

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2, Paragraph 3 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”,  
Message # 72 – “The Procession of the Spirit”, Presented in the Adult Sunday  
School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall, on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

**Paragraph 3** – In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, d) the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, e) yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is f) eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit g) proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him.

d) 1<sup>st</sup> John 5: 7;    Matthew 28: 19;    2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13: 14;    e) Exodus 3: 14;    John 14: 11;  
1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 8:6;    f) John 1:14,18;    g) John 15:26;    Gal 4: 6)

**Review** – In our last session we looked at the Communion which we have with the Father and the Son. Our communion with the 3 Persons of the Divine Trinity is based upon the Communion which they have had with each other from all eternity, and continue to have with each other in terms of all of their shared acts of creation and redemption. I said to you that this Communion between the Persons of the Godhead was seen in the Creation of the world and especially in the creation of man. I then told you that this Communion of the Persons of the Godhead is further seen, in the fullness of time, in relation to the Father sending the Son into the world to redeem a people. When redemption was accomplished, it then needed to be applied. It would be applied by what the Father and the Son would together do together, in the sending of the Spirit, which would establish to all believers in the New Testament Church age all the blessings of their salvation. All of this work of these Divine Persons, together, is the basis of our receiving all the spiritual blessings of salvation, and is the basis of our communion with God, and our fellowship with their Persons.

**John 15: 26** – “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.” “And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

When Jesus says here – “When the Helper comes”, He was not meaning to say that the Holy Spirit was not yet given in the hearts and lives of his individual disciples; acting and active in relation to their salvation and sanctification. He says the same kind of thing about the sending of the Spirit in John 7: 38 and 39 when He said – “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” “But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

In both of these texts, He is speaking of the Holy Spirit coming to help in a much greater sense in the formation and growth of the New Testament Church. The Holy Spirit would be sent to help the apostles by descending upon them in power on the day of Pentecost. And the Lord Jesus prophesied of this, as it is recorded for us in Acts chapter 1, verse 4 where it says – “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘You have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’”

When Jesus says that He shall Personally send the Spirit to His disciples from the Father, it shows us that the Spirit is sent both by the Father and the Son; that the Spirit would proceed from them both as Persons of the Godhead, equal in authority and power, one in purpose and love for the Church.

**1. The Holy Spirit Proceeds from the Father and the Son eternally.**

The Personal Property of the Holy Spirit is His proceeding from the Father and the Son. Just as it is the Personal Property of the Father was to beget the Son from all eternity, and just as it was the Personal

Property of the Son to be begotten of the Father, so it was the Personal Property of the Spirit to proceed, to be spirated, to be breathed out from the Father and the Son, from eternity past on into eternity future and forever, as an eternal act. Eternal Generation was the work of the Father alone. But Spiration was and is the work of the Father and the Son.

### **Truths to Remember:**

**a)** The Divine Essence neither begets nor is begotten. Rather, it is a Divine Person in the Essence (the Father) that begets, and a Divine Person in the Essence, (the Son) that is begotten. Essence does not beget essence, but Person begets Person, otherwise there would be more than one essence: So, even though there are more Persons than one in God, yet there is not more than one essence in God. God is One. He is Simple in His Being. (See Gill's – The Doctrine of the Trinity, P. 125 and 126)

**b)** Even so, we can say, that Divine Essence does not send or proceed forth from itself. It is a Divine Person, the Holy Spirit, who proceeds and is sent forth to His mission and work. The Mission and Work of this Blessed Person proceed from eternity past, even as in the Eternal Generation of the Son, and proceeding from the Eternal Generation of the Son.

### **How then should we define the Spirit's Procession?**

I myself would define it as the Father and the Son, as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Persons of the Divine Trinity, breathing out and sending forth the Holy Spirit, as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Person of the Divine Trinity, in His coming to have a Divine Mission Peculiarly assigned to Him by them; to be a Divine Workman in the creation of the world, and of man, to strive with consciences of sinful men, to be the Comforter and Helper of all believers in Christ in all generations, and in His taking the things of Christ and making them known to men according to their mutually agreed purpose as the 3 Persons of the Godhead.

The procession of the Spirit is from Eternity Past because it was then in the counsels of eternity that these things were agreed upon by all the Persons of the Divine Trinity together as equals, without any subordination of either the Son to the Father, or the Spirit to the Son and the Father. The procession of the Spirit came about within the Divine Trinity itself, and then was manifested in the acts of Creation, Providence, and Redemption to the glory of the Triune God.

### **2. The Father and the Son's sending of the Spirit, following Christ's Ascension, is based upon the Eternal act of Spiration of the Spirit by the Father and the Son in Eternity Past.**

In other words, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son eternally, even as the Son was begotten of the Father eternally. Both are eternal acts within the Godhead. The Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and the Son, one with the Father and the Son in substance and Essence, Equal and One in purpose and in power and authority.

All of the Spirit's proceeding, then, in time and space, in His being given to the Church, is all based upon the Eternal Act of Spiration, His proceeding from the Father and the Son, according to mutually determined purpose relates to acts and actions taken all through human history, which is the story of Christ and His Redemption.

**John 16: 13-15** – “However, when He, the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” “All things that the Father has are Mine.” “Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”

When the Spirit of truth came, the whole Church was baptized with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. And in that mighty act of the Spirit, the apostles were given power and gifts for ministry, and all the believers were baptized into the body of Christ. From that time forward then, until the end of the age, individual believers, when they believed, were placed into the body of Christ, (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12: 13) into the Universal Church and mystical spiritual body, of our Lord Jesus Christ. Each believer in Christ is only baptized once,

spiritually speaking. And this takes place following their being regenerated by the Spirit, and their believing in Christ. They are sealed with the Holy Spirit in this wonderful way. There is only one baptism and then during the course of the Christian life, there are many fillings. The Holy Spirit's ministry in this whole Church age is to guide believers into the truth concerning Christ and what He has done by His righteous life and sacrificial death. It is to guide the Church into all the truth of the greatness of His kingdom and His glory. This is what it means when Jesus says – "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."

### **3. The Father and the Spirit send the Spirit in relation to the Son's fulfillment of His mission; that is, the fulfillment of all righteousness and the accomplishment of redemption.**

**John 16: 5-7** – "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart." "Nevertheless I tell you the truth." "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to You."

As a Person of the Divine Trinity, Jesus says that He would never leave them or forsake them, but here is saying that as a Man and Mediator, the Son of God, He was going away to Him who sent Him, to the Father. But this was fully according to the Father's and His purpose and plans.

So, here we see fully confirmed in the words of promise which Jesus gives to His disciples, His own full ability as a Person of the Divine Trinity, to send the Holy Spirit. So the Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to the Church on the day of Pentecost, and begins His good work of spiritually baptizing all believers into Christ's one spiritual body.

Just as the Spirit brooded over the waters in the first creation, and is spoken of in Psalm 33, verse 6 as the "Breath of God's mouth", by whom the heavens were made, and the heavenly host, the angels, were made, even so, we must understand that the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son would have, and still does have, this marvelous role and work, as God, in being sent by the Father and the Son, His sovereign assigned work has been to work out the New Creation of Christ's Church; that is by His power, apply Christ's redemption, to save all elect sinners, to teach them and give them understanding in terms of their learning and doing the will of God, and also giving them wisdom and power to be good witnesses on behalf of God and Christ, and to people around them. His focus is to testify of Son, Christ Jesus, through His redeemed people.

**John 14: 26** – "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

Here we see the Father is mentioned specifically as the Person sending the Holy Spirit. But you will notice that it says that He will send the Spirit in Jesus name; that is, His sending is with the the full concurrence of the Son, both in purpose and in the actual act of sending the Spirit to the Church. For the Lord Jesus would ascend to the Father 40 days after His Resurrection, and when He would "go away" to heaven, the Spirit would be sent to the Church.

### **4. Conclusion: Communion with the Holy Spirit flows out of His Sanctifying work in our hearts and lives.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2: 13-17** – "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle." "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work."

Paul is here compelled to give thanks to God the Father, always, for all the brethren at the church of Thessalonica. These were brethren who he knew were beloved by the Lord. He knew that God had from the beginning, that is from the beginning of the world, and before that in the counsels of eternity past with the Son and Spirit, chosen a people to be His particular people, considering them all as fallen, and not finding any reason in any of them for His choosing them; simply to show mercy and demonstrate undeserved love. He chose them for salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit (here the distinction in the Godhead in terms of role is clearly seen, even though the Persons of the Godhead are of one essence. Sanctification is by the Spirit in relation to belief in the truth of the gospel. And the purpose? For the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**This Communion is experienced by us when we believe in the Love between the Father and the Son; which love is communicated to us by the Holy Spirit.**

**John 17: 20-26** – “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.” “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.” “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” “O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

**1<sup>st</sup> John 4: 9-16** – “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.” “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” “No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.” “By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” “We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.” “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

**Quotes of Men on the Procession of the Spirit:**

**Louis Berkhof in His *Systematic Theology*, P. 97 says this:** By generation the Son is enabled to take part in the work of spiration, but the Holy Spirit acquires no such power.” “In logical order generation precedes spiration.” (He means, in the logical mind of man) “It should be remembered, however, that all this implies no essential subordination of the Holy Spirit to the Son.” “In spiration as well as in generation there is a communication of the whole of the Divine Essence, so that of the procession of the Holy Spirit is on an equality with the Father and the Son.” “The doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son is based on John 15: 26 and on the fact that the Spirit is also called the Spirit of Christ and of the Son (Romans 8: 9 and Galatians 4: 6), and is sent by Christ into the world.” “Spiration may be defined as that eternal and necessary act of the first and second Persons in the Trinity whereby they, within the Divine Being, become the ground of the Personal Subsistence of the Holy Spirit, and put the third Person in possession of the whole Divine Essence, without any division alienation or change.”

**Matthew Barrett in His book, *Simply Trinity*, says this:** Our English word procession is how we translate the Greek word *ekporeusis*. On P. 269 he says – “The spiration of the Spirit is distinct from the generation of the Son. But one should not assume that the spiration of the Spirit has nothing to do with paternity and filiation.” (that is, the Divine Properties of the Father and the Son established from all eternity past) “The reason the Spirit is spirated (or breathed) from the Father and the Son is because it is in

Eternal Generation that the Son is empowered to spirate the Spirit.” “Gilles Emory says, “The Father, in begetting His Son, gives to His Son the power to ‘breathe forth’ or to “spirate” the Holy Spirit.” “What does this look like for each Person of the Trinity?” “The Father, as Father gives to the Son the power to spirate with Him the Holy Spirit, and the Son as Son receives from the Father the power (the active power) of spirating with Him the Holy Spirit.” “Or think of it this way, “The power of spirating the Holy Spirit is included in the generation of the Son: by His His generation, the Son receives from the father to be with the principle of the Holy Spirit.” “What does this entail for the Spirit?” “The ‘procession of the Holy Spirit is inscribed in the mutual relation of the Father and the Son.” “This means that the process of the Holy Spirit is connected in itself to the generation of the Son by the Father.” (The Trinity, P. 116)