



QUESTION:
Is it right to sing hymns or pray to
the Holy Spirit?



Let me begin by asking you to think about the following questions:

1. Suppose a very dear friend, for whom you have great respect, and whose judgment you could unhesitatingly trust, were to say to you, "I know that you are having a difficult time and therefore I am sending someone to you who will help you with the problems you are facing. He will stay with you and always be on hand to advise and encourage you. And I want you to receive him as you would receive me."

Would you be prepared to receive this special visitor, or would you prefer not to entertain him? And, if you *did* choose to receive him, would you be willing to talk to him? Or would keep him at arm's length and even avoid speaking to him?

2. Again, suppose you were accused of committing a serious offence and you were offered the services of the finest advocate available - someone who could represent you effectively because he understands you - would you accept the offer and be willing to talk to him about your case? Or would you decide that, after all, you could manage without his help?
3. And yet again. Suppose you learned that someone has genuine concern for your welfare and wished to be your friend. Would you agree that it would be - to say the least - evidence of deep ingratitude, if you were to ignore this individual and treat him as though he did not exist?

Why do ask these questions? I ask them because if you will think about them and answer them for yourself, you will have the answer to the question I have been requested to consider in "The Question Box".

The Question is; **"Is it right to sing hymns, or pray, to the Holy Spirit?"**

Now, for me, the matter does not constitute a problem, because I accept all that the New Testament scriptures teaches me concerning the Holy Spirit.

I have learned that the Holy Spirit is an intelligent, emotional being who possess all the qualities and characteristics that indicate personality. I know that the Lord Jesus promised to send Him to be 'another Comforter' to believers; that is, to be a 'parakletos' = 'one called alongside to help'. In other words, to be a helper.

And, since the Holy Spirit came to 'abide for ever', He is here *now*, and He will remain here until the Lord returns.

He is capable of affection.

Rom. 15:30 speaks of 'the love of the Spirit'. This refers to the love that *He* has for *us*, and when, in our prayers, we find it difficult to find the words with which to express ourselves clearly, the love He has for us moves Him to take up our faltering petitions and present them on our behalf to the Father, 'with sighs too deep for words' as He makes intercession for us (Rom. 8: 26-27).

Why, then, should we hesitate to speak to, or sing about, such a wonderful Friend? I can think of two possible reasons why some Christians find it something of a problem.

1st. There are not very many hymns in our hymnbook that relate to the Holy Spirit, or that speak about Him, because the sad fact is that the majority of such hymns have been written by people of the Pentecostal persuasion, and the hymns and songs they have produced inevitably contain 'Pentecostal' errors concerning the nature and work of the Spirit. They plead for a *Pentecostal descent of the Spirit*, or a '*baptism of the Spirit*', or a bestowal of the charismata – the '*gifts of the Spirit*'. So we are naturally reluctant to use them in their original form.

As a matter of fact, I must admit have serious doubts about some of the hymns that are found in our own hymnbooks. "*Breathe on me Breath of God*" has a lovely melody, but its sentiments are certainly questionable.

Another one? What about "*Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on me*"? We cannot sing this hymn scripturally, and it is imperative that we take care that what we sing is in harmony with the Word.

2nd But probably our major difficulty arises from the fact that the Holy Spirit is the least known member of the Godhead. He is described in the Oxford Dictionary as '*the third person in the Godhead*', and sadly, that is the place to which he is erroneously assigned in the thinking of many Christians. He is Number Three!

But the only sense in which it is possible to describe Him as the Third Person is Chronologically. By this I mean in the sense that that the Holy Spirit is the third Person to be revealed to us.

The First Person to be revealed was God Himself, the Father.

Then, the Second Person, to be revealed '*in the fullness of time*', was the Word, Who '*became flesh and dwelt among us*', and of Whom God said, "*Thou art My Son...*".

Finally, the Third and last Person in the Godhead to be revealed was the Spirit of God – the Holy Spirit – when, on the Day of Pentecost, after the Lord's ascension, He came into the world to commence His own ministry; a ministry which Jesus described as being '*to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment*'.

We have no difficulty speaking to the Father, or to the Saviour in prayer and we find it easy to address them in song. If we knew our Comforter better and felt more comfortable speaking *about Him*, we should find it easier to speak *to Him*, and singing about Him, would come easier to us.

If the Spirit were to speak to the Church today, I think He would say; "*Believe in Me! Trust Me! Use Me!*"

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