reach the supreme point in the knowledge of God in his internal intelligible personal relations. In this process we have to bring in a new concept to be used along with the *homoousion* and the hypostatic union. This is what is known as *perichoresis* (περιχώρησις), a refined form of thought which helps us to develop a careful theological way of interpreting the biblical teaching about the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son and the Spirit and thus about the Communion of the Spirit. *Perichoresis* derives from *chora* (χώρα), the Greek for word 'space' or 'room', or from *chorein* (χῶρειν), meaning 'to contain', 'to make room', or 'to go forward'. It indicates a sort of mutual containing or enveloping of realities, which we also speak of as *coinherence* or *coindwelling*. This concept in a verbal form was first used by Gregory Nazianzen to help express the way in which the divine and the human natures in the one Person of Christ coinhere in one another without the integrity of either being diminished by the presence of the other.⁶⁵ It was then applied to speak of the way in which the three divine Persons mutually dwell in one another and coinhere or inexist in one another while nevertheless remaining other than one another and distinct from one another.⁶⁶ With this application the notion of *perichoresis* is refined and changed to refer to the complete mutual containing or interpenetration of the three divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in one God.⁶⁷ But this had the effect of defining it in such a way that it may not be applied to the hypostatic union of divine and human natures in Christ, without serious damage to the doctrine of Christ. Whenever that has been attempted in ancient or modern times, without qualification, it has resulted in some form of docetic rationalising and depreciating of the humanity of Christ. Its application to the doctrine of the Trinity, on the other hand, enables us to recognise that the coinherent relations of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, revealed in the saving acts of God through Christ and in the Spirit, are not temporary manifestations of God's Nature, but are eternally grounded in the intrinsic and completely reciprocal relations of the Holy Trinity. In this way the concept of *perichoresis* serves to hold powerfully together in the doctrine of the Trinity the identity of the divine Being and the intrinsic unity of the three divine Persons.

This is an excerpt from TFT on what is meant by this doctrine. 📖 db note p.76 part 2.

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