

BIBLE TRUTHS EXPLAINED

What God's Word teaches about

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Gordon Lyons

KJV Edition

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Bible Truths Explained: God the Holy Spirit
Revised: 1990, 2000, 2006
First published: 2006
1-word.com web site publication

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God the Holy Spirit

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Special Acknowledgement

I must acknowledge a genuine debt of gratitude to the work of Dr. Charles Hodge. The writings of this theologian from a previous generation have helped considerably in preparing this work. On a number of occasions—as will be seen when reading these studies—I have cited or alluded to Dr. Hodge’s remarks in his three-volume *Systematic Theology*. These references have been acknowledged in the footnotes to the study text.

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Author's Note

The following study on the Doctrine of God the Holy Spirit is the first of two studies on the Holy Spirit. The second study, published separately, deals more particularly with the Work of the Holy Spirit. Please consult both documents to appreciate more fully the person and work of God the Holy Spirit.

Part 1

Synopsis: God the Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead or Trinity, co-equal in eternity, power and glory with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is a person. All the attributes of personality are ascribed to the Spirit in the same way that they are ascribed to the Father and to the Son. The Holy Spirit has existed with the Father and with the Son from all eternity, and the Spirit is said to proceed from (and be sent by) both the Father and the Son. Concerning the work of redemption, the Holy Spirit convicts men and women of sin, righteousness and judgment; he converts sinners to God by regenerating them and bringing them to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Following conversion, the Holy Spirit continues the work of sanctification in the life of every child of God. To this end, the Holy Spirit indwells every truly born-again believer, signifying them as belonging eternally to God, setting them apart from the world to God, and setting God's seal of ownership upon them unto the day of final redemption.

Note 1

Not Merely a Divine Influence

The Holy Spirit is not merely a divine influence, power or force devoid of personality. He is in all respects a personal Being, and must be considered as such. It is the Holy Spirit, who, as a person, interprets the truths of God's Word to the believer, and who grants to each believer the ability to understand and believe spiritual truths. It is the Holy Spirit, who, as a person, intercedes for the believer with groans (or expressions) that cannot be uttered. As a person, the Holy Spirit can be grieved and sinned against. It is the Spirit, who, as a person, indwells each believer. Since a person of the Godhead indwells us, our thoughts, words and general manner of life should be consistent with God's holy presence. (John 14:16-17, 26: 16:12-15; Rom. 8:26-27)

Scripture References: Note 1

John 14:16-17

⁽¹⁶⁾ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; ⁽¹⁷⁾ *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (See v.18)

John 14:26

⁽²⁶⁾ But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 16:12-15

⁽¹²⁾ I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.
⁽¹³⁾ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

⁽¹⁴⁾ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you. ⁽¹⁵⁾ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show *it* unto you.

Romans 8:26-27

⁽²⁶⁾ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

⁽²⁷⁾ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

Note 2

Work of the Holy Spirit

Concerning the world generally, the Holy Spirit restrains unregenerate mankind from unbridled evil. He strives with men and women, convicting them of sin and convincing them of coming judgment upon the ungodly. In this respect, the work of the Holy Spirit is common to all mankind (common grace). However, the Spirit works efficaciously or effectually and savingly only upon the elect (saving grace). In their case, he draws them irresistibly to Christ, convinces them of their great need of redemption by Christ's blood, and enables them—*freely and willingly*—to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus. (John 6:44, 63, 65; 7:37-39; 16:7-11)

Scripture References: Note 2

John 6:44-45

⁽⁴⁴⁾ No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

John 6:63

⁽⁶³⁾ It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life. (Cf. 2 Cor. 3:6)

John 6:65

⁽⁶⁵⁾ And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. (See vv. 64,66)

John 7:37-39

⁽³⁷⁾ In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. ⁽³⁸⁾ He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ⁽³⁹⁾ (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (Cf. Isa. 44:3; 55:1)

John 16:7-11

⁽⁷⁾ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

⁽⁸⁾ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁽⁹⁾ Of sin, because they believe not on me; ⁽¹⁰⁾ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ⁽¹¹⁾ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Note 3

Sanctified by the Holy Spirit

All those who profess saving faith in Christ have received the gift of the Holy Spirit to designate and seal them as belonging to God; to guarantee their inheritance to eternal life and heavenly glory, and to prepare them for that glory by changing them from one degree of glory to another during the course of this earthly life. This is known as the work of sanctification. The believer's sanctification will be brought to completion in their final glorification, at which time these believers will be presented spotless and blameless before God, their Father in heaven. (Acts 2:38-39; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Eph. 1:13-14; Jude 1:24-25)

Scripture References: Note 3

Acts 2:38-39

⁽³⁸⁾ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ⁽³⁹⁾ For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. (See vv.22-41; cf. Acts 15:7-9)

2 Corinthians 3:16-18

⁽¹⁶⁾ Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. ⁽¹⁷⁾ Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. ⁽¹⁸⁾ But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord. (See vv.5-15; cf. 1 Cor. 13:12)

Ephesians 1:13-14

⁽¹³⁾ In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, ⁽¹⁴⁾ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (See also 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5)

Jude 1:24-25

⁽²⁴⁾ Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, ⁽²⁵⁾ To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Note 4

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit apportions to each believer particular gifts or offices, which are to be used in building up the body of Christ (the church). These gifts and offices are of various kinds; and, like the various members or parts of the human body, each believer has a different, but essential, part to play. In regard to spiritual gifts, the Bible does not teach that every believer should possess the same gift or gifts, but it teaches that all believers should show evidence in their lives of the same fruit: viz., the fruit of the Spirit; the foremost of which is love. (Rom. 12:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:4-20; Eph. 4:7-13)

Scripture References: Note 4

Romans 12:4-8

⁽⁴⁾ For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ⁽⁵⁾ So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. ⁽⁶⁾ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; ⁽⁷⁾ Or ministry, *let us wait* on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; ⁽⁸⁾ Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

⁽⁴⁾ Now there are diversities of gifts, but the **same Spirit**. ⁽⁵⁾ And there are differences of administrations, but the **same Lord**. ⁽⁶⁾ And there are diversities of operations, but it is the **same God** which worketh all in all. ⁽⁷⁾ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. (Bold emphases added; see vv.8-10)

1 Corinthians 12:11

⁽¹¹⁾ But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (Cf. 1 Cor. 7:7)

1 Corinthians 12:14,18

⁽¹⁴⁾ For the body is not one member, but many...

⁽¹⁸⁾ But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. (See vv.12-31)

Ephesians 4:7

⁽⁷⁾ But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (See vv.8-13)

Key Scripture References

Genesis 1:1-2

⁽¹⁾ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

⁽²⁾ And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Job 33:4

⁽⁴⁾ The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

Psalms 139:7

⁽⁷⁾ Whither shall I go from thy spirit [Spirit]? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

Isaiah 40:13

⁽¹³⁾ Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him?

Matthew 1:18

⁽¹⁸⁾ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 1:20

⁽²⁰⁾ But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 12:31-32

⁽³¹⁾ Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

⁽³²⁾ And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come. (See also Mark 3:28-29; Luke 12:10)

John 14:16-17

⁽¹⁶⁾ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; ⁽¹⁷⁾ *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 15:26

⁽²⁶⁾ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16:8

⁽⁸⁾ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

John 16:13

⁽¹³⁾ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

Acts 5:3a,4b

^(3a) But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost... ^(4b) thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

Acts 5:9

⁽⁹⁾ Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

Acts 10:19

⁽¹⁹⁾ While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

Acts 13:2

⁽²⁾ As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Acts 13:4

⁽⁴⁾ So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Acts 16:6-7

⁽⁶⁾ Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁽⁷⁾ After they were come to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

Acts 20:28

⁽²⁸⁾ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

1 Timothy 4:1

⁽¹⁾ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Hebrews 3:7-8

⁽⁷⁾ Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice,
⁽⁸⁾ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

Related Scripture References

Genesis 6:3

⁽³⁾ And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.

Numbers 27:18

⁽¹⁸⁾ And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom *is* the spirit [Spirit], and lay thine hand upon him;

Nehemiah 9:20a

^(20a) Thou gavest also thy good spirit [Spirit] to instruct them...

Psalms 51:11

⁽¹¹⁾ Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Isaiah 11:2

⁽²⁾ And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

Isaiah 42:1

⁽¹⁾ Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Isaiah 61:1

⁽¹⁾ The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; (See also Luke 4:18)

Zechariah 4:6

⁽⁶⁾ Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Matthew 3:16-17

⁽¹⁶⁾ And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: ⁽¹⁷⁾ And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 4:1

⁽¹⁾ Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Matthew 10:20

⁽²⁰⁾ For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (See also Mark 13:11)

Matthew 28:19

⁽¹⁹⁾ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Luke 11:13

⁽¹³⁾ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Acts 5:32

⁽³²⁾ And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Acts 7:51

⁽⁵¹⁾ Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

Acts 15:28

⁽²⁸⁾ For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

Romans 8:26-27

⁽²⁶⁾ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ⁽²⁷⁾ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.

Ephesians 4:30

⁽³⁰⁾ And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Revelation 14:13

⁽¹³⁾ And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Related Bible Doctrines

The doctrine of God the Holy Spirit (or the doctrine of the Person of the Holy Spirit) is related directly to the doctrine of the Work of the Holy Spirit. The former deals principally with the Holy Spirit as a Person; including his divine attributes and his relationship within the Godhead or Trinity. As the title implies, the

related doctrine of the Work of the Holy Spirit deals principally with the operations of the Spirit of God in the world; in the lives of mankind in general, and in the lives of believers in particular.¹

¹ See further on *Bible Truths Explained: The Work of the Holy Spirit*, by Gordon Lyons.

Part 2

Preliminary Remarks

Breath, Wind and Spirit

The Hebrew word 'ruah' and its Greek counterpart 'pneuma' are used in different senses. Both *ruah* and *pneuma* may be rendered as 'breath', 'wind', 'mind', or 'spirit', according to the context. Again, these words may be understood in either a literal or a figurative sense—depending on the context and on the analogy of Scripture.

In referring to the words 'ruah' and 'pneuma', Charles Hodge wrote:

“...They properly mean 'wind', as when our Lord says, 'The πνεῦμα [*pneuma*, wind] bloweth where it listeth' (John 3:8); then any invisible power; then immaterial, invisible agents, as the soul and angels; then God himself, who is said to be a Spirit, to express his nature as an immaterial, intelligent being; and finally, the Third Person of the Trinity is called 'The Spirit' by way of eminence, probably, for two reasons: First, because he is the power or efficiency of God, i.e., the person through whom the efficiency of God is directly exercised; and secondly, to express his relation to the other persons of the Trinity. As Father and Son are terms expressive of relation, it is natural to infer that the word 'Spirit' is to be understood in the same way...”²

Although different renderings of these Hebrew and Greek words are possible, the context must determine which sense is intended. However, when the words 'ruah' or 'pneuma' (or their variants) form part of a phrase such as 'the Spirit of God', or 'the Spirit of the LORD', or 'my Spirit', then clearly it is the Holy Spirit who is intended.

For example, the Scripture says:

Job 33:4

⁽⁴⁾ The **Spirit of God** hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. (Bold emphasis added)

In this verse, 'the Spirit of God' refers clearly to the Holy Spirit. In responding to Job, Elihu (the speaker) is attributing the gift of life to the work of God himself, acting through his Holy Spirit. Probably, Elihu is alluding to the creation of man, where God breathed into Adam the breath of life and man became a living soul. Here, however, the Holy Spirit is being equated with almighty God—thus demonstrating the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit.

As the executive of the Godhead, it is the Holy Spirit through whom God acts: in this case, in the creation of human life; both in the case of Adam, and in the case of all human life since Adam. Thus, we see that biological processes alone do not constitute the fullness of life experienced by human beings, nor do biological processes account for the immortal soul present in the life of every human being. This is the work of the almighty sovereign God of all creation, acting through his Holy Spirit. (Gen. 2:7)

Again, concerning Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, the LORD God said:

Ezekiel 37:3,9-10

⁽³⁾ ...Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest...

² C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1977 reprint, Vol. 1, p.522.

⁽⁹⁾ Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the **wind**, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O **breath**, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

⁽¹⁰⁾ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

The LORD God continued:

Ezekiel 37:13-14

⁽¹³⁾ And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, ⁽¹⁴⁾ And shall put my **spirit** in you, and ye shall live... (Bold emphases added)

In the Hebrew of the above passages from Ezekiel chapter 37, the words translated 'breath', 'wind', and 'spirit' (*'ruah'*) are the same (or are derived from the same root).

Again, regarding the new creation or the new birth—a direct creative act of the Holy Spirit—the Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus:

John 3:8

⁽⁸⁾ The **wind** [Gk., πνεῦμα, *pneuma*] bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the **Spirit**. [Gk., πνεύματος, *pneumatos*] (Bold emphases added)

In the Greek of this verse, the word translated 'wind' (*pneuma*) is essentially the same word as that translated 'Spirit' (*pneumatos*).

From these examples, it can be seen that the same words (Heb. 'ruah' and Gk. 'pneuma') may be translated in different ways.

The Doctrine of God the Holy Spirit

Pre-Existence of the Holy Spirit

As one of the Godhead or Divine Trinity, the Holy Spirit has existed from all eternity, and he will continue to exist throughout the eternal ages. He has had no beginning—for he is uncreated pure Spirit, eternally existing with, and proceeding from, the Father and the Son.

Thus, concerning his existence at—and participation in—the creation of the universe, the Scripture says:

Genesis 1:1-2

⁽¹⁾ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

⁽²⁾ And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the **Spirit of God** moved upon the face of the waters.

And, concerning the Holy Spirit's existence from eternity, the writer to the Hebrews declares:

Hebrews 9:14

⁽¹⁴⁾ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the **eternal Spirit** offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Bold emphasis added)

Like God the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son (the eternal Word or Logos), the eternal Spirit of God has no beginning of days or end of life. The Persons of the Godhead are not subject to the limitations of time and space; nor to the effects of sin, including decay, death and dissolution. These things do not apply in the presence of the most holy and eternal spirit Being: God Triune—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Person of the Holy Spirit

The Trinity

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the divine Trinity or Godhead. In his book, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, George Smeaton summarises the commonly accepted beliefs of the Church throughout many centuries concerning the doctrine of the Trinity.

These beliefs are as follows:

1. That there is one God or divine essence.
2. That the same numerical divine essence is common to three truly divine Persons, who are designated Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
3. That between these three divine Persons there obtains a natural order of subsistence and operation: that the first Person hath life in himself (John 5:26); and that the second and third Persons subsist and act from the first.
4. That this order of the divine Persons belongs to the divine essence prior to, and irrespective of, the covenant of grace.
5. That this natural order of subsistence and action is the ground and reason of the several names, Father, Son, and Spirit; the Son being begotten of the Father, and the Spirit by spiration proceeding from both.³

Smeaton continues:

And as to the divine **works**:

- The Father is the source **from which** every operation emanates;
- The Son is the medium **through which** it is performed,
- And the Holy Ghost is the executive **by which** it is carried into effect.⁴

Relationship within the Trinity

As we have seen, the Godhead or Trinity consists of three truly divine Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit is a person in exactly the same way as the Father and Son are persons. Although the Godhead consists of three distinct Persons, however, there are not three Gods. The three divine Persons of the Trinity constitute only one God (God Triune).

Concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the following points should be noted:

1. In regard to his Person, the Holy Spirit is **equal** in power, glory, and eternity with the Father and the Son.
2. In regard to his work and offices (or his mode of subsistence and operation), the Holy Spirit is **subordinate** to the Father and the Son.

³ George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Edinburgh, 1988 reprint, p.3.

⁴ Op. cit., p.4.

3. In regard to his relation to the other Persons of the Godhead, and his relationship to the believer, the Holy Spirit is said to **proceed from** (and be sent by) the Father and the Son.

This is as much as the Scriptures tell us about the interpersonal relations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and this is all that the people of God need to know and believe. A full understanding of this unfathomable mystery is not possible to our finite minds, nor is it necessary to life or godliness.

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

Throughout the Bible, various terms are used to designate the third person of the Trinity, including ‘the Spirit of God’, ‘the Spirit of the LORD’, ‘my Spirit’, ‘the Holy Spirit’, ‘the Comforter’ or ‘the Counsellor’, etc.

Concerning the various terms employed to designate the Holy Spirit, Charles Hodge wrote:

“...These [names and titles] and equivalent terms are evidently to be understood in the same sense throughout the Scriptures.

If the Spirit of God which moved on the face of the waters, which strove with the antediluvians [pre-flood mankind], which came upon Moses, which gave skill to the artisans, and which inspired the prophets, is the **power** of God; then the Spirit which came upon the Apostles, which Christ promised to send as a comforter and advocate, and to which the instruction, sanctification, and guidance of the people of God are referred, must also be the **power** of God.

But if the Spirit is clearly revealed to be a **person** in the later parts of Scripture, it is plain that the earlier portions must be understood in the same way. One part of the Bible, and much less one or a few passages, must not be taken by themselves, and receive any interpretation which the isolated words may bear, but Scripture must interpret Scripture...”⁵ (Bold emphases added)

Scriptures Demonstrate Personality of the Holy Spirit

It is necessary to establish from the Word of God the fact that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person. As a person, the Holy Spirit must exhibit intelligence, will, and individual subsistence or being; together with all the other attributes or characteristics of personality. He must be able to exercise these attributes according to the sovereign purposes of his own will. If this can be shown to be the case from the Scriptures, then clearly this will refute the view that the Holy Spirit is not a person, but merely a divine power, force, or influence, emanating from God.

In the section that follows, we will adduce just some of the many passages from the Word of God that demonstrate and prove the personality of the Holy Spirit. Having done this, we will then consider what God’s Word says about the deity or divine nature of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus’ Teaching about the Holy Spirit

The teaching that perhaps illustrates most clearly the personality and work of the Holy Spirit is given by the Lord Jesus in his discourse to the apostles; recorded for us in the Gospel of John, chapters fourteen through sixteen. This specific teaching about the Holy Spirit was intended to prepare the apostles for the Lord’s coming departure from their midst; to explain to them something of the subsequent mission of the Holy Spirit, and to caution them against acting prematurely: i.e., without the full power, or without the specific gifts, of the Holy Spirit which they were to receive at Pentecost.

This, however, is not to imply that the presence of the Holy Spirit was yet unknown to the apostles. (For the past three years, the Lord and his apostles had been teaching and healing people by the power of the Holy Spirit. And, by this same Spirit of God, people had been regenerated and brought into God’s kingdom.) Rather, it is to make clear that—after the departure of the Lord Jesus—the apostles would be equipped with a fuller measure of the Spirit’s power, and that they would receive specific gifts of the Spirit (including divine inspiration, tongues [i.e., languages], etc). This power and these gifts were es-

⁵ Op. cit. p.523.

sential to their apostolic calling and ministry; for the effective diffusion of the Gospel among all nations, and for the edification or upbuilding of the early Church.

Thus, to these apostles, Jesus said:

John 14:16-17

⁽¹⁶⁾ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,⁶ that he may abide with you forever; ⁽¹⁷⁾ *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (See vv.18,26)

In the following chapter, the Lord Jesus says:

John 15:26-27

⁽²⁶⁾ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: ⁽²⁷⁾ And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

In both of the above passages, it can be seen that the Lord Jesus clearly distinguishes the Holy Spirit both from himself and from his Father—thereby indicating the individual subsistence (or distinct being) and personality of the Holy Spirit. Also, the Lord Jesus is attributing qualifications and characteristics to the Holy Spirit that are applicable only of a person (e.g., the ability to comfort, counsel, defend or aid; and the ability to testify or bear witness).

Again, concerning the work of the Comforter, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples:

John 16:7

⁽⁷⁾ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

In John 15:26, the Holy Spirit is said to proceed from the Father. However, in John 16:7 above, the Spirit is said to be sent by the Son. From this it is evident that the Holy Spirit proceeds from (and is sent by) both the Father and the Son. In this instance, the Holy Spirit is said to be sent by the Son in order to continue his work in relation to the world, and within the lives of the Lord's own people.

Thus, concerning the Holy Spirit's work in relation to the world, the Lord Jesus said:

John 16:8-11

⁽⁸⁾ And when he is come, he will reprove [convict] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁽⁹⁾ Of sin, because they believe not on me; ⁽¹⁰⁾ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ⁽¹¹⁾ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

By ascribing such a work to the Holy Spirit, this passage demonstrates unmistakably the personality of the Spirit.

⁶ Comforter: Gk., παράκλητος, *parakletos*, counsellor, advocate, or helper.

The Lord Jesus continues:

John 16:12-13a

⁽¹²⁾ I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

^(13a) Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...

The Holy Spirit comes in the first instance to guide the apostles, and then to guide believers more generally, into all truth concerning Jesus, and about what he taught. For the apostles, this guidance into all truth was of paramount importance; for, while inspired by the Holy Spirit, the apostles of the Lord Jesus would be responsible for proclaiming the Word of God infallibly, or for committing that sacred, imperishable and infallible Word to writing in the form of the New Testament Scriptures.

The Holy Spirit also reveals what the Word of God as a whole teaches. Apart from this illuminating presence and testimony of the Holy Spirit acting powerfully with the Word, that Word cannot rightly be understood: For God's Word is spiritually discerned, and it must be interpreted by the Spirit of God. However, the ability to provide spiritual illumination, guidance and teaching, supposes personality on the part of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 13 quoted above continues:

John 16:13b

^(13b) ...he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall **hear**, *that* shall he **speak**: and he will **show** you things to come. (Bold emphases added)

Here, the Holy Spirit is said to 'hear', to 'speak', and to 'show'. These actions indicate that the Holy Spirit is a person.

The Scripture continues:

John 16:14-15

⁽¹⁴⁾ He shall **glorify** me: for he shall **receive** of mine, and shall **show** *it* unto you.

⁽¹⁵⁾ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall **take** of mine, and shall **show** *it* unto you. (Bold emphases added; cf. v.14 with John 17:1)

Here, the Holy Spirit is said to 'glorify' the Son; to 'receive' and 'take' that which pertains to the Son, and to 'show' these truths to the apostles, and ultimately to believers generally. This passage again illustrates the actual and distinct being and personality of the Holy Spirit.

Other Scriptures Indicating Personality of the Holy Spirit

Again, concerning the sufferings, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Scripture says:

Acts 5:32

⁽³²⁾ And **we are his witnesses** of these things; **and so is also the Holy Ghost**, whom God hath given to them that obey him. (Bold emphases added; see vv.29-31)

In the above verse, the Holy Spirit is named as a witness. The Spirit of God witnesses to the Lord Jesus, and to the truth of everything that the Lord said and did. This powerful witness or testimony of the Holy Spirit confirms the apostle's own testimony concerning the risen Lord Jesus. It also stamps the

seal of divine authenticity and approval upon the message of the Gospel: the message of forgiveness of sins and eternal life through repentance and faith in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, from this verse, it is clear that the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Son—concerning whom he bears witness, and whom he glorifies. Similarly, the Spirit is distinct from the Father, who gives the Holy Spirit to all who obey him (i.e., to those who obey God rather than men (cf. Acts 5:29); it may also denote the obedience of faith (cf. Rom. 1:5).)

Furthermore, it can be seen that the Holy Spirit exhibits personal attributes when he chooses, equips, and appoints God's people to office or service within the church. Thus, to the elders of the church at Ephesus, the apostle Paul declares:

Acts 20:28

⁽²⁸⁾ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, **over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers**, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. (Bold emphasis added; see vv.29-31)

And, concerning the fact that—as a Person of the Godhead—the Holy Spirit is infinite in knowledge and understanding, the Scripture says:

1 Corinthians 2:9-11

⁽⁹⁾ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ⁽¹⁰⁾ But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: **for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.** ⁽¹¹⁾ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (Bold emphases added; see vv.7-16)

In this passage, the Spirit of God is said to 'search' all things—even the deep things of God. Once again, the attribute of personality (and omniscience, and therefore deity) is being ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

Attributes Demonstrate Personality

Throughout the Word of God, the Holy Spirit is spoken of in terms that make it abundantly plain that he possesses the same personal characteristics or attributes as are possessed by God himself. As one in whom intelligence, emotion, and will resides, the Holy Spirit possesses the ability to know, to think, to reason, to speak, to feel, and to act—according to his own sovereign will. The possession and exercise of such attributes clearly indicates personality.

Similarly, throughout the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is referred to by the use of personal pronouns such as 'I', 'thou', 'he, or 'him'.

The Holy Spirit is a Person—just as the Father and Son are Persons. No amount of philosophical debate or argument can weigh against the plain sense of the Word of God.

- The Spirit, as a person, inspired God's prophets.
- The Spirit, as a person, comforts God's people.
- The Spirit, as a person, intercedes for the believer.
- The Spirit, as a person, guided the apostles—and all other believers—into all truth.
- The Spirit, as a person, can be lied to.
- The Spirit, as a person, can be grieved.
- The Spirit, as a person, can be rebelled against.

- The Spirit, as a person, can be blasphemed.

In the section that follows, we will look more closely at some of these aspects of the Holy Spirit's personality.

The Holy Spirit can be Grieved

In the moral and spiritual sense of the words, only a person can be pleased or displeased; only a person can experience vexation or grief; only a person can be rebelled against and sinned against, and only a person can be slandered or blasphemed. Yet, the Scriptures frequently speak of the Holy Spirit as being displeased, resisted, rebelled against, grieved, etc.

Thus, concerning the corrupt and violent state of mankind just prior to the Noahic flood, it is recorded:

Genesis 6:3

⁽³⁾ And the LORD said, My **spirit** shall not always **strive** with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years. (Bold emphases added; see vv.1-8)

Here, wicked and rebellious mankind strove against, or resisted strenuously, the Spirit of God. They did this by utterly despising God's warnings of coming judgment, which were pronounced repeatedly by Noah during the building of the ark. They did it by knowingly and wilfully rejecting the external call to repentance, and by scorning God's offer of deliverance by means of the ark.

Again, concerning Israel's stubborn rebellion against God, against God's Holy Spirit, and against God's servant Moses during their wilderness wanderings, the Scriptures says:

Isaiah 63:9-10

⁽⁹⁾ In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bore them, and carried them all the days of old.

⁽¹⁰⁾ But they **rebelled**, and **vexed** his **Holy Spirit**: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, *and* he fought against them.

(Bold emphases added; see v.11; cf. v.9 with Acts 7:34; cf. v.10a with v.11c)

Again, in the face of imminent martyrdom, Stephen is forced to cry out concerning the Jewish leaders of his time:

Acts 7:51

⁽⁵¹⁾ Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always **resist** the **Holy Ghost**: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

(Bold emphases added; see vv.52-60)

Once again, concerning all of God's redeemed people, the Scripture says:

Ephesians 4:30

⁽³⁰⁾ And **grieve not** the **Holy Spirit** of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

(Bold emphases added; see vv.24-32; cf. 1 Thess. 5:19)

These few examples indicate clearly that it is a person who is being offended. Expressions such as 'resisting', 'rebellious against' or 'grieving' the Holy Spirit would be wholly inappropriate if an impersonal power, force, or influence were being referred to.

The Comforter is a Person

Clearly, therefore, it is mistaken to say that the Spirit of God is a divine guiding force, power, or influence—a force or power that is devoid of personality. The attributes of personality are ascribed to him so frequently, that we must consider the Holy Spirit as much a person as God the Father or as Jesus Christ his Son.

Again, what consolation could the Holy Spirit afford the children of God if he were not the personal Comforter whom the Lord Jesus promised to send to his sorrowing disciples? What comfort could the Holy Spirit be to the people of God in their trials and tribulations if he were merely an impersonal power, force, or influence?

In the Scriptures, the word 'Comforter' may be more correctly translated as 'Counsellor' or 'Advocate'⁷ As a Counsellor or Advocate, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with God. But how can an impersonal entity make intercession with God? How can a power, force, or influence act as our Advocate with the Father?

The people of God need the presence of God. They need the presence of a person—a person just as real as the Lord Jesus himself. That person is the Holy Spirit. If we would detract from the personality of God's Holy Spirit, we are detracting from the teaching of God's Word and affording scant comfort to God's people.

Furthermore, before leaving his disciples, the Lord Jesus said:

John 14:18

⁽¹⁸⁾ I will not leave you comfortless [Gk., ὀρφανός, *bereft* or *orphaned*]: I will come to you.

In this verse, the Lord Jesus is talking about the Holy Spirit whom he will send to take his place in the disciples' hearts and lives, to guide them, to comfort them, and to remain with them forever. However, the Lord is equating the presence of the Holy Spirit with that of his own presence, or with one who is exactly like himself. And since the Lord Jesus is a divine person, then manifestly the Holy Spirit must be a divine person.

Personality Indicated by Baptismal Formula

The personality of the Holy Spirit is clearly taught in the Trinitarian formula into which people are to be baptised. Thus, to his disciples, the Lord Jesus said:

Matthew 28:19

⁽¹⁹⁾ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (See vv.18-20)

Wherever the Gospel was proclaimed, and wherever people turned to the Lord in repentance and faith (Acts 2:38,41), they were to be baptised in (or into) the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But, clearly, since the name of the Father relates to a person, and the name of the Son relates to a person, then the name of the Holy Ghost must also relate to a person.

⁷ Comforter: Gk., παράκλητος, *parakletos* (lit., 'called to one's side' or 'to one's aid': i.e., a (legal) counsellor or advocate, equivalent to 'counsel for the defence').

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

Having established the personality of the Holy Spirit, we will now consider those Scriptures that demonstrate the deity or divinity of the Holy Spirit. In the early days of the church, the deity of the Holy Spirit was not widely contested. However, in subsequent generations, some have argued against the deity of the Spirit or the full equality and eternity of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. For this reason, we will turn to the Word of God and allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves.

The Holy Spirit Equated with God the Father

The prophet Isaiah records the following words, spoken by the Lord God:

Isaiah 6:8-9

⁽⁸⁾ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

⁽⁹⁾ And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

However, when alluding to this passage in Acts chapter 28, the apostle Paul attributes the above words to the Holy Spirit:

Acts 28:25-27

⁽²⁵⁾ And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, **Well spake the Holy Ghost** by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, ⁽²⁶⁾ Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: ⁽²⁷⁾ For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (Bold emphasis added)

From this, we see that the Holy Spirit was considered by the inspired apostle Paul to be virtually synonymous with God the Father. This illustrates clearly the Holy Spirit's equality with God the Father and therefore the Holy Spirit's deity—since only God can impart his words to the prophets, such as Isaiah.

We may consider also the words of the prophet Jeremiah, when recording the words of the LORD:

Jeremiah 31:33

⁽³³⁾ But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

⁽³⁴⁾ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

However, when quoting from this passage, the writer to the Hebrews says:

Hebrews 10:15-17

⁽¹⁵⁾ *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, ⁽¹⁶⁾ This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; ⁽¹⁷⁾ And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

Here, the Holy Spirit is called upon as a witness to the veracity of the words of the Sovereign Lord God. However, one who bears witness to the eternal and infallible word of God must be:

- a) a person who is himself infallible and omniscient, and
- b) a person who is co-equal, co-existent, and co-eternal with the original speaker; viz., the LORD God.

Thus, the Holy Spirit must be a person who is equal with God himself, he must possess all the attributes of God the Father, and therefore the Holy Spirit must possess the same divine nature as the Father.

This is again illustrated by the following two quotations:

Psalms 95:6-11

⁽⁶⁾ O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

⁽⁷⁾ For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice,

⁽⁸⁾ Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and as in* the day of temptation in the wilderness:

⁽⁹⁾ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It *is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

⁽¹¹⁾ Unto whom I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

The above passage from Psalm 95 is attributed to the LORD God, the maker of everything in all creation. However, when the inspired writer of Hebrews quotes from this verse in chapter 3, he declares that these are the words of the Holy Ghost (or of the LORD God speaking through the personal agency of the Holy Spirit).

Hebrews 3:7-11

⁽⁷⁾ Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice,

⁽⁸⁾ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁽⁹⁾ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. ⁽¹¹⁾ So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

Clearly, then, the Holy Spirit is co-equal with God the Father. For whether the writer is saying that the above passage in Hebrews are the words of the Holy Spirit himself, or that they are the words of the Lord God speaking through the personal agency of the Holy Spirit, it amounts to the same thing. Either way, the Holy Spirit must possess all the attributes of the Sovereign Lord God himself in order to convey infallibly the Word of God to others.

The co-equal relationship between God the Father and God the Holy Spirit becomes even clearer in the passage dealing with Ananias and Sapphira. There, it is recorded:

Acts 5:3-4

⁽³⁾ But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart **to lie to the Holy Ghost**, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? ⁽⁴⁾ While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? **thou hast not lied**

unto men, but unto God. (Bold emphases added)

Verse 3 makes it plain that, by attempting to deceive the Lord's apostles, Ananias had been guilty of lying not only to the apostles but also to the Holy Spirit (thereby demonstrating the personality of the Holy Spirit). However, in verse 4, Peter declares that Ananias had not lied unto men, but unto God (thereby demonstrating the deity of the Holy Spirit and his equality with God).

Again, the Holy Spirit was considered a divine person when the Lord Jesus uttered this solemn warning to the Pharisees when they attributed his works to the power of Satan:

Matthew 12:31-32

⁽³¹⁾ Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

⁽³²⁾ And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.

The sin of blasphemy can be committed only against a person. However, the context makes it abundantly clear that this is no ordinary person, but one who is equal with God himself.

Deity Indicated by Baptismal Formula

Again, the Lord Jesus commanded his disciples to preach the Gospel to all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

Matthew 28:18-19

⁽¹⁸⁾ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...

Here, the Lord Jesus Christ himself equates the name (singular) of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Clearly, then, believers were to be baptised into the name of the Triune God, of which the Holy Spirit is a divine person, co-equal in power, glory, and eternity with the Father and the Son.

Deity Indicated by Apostolic Benediction

Again, the apostle Paul says to the church at Corinth:

2 Corinthians 13:14

⁽¹⁴⁾ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen.

Here, the apostle links the Lord Jesus Christ with God the Father and with the Holy Ghost, thus indicating both the personality and the deity of all three members of the Godhead.

The Temple of God

The temple of God is the hallowed sanctuary where the Most High God makes his presence known. Concerning believers, the temple of God is not a building of stone, but the individual lives of each child of God. The redeemed body of each believer constitutes a holy dwelling place of God.

God's Word says:

Romans 8:9

⁽⁹⁾ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God

dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Here, the apostle Paul speaks of the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) indwelling each of those who belong to him. However, in the same verse, the apostle then speaks of the Spirit of Christ (the same Holy Spirit) indwelling God's people, thereby demonstrating both the deity and the equality of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, only God, or one who is co-eternal and co-equal with God the Father, can be said to indwell his temple or hallowed and sanctified dwelling place.

Again, the Word of God says:

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

⁽¹⁶⁾ Know ye not that ye are the **temple of God**, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ⁽¹⁷⁾ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

⁽¹⁹⁾ What? know ye not that your body is the **temple of the Holy Ghost** *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ⁽²⁰⁾ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (Bold emphases added)

Here, God's holy temple (our body) is called the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17) and also the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6:19), thereby showing that the Holy Spirit is equal with God.

The Spirit of Resurrection to Life

God alone can impart new life to a person, or regenerate his soul. However, the Lord does this through the personal agency of his Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit of God who creates new spiritual life within those who are called to repentance and faith. Again, it is the Holy Spirit who raises the dead to life, both in the spiritual sense and in the physical sense.

Thus, God's Word says:

Romans 8:11

⁽¹¹⁾ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Here we see that it was the Holy Spirit who raised the Lord Jesus physically from the dead. This demonstrates the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit and therefore his equality with the Father. Furthermore, the verse continues by declaring that the same Holy Spirit also imparts (spiritual) life to each believer on Christ in virtue of his indwelling presence. However, only God can impart spiritual life to those who once were dead spiritually.

Again, concerning regeneration or the creation of new spiritual life, the apostle Paul writes to Titus:

Titus 3:5

⁽⁵⁾ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Here, the Holy Ghost (or the Holy Spirit) is said to be the one who regenerates a person or who creates new spiritual life within (or who raises a person from spiritual death to spiritual life). However, God alone is able to regenerate a person or raise the dead (spiritually and physically). Therefore, the Holy Spirit must possess all the same attributes as the Father.

Eternity of the Holy Spirit

Only God, or the Persons of the Godhead, is eternal. Everyone and everything else throughout the entire universe was created at a particular point in time. However, in Hebrews chapter 9, the writer says this:

Hebrews 9:13-14

⁽¹³⁾ For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: ⁽¹⁴⁾ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Here, the Holy Spirit is called the 'eternal Spirit'. However, since he is the eternal Spirit, then he must be equal with the only eternal God and with the eternal Son of God. No other living beings have existed from eternity.

Not all commentators accept that the foregoing passage speaks of the Holy Spirit. Some believe that the reference is to Christ's own eternal spirit. Whether this be so or not, there are many other passages in God's Word that require us to believe in the deity or divine nature of God's Holy Spirit. We will now consider a few of these passages.

Omnipotence of the Holy Spirit

We accept that God alone is omnipotent, or that there is absolutely no limit to the extent of his divine power. For example, God alone can create out of nothing. God alone can impart life; physical, spiritual and eternal. Yet, in the Scriptures that follow, we see the Holy Spirit performing these very acts of omnipotence.

Psalms 104:5,29-30

⁽⁵⁾ *Who* laid the foundations of the earth, *that* it should not be removed forever.

⁽²⁹⁾ Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. ⁽³⁰⁾ Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

Here we see that the Lord God sends forth his Spirit to create life on the face of the earth. However, only God can create life in this manner. All life has its origin in God. Biological processes cannot establish life apart from the providential power of almighty God. For, in the case of human beings, life is not only biological and physical but also spiritual and eternal. But spiritual life (associated with the immortal soul) can be created and imparted by God alone. Yet, here the Holy Spirit is said to create life (both animal and human)—thus demonstrating the omnipotence and therefore the deity of the Holy Spirit.

Again, in Job, it is written:

Job 33:4

⁽⁴⁾ The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

Here, creation of human life is attributed to the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. However, in the very same sentence, the Spirit of God is associated with the almighty God himself. It may be argued that this is merely a Hebrew mode of expression. However, the Scriptures clearly teach us elsewhere that God works through the personal agency of his Holy Spirit; as, for example, at the creation of the world. (Gen. 1:1-2)

Of especial significance in this respect, is the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the virgin Mary, enabling her to conceive the baby Jesus without the normal processes of male fertilisation. Thus, by an exercise of his omnipotence, the Holy Spirit creates new life within Mary—as the Scripture says:

Luke 1:35

⁽³⁵⁾ And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Clearly, since no human reproduction was involved on this occasion, the conception of the Lord Jesus was by miraculous intervention of God the Holy Spirit. This once again proves however that the Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of divinity or deity.

Again, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead; for it was by the power of God's Holy Spirit that the Lord was raised. As Paul declares in Romans chapter 8:

Romans 8:11

⁽¹¹⁾ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Only God is able to restore life to the dead, for only God is omnipotent. However, since the Lord Jesus was raised to life on the third day by the Holy Spirit, then clearly the Holy Spirit is both omnipotent and equal with God.

Omniscience of the Holy Spirit

Only God is omniscient. He alone knows absolutely everything that there is to know throughout the entire universe, for he is the source and fountain of knowledge and wisdom. However, omnipotence is ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the following Scripture, when the apostle Paul declares:

1 Corinthians 2:10-14

⁽¹⁰⁾ But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. ⁽¹¹⁾ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

⁽¹²⁾ Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

⁽¹³⁾ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

⁽¹⁴⁾ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

This passages demonstrates beyond all shadow of doubt the deity of the Holy Spirit. In verse 10, God's Word says that '*the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*' Who but God can possibly fathom the mind of God, or know the will and purposes of God? Yet, the Holy Spirit is said to search the deep things of God, thereby showing that the Spirit is equal in power, glory and eternity with the Father himself, and with his Son.

Again, in verses 12 and 13 above, we see that the Holy Spirit alone is capable of teaching divine truths and imparting these truths to the believer. However, the ability to impart the truths of God in this man-

ner is a function of God alone, or of one who is co-equal with him. Thus, it is shown that the Holy Spirit, who leads God's people into all truth, is equal in power, glory and eternity with the Father and the Son.

This explains also (v14) why the natural (i.e., unregenerate) person cannot comprehend the truths of God's Word. These truths are spiritually discerned and can be known only with the aid of a spiritual interpreter. Furthermore, before these truths can be understood aright, the 'natural man' must be converted or regenerated unto newness of spiritual life. Only then—and with the Holy Spirit of God acting as teacher and interpreter, can a person begin to comprehend the things of God and spiritual things more generally. Until such time as the Holy Spirit renews his soul and mind, these truths appear to him as foolishness, for his mind remains incapable of comprehending them.

This again demonstrates that the Holy Spirit possesses the same almighty power as God himself, since only God can regenerate a person's soul (by his Holy Spirit); only God can raise from death to life those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and only God can impart the deep things of God to those so regenerated and raised to newness of life in Christ Jesus.

That the world of unregenerate mankind cannot receive the indwelling Holy Spirit, nor receive his teaching, is shown from the following Scriptures where the Lord Jesus says concerning his disciples:

John 14:16-17

⁽¹⁶⁾ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; ⁽¹⁷⁾ *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 14:26

⁽²⁶⁾ But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Once again, we see that the Holy Spirit has the divine knowledge, power and ability to teach the disciples about all things spiritual and to remind them about, and help them to understand more fully, everything that the Lord Jesus had taught them previously.

Omnipresence of the Holy Spirit

The following Scriptures demonstrate indisputably the ubiquity or omnipresence of God's Holy Spirit:

Psalms 139:7-12

⁽⁷⁾ Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

⁽⁸⁾ If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

⁽⁹⁾ If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

⁽¹⁰⁾ even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

⁽¹¹⁾ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,"

⁽¹²⁾ even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

This passage demonstrates unmistakably that the Spirit of God is equal with God the Father, for only God can be present at the same time in every location throughout the entire universe.

This is illustrated further by the following references:

Ephesians 2:17-18

⁽¹⁷⁾ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ⁽¹⁸⁾ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Verse 18 above declares that both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father in (or through) one Spirit. However, this implies the presence of the Holy Spirit with every individual believer—Jew and Gentile—around the world. This in turn implies the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit.

Again the fact that the Holy Spirit is given by the Father to indwell, sanctify, and seal every child of God worldwide demonstrates clearly the omnipresence of God the Holy Spirit. Similarly, the fact that the Holy Spirit is present with all mankind to convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgment clearly implies the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit. Yet again, the fact that the Holy Spirit is present with the church worldwide is an indisputable argument for the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit.

Arguments could be multiplied, and many other passages of God's Word could be cited to demonstrate the omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence—and therefore the deity—of God the Holy Spirit. However, the examples quoted or alluded to in the foregoing study are sufficient to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is equal in power, glory and eternity with God the Father and God the Son.

Epilogue

It is the Church's duty and responsibility to maintain and assert the Biblical truth concerning the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, and to defend the Church from erroneous opinions and teaching regarding this fundamental truth. Throughout the ages, the Church has done this by referring to the baptismal formula quoted above (Matt. 28:19). In this one passage, it is evident beyond all doubt that three distinct *Persons*—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit)—are being referred to. Yet, it must be remembered that these three persons constitute but one God (God Triune). This is the mystery of the Trinity or Godhead.

Here, we must leave the study of the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit. However, in the next study in this series, we will consider the work of the Holy Spirit, both in relation to the world in general and more specifically in relation to the life of the church and of individual believers.

