

# A Critical Analysis Of The Pneumatology Of Thomas Erskine Of Linlathen

## Abstract

In performing an analysis of the pneumatology of Thomas Erskine it is first necessary to look for the presence of a traditional Trinitarian Pneumatology which is based on the historical findings of the church and which deals with the subject of hypostasis and the relationships between the Persons within the Godhead. This kind of pneumatology is found to be lacking in Erskine's writings. The next step is to proceed to look for anything that could replace it. Erskine's concept of the "first bond" of the flesh, the role of the human conscience, and the place of the living Word are three things that partially take the place of a formal pneumatology in Erskine's thinking.

Erskine was very interested in the West Country revival which began in Scotland in 1829. He visited the area and wrote about his observations and experiences there. This increased his interest in the actions of the Holy Spirit both in experience and the scriptures. Even though he later recanted his endorsement of these manifestations in his own day, he held to his belief that such phenomena should appear in a healthy church which follows a New Testament pattern.

In this thesis Erskine's writings are analyzed by scanning all of them into a computer database and searching for references to the actions of the Holy Spirit. From this a dynamic pneumatology emerges. A dynamic pneumatology is not concerned with historic creeds or the relationships within the Godhead. John McIntyre defines a dynamic pneumatology as one that speaks of what the Holy Spirit *does*. McIntyre's taxonomy sets forth eleven patterns of pneumatology with many sub-patterns. This examination of the writings of Erskine reveals a strong dynamic pneumatology which is both relational and ecclesial.

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