

# The Personality of the Holy Spirit

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## Introduction

Trying to understand the nature of God is both a noble and daunting task. Humans are naturally curious and long to understand their Creator. Yet, as Augustine once noted, “in no other subject is error more dangerous, or inquiry more laborious, or the discovery of truth more profitable” (*On the Trinity*, 1.3.5).<sup>1</sup>

After the New Testament was written, early Christians scrutinized what God had revealed, almost incidentally as it were, about the nature of the Holy Spirit. At times, these investigations strayed into superficial and dubious concerns, which generated scandalous contentions, but the end result was the formation and general acceptance of certain statements as inferences from Scripture, which became part of the creeds of the Church and which the majority of Christians still embrace.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, in recent years, there has been less and less agreement about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Philosophical discussions, outside the realm of the Christian Church, have modified the concepts of spirit and personality so much that there is a widespread conviction that the language of the ancient creeds is now inadequate and needs to be restated in modern terms.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the influence of theological liberalism has created considerable diversity of opinion concerning the personality of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this paper is to survey the theological and historical background concerning the personality of the Holy Spirit.

### The Spirit in the Old Testament

The Hebrew term *ruah* (spirit) is extremely difficult to define because it has such a broad range of meanings and because invisible phenomena are inherently difficult to define. Depending on the context, *ruah* can denote wind, breath, transitoriness, volition, emotional disposition, temper, spirit, or Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

*Ruah* is a general term embracing elements collected from various sources through syncretism and therefore not derivable from one general principle. *Ruah* expressed “the metaphysical notion of causality, the principle of movement, energy, and life in the universe.”<sup>5</sup>

Essentially, *ruah* denotes something unseen so that the visible effect of an invisible force can be adequately understood.<sup>6</sup> Hoyle said that the primary meaning appears to be “air in motion” as wind or breath, while the general idea behind all of its uses is “power in manifestation, or

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, trans. Arthur West Haddan, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1887), 3:19.

<sup>2</sup> John McClintock and James Strong, eds., *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (1891), s.v. “Spirit, Holy,” 9:947.

<sup>3</sup> R. Birch Hoyle, “SPIRIT (Holy), SPIRIT OF GOD” in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (1981), 11:796.

<sup>4</sup> M. V. Van Pelt, W. C. Kaiser, and D. I. Block, “ruah” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (1997), 3:1073.

<sup>5</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:785-6.

<sup>6</sup> Van Pelt, Kaiser, and Block, *NIDOTT*, 3:1073.

energy.”<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Kamlah believes that the basic idea behind *ruah* is not just “air in motion” but rather the energy manifested by such movement.<sup>8</sup>

In the physical realm, *ruah* simply refers to the wind. Yet, this invisible and unpredictable force of nature is under God’s control (Num 11:31). It also came to denote the direction from which the wind might blow (Exod 14:21). Thus, “the four winds” suggests movement in every direction (Jer 49:36) and being “scattered to the winds” implies the most severe exile imaginable (Jer 49:32).<sup>9</sup> It also conveyed a figurative sense of vanity or emptiness (Eccl 1:14, Isa 41:29).<sup>10</sup>

In the physiological realm, *ruah* can also refer to the life-sustaining function called breathing or breath. It is the essence of life in the bodies of men and animals (Gen 6:17) and a direct result of God’s power (Ps 104:29-30). However, the *ruah* of God’s nostrils is probably a symbolic reference to the wind as an agent of God’s ominous power (Job 4:9, Isa 11:4).<sup>11</sup> *Ruah* also appears with *neshamah* (breath) and *nephesh* (soul) to denote the breath-soul in man.<sup>12</sup>

In the psychological realm, *ruah* can describe a mood, attitude, or inclination. Consequently, *ruah* involves a person’s character, nature, or condition. Thus, God can demoralize the spirit of the Egyptians (Isa 19:3).<sup>13</sup>

Since breathing is often a visible indication of intense emotions, *ruah* readily expressed the mental and emotional aspects of man’s inner life and was used with terms like *nephesh* and *labe* (heart). *Ruah* and *nephesh* both express the invisible and immaterial element in man as opposed to the flesh, but they are distinguished from each other as the “animating principle” and the “animated result.” *Ruah* denotes the vital energy, the causative principle in all actions, whether bodily or mental, while *nephesh* is the ego. The association of power with *ruah* may explain its use to denote the energy of personality in particular situations.<sup>14</sup>

As the seat of cognition and volition, *ruah* denotes activities involved in thinking, aptitude, and decision-making. For example, God enhanced certain creative abilities through the spirit of wisdom to facilitate the construction of the tabernacle (Exod 28:3) and enriched certain cognitive faculties through the Spirit of the LORD (Isa 11:2). Often, *ruah* refers to the mind (Isa 29:24), and frequently appears as a synonym of *lebab* (heart) when denoting intellectual activity (Ps 77:6).<sup>15</sup>

In the supernatural realm, *ruah* was used to describe a variety of agents acting on mankind from outside or above. Hoyle described this aspect as “extra-human” because Hebrew thought made no distinction between the natural and the supernatural. At times, these agents were distinctly personal (1 Kgs 22:19-26), while at other times, they were not (Judg 9:23). They were under God’s control and were responsible for sickness, insanity, and abnormal powers of body and mind (1 Sam 18:10).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:784.

<sup>8</sup> E. Kamlah, “Spirit, Holy Spirit” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (1978), 3:690.

<sup>9</sup> Van Pelt, Kaiser, and Block, *NIDOTT*, 3:1074.

<sup>10</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:784.

<sup>11</sup> Van Pelt, Kaiser, and Block, *NIDOTT*, 3:1074.

<sup>12</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:784.

<sup>13</sup> Van Pelt, Kaiser, and Block, *NIDOTT*, 3:1074.

<sup>14</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:785.

<sup>15</sup> Van Pelt, Kaiser, and Block, *NIDOTT*, 3:1075.

<sup>16</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:784.

Theologically, the most important aspect is that of the divine *ruah*. In the Old Testament, the predominant designation for the divine Spirit is as the Spirit of Yahweh (25 times) or the Spirit of *Elohim* (11 times). Sometimes, the Spirit occurs with pronouns but only rarely as “the Spirit.”<sup>17</sup> The phrase “Holy Spirit” occurs in only two Old Testament passages (Ps 51:11, Isa 63:10-11); but in both places, Cautley maintains that God Himself is the referent and not the Holy Spirit who is encountered in the New Testament.<sup>18</sup>

The operations of God’s Spirit are both pervasive and diverse. For example, the “breath” of God can be simply a strong wind (Isa 40:7, 59:19 NASB), and His “spirit” may indicate nothing more than active power or mental activity (cf. Isa 40:13 with LXX and 1 Cor 2:16). At other times, the Spirit is distinct from both Yahweh and Moses; a portion can be taken from him and “placed” upon the elders in the wilderness (Num 11:17, 25). Yet, Isaiah, quoting the Messiah, appears to assume the distinct personality of the Spirit (Isa 48:16).<sup>19</sup>

The Spirit may be related to God’s activity in creation (e.g., Gen 1:2, Ps 104:30). However, Turner rightly notes that such assertions are rare and ambiguous; the breath of God’s mouth may refer to the word of His command (Ps 33:6), and God’s *ruah* might refer to the vitality He gives to living creatures (Ps 104:29, Job 27:3).<sup>20</sup> While the role of the Spirit in creation is not always clear, Old Testament authors speak of the Spirit as being omnipresent (Ps 139:7) and omniscient (Isa 40:13). Often, the divine *ruah* functions like the alter ego of God, dwelling in the midst of Israel like the divine Glory (Hag 2:5).<sup>21</sup>

The Spirit of God is also the agency by which God controls or empowers individuals. God’s people are energized (Ezek 2:2), transported (2 Kgs 2:16) or endowed with special gifts for sacred service (Exod 35:31, Judg 6:34). Evidently, the liquid anointing with oil symbolized the divine spiritual anointing (1 Sam 16:13), which provided the basis for David’s adoption as God’s son (Ps 2, cf. Matt 3:16-17, Rom 8:14-15).<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, the Spirit of God is the agent of inspiration. A prophet is literally a “man of the spirit” (Hos 9:7) who speaks on God’s behalf through the direction of the Spirit (2 Sam 23:2). Prophetic operations occur when the Spirit is “poured out” in the context of Israel’s restoration and covenant renewal (Joel 2:28-29).<sup>23</sup>

At times, the Spirit appears in anthropomorphic terms (either literally or metaphorically). In early poetry, the Spirit was God’s breath (Exod 15:8, 10, Ps 18:15), and the storm was the explosive blast of His breath (Isa 30:27ff, Job 4:9). Hoyle said that the Spirit usually denoted the higher activities of the divine nature and was regarded as similar to the energies of thought and volition in man.<sup>24</sup>

There is no way of tracing exactly how biblical authors connected the earlier, literal meaning of *ruah* as wind or breath with the divine Spirit. However, one can imagine how the original,

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<sup>17</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:786.

<sup>18</sup> T. S. Cautley, “Holy Spirit” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (2001), 568.

<sup>19</sup> J. Barton Payne, “Ruah” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (1980), 2:837.

<sup>20</sup> Max Turner, “Holy Spirit” in *New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 2d ed., 400.

<sup>21</sup> Van Pelt, Kaiser, and Block, *NIDOTT*, 3:1075.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:1075-6.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:1076-7.

<sup>24</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:786.

narrower meaning gradually expanded into the larger and wider usage as vitality, feelings, intelligence, and general disposition.<sup>25</sup>

Biblical authors undoubtedly believed that God made man in His image. Since human breath was an invisible part of man that represented his vitality, energy, and life, it would have been easy to transfer that concept to God in an effort to represent His energetic and transitive action on man and nature.<sup>26</sup>

The ancient Israelites spoke anthropomorphically of God's arm, hand, or face; so they also spoke of His breath (i.e., His vital power) in a way that was as active and effective as God Himself. The ancients regarded the wind and the vitality of life as mysterious, powerful, and terrifying forces; consequently, manifestations of extraordinary, mysterious powers in man or nature were attributed to the breath or Spirit of God.<sup>27</sup>

If the Spirit sometimes appears to be distinct from God, it is because the breath of God acts in an exterior fashion (Isa 48:16, 63:11, 32:15).<sup>28</sup> Hence, the simple anthropomorphism of the biblical authors probably led them to think of the Spirit of God as the breath of God just as a man's breath is part of the man and yet goes forth from him.<sup>29</sup>

Swete observed that, in the great majority of Old Testament passages, the Spirit of God is the vital energy of the divine nature, corresponding to the higher vitality of man. This energy is usually presented as a creative or vitalizing force and the source of reason and intellect in man (particularly in the case of special gifts or endowments).<sup>30</sup>

According to Swete, the divine *ruah* exhibits personal qualities and performs personal acts because, in the Old Testament, the Spirit of God is "God exerting power." The Spirit is the principle of life within the divine nature and the presence of God in the world and in man. Since the truth, mercy, and light of God are partially personified in the Psalms (e.g., Ps 43:3, 57:3), the Spirit can also be regarded as quasi-personal.<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, Swete concluded that the Spirit of God rules, speaks, and guides because it is the living energy of a personal God. He said that the Spirit exhibits a quasi-independence that comes close to distinct personality (Isa 48:16) especially where the Spirit and the Word are contrasted, but, the distinction only applies to the external activities of these two divine forces. Thus, the distinct personality of the Spirit belongs to a later revelation.<sup>32</sup>

While the Old Testament does not discuss the nature of the Spirit in a metaphysical sense, the Spirit is always presented as energetic, never static; therefore, Hoyle concluded that "the Spirit of God is God at work manifesting effective power."<sup>33</sup> In the Old Testament, the Spirit is viewed as the basis of the divine nature, the equivalent of deity itself (Isa 30:1, 31:3). Indeed, the presence of the Spirit is the presence of the LORD, and the departure of the Spirit is the departure of God (1 Sam 16:13-14, 18:12, 28:15).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Edgar Y. Mullins, "Holy Spirit" in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1915), 3:1406.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Leonard A. Bushinski, "Spirit of God" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2d ed., 13:426.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Mullins, *ISBE*, 3:1407.

<sup>30</sup> Henry Barclay Swete, "Holy Spirit" in *Dictionary of the Bible* (1899), 2:402-3.

<sup>31</sup> Swete, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 2:404.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:786-7.

<sup>34</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia*, 9:946.

In the latter part of the Old Testament, there is an increased use of personification with respect to the Spirit. For example, the Spirit “spoke” through David (2 Sam 23:2) and was an instructor of Israel (Neh 9:20). Israel is said to have “rebelled against” and “grieved” His Holy Spirit (Ps 106:33, Isa 63:10).<sup>35</sup>

However, Hoyle rightly observed that this language should not be unduly pressed. The fact that the Spirit could be “grieved” was used by fourth century churchmen to prove the personality of the Spirit, but Isaiah also said that a forsaken woman could be “grieved in spirit” (Isa 54:6). In addition, “Wisdom” and the “Word” were both personified to such a degree that Wisdom itself had a spirit (Prv 1:23, Isa 55:11).<sup>36</sup>

Bushinski claims that the Old Testament does not present the Spirit as a person either in the strictly philosophical sense or in the Semitic sense; God’s Spirit is simply His power. He says that Old Testament authors rarely attribute mental or emotional activity to the Spirit of God; and when they do, such expressions are mere figures of speech reflecting the use of the term *ruah* as the seat of intellect and emotion.<sup>37</sup>

While there are no Old Testament passages that explicitly present the distinct personality of the Spirit in the New Testament sense, there are many passages that are in harmony with and prepare the way for it (Ps 139:7, Isa 63:10, 48:16, Hag 2:5, Zech 4:6).<sup>38</sup> According to Carter, many other doctrines are implicit in the Old Testament and explicit in the New.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, many believe that the personality, attributes, and operations of the Holy Spirit are made known mainly in the New Testament. This is consistent with what appears to be a general rule of divine revelation that the knowledge of heavenly things is given more abundantly and more clearly in later ages.<sup>40</sup>

### The Spirit in the New Testament

The Greek term *pneuma* (spirit) also denotes air set in motion with an underlying stress on its inherent power. It first meant wind or breath, but increasingly, it took on the functions of related concepts (i.e., vitality, thought, and intellect).<sup>41</sup>

In Stoic philosophy, it was the fifth element, an ethereal, fire-like substance that gave coherence to the different entities of creation. In its purest form, it was the *Logos* or God. As spiritual fire, it was the soul of man, and as “habitual” *pneuma*, it gave coherence to inanimate objects.<sup>42</sup>

*Pneuma* also had a supernatural aspect. Plutarch and others used it to denote prophetic inspiration. They considered it to be a material substance, which filled a man and enabled him to prophesy. It could also refer to a demon or other supernatural entity.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:787.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:787-8.

<sup>37</sup> Bushinski, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 13:426-7.

<sup>38</sup> Mullins, *ISBE*, 3:1407.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Webb Carter, *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), 25.

<sup>40</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia*, 9:947.

<sup>41</sup> Kamlah, *NIDNTT*, 3:689.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:689-90.

<sup>43</sup> Kamlah, *NIDNTT*, 3:690.

The origins of *ruah* and *pneuma* are similar, stemming from associations with wind and breath, which ancient cultures connected to an invisible spiritual force.<sup>44</sup> In the LXX, the equivalent of *pneuma* is usually *ruah*. Only three times does *pneuma* correspond to the term *neshemah* (breath). Of the 377 instances of *ruah* in the Masoretic Text, 264 are translated as *pneuma* and 49 are translated as *anemos* (wind).<sup>45</sup> While the terms *ruah* and *pneuma* can refer to wind, breath, or spirit, the common image is that of invisible forces or life energies whose sources cannot readily be observed but whose effects are transparent and sometimes even violent.<sup>46</sup>

Consequently, there are some interesting parallels associated with these terms in the Old and New Testament. For example, an evil *ruah* was said to “come upon” men, and similar language is used about the Holy Spirit (1 Sam 10:6, Luke 1:35). Another group of phrases attributes fluid properties to *ruah*. God “mingled” a spirit of perverseness on Egypt (Isa 19:14) and “poured out” a spirit of sleep upon the people (Isa 29:10). Similarly, the Spirit of God was to be poured out (cf. Isa 44:3, Joel 2:28 with Tit 3:5-6), and a person could be “filled” with the Spirit (Exod 31:3, Luke 1:41).<sup>47</sup>

In the New Testament, *pneuma* denotes the power that humans experience in connection with the spirit realm. Within this broad definition, *pneuma* can refer to the human spirit (nearly 40 times), good or evil spirits (more than 40 times), or the Holy Spirit (more than 250 times).<sup>48</sup>

The transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament provides a fuller theology of the Holy Spirit. The writers of the New Testament employed phrases that were not seen in the LXX. The divine Spirit appears as the Spirit of the Father (Matt 10:20), the Spirit of His Son (Gal 4:6), and the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7 NASB). New attributes are also associated with the Spirit; in addition to being the Spirit of wisdom (Isa 11:2), the New Testament speaks of the Spirit of truth (John 14:17), life (Rom 8:2), grace (Heb 10:29), and sonship (Rom 8:15). Above all, the Spirit has a personal title, *ho parakletos* (the Paraclete or Helper).<sup>49</sup>

Various symbols of the Holy Spirit appear throughout the New Testament. Jesus breathed on the disciples to foreshadow the coming of the Holy Spirit, which builds on the Old Testament symbolism of the Spirit as the breath of God (John 20:22). Jesus also described the Spirit as rivers of living water flowing out from Him like water from the rock in the wilderness (John 7:37-39). Paul described the Spirit as a guarantee of God’s promises (2 Cor 1:20-22) and as a seal that identifies the believer as God’s property (cf. Eph 1:13-14, Rom 8:9).

Although theologians have often related oil with the Holy Spirit, Cherry rightly observes that there is little biblical evidence for this connection (e.g., 1 Sam 16:12-13, Isa 61:1-2). Yet, he also feels that oil symbolizes in the Old Testament what the Holy Spirit fulfills in the New Testament since the work of the Holy Spirit is to set apart and empower individuals for service.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Caulley, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 568.

<sup>45</sup> Kamlah, *NIDNTT*, 3:690.

<sup>46</sup> Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (1998), 391.

<sup>47</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:785.

<sup>48</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, “Spirit, Holy Spirit” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (1978), 3:693-4.

<sup>49</sup> Swete, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 2:405.

<sup>50</sup> Howard F. Cherry, “The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit” in *Theological Perspectives*, ed. Paul R. Fetters (Huntington Ind.: Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1992), 433.

There are also some very significant manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove at the baptism of Jesus authenticating His messianic office (John 1:32-33). A mighty wind and tongues of fire preceded the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:2-3).

In many ways, the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is an extension and culmination of Old Testament functions. The miracles of Jesus and the apostles reflect the astonishing creative power of the Holy Spirit; indeed, the role of the Spirit in the resurrection of Jesus and the saints is now prominent (Rom 8:11). The Holy Spirit is still an integral agent in prophecy, revelation, and inspiration, but there is now an explicit understanding that the writings of the apostles and prophets are God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:21).

According to Swete, the question of the Spirit's relationship to God is never formally raised in the New Testament and receives only a partial answer; instead, the Holy Spirit is discussed mainly in relation to the Church and the Christian life.<sup>51</sup> The Holy Spirit is the chief agent in the regeneration and sanctification of the saints so they can walk in the Spirit (Rom 8:4, Gal 5:16). Indeed, the transformation of the heart is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit not only reveals the truth but also takes an active role in missionary activity throughout the Book of Acts. The Holy Spirit selects leaders within the body (Acts 20:28) and empowers them with gifts for service (1 Cor 12:1-11).

Similarly, Hoyle felt that the Synoptics present the Spirit much as the Old Testament did; the Spirit is correlated with God but not as a distinct person. The Holy Spirit can be blasphemed, which is an unpardonable sin (Matt 12:31-32, Mark 3:28-30, Luke 12:10), and in times of trial, the Spirit would "speak" through the disciples (cf. Matt 10:20, Mark 13:11 with Luke 12:12, 21:15).<sup>52</sup> Swete also believed that blasphemy of the Spirit indicated His deity but did not exceed the limits of Old Testament revelation in that respect.<sup>53</sup>

According to Mullins, the validity of Matthew 28:19 has been called into question, but there are insufficient grounds for its rejection. Up to this point, he says, there is almost no direct hint of the personality of the Holy Spirit in the Synoptics, but here is "a very suggestive hint" of a doctrine of the Spirit that attains more complete development later.<sup>54</sup>

Hoyle argued that the personal activities predicated of the Paraclete, the careful selection of masculine terms for the neuter substantive (*pneuma*), the steady use of the personal pronoun *ekeinon*, and the functions which the Spirit discharges all imply personality.<sup>55</sup> Swete argued that the Holy Spirit was to be Christ's substitute on earth fulfilling the role of an advocate and that no function more characteristic of personal life could have been attributed to the Spirit.<sup>56</sup>

According to Swete, the personality of the Paraclete was essential to Christ's reasoning since an impersonal influence could not supply the personal guidance and probation that the apostles needed when the Lord was taken from them. Therefore, Christ's description cannot be compared with the Old Testament personification of the wisdom of God as a personal (female) agent.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Henry Barclay Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (London: MacMillan & Company, 1921), 288.

<sup>52</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:792.

<sup>53</sup> Swete, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 2:408.

<sup>54</sup> Mullins, *ISBE*, 3:1413.

<sup>55</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:795.

<sup>56</sup> Swete, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 2:408.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

Indeed, Swete held that the notion of personification breaks down in view of Christ's own recorded words. Jesus promised a personal Advocate, not a mental abstraction, and that is exactly what the apostolic Church experienced. The distinct personality that began at the Last Supper is consistently maintained in the Book of Acts and the epistles. The Spirit commands, forbids, helps, and leads the Church; in addition, He can be resisted and grieved.<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, Owen argued that the same logic that is used to prove that the Father and the Son are persons applies equally to the Holy Spirit as well. The Holy Spirit guides the Church and appoints overseers to govern it (Act 13:2-4, 20:28). He discerns and judges all things (John 16:8), comforts and strengthens the weak, and is grieved and provoked by sin (Eph 4:30). He works, orders, and disposes all things according to His own will and council (Act 8:29, 15:28, 1 Cor 12:11). Whatever is ascribed to the other persons is equally ascribed to the Holy Spirit.<sup>59</sup>

Swete observed that Christ could not be speaking of a new operation of divine power in man or of His own spirit perpetuating itself in the lives of His disciples because He distinguishes the Paraclete from Himself and the Father. The differentiation is "perfect." The Spirit is not the Father or the Son; He is distinct from both. He proceeds from the Father but is sent by both.<sup>60</sup>

The Paraclete is not simply the spiritual presence of Christ because the Spirit is designated as "another Helper" (John 14:16) distinct from Christ. He is sent by Christ and bears witness to Him; He speaks what He hears and glorifies Christ. If language means anything, personality is clearly implied.<sup>61</sup> Richards observes that *allos* (another) here does not refer to "another of a different kind" but rather "another of the same kind." The Holy Spirit is certainly of the same nature and origin as Jesus and thus one with the Father.<sup>62</sup>

While the personality of the Spirit is clearly implied by the language of John 14-17, Mullins admits that there is no formal teaching on the metaphysical side, no ontology in the strict sense of the word. Those who reject the personality of the Holy Spirit make much of this fact, but they have no difficulty claiming that the authors of the New Testament saw God as a personal being.<sup>63</sup>

Indeed, there is little in the way of metaphysics or ontology concerning the nature of God in either Testament. His personality is deduced from the same kind of language that is used for the Spirit. From a strictly ontological point of view, therefore, one should also reject the personality of God on the basis of biblical teaching. Those who believe in the personality of the Spirit are not insisting on finding metaphysics in Scripture when it is absent, but they do insist on consistency when interpreting the popular and practical language of Scripture.<sup>64</sup>

Hoyle said that Paul did not attempt to define the nature of the Holy Spirit; instead, he was more concerned with the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, which was described in both personal and impersonal terms. For example, Paul referred to the Spirit metaphorically as a seal (Eph 1:13) or a pledge (2 Cor 1:22).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Henry Barclay Swete, "The Person of the Holy Spirit" in *The Official Report of the Church Congress held at Exeter*, ed. C. Dunkley (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1894), 694.

<sup>59</sup> John Owen, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977), 42-4.

<sup>60</sup> Swete, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 2:408.

<sup>61</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:795.

<sup>62</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, "Spirit" in *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words* (1991), 578.

<sup>63</sup> Mullins, *ISBE*, 3:1414.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:795.

However, Mullins argues that the impersonal references reflect the Old Testament concept of the Spirit, while the personal references represent the more developed concept of both John and Paul. Personal attributes appear so often, he said, that it would be unwarranted to let the earlier and lower concept take precedence over the later and higher view.<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, Hoyle observed that attributes such as thought, choice, and volition (1 Cor 12:11) suggest a self-conscious agent in the modern sense of the term. The frequent coordination of the Spirit with the Father and the Son (Rom 8:9-11, 1 Cor 12:4-11) and the “supernatural” quality of the Spirit’s work (renewing, sanctifying, and indwelling) indicate that this language is more than just personification. The Spirit is described as the self-consciousness of God, which goes forth from Him (Gal 4:6) and intercedes on behalf of the saints with Him (Rom 8:27).<sup>67</sup>

Hoyle cited additional evidence in the Book of Hebrews. The Spirit speaks directly through Scripture (Heb 3:7, 9:8, 10:15) and not through intermediaries as in the Old Testament (cf. Matt 22:43, Acts 1:16). The Spirit can also be insulted (Heb 10:29).<sup>68</sup>

According to Bushinski, most New Testament passages mentioning the Spirit of God reflect the Old Testament notion of God’s power. The Spirit is associated with Mary’s pregnancy (Luke 1:35), the expulsion of demons (Matt 12:28), spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4-11), the miracle of “tongues” (Acts 2:4), and prophetic revelation (Luke 1:67). Believers also experience renewal and sanctification through the Spirit (Tit 3:5).<sup>69</sup>

He feels that most New Testament texts reveal the Holy Spirit as something, not someone. This is especially evident in the parallelism between the Spirit and the power of God. Although quasi-personal activities such as speaking are ascribed to the Spirit, the same expressions are used of rhetorically personified things or abstract ideas (Rom 7:17, 8:6-7). Thus, the context of the phrase “blasphemy against the spirit” shows that this is a reference to God’s power.<sup>70</sup>

Yet, Bushinski maintains that there is a gradual revelation of God’s Spirit as a person. In his opinion, the only passage among the Synoptics that clearly speaks of the personality of the Spirit is the baptismal formula of Mathew 28:19, and while the Spirit is often mentioned in the Book of Acts, the only statement that seems to imply full personality is Acts 15:28. He says that Paul’s Trinitarian formulas indicate a real personality (e.g., 2 Cor 13:14), as well as John’s use of the masculine pronoun (*ekeinos*) to refer to the Spirit (John 16:8, 13-16).<sup>71</sup>

### The Road to Nicaea

According to Walvoord, the early Church understood the major aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the beginning and expressed this understanding in various ways. However, the technical terms associated with this doctrine developed very gradually, and many writers struggled to understand more fully what they believed but had not yet articulated in precise theological language.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Mullins, *ISBE*, 3:1417.

<sup>67</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:795.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:793.

<sup>69</sup> Bushinski, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 13:427.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 13:428.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 3d ed. (Findlay, Oh.: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958), 237-8.

The Ante-Nicene period (AD 100-300) provides considerable testimony about the deity of the Holy Spirit, although the period as a whole was still formative and preparatory. While their language was not always technically correct, the writers of the second and third centuries obviously tried to remain close to the Scriptures and also attributed praise and honor to the Holy Spirit. The Church also promptly rejected many early errors about the Holy Spirit and generally excluded the Gnostics, Ebionites, and followers of Simon Magus from their fellowship.<sup>73</sup>

Hoyle explained that, in the post-apostolic era, there were four different views concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit. At various times, the Spirit was described as an attribute of God without distinct personality, as an impersonal energy or operation, as a gift expressed in impersonal terms, and as a distinct person.<sup>74</sup>

For example, in the early Christological speculations, the Spirit was viewed as a divine essence and was frequently identified as the Son (cf. Justin Martyr *Apology* 1.33, Hermas *Similitude* 5.6, 9.1, 2 *Clement* 9.5, 14.3 in the Appendix). Second century apologists used well-known philosophical terms (like Wisdom and *Logos*) to explain the providential operations of God and the inspiration of Scripture. However, like Philo before them, they found it difficult to keep the concept of the Spirit distinct from the *Logos*.<sup>75</sup>

Gradually, the distinction between the Spirit and the Son became clear. Justin placed the Spirit in third order within the divine name (*Apology* 1.13), and Theophilus of Antioch used the term *Triados* (Triad) while differentiating Wisdom (i.e., the Spirit) from the *Logos* (*To Autolytus* 2.15). While Athenagoras considered the Holy Spirit to be an effluence of God, he also affirmed the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and their distinction within that unity (*A Plea for the Christians* 10, 12). And, while Valentinus diminished the status of the Son and the Holy Spirit, Irenaeus united them as God's "Hands" in the creation of mankind (*Against Heresies* 4.pref.4).<sup>76</sup>

The early Church clearly treated the Holy Spirit as a distinct person. Hoyle cited three particular examples: the threefold baptismal formula (cf. Matt 28:19, Justin Martyr *Apology* 1.61, *Didache* 7.1, 3), the various early forms of the so-called Apostle's Creed, and the constant association of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son as an object of faith and worship (e.g., Justin Martyr *Apology* 1.6).<sup>77</sup> Indeed, Swete noted that the devotional language of the early Church was more advanced than its doctrinal system. He said, "The worship of the Trinity was a fact in the religious life of Christians before it was a dogma of the Church."<sup>78</sup>

Origen concluded that the Holy Spirit possessed the same honor and dignity as the Father and the Son and that there could be no subordination within the Trinity (*First Principles* Pref. 4, 1.3.7). He was unsure if the Spirit was begotten or unbegotten (the Eunomian dilemma), and in his freer speculations, he had considered the Spirit to be subordinate to the Son. Yet, his doctrine of the generation of the Son as an eternal, immanent relation within the Godhead provided a solution to subordinationism; it explained the consubstantiality of the Father with the Son, and thus, by inference, of the Holy Spirit with both.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 238.

<sup>74</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:796.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:796.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:796-7.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:796.

<sup>78</sup> Swete, Henry Barclay. *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church* (London: MacMillan & Company, 1912), 159.

<sup>79</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:797.

The rising tide of heresy eventually forced the Church to define the doctrine of the Holy Spirit more clearly. In the early part of the third century, Sabellius taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were actually three different modes by which God manifested Himself; Sabellianism gained a significant foothold within the Church but was halted when Sabellius was finally excommunicated in AD 261. In the early fourth century, an Alexandrian presbyter named Arius taught that the Father had created the Son and that the Son, in turn, had created the Holy Spirit. He also denied the consubstantiality of the Son and the Holy Spirit with the Father. Later, he denied both the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit.<sup>80</sup>

New theological terms and phrases gradually began to appear. For example, Hippolytus applied the Greek term *prosopon* (face) to the persons of the Trinity. Tertullian originated the term “Trinity” and the formula “three Persons, one substance,” which spread throughout the West (*Against Praxeas* 11-13).<sup>81</sup> He believed that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were distinct and yet “of one substance” (*Against Praxeas* 2, 9). In this economic Trinity, the Spirit was third in order of divinity (*Against Praxeas* 30) but also subordinate to the Son.<sup>82</sup>

The terms “person” and “substance” were borrowed from Greek philosophy and given specific theological definitions that differed from their original meanings.<sup>83</sup> When the term “person” is applied to the Godhead, it is not being used in its ordinary sense to denote a separate being. It represents the Latin *persona* or the Greek *prosopon*, which refers to that which stands under or is the subject of certain attributes or properties; therefore, three “Persons” are not three parts of one God or three Gods. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not simply three names but distinct hypostases with characteristic attributes.<sup>84</sup>

In addition, the meaning of the term “person” changed significantly over time. The Latin term *persona* originally denoted the mask worn by an actor. It was then applied to the role he played, and finally, to any character on the stage of life, to any individual.<sup>85</sup> It is equivalent to the Hebrew term *panim* (face) and was used in 2 Corinthians 1:11 to refer to an individual. After some initial hesitation by Tertullian and Novation, the West adopted the use of this term. In the first century, the biblical term *hypostasis* (Heb 1:3) originally meant a common substratum, or *ousia*, that could be shared by several individuals, but later, it came to mean a concrete individual with definite characteristics.<sup>86</sup>

In the period leading up to the Council of Nicaea (AD 325), the Church was preoccupied with debating the nature of Christ and paid little attention to the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed recognized the Holy Spirit without developing the idea of the Spirit’s divinity or essential relationship with the Father and the Son; that became a major issue in the late fourth century.<sup>87</sup> The Nicene Creed positively affirmed the deity and consubstantiality of the Father and the Son but simply concluded with “I believe in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 8, 238-241.

<sup>81</sup> Aloysius M. Bermejo, “Person, Divine” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2d ed., 11:151-2.

<sup>82</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:797.

<sup>83</sup> Charles Hedrick, *More about Christian Beliefs: The Trinity*. (n.p., n.d.)

<http://geneva.rutgers.edu/src/christianity/trinity.html> (accessed Nov 18, 2004).

<sup>84</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia*, s.v. “Personality,” 7:986.

<sup>85</sup> Leonard W. Geddes, “Person” in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, (1911), 726.

<sup>86</sup> Bermejo, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 11:151-2.

<sup>87</sup> Caulley, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 570.

<sup>88</sup> Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 242.

## The Post-Nicene Period

In the Post-Nicene period (AD 325-451), another outbreak of heresy forced the Church to address the deity of the Holy Spirit. Between AD 340 and AD 360, various Arian or semi-Arian synods recognized the personal existence of the Holy Spirit but anathematized those who regarded Him as a part of God or confused Him with the Father and the Son (i.e., Sabellianism). They acknowledged only a unity of agreement among the persons of the Trinity and would not affirm the deity of the Spirit. Around AD 358, a deposed bishop of Constantinople named Macedonius taught that the Spirit was a created being subordinate to the Son. He and his followers were known as Macedonians or Pneumatomachoi (i.e., “fighters against the Spirit”).<sup>89</sup>

The reaction against the Macedonians was decisive and far-reaching. By AD 363, Alexandria had affirmed the deity and consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. Antioch and Rome endorsed similar positions shortly thereafter. Finally, in AD 381, the Council of Constantinople anathematized the Macedonians, confirmed the Nicene Creed, and enjoined the worship of the Spirit as co-equal with the Father and the Son.<sup>90</sup> They described the Spirit as “the Lord and Giver of Life, proceeding from the Father, to be worshiped and glorified together with the Father and the Son.”<sup>91</sup>

During the Trinitarian disputes, the use of the word *persona* led to controversy between the East and West. The precise Greek equivalent was *prosopon*, which also originally referred to an actor's mask and then to the character he represented; however, *prosopon* had not yet acquired the general meaning of an individual, as had that of *persona*. Consequently, the formula *tres personae, tria prosopa* (three persons) sounded like Sabellianism to the Greeks. On the other hand, the Greek term *hypostasis*, from *hypo-histemi*, was taken to correspond to the Latin *substantia*, from *sub-stare*. Therefore, *tres hypostases* appeared to conflict with the Nicene doctrine of the unity of substance in the Trinity.<sup>92</sup>

Gregory of Nazianzus brought about the final reconciliation between the conflicting terminologies of the East and West (*Orations* 42.16). The Greek terms *ousia* and *hypostasis* were equivalent to the Latin terms *substantia* and *persona*. In the Godhead, *ousia* denoted what was common to all three, such as goodness and divinity, while *hypostasis* signified the special property of Fatherhood, Sonship, and sanctifying power (*Basil Letters* 214.4).<sup>93</sup>

By the time the First Council of Constantinople convened, both sides recognized that the terms *hypostasis*, *prosopon*, and *persona* were equally applicable to the three divine realities. The West recognized that the true equivalent of *hypostasis* was not *substantia* but *subsistentia*, and the East realized that using the term *prosopon*, in the sense of the Latin *persona*, precluded the possibility of Sabellianism.<sup>94</sup>

The Council of Constantinople had settled the question of the deity of the Holy Spirit. The Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), which included Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Constantinople,

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<sup>89</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:797.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Caulley, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 570.

<sup>92</sup> Geddes, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 727.

<sup>93</sup> Bermejo, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 11:152.

<sup>94</sup> Geddes, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 727.

confirmed the findings of the previous councils. After this, theological debate centered on the procession of the Spirit from the Son; the deity of the Holy Spirit was no longer an issue.<sup>95</sup>

However, this verdict rested on the prior work of many notable individuals. Athanasius, the Cappadocian triumvirate,<sup>96</sup> Didymus the Blind, and Epiphanius had opposed Eunomianism, refuted the Macedonians, and worked out a doctrine of the Trinity. Gregory of Nazianzus concluded that the Spirit possessed the properties and prerogatives of God, and therefore, that the Spirit must be divine. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit shared a community of essence and were inseparable in every operation. Consequently, the order of the divine names in the baptismal formula implied co-numeration not subordination.<sup>97</sup>

Moreover, their discussions included several important caveats. While biblical exegesis provided the raw material of their doctrine, the formal arguments were based on Neo-Platonic metaphysics. In addition, the “personality” predicated of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was not the modern concept of a self-conscious, self-determining ego.<sup>98</sup> Instead, “the three subjects ranked neither as separate persons, nor as attributes of the real divine being, but as three special bearers or independent *foci* [centers] of all attributes and activities of their common divinity, and also of a peculiar and characteristic property.”<sup>99</sup> They were theoretical or conceptual entities that were equally divine and yet distinct from one another.

In the centuries that followed, the East and West divided over the *Filioque* controversy. The Constantinopolitan Creed had sidestepped the Eunomian dilemma (that the Spirit was either generated or ungenerated) by simply asserting that the Spirit “proceeds” (*ekporeuetai*) from the Father (John 15:26). This language preempted the kind of criticism often leveled against the unscriptural Nicene term *homoousios* (of the same essence) that was used during the Trinitarian debates.<sup>100</sup>

In the West, Augustine asserted that the Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father “and the Son” (*filioque*), while in the East, procession was solely from the Father. The unilateral insertion of the *Filioque* clause into the Constantinopolitan Creed by the West was a contributing factor in the rupture with the East in AD 1054.<sup>101</sup>

Augustine understood the term “Person” in the Trinity to mean a subsistent relation. Hence, the mutual relations in the Godhead were taken as eternal begetting, being begotten, and proceeding.<sup>102</sup> In the Augustinian social analogy, the Father loves the Son, the Son is beloved, and the Spirit is the love between them. In the psychological analogy, God is similar to the memory, intellect, and will of the mind.

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<sup>95</sup> Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 242-3.

<sup>96</sup> Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus.

<sup>97</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:797-8.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:798.

<sup>99</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Lehrbuch der evangelischen Dogmatik* (Freiburg i. B., 1889-92), 2:415; quoted in William P. Paterson, *The Rule of Faith* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), 218, n. 2.

<sup>100</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:798.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Mark J. Dorenkemper, “Person (in Theology)” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2d ed., 11:149.

## From Medieval to Modern Times

Boethius, an Italian philosopher-statesman of the 6th century, provided the classic definition of a person: *Naturae rationalis individua substantia* (an individual substance of a rational nature).<sup>103</sup> Substance, in this case, denoted a subsistent subject or hypostasis. Hence, a person is a subsistent and incommunicable subject of an intellectual nature.<sup>104</sup>

Aquinas, however, explained it in terms that essentially constituted a new definition. *Individua substantia*, he said, signified *substantia, completa, per se subsistens, separata ab aliis* (i.e., a substance, complete, subsisting *per se*, existing apart from others).<sup>105</sup>

Meyer claims that the Trinitarian doctrine of classical Scholasticism, which influenced Catholic pneumatology until recent times, originated in a rather strange amalgam of New Testament data, Platonic Gnosticism, and Aristotelian metaphysics. The presupposition of the system was that God is an adequate object of human cognition and that, in addition to the Bible, the speculations of metaphysics could be predicated about His nature. He could be understood by way of analogy and negation. In Scripture, God is a father, husband, and judge, only more so. The philosopher's way was that of negation; God is immutable, uncreated, and infinite.<sup>106</sup>

Scholastic theology viewed the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as formal relations grounded in the common divine essence. When the relationship is considered, the three persons stand in opposition or distinction to one another; when the divine essence is considered, there is no distinction or opposition. Thus, the persons of the Trinity are constituted essentially by subsistent, substantial relations. The Father is constituted through paternity and spiration, while the Son is graced with filiation and spiration. The Holy Spirit is awarded only one relation, that of passive spiration.<sup>107</sup>

With the exception of the Socinians, the Reformers accepted the traditional views concerning the personality of the Holy Spirit. The Reformers and their successors were concerned with justification by faith and the sufficiency of Scripture alone apart from tradition. Socinianism revived Arianism by asserting that the personal activities of the Spirit were figures of speech and that the Spirit was a property of God without hypostatization. Although the Socinians were vigorously opposed, the arguments for the personality of the Spirit showed no real advance over earlier discussions.<sup>108</sup>

John Wesley relied on the Bible for his doctrine of God and paid little attention to metaphysics and philosophy. His position was practical rather than speculative. He did not think that it was wise to attempt an explanation of God's nature because it could lead to confusion rather than clarification and did not believe that people should be burned at the stake if they did not use the word "trinity." He acknowledged the deity and unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and considered it foolish to reject what God had revealed merely because one did not comprehend what God had not revealed.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Geddes, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 726.

<sup>104</sup> Dorenkemper, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 11:149.

<sup>105</sup> Geddes, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 726.

<sup>106</sup> Charles Meyer, *What a Modern Catholic Believes about the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Thomas More Press, 1974), 31.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-4.

<sup>108</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:800.

<sup>109</sup> Carter, *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit*, 27-8.

The deists of the eighteenth century tried to reconcile the existence of a supremely good and powerful Creator with the presence of evil in the world. Therefore, they concluded that God was transcendent, but not immanent; He had created the world but did not control it.<sup>110</sup>

The nineteenth century produced many notable works about the Holy Spirit, but the advent of Rationalism undermined many traditional positions throughout continental Europe. Abraham Kuyper and George Smeaton made important contributions to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, while Friedrich Schleiermacher denied the personality of the Spirit, and Albrecht Ritschl ignored the subject altogether.<sup>111</sup>

At the turn of the century, Henry Barclay Swete became the leading voice of his time concerning the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Swete held that, in both the Old and New Testaments, the Spirit of God is God at work in the world. And, while God is spirit in an ontological sense, the Spirit of God is differentiated from God because the Spirit proceeds from the Father and is sent by the Son. He concluded that the distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in conjunction with the personal attributes that are assigned to each, points to some profound mystery in the Being of God that makes it possible to say that the Spirit of God is God, yet not the Father nor the Son.<sup>112</sup>

He also observed that, while the Holy Spirit is not definitively hypostatized in the New Testament as a person within the unity of a tri-personal Essence, personal qualities are freely attributed to the Spirit as an agent in the field of human experience. The ideas of personality and tri-personality, he said, are foreign to the intensely practical purposes of the New Testament, and in its closest approach to a metaphysical theology, it stops short at such a revelation of God as answers to the needs and corresponds with the facts of the spiritual life in man.<sup>113</sup>

However, the fact that this Advocate is invisible and purely spiritual does not negate His personality because “it is in that which is most spiritual in ourselves that we find evidence of our own personal life.” Since He fulfills all of Christ’s personal functions toward the Church and belongs in the category of a Paraclete, He is invested with all of the essential attributes of personality.<sup>114</sup>

Hence, the Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, although He is God. In His works and gifts, He is regarded as a power and a gift rather than as a person and is described under figures borrowed from external and inanimate nature; yet in His own divine life, it is impossible to doubt that He possesses that which, in some higher and incomprehensible way, answers to personality. With respect to the Church and the world, He bears a personal name and fulfills the role of a personal office, but the Apostolic age did not venture beyond these lines of thought. It was occupied with the work of the Spirit rather than with the doctrine of His personality or His relationship to the Father and the Son.<sup>115</sup>

In the end, Swete concluded that the essential nature of the Holy Spirit is, in the strict sense of the word, divine. While the Bible is also decisive concerning the personality of the Spirit, it is not equally clear in the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament attributes personality to the Spirit to the degree that it identifies the Spirit of God with God Himself, present and operative in

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<sup>110</sup> Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 254.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 250-1.

<sup>112</sup> Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, 288.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 289-91.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

the world and in men. The teaching of Christ and the apostles accentuates the personal attributes of the Spirit while distinguishing the Spirit from the Father and the Son. The baptismal formula encompasses the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the unity of the name that consecrates and claims for itself the life of man.<sup>116</sup>

The dominance of liberal theology in German universities in the early twentieth century seriously undermined confidence in the Bible. Theological liberals brushed aside the doctrine of inspiration and assumed that belief in biblical inerrancy was no longer tenable. Subsequent contributions by crisis theologians, like Barth, and the adherents of neo-orthodoxy have done little to reverse this trend.<sup>117</sup>

Having rejected the incarnation and deity of Christ, liberal theologians considered the Holy Spirit to be a divine manifestation without the quality of personality. Contemporary theologians view the concept of three persons in one God as a fundamental contradiction; consequently, there has been an inevitable tendency toward Unitarianism in which God is one though His manifestations are many.<sup>118</sup>

Liberal theologians in the twentieth century took the opposite position of the deists who had preceded them. They believed that God was immanent rather than transcendent; however, since a good and omnipotent God would not allow evil to exist, they concluded that God was not all powerful.<sup>119</sup>

The darkness and despair of World War I forced Swiss theologian Karl Barth to revise the tenants of liberal theology. He found that liberalism was completely inadequate for the needs of his congregation. The horrors of war demonstrated mankind's utter helplessness and forced a re-examination of biblical theology to see if there was a divine answer to human need. Barth concluded that liberalism had erred by denying the transcendence and omnipotence of God. He solved the problem "by attributing to God the power of immediate divine revelation to man and direct intervention in supernatural ways into human problems."<sup>120</sup>

While Barth accepted the deity of the Holy Spirit, his main contribution was a new doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit, which led to a re-examination of the definition of His personality. He rejected the definition of the Holy Spirit as a distinct person of the Trinity and the concept that the Spirit is simply a mode of manifestation. He objected to the term "person" as implying tritheism (three Gods) but also rejected ordinary modalism (divine manifestation) in three ways as equally inadequate.<sup>121</sup>

Barth's definition of the Trinity is a threefold mode of divine existence or being, which is less than that of distinct persons but more than that of mere modes of manifestation. His definition was an attempt to avoid the problem of using the term "person" to refer to the members of the Trinity. Consequently, his view is acceptable to some who are formally orthodox.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Swete, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 2:410-1.

<sup>117</sup> Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 252-3.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 255-6.

## Contemporary Voices

Like Barthianism, neo-orthodoxy was a reaction against liberalism that brought a renewed sense of realism to both philosophy and theology. The chief spokesmen were Emil Brunner, Reinhold Neibuhr, and Paul Tillich. They replaced the liberal tendency to naturalize religion and deny the miraculous with the concept of a transcendent and supernatural God. While still suspicious of biblical miracles, neo-orthodoxy regards the work of God in revealing Himself and extending grace to man as supernatural acts.<sup>123</sup>

As a group, neo-orthodox theologians do not have a clearly delineated doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit. While Brunner is more emphatic about the personality of the Spirit than Barth, Tillich rejects His personality, and Neibuhr never constructs a doctrine of the Holy Spirit in a Trinitarian sense.<sup>124</sup>

Instead, the Holy Spirit is an activity of God, supernatural and gracious, but not a person of the Trinity in the orthodox sense. Unlike Barth, they usually deny the distinct personality of the Spirit and affirm His deity only in a Unitarian sense as a divine manifestation.<sup>125</sup>

For example, C. F. D. Moule steadfastly resists the personality of the Holy Spirit. He says there is no uniform treatment of the Spirit in the New Testament and insists that it is inappropriate to try to squeeze New Testament references to the Spirit into the straight jacket of later doctrinal formulation; however, by examining the implications of New Testament experience, it may be possible to understand why later generations came to a Trinitarian concept of God's nature.<sup>126</sup>

He feels that the closest that the New Testament comes to Trinitarian language is in the passages where "the Father" and "the Son" are almost used as technical terms. When these terms are used almost as titles (e.g., Matt 28:19, 1 John 2:22), some kind of eternal relationship is apparently being indicated.<sup>127</sup>

And, while there are numerous passages containing words for God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, he argues that they are not an indication of an eternal, threefold nature in the one Godhead. For example, outside of Christianity, Plato's *Timaeus* drew many commentators who developed various transcendental triads (i.e., "father, creator, artificer" or "mind, artificer, cosmos"), but none of these implied a strictly Trinitarian interpretation. In the New Testament, threefold phrases are not confined to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit; Paul mentioned God, Christ, and the holy angels (1 Tim 5:21). Even less significant is the "trishagion" or thrice holy cry of the seraphim (Isa 6:3, Rev 4:8, *1 Clement* 34:6), which some viewed as an indication of the threefold nature of God but is more likely just reverential repetition.<sup>128</sup>

Moule claims that the doctrine of the Spirit that developed in the centuries following the New Testament was derived from and dependent on the doctrine of Christ that developed during the same period. In effect, the doctrine of the Trinity was the by-product of a binitarian interpretation that preceded it.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 259.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 260-2.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 260, 262.

<sup>126</sup> Charles F. D. Moule, *The Holy Spirit* (London: Mowbrays, 1978), 24, 38.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>128</sup> Moule, *The Holy Spirit*, 25.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

And, while the Spirit is never anything less than awe-inspiring, divine, and mighty in Scripture or subsequent Christian writings, it is not immediately obvious to him that the Spirit should be understood as an eternal and distinct aspect within the Godhead. Indeed, he says that creedal statements and ancient hymns mentioning the Spirit are conspicuously brief.<sup>130</sup>

According to Moule, the deity of the Spirit first began to take shape when the Arian heresy was defeated by the main stream of orthodoxy. Arius taught that Christ was divine but on an inferior level to the supreme Deity, just as a demigod in Greek mythology was subordinate to Zeus. Arius said that Jesus was “of a different essence” (*heteroousios*) with the Father while others held that He was “of similar essence” (*homoiousios*); the final consensus was that the Father and the Son were “of the same essence” (*homoousios*). In subsequent debates, Arius’ questions about the nature of the Son were applied to the Holy Spirit; but this proposal was also rejected, and the Spirit was declared to be in no way inferior to the Father or the Son.<sup>131</sup>

In Moule’s opinion, the appeal to Scripture made by Athanasius, Serapion, and Basil proves nothing as to the eternal “being” of the Spirit; it only shows that the term “Spirit” refers to a personal God’s personal activity. If “Holy Spirit” means “God at work among men,” it would be easy to quote Scriptures showing that the Spirit is spoken of as divine and personal. After all, “Spirit” is only one of several terms denoting divine action, intention, or immanence. God’s “Word” (or *Logos*) and Wisdom can perform the same function, and in certain contexts, so can His “Name,” “hand,” or “finger.”<sup>132</sup>

In the end, the main stream of the Church did not stop at a binitarian view. It explicitly set the Holy Spirit as a third entity in the same category as the Father and the Son and described the Spirit as “one in being” (*homoousion*) with the Father. While the unilateral insertion of the *Filioque* into the Nicene Creed led to dissention between the East and West, both sides expressed the firm conviction that the Spirit was distinct from the Son and that God must be described in Trinitarian terms.<sup>133</sup>

Moule also contends that Augustine’s social analogy fails to justify this view because a relationship between two persons cannot properly be described as possessing personality in itself. This is further underscored by the tendency to speak of the Spirit in neuter terms and the fact that Christian art avoided personal depictions of the Spirit by using the symbol of the dove or rays of light.<sup>134</sup>

According to Moule, the fact that Spirit is the mode by which a personal God is present does not seem to require that Spirit should be recognized as essentially personal. There is a good case for personal language, he says, when Spirit is the mode of God’s presence in the hearts and minds of His people, but this does not indicate a third, eternal “Person” (in the technical sense) within the Godhead.<sup>135</sup>

Therefore, he concludes that two things are clear and striking about the experience of the earliest Christians. First, Jesus Christ was understood to be not just an historical figure but also a transcendent Being; He was one with God in a binitarian sense, and therefore, eternally existent. Second, there was the experience of Christ’s character being imparted and reproduced in each

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<sup>130</sup> Moule, *The Holy Spirit*, 43-4.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-5.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-6.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 46, 47, 49.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 49-50.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

Christian as the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Christian experience led to the recognition of at least two distinct “modes” of God’s presence with humanity: Christ as Mediator and the Holy Spirit creating Christ’s likeness in them.<sup>136</sup>

Turner, on the other hand, sees the Holy Spirit as a reference to God Himself, especially as an expression of His power in the world. He claims that idealism and classic liberalism emphasized the “Spirit” as God’s mode of immanence in creation. As a result, pneumatological studies have tended to go in pantheistic directions and have lost sight of the biblical focus of the Spirit as the redeeming presence of God among His people.<sup>137</sup>

He describes the Spirit in the Old Testament as a mode of God’s presence (Pss 51:11, 139:7). He also dismisses the personal attributes of the Spirit (e.g., teaching, leading, and speaking) as an apparent literary device and considers references to God’s “arm” or “hand” to mean God’s Spirit rather than God the Spirit.<sup>138</sup>

He points out that, in the New Testament, the Spirit of the LORD has become the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7 NASB). And, just as the Spirit had been the channel of communication between Yahweh and Israel’s leaders, the Holy Spirit, operating in the realm of prophecy, became the link between the risen Jesus in heaven and His church on earth. Indeed, the Paraclete mediates the presence of the Father and the Son just as Jesus had represented the Father (John 14:7-11, 23).<sup>139</sup>

Haroutunian laments that theologians have been unable to find a firm and logical place for the Holy Spirit within the Godhead. While the terms “Father” and “Son” readily function as personal symbols, the term “spirit” refers to wind, breath, or moving air, which is not clearly personal. Personal and impersonal references to the Holy Spirit by biblical authors have produced endless confusion until the Spirit has become an “oblong blur.”<sup>140</sup>

In spite of recent efforts, he says that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit remains a puzzle to many. When theologians describe the Holy Spirit as God in action, the power of God, or the presence of God, it is hard to think of Him as the third person in the Trinity. Analogies with the human spirit or references to the Spirit of Christ have failed to improve the situation.<sup>141</sup>

Thus, while orthodox theologians have continued to argue for the personality of the Spirit on biblical and traditional grounds, liberals have fallen into Unitarian or binitarian positions because tradition without logic has ceased to be binding for them. However, orthodox and liberal theologians have been so preoccupied with the doctrines of God and Christ that the Spirit has all but vanished from the mind of the Church.<sup>142</sup>

Hendry, on the other hand, says that while the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the New Testament, it contains the materials out of which the doctrine took shape. In particular, he sees the outlines of a Trinitarian pattern in the thoughts of John and Paul.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Moule, *The Holy Spirit*, 50-1.

<sup>137</sup> Turner, *New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 403.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 401.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 401-2.

<sup>140</sup> Joseph Haroutunian, “Spirit, Holy Spirit, Spiritism” in *Dictionary of Christian Theology*, (1969), 318-9.

<sup>141</sup> Haroutunian, *Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 319.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>143</sup> George S. Hendry, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), 30.

He describes the Trinitarian character of Pauline theology as a paradoxical combination of unity and diversity. The unity of the Trinity is primarily functional in nature, so that the names of the three “persons” are interchangeable, while the distinction between them centers on their respective spheres of activity. “The Father is present and active in the Son, who in turn continues to be present and active in the Spirit.”<sup>144</sup>

The personality of the Spirit is important, he concludes, not because the Spirit is a person in relation to God but because the Spirit is a person in relation to humanity. Therefore, the Spirit is not merely a divine influence or force because, through the Spirit, God meets with and deals with mankind personally.<sup>145</sup>

Similarly, Meyer notes that one’s identity is usually defined in terms of the role that one plays in life; consequently, he believes that the identity of the Holy Spirit must be sought in the economic Trinity. Essential Trinitarianism deals with the Trinity of persons in itself, while economic Trinitarianism deals with the three persons in relation to human salvation.<sup>146</sup>

In economic Trinitarianism, theologians speak of personal missions and appropriations. Missions are earthly processions of the persons for a particular salvation task corresponding with the essential processions by which the Father is able to send the Son or the Holy Spirit. Appropriation is the parceling out of the various tasks of creation and salvation to the divine persons with the understanding that each job is done by all three acting in consort through the divine nature.<sup>147</sup>

Pinnock complains that there has been a marked unwillingness among theologians to acknowledge the social character of the Trinity. While the Cappadocian brothers saw personal communication as something central to God’s nature, Augustine sent out mixed signals; he would sometimes speak of three persons as distinguishable subjects, while at other times he would hesitate to give such distinctions a place. Augustine was similarly ambivalent over whether the social or psychological analogy was most appropriate.<sup>148</sup>

Pinnock maintains that Augustine was influenced by the neo-Platonic doctrine of simplicity, which posits an ideal of undifferentiated unity in God. While any form of Trinitarian doctrine challenged Hellenistic thinking, the cultural influences of that day encouraged people away from the biblical portrait of God as dynamic, relational, and open to the world.<sup>149</sup>

Although cultural pressures have changed, Pinnock believes that this uncertainty concerning the personality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has continued to the present day. Modern theologians evidently think of God as a single, divine subject existing in three (undefined) modes.<sup>150</sup> They are reluctant to speak straightforwardly of three persons, not because of neo-Platonism, but because of modern notions about what the term “person” means.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Hendry, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology*, 31, 35-6.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>146</sup> Meyer, *What a Modern Catholic Believes about the Holy Spirit*, 29, 34.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-5.

<sup>148</sup> Clark Pinnock, “The Holy Spirit as a Distinct Person in the Godhead” in *Spirit and Renewal: Essays in Honor of J. Rodman Williams* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994) 36-7.

<sup>149</sup> Pinnock, *Spirit and Renewal*, 37.

<sup>150</sup> Pinnock identifies Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, and Hendrikus Berkhof (among others) as theologians who prefer “modal language” over “person language.”

<sup>151</sup> Pinnock, *Spirit and Renewal*, 37-8.

Pinnock will have none of this and calls on theologians to stop sending out mixed signals concerning the persons of the Trinity. For him, the Spirit is not an unspecified mode in a unipersonal God but a self-conscious person who fellowships with the other persons of the Godhead. He also notes that, in recent years, there has been renewed interest in the social analogy by many theologians (e.g., Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jurgen Moltmann, and Cornelius Plantinga).<sup>152</sup>

### Defining Personality

Modern philosophy has generally not discussed the Holy Spirit in a specific theological sense. The God of Hegelianism was scarcely personal; Hegel used the expression “Holy Spirit” to refer to the spirit of logic, and any similarity to Christian doctrine was merely superficial. Kantian philosophy limited reason to the phenomenal and fostered agnosticism within theology.<sup>153</sup>

However, modern philosophy has played an important role in the critical analysis of self-consciousness, which has influenced the discussion of the doctrine of the Spirit. The reaction against Kant traced out the meaning of personality by examining the ego in terms of cognition and volition. Consequently, the traditional interpretation of personality in terms of substance and accident is now considered inferior to that of self-conscious spirit. Yet, Hoyle rightly observed that the concept of personality has not been fully explored, and the use of one mystery to understand another can hardly bring much light.<sup>154</sup>

According to Swete, the Holy Spirit is not merely personal but a person in God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit possess the same divine life, each with a different mode. These modes are referred to as “Persons,” but the analogy of human personality is deficient. Therefore, it is not surprising that untrained minds have a concept of the Trinity that borders on tritheism.<sup>155</sup>

Yet, as Swete also candidly admitted, the definition of divine personality is unavoidably ambiguous.

The idea of the One Undivided Essence, subsisting eternally after a threefold manner and in a threefold relation, finds but very partial correspondence in the nature of man or in any finite nature. When we try to express it in precise language, our terminology is necessarily at fault; the “hypostasis” of the philosophical East, the “persona” of the practical West are alike inadequate; in the things of God we speak as children, and we shall continue to do so until “that which is perfect is come.” Yet our imperfect terms represent eternal [truths]. The currency may be base, but it serves for the time to circulate amongst men the riches of God's revelation of Himself.<sup>156</sup>

Consequently, the theological definition of personality has some significant caveats. As Torrey cogently observed,

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<sup>152</sup> Pinnock, *Spirit and Renewal*, 36, 41.

<sup>153</sup> Hoyle, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:802-3.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:803.

<sup>155</sup> Swete, *Exeter Church Congress*, 694.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

Oftentimes when you say that the Holy Spirit is a Person, people understand you to mean that the Holy Spirit has hands, and feet, and fingers, and toes, and eyes, and ears, and nose, and mouth, and so on. No, not at all. These are not the marks of *personality*; these are the marks of *corporeity*. THE MARKS OF PERSONALITY ARE, KNOWLEDGE, FEELING AND WILL, AND ANY BEING WHO KNOWS, THINKS, FEELS, AND WILLS, IS A PERSON WHETHER HE HAVE A BODY OR NOT.<sup>157</sup>

Indeed, some say that human language cannot adequately express the mutual relations of three hypostases in one substance. “That which transcends thought can never find expression by the tongue.” Analogies are insufficient, they claim, because God is unique, and there is no way to test the comparison. However, analogies do show that the personality of God is possible, and a non-personal God is inconceivable.<sup>158</sup>

Many European theologians, inspired by Rudolf Bultmann, believe that all human language about God is symbolic and mythical. Meyer concludes that if there is no analogy of being, then God has to be totally Other and not at all describable in terms of human subjects and objects. Thus, God can be objectified in human thought and language only through the use of symbol and myth, which simultaneously encapsulates some significant truth related to the mysterious and preserves the aura of mystery about that truth. As Augustine stated, long before Bultmann, if someone thinks that they have arrived at a concept of God, one thing is certain: they have not.<sup>159</sup>

The fact that God’s nature is incapable of complete human comprehension is both logical and understandable. Humanity can never fully comprehend the limitlessness of deity. To comprehend God fully would require possessing the infinite wisdom of God, in which case, one would no longer be human but divine.<sup>160</sup>

Humans are able to know something of God’s personality because they are made in His image, yet Champion points out that one must not mistake likeness for identity. It has often been assumed that personality is practically the same in both God and humanity, but he believes that each type of personality (human, angelic, and divine) should be considered in itself and that failure on this point has led to a great deal of confusion about the nature of God. For example, divine personality is uncreated and infinite and is always perfect in the finality of eternal attainment, which is not true of humanity.<sup>161</sup>

And, since human persons are able to reveal themselves more fully to those with whom they are in full accord, the art of knowing God consists largely of being led by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:14) and hungry for the Word of God. Champion rightly concludes that, without these two elements, even the brainiest and most scholarly of men may wander the fens and moors of foolishness and self-deception.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Torrey, Reuben A. *The Holy Spirit: Who He Is and What He Does* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1927), 16.

<sup>158</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia*, 7:986.

<sup>159</sup> Meyer, *What a Modern Catholic Believes about the Holy Spirit*, 36-7.

<sup>160</sup> Carter, *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit*, 27.

<sup>161</sup> John B. Champion, *Personality and the Trinity* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1935), 52-3.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-7.

## Arguments in Favor

The argument that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person within the one Godhead rests on three lines of reasoning. The first is that the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son. The second is that the Holy Spirit possesses the essential attributes of personality. The third is that the Holy Spirit is God. Since similar arguments can be made for the Father and the Son, theologians conclude that the Holy Spirit must be a divine person within the Trinity.

First, Scripture distinguishes the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. They are listed separately in the baptismal formula (Matt 28:19), which is redundant if the Spirit is a mere mode or manifestation. They are differentiated in various administrations and blessings (1 Cor 12:4-6, 2 Cor 13:14, 1 Pet 1:1-2) and are as unique as the one body, one faith, and one baptism that define Christianity (Eph 4:4-6).

During the Last Supper, Jesus was explicitly clear on this point. The Father sends the Holy Spirit at the behest of the Son (John 14:16-17). If the Paraclete is sent by the Father and by the Son (John 14:26, 15:26), then clearly He must be distinct from both. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is “another Helper” or Advocate sent to take the place of Jesus (John 14:16, 1 John 2:1).

References to the Holy Spirit are not simply circumlocutions for the Father or the Son nor are they references to the human spirit of Jesus. The differentiation is too pronounced and goes beyond the simple anthropomorphic descriptions of the Spirit of Yahweh found in the Old Testament. The Spirit of the Father (Matt 10:20) and the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9) are not two separate spirits but one Holy Spirit (Eph 4:4); therefore, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equally divine and consubstantial yet distinct from one another.

Second, the Holy Spirit possesses all the basic attributes of personality. Here, the *hypostasis* of the ancient creeds has been superseded by the modern definition of a person as a self-conscious subject that possesses intellect, volition, and emotion. In addition, the Holy Spirit carries out functions that are normally associated with personality.

For example, the Holy Spirit has a mind. The Holy Spirit makes decisions (Acts 15:28). In addition, God knows the mind or intent of the Spirit (Rom 8:27). Indeed, Paul did not say that the Holy Spirit is the mind of God but that the Holy Spirit possesses intellect. Likewise, the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God (1 Cor 2:11 NASB) showing that there is communication between them.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit exhibits volition. The Holy Spirit issued commands and selected leaders in the early Church (Acts 8:29, 10:19-20, 13:2-4, 20:28). The Holy Spirit distributed spiritual gifts according to His will (1 Cor 12:11). Finally, biblical prophets spoke as they were moved or prompted by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21), which required thoughtful supervision in order for their words to be considered God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16).

The Holy Spirit exhibits emotions. The Holy Spirit groans while interceding for the saints, which indicates His passion and concern (Rom 8:26). Paul warned the Ephesians not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30). In addition, the Holy Spirit can be insulted (Heb 10:29).

Moreover, the Holy Spirit exhibits all the functions that one would normally associate with personality. Since the Father and the Son exhibit many of the same personal activities, the Holy Spirit must be just as personal.

For example, John used the term *parakletos* to describe the role that the Holy Spirit would play in the life of the Church (John 14:26). Although often translated as “Helper” or “Comforter,” this term also implies a counselor, intercessor, or legal advocate, which requires

true personality to fulfill; therefore, the Spirit cannot be a mere influence or power. This conclusion is borne out in John's description of the Paraclete.

According to Jesus, the Paraclete was to teach, testify, and convict (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:8), which are intrinsically personal activities. According to Paul, the Spirit "testifies with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom 8:16 NASB). In addition, the Paraclete was to inform the Church of future events (John 16:13), and Paul wrote that the Spirit had clearly explained what would come to pass in the latter times (1 Tim 4:1).

Indeed, the Paraclete can hear and speak (John 16:13). Luke wrote that the Holy Spirit gave audible commands to Philip, Peter, and Paul (Acts 8:29, 10:19-20, 13:2). Old Testament prophets spoke to God's people saying, "Thus says the LORD." In the New Testament, Agabus revealed Paul's future saying, "Thus says the Holy Spirit" (Acts 21:11).<sup>163</sup> Jesus explicitly said that the Holy Spirit would be "another Helper" sent in His place to minister to the needs of the Church (John 14:16, 1 John 2:1), which underscores the divine origin and personal qualities that were needed to fulfill Christ's role in ministering to the disciples.

Moreover, lying to the Holy Spirit also clearly indicates His personality, since one cannot lie to an impersonal influence (Acts 5:3-4). The fact that Ananias and Sapphira received such a swift, severe, and miraculous punishment for their blatant impiety is a stern reminder that God knows the thoughts and feelings of every person and He rewards accordingly (Jer 17:10).

Many cite the use of masculine pronouns as evidence for the personality of the Holy Spirit. Greek words have a grammatical gender that is not necessarily related to natural gender. For example, the Greek term *paidion* (child) takes neuter pronouns in the original text, but these pronouns are translated as either masculine or feminine (depending on the context) to be consistent with the rules of English grammar (e.g., Matt 18:2).

The Greek term *pneuma* (spirit) is grammatically neuter, but the Bible occasionally appears to use masculine pronouns when speaking about the Holy Spirit. For example, John repeatedly used the masculine demonstrative pronoun *ekeinós* (that one) to refer to the Holy Spirit (John 15:26, 16:7-8, 13-14). Martin says that this is a figure of speech called heterosis, in which one gender is used in place of another to emphasize something.<sup>164</sup>

However, there are some significant problems with this argument. Ryrie concedes that the clearest example only occurs in John 16:13-14, since the other passages may be referring to the term *parakletos* (Helper), which is also masculine.<sup>165</sup> Paul may have used the masculine relative pronoun *hos* (who) when referring to the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14), but the evidence is not compelling. Ryrie points out that *hos* in Ephesians 1:14 may refer to the word "guarantee" ("earnest" in the KJV), which is also masculine.<sup>166</sup> Similarly, Comfort says that the earliest manuscripts (P46, B) use a neuter pronoun.<sup>167</sup>

Third, Scripture supports the deity of the Holy Spirit. Various passages either equate the Holy Spirit with God or show that the Holy Spirit possesses the unique attributes of deity. Since these statements cannot apply to a created being, the Holy Spirit must be God.

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<sup>163</sup> Scriptures are quoted from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

<sup>164</sup> Tim Martin, *The Watchtower and the Wholly Other, Holy Spirit*. (n.p.: Watchman Fellowship, Inc., 2000) <http://www.watchman.org/jw/watchtowerholyspirit.htm> (accessed May 15, 2000).

<sup>165</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986), 344.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> Philip Wesley Comfort, *Early Manuscripts & Modern Translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 153-154.

For example, in the Old Testament, the Spirit of Yahweh is synonymous with the invisible presence of Yahweh, the God of Israel (1 Sam 16:13-14, 18:12, 2 Sam 23:2-3). This link also appears in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry (Ps 139:7ff). Indeed, David associated the departure of the Holy Spirit with being cast from God's presence (Ps 51:11). Since David understood that God is omnipresent, this must refer to a loss of fellowship and favor with God as the earlier episode with Saul plainly indicates (1 Sam 28:6, 15).

Similarly, in the New Testament, lying to the Holy Spirit is synonymous with lying to God (Acts 5:3-4). Paul equated "God's temple" with "a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 3:16-17, 6:19-20). Indeed, the voice of the Lord in the Old Testament is the voice of the Holy Spirit (cf. Heb 1:1, 2 Pet 1:21 with Acts 28:25-27, Isa 6:8-10) so that what was spoken by Yahweh was spoken by the Holy Spirit (Heb 10:15-16, Jer 31:33). Thus, Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit and also God-breathed (2 Pet 1:21, 2 Tim 3:16).

In addition, the Holy Spirit possesses all the attributes of deity. Unlike humans and angels, God alone is all-powerful, ever present, all knowing, and uncreated. Since the Holy Spirit has these attributes, the Holy Spirit must also be divine.

For example, the Holy Spirit is omnipotent. God promised Zerubbabel that His plan would succeed, not by (human) might or power, but by His Spirit (Zech 4:6). The Holy Spirit facilitated the signs and wonders performed by Paul (Rom 15:18-19) and is instrumental in the spiritual rebirth and renewal of the saints (John 3:5-6, Tit 3:5).

Some cite Genesis 1:2 and Psalm 104:30 as evidence of the Spirit's role in Creation, but these passages are ambiguous. Psalm 104 celebrates the same creative acts that are mentioned in Genesis 1, but the context seems to emphasize God's providential role in animating or replacing animal life upon the earth (cf. Ps 104:29 with Job 33:4, 34:14-15), which illustrates the power of the Spirit nonetheless.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit is omnipresent, omniscient, and eternal. The Spirit of God is synonymous with God's presence, which fills heaven and earth (Ps 139:7-12, Jer 23:24). The Holy Spirit investigates all things and knows the thoughts of God, which no one else can know unless God reveals them (1 Cor 2:10-11, Isa 40:28). And, like God who is everlasting, the Spirit always exists having no beginning or end (Heb 9:14).

In addition, the Holy Spirit can be blasphemed (Matt 12:31-32, Mark 3:29, Luke 12:10). Blasphemy is essentially any act that insults God; therefore, any sin by God's people is an act of blasphemy because it dishonors His name (Ezek 36:22, Rom 2:24). By extension, God's representatives can be blasphemed (Acts 6:11, 1 Cor 10:30) because they speak for God and carry His message.<sup>168</sup> Indeed, Revelation 13:6 and 2 Peter 2:11 list a variety of dignitaries and locations that can be blasphemed. In this case, however, the deity of the Holy Spirit is clearly implied since the term "spirit" often refers to an immaterial, personal being and since blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is an eternal sin, placing it in a superlative category.

While some of the foregoing evidence is circumstantial and inferential, certain conclusions about the Holy Spirit appear to be reasonable. If personality is defined in terms of mind, will, and emotion, then the Holy Spirit is clearly a distinct person. Scripture also appears to support the deity and consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. Therefore, as Swete rightly noted, the Holy Spirit is God proceeding from God, not the Father or the Son, but the Spirit of both.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> R. P. Martin, "Blasphemy" in *The New Bible Dictionary* 3d ed.

<sup>169</sup> Swete, *Exeter Church Congress*, 693.

## Arguments Against

Today, only a few groups deny the personality of the Holy Spirit. This includes neo-Arian groups like the Christadelphians and some Adventist splinter groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses or the United Church of God. The Seventh Day Adventist Church, however, is officially Trinitarian.

They tend to view God in anthropomorphic terms; therefore, they usually see the Holy Spirit as merely the mind or power of God. Following the Socinians, they consider the Holy Spirit to be an impersonal influence that facilitates God's will. The Jehovah's Witnesses describe the Holy Spirit as a "controlled force" that God uses to accomplish His purposes; thus, the Holy Spirit enables humans to do what they ordinarily could not do.<sup>170</sup> This implies that God is not omnipresent since He needs to extend a special force to get things done in the universe.<sup>171</sup>

For example, Broughton maintains that the Holy Spirit is often a reference to God's power. He cites Luke 1:35 as a typical example of Hebrew parallelism where the same thought is repeated in different words. In this case, he equates the phrase "the Holy Spirit" with "the power of the Most High" and concludes that they are identical.<sup>172</sup>

Indeed, Broughton asserts that the close connection between the Holy Spirit and power requires that they be recognized as identical. He claims that Acts 1:8 can be "literally" translated as "you shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you," showing that "power" and "the Holy Spirit" are grammatically parallel with one another. Similarly, he claims that the term "and" in Acts 10:38 and 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 can be rendered as "even" by the figure of epexegetis, again equating the Spirit with power.<sup>173</sup>

Schroeder also asserts that the Bible most often refers to or connects the Holy Spirit with God's divine power (Zech 4:6, Micah 3:8). According to him, "Paul referred to it as the spirit of power, love, and a sound mind" (2 Tim 1:7), and Jesus began His ministry "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14).<sup>174</sup>

However, the words "Spirit" or "Holy Spirit" often appear as a metonymy for the influence or effects of His agency (e.g., Luke 1:35, Acts 1:5, Rev 1:10).<sup>175</sup> Today, "the White House" is used for the presidency and "the press" is used for the news media. In Luke 1:35, the phrase "Holy Spirit" and "power of the Most High" are parallel expressions emphasizing the divine source and holiness of the begotten Savior.<sup>176</sup> When Mary is "overshadowed" by the power of the Most High, there are echoes of God's Spirit in the divine cloud overshadowing the tabernacle so that the tent was filled with the glory of the Lord (cf. Exod 40:35, Isa 63:11-14).<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, *The Holy Spirit - God's Active Force* (2004) [http://www.watchtower.org/library/ti/article\\_07.htm](http://www.watchtower.org/library/ti/article_07.htm) (accessed Sept. 27, 2004).

<sup>171</sup> Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 111-4.

<sup>172</sup> James H. Broughton, "The Power of the Most High" in *The Trinity: True or False?* (Nottingham: Dawn Book Supply, 2002), [http://www.thechristadelphians.org/html/books/trinity/trinity\\_mainframe.htm](http://www.thechristadelphians.org/html/books/trinity/trinity_mainframe.htm), chapter 5 section 2, (accessed Nov 17, 2004).

<sup>173</sup> Broughton, *The Trinity: True or False?*, chapter 5 section 2.

<sup>174</sup> John Ross Schroeder, *Who Is God?* (Cincinnati: United Church of God, 2001), 53.

<sup>175</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia*, 9:945.

<sup>176</sup> Mullins, *ISBE*, 3:1410.

<sup>177</sup> Caulley, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 569.

In addition, Broughton's close association falls apart upon careful examination. In Acts 1:8, the phrase "the Holy Spirit coming upon you" is a genitive absolute, which is grammatically unrelated to the rest of the sentence. Mounce points out that the translation of a genitive absolute is highly idiomatic and cannot be translated word for word.<sup>178</sup> He also notes that most genitive absolutes in the New Testament are temporal in nature; in this case, it explains when the disciples will receive this power, and most translations render the passage accordingly.

When Jesus promised the disciples that they would receive power with the coming of the Holy Spirit, He meant that the Spirit, who is all-powerful, would come in fullness and provide them with the necessary means for effective ministry.<sup>179</sup> Far from equating the Holy Spirit with power, Acts 1:8 actually explains why God empowered the disciples in the first place; He wanted them to preach the gospel to the whole world.

Moreover, Broughton's attempt to retranslate Acts 10:38 and 1 Corinthians 2:4 is technically possible but most unlikely. The Greek term *kai* is usually translated as a connective conjunction ("and") rather than as an ascensive ("even") or explanatory ("namely") conjunction, and there is no compelling contextual evidence favoring his position in either passage.

Indeed, Scripture repeatedly distinguishes the Holy Spirit from the gifts and power that He conveys (e.g., 2 Cor 6:6-7). For example, Palmer rightly observes that it would be redundant to say "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14) if the Spirit was simply an impersonal force.<sup>180</sup>

While Zechariah 4:6 and Micah 3:8 show that the Holy Spirit is both divine and powerful, they do not equate the Holy Spirit with power. This kind of language does not prove that the Holy Spirit is not a person; Arnn rightly notes that Paul referred to Jesus as "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24), yet Jesus is obviously a person.<sup>181</sup>

Finally, 2 Timothy 1:7 is not referring to the Holy Spirit but to a mental disposition. The Greek term *pneuma* can refer to wind, breath, vitality, mental disposition, or a spiritual entity depending on the context. Here, Paul contrasted the mental disposition of fear, which is not a person, with love and sound mindedness. The term *pneuma* only occurs once in the passage and is modified by terms that indicate a mental disposition; most translations indicate this by translating *pneuma* as "spirit" not "Spirit."

Broughton also claims that God's Spirit can refer to His own mind as a part of Him. He says that "spirit" and "mind" are sometimes equivalent terms (e.g., Isa 40:13, Rom 11:34, 1 Cor 2:16). Therefore, he argues that the spirit of a man bears the same relationship to a man that the Spirit of God bears to God Himself (1 Cor 2:11).<sup>182</sup>

Yahweh occasionally appeared to Old Testament authors in human form, so they naturally spoke about Him in anthropomorphic terms. This kind of language was carried over into the New Testament through various citations and allusions from the Old Testament.

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<sup>178</sup> William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 274-6.

<sup>179</sup> Anthony D. Palma, *The Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield: Logion Press, 2001), 21.

<sup>180</sup> Edwin H. Palmer, *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit: The Traditional Calvinistic Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), 12.

<sup>181</sup> Phillip Arnn, *The Holy Spirit Is Who or What?* (Watchman Fellowship, Inc., 2000), <http://www.watchman.org/rektop/holyit.htm> (accessed Nov 17, 2004).

<sup>182</sup> Broughton, *The Trinity: True or False?*, chapter 5 section 2.

However, Jesus revealed new information about God's nature that was only hinted at in the Old Testament. One cannot dismiss this additional information about God simply because it goes beyond these earlier concepts. All the available information must be integrated into a coherent model to achieve the best possible explanation.

For example, Paul clearly differentiated the mind of the Spirit from the mind of God (Rom 8:26-27). If God knows the thoughts and intent of the Holy Spirit as He intercedes with God on behalf of the saints, then clearly there is communication between two minds.

In 1 Corinthians 2:11, Paul was building an analogy with important implications. He joined the two statements in 1 Corinthians 2:11 with the conjunction *houtos kai* meaning "likewise also" or "similarly" In effect, he was saying that the Holy Spirit knows God's thoughts just as intimately as a man knows his own mind.

According to Pache, 1 Corinthians 2:11 also shows that just as a man and his spirit make one and the same being, so God and His Spirit are truly one. There is only one divine Spirit, and He is at the same time the Spirit of the Father and the Son, since they are one. And, since the Father and the Son are both God, the Spirit of either one must also be God.<sup>183</sup>

Broughton also maintains that the Spirit of Christ is the mind of Christ and not a separate person. He notes the close association between the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ (Acts 16:6-7) and feels that Paul specifically identified Jesus with the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17-18).<sup>184</sup>

Therefore, he identifies the Spirit who intercedes for the saints as Jesus (Rom 8:27, 33-34). He argues that since there is only one mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5), Jesus must be the only intercessor as well (Heb 7:25).<sup>185</sup>

However, Broughton has no basis for identifying the Spirit who intercedes for the saints as Jesus. A mediator is one who reconciles two parties. In the case of God and mankind, only the blood of Jesus can provide the propitiation that brings reconciliation; however, many individuals can petition God on behalf of another as Broughton himself pointed out (Phil 1:19).<sup>186</sup> Indeed, Paul described Christ as someone "who also makes intercession" (*hos kai entugchanei*) for the saints because this is in addition to the intercession of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:27, 34).

Moreover, during the Last Supper, Jesus clearly differentiated the Spirit from both Himself and the Father. They both send the Spirit as "another Helper" (John 14:16, 26, 15:26). If the Spirit testifies about and glorifies Christ (John 16:14), how can He be Christ's own mind? If He does not speak on His own authority, but speaks according to what He is told (John 16:13), how can He be the mind of the Father? Is the Father subservient to Christ?

In addition, the meaning of the phrase "the Lord is the Spirit" is disputed (2 Cor 3:17). While this passage seems to identify Christ and the Spirit, Schmans says that Paul usually distinguished them from each other; therefore, this statement should be understood as a dynamic and not an ontological identity. In other words, Christ is present and active in the Church through the Spirit as He exercises His saving power.<sup>187</sup>

Moreover, while attempts have been made to equate the risen Christ with the Spirit, Moule argues that they are basically distinguished from each other in the New Testament. He rightly explains that 2 Corinthians 3:17 is a reference to the LORD God of Exodus 34 rather than to Jesus

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<sup>183</sup> Rene Pache, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954), 17.

<sup>184</sup> Broughton, *The Trinity: True or False?*, chapter 5 section 2.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Broughton, *The Trinity: True or False?*, chapter 5 section 2

<sup>187</sup> Michael Schmans, "Holy Spirit" in *Sacramenti Mundi* (1969), 3:56.

Christ. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 15:45, Paul was simply contrasting the mere physical life of Adam with the life-giving spiritual nature of Christ.<sup>188</sup>

Despite the overlap between the functions of the Spirit and those of Christ, Moule concludes that there is a perceptible specialization in the usages. Even where “Spirit” means no more than “God present in and among His people,” he says, “this is a presence conditioned by and yet distinguishable from the presence of the risen Christ.”<sup>189</sup>

In addition to claiming that the Holy Spirit is the mind or power of God, these groups also offer various arguments against the personality of the Holy Spirit. The following are among the more common or difficult examples.

Broughton points to several passages that fail to mention the Holy Spirit as evidence that He is not a person. For example, Paul mentioned God the Father and Jesus Christ in the salutations of his epistles but failed to mention the Holy Spirit (Rom 1:7, 1 Cor 1:3, etc.). In addition, John said that Christians have fellowship with the Father and the Son but did not say that they have fellowship with the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:3). Lastly, Scripture sometimes mentions God, Jesus and the elect angels but not the Holy Spirit (Luke 9:26, 1 Tim 5:21, Rev 3:5).<sup>190</sup>

However, this is merely an argument from silence that can have alternate explanations. If Scripture occasionally fails to mention the Holy Spirit along with the Father and the Son, what is the significance of those passages where all three are mentioned together (e.g., Matt 28:19, 1 Cor 12:4-6, 2 Cor 13:14)? If Scripture failed to mention the Father with Jesus and the Spirit, would that be significant (Phil 2:1)? Or, if Scripture failed to mention Jesus with the Father and the Spirit, would that be significant (Rom 8:14-16)? Broughton's methodology is clearly flawed.

In addition, salutations, by their very nature, convey greetings from persons who are absent. Both the Father and the Son are in heaven (Matt 6:9, Acts 3:20-21), which Paul once saw in a vision (2 Cor 12). Therefore, it would have been perfectly natural for him, as God's earthly representative, to send greetings to the churches in the name of the Father and the Son.

However, the Holy Spirit always abides with the believer (John 14:16) and invisibly conveys His presence and blessings at all times. Indeed, John said that God's holy Anointing (i.e., the Holy Spirit) abides in believers to teach them all things (John 14:26, 1 John 2:27). Could there be a better example of divine fellowship with believers?

In Luke 9:26, Jesus referred specifically to the time of His return with His Father and the holy angels. However, the Holy Spirit has already appeared in glory on the day of Pentecost and does not need to return with Christ at the end of this age since He never departed (John 14:16).

Similarly, references to the Father, Jesus Christ, and the elect angels (e.g., 1 Tim 5:21, Rev 3:5) focus on God's heavenly throne as the center of authority. However, the Holy Spirit, by His very nature, mediates the presence of the Father and the Son to the world and to the Church.

Broughton also claims that there is an inherent contradiction in the doctrine of the Trinity since Scripture recognizes both the Father and the Holy Spirit as the begetter of Jesus (e.g., Matt 1:20, Luke 1:35). Since Jesus is never called the Son of the Holy Spirit, Broughton concludes that the Spirit is not a person.<sup>191</sup> Similarly, Schroeder argues that the Holy Spirit must be an agency or power since Jesus never spoke of the Holy Spirit as His Father.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Moule, *The Holy Spirit*, 26.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-9.

<sup>190</sup> Broughton, *The Trinity: True or False?*, chapter 5 section 3.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> Schroeder, *Who Is God?*, 55.

However, Champion rightly observes that sexuality is only possible in the physical realm and that despite the use of terms like “Father” and “Son,” there can be no sex in God because God is pure spirit.<sup>193</sup> Jesus said that spirit beings are incorporeal (Luke 24:39), and therefore, they do not engage in marriage, which implies sexual relations (Matt 22:29-30). Jesus has a body by virtue of the incarnation and the hypostatic union of His human and divine natures.

To the Eastern mind, a name is not merely an identifying appellation but an indication of inward character, some type of outward manifestation, or an expectation of what one will become. Thus, the terms “Father” and “Son” can have other meanings such as “the Father (Creator) of lights” (Jas 1:17) or “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17). The term “father” can express likeness or spiritual kinship as in “You are of *your* father the devil” (John 8:44).<sup>194</sup> Indeed, Isaiah referred to the Messiah (the Son) as the “Everlasting Father” (Isaiah 9:6), and Adam is called the son of God (Luke 3:38) although he was not actually born of a woman.

According to the doctrine of the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share the same divine essence and life; therefore, each participates in the actions that God takes according to specific roles. For example, in the crucifixion, the Father gave His only Son (John 3:16), while Jesus offered Himself through the eternal Spirit (Heb 9:14). Through Christ, believers have access to the Father by one Spirit (Eph 2:18).

This coordination also applies to the miracle of the incarnation. The Father initiated the incarnation by sending the *Logos* into the world thus taking on the role of a father. The *Logos* took on the role of a son through His birth, and the power of the Holy Spirit produced the miracle of the incarnation, which is figuratively referred to as a begetting. There is no reason to expect Jesus to be called the Son of the Spirit, and the lack of such language proves nothing.

Broughton also claims that there is a “deafening silence” about the Trinity in the Book of Acts. He observes that there is a lack of controversy over the Trinity among the Jews and Samaritans during their interactions with the Christians and concludes that the apostles did not teach the Trinity. He concedes that Trinitarianism appeared early after the apostolic age, but he blames it on “fierce wolves” and “half converted Greek philosophers.”<sup>195</sup>

Again, this is an argument from silence that can have other logical explanations. Given the significant body of evidence that Trinitarians cite from the Book of Acts for the personality of the Holy Spirit, Broughton’s assertion is nothing short of astonishing.

While the Book of Acts does not record a major controversy among the Jews and Samaritans, Luke was under no obligation to record every unfounded accusation hurled against the Church. The doctrine of the Trinity is clearly monotheistic in tenor; therefore, Broughton is simply looking for a chimera.

Moreover, the New Testament does not present an organized and explicit doctrine of the Holy Spirit; instead, post-apostolic writers gleaned the import of the passages that they were expounding and arranged their material in a systematic fashion. Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would lead them into all truth when they could bear it (John 16:12-13); the fact that the personality of the Holy Spirit is revealed in scattered passages may indicate that this was a difficult teaching that God very gradually revealed to the Church.

Jehovah’s Witnesses claim that baptism in the name of the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19) does not support the personality of the Spirit because the term “name” does not always refer to a personal

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<sup>193</sup> Champion, *Personality and the Trinity*, 58.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>195</sup> Broughton, *The Trinity: True or False?*, chapter 5 section 3.

name. For example, the phrase “in the name of the law” means that which the law represents, its authority. Therefore, baptism in the name of the Holy Spirit recognizes the authority of the Spirit, which comes from God and functions by His divine will.<sup>196</sup>

However, Bowman points out that, of the 228 times that the term *onoma* (name) is used in the New Testament, 224 are personal names. He says, “Reading the modern idiom ‘in the name of the law’ back into Matthew 28:19 is simply anachronistic.” There is no historical basis for doing so. While the term “name” is used to denote power or authority, it stands for the power or authority of someone, never for an impersonal force; a minister baptizes on behalf of someone, not something. “An impersonal force cannot have authority; only a person can.”<sup>197</sup>

Even Broughton is forced to concede that Matthew 28:19 supports the doctrine of the Trinity but suggests that this passage may be a later addition. He notes that Eusebius has only “in my name.” In addition, he contends that the one name (i.e., Yahweh) covers all three entities.<sup>198</sup>

However, the evidence does not favor his claims. The triadic formula of Matthew 28:19 appears in the earliest writings of the Church (cf. Matt 28:19, Justin Martyr *Apology* 1.61, *Didache* 7.1, 3). Moreover, appealing to the Tetragrammaton as the referent to the term “name” runs counter to the sense of the verse and is grammatically impossible.

Jehovah’s Witnesses admit that the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit in personal terms but attributes such references to personification. For example, sin and death are said to reign like kings (Rom 5:14, 21), and wisdom is said to have children (Luke 7:35); yet everyone recognizes this as figurative language.<sup>199</sup>

However, this argument raises far more problems than it solves. The personification of impersonal nouns is easy to recognize, but the term “spirit” can refer to a personal entity. In addition, authors rarely use personification beyond a few short comments; personification on this scale would raise serious doubts about the personality of the Father and the Son as well. Finally, personifications have never yet been known to utter audible commands (Acts 13:2)!

Jehovah’s Witnesses also contend that the masculine pronouns associated with the “Helper” in John 14-16 are not expressing doctrine. They correctly note that the Greek term for “spirit” is neuter and takes neuter personal pronouns, while the Greek term for “Helper” (*parakletos*) is masculine and therefore takes masculine personal pronouns.

While Bowman concedes that some exegetes have made too much of these masculine pronouns, he also rightly notes that there is much more in John’s Last Supper discourse that supports the personality of the Holy Spirit.<sup>200</sup> The whole tenor of this passage reflects the fact that the role of the “Helper” is intrinsically personal in nature, which narrows the range of interpretive options considerably. The Paraclete is either a person or a personification.

Indeed, Schroeder goes too far when he says that it is grammatically incorrect to translate the Greek masculine pronouns with English masculine pronouns.<sup>201</sup> While one would not translate a reference to the French term for “book” with an English feminine pronoun, a book is clearly an inanimate object. However, the Greek term *parakletos* refers to a comforter, councilor, and legal

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<sup>196</sup> Watch Tower, *The Holy Spirit - God’s Active Force*, n.p.

<sup>197</sup> Bowman, *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity*, 114-5.

<sup>198</sup> Broughton, *The Trinity: True or False?*, chapter 5 section 3.

<sup>199</sup> Watch Tower, *The Holy Spirit - God’s Active Force*, n.p.

<sup>200</sup> Bowman, *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity*, 115-7.

<sup>201</sup> Schroeder, *Who Is God?*, 51.

advocate, which are intrinsically personal roles. Thus, masculine personal pronouns are required and appropriate, even if one believes that John's use of *parakletos* is a mere personification.

Schroeder notes that the Bible refers to the Holy Spirit using impersonal terms. The Holy Spirit can be poured out (Acts 2:17), and believers can be filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:4). The Holy Spirit is a gift (Acts 10:45) and a guarantee (Eph 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit can be quenched like fire (1 Thes 5:19), and must be stirred up or rekindled (2 Tim 1:6).<sup>202</sup>

While biblical authors compare the Father and the Son to human beings in form and shape, he says that the Holy Spirit appears in a completely different manner. Various impersonal symbols and manifestations of the Holy Spirit include wind (Acts 2:2), fire (Acts 2:3), water (John 7:37-39), and a dove (Matt 3:16). According to Schroeder, these depictions are difficult to understand if the Spirit of God is a person.<sup>203</sup>

However, this kind of metaphorical language is common throughout the Bible and does not disprove the personality of the Holy Spirit. For example, Scripture says that the Messiah poured out his soul like water and that his heart melted (Isa 53:12, Ps 22:14). Christians can be filled with God (Eph 3:19). Similarly, God fills the heavens and the earth (Jer 23:24), and Christ fills all things (Eph 4:10).

Indeed, adequate explanations exist for each one of Schroeder's objections. Paul referred to the Holy Spirit as a gift, but John the Baptist called Jesus Christ the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36), and in the Book of Revelation, Jesus appeared as a slain Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes (Rev 5:6). Indeed, the Father gave His Son (like a sacrificial offering) so believers can have eternal life (John 3:16). Does this mean that Jesus is not a person?

This applies to visible manifestations as well as to metaphoric language. While the Holy Spirit appeared as tongues of fire, God appeared to Moses as a burning bush (Exod 3:2-4) and as a pillar of fire in the wilderness. Indeed, Scripture describes God as a consuming fire (Deut 4:24, 9:3, Heb 12:29). Does this mean that God is not a person?

Careful examination resolves all of Schroeder's objections. Arnn notes that quenching the Holy Spirit (1 Thes 5:19) is a metaphor for suppressing His influence and "stirring up the gift of God" (2 Tim 1:6) refers to the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and Romans 12:6-8.<sup>204</sup> Even if the "gift" is the Holy Spirit, Paul would be speaking of "rekindling" a relationship with God in the same way that a former suitor might talk about "lighting a spark" with an "old flame." There is nothing here to disprove the personality of the Holy Spirit.

Jehovah's Witnesses also point out that the Holy Spirit is listed among a number of qualities (2 Cor 6:6), but this is simply a hasty generalization.<sup>205</sup> Paul also listed the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with other impersonal nouns in Ephesians 4:4-6, but that does not mean that the Father and the Son are not persons.

Schroeder says that Paul did not mention the doctrine of the Trinity or the personality of the Holy Spirit in any of his writings. He claims that Paul mentioned the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together only once (2 Cor 13:14) and that Paul failed to mention the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son (1 Cor 8:6).<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Schroeder, *Who Is God?*, 54-5.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Phillip Arnn, *The Holy Spirit Is Who or What?*, n.p.

<sup>205</sup> Watch Tower, *The Holy Spirit - God's Active Force*, n.p.

<sup>206</sup> Schroeder, *Who Is God?*, 55-6.

However, Schroeder appears to have narrowed his search parameters too tightly. For example, Paul mentioned the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together when discussing the role of the Holy Spirit in distributing spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4-6) and the unity of the faith (Eph 4:4-6).

Indeed, since Trinitarians often cite Paul's writings, Schroeder's position lacks credibility. While Paul did not directly address the nature of the Holy Spirit in his epistles, he did provide important comments about the Holy Spirit throughout his writings. This allowed later writers to integrate them into a fully biblical position about the Holy Spirit. Moreover, other doctrines developed along similar lines (e.g., the incarnation and nature of Christ).

Schroeder claims that Jesus never spoke of the Holy Spirit as a third, divine person. He says that Jesus often discussed His relationship with the Father, but the Holy Spirit is "conspicuously absent" from His teaching in general.<sup>207</sup>

However, there are several problems with this argument. First, Jesus did much more than is recorded (John 21:25), therefore one cannot conclude that Jesus never told His disciples about the personality of the Holy Spirit. Second, Jesus explicitly told the disciples that He had withheld additional information because they could not bear it at that time (John 16:12), and He said this while specifically discussing the nature of the Holy Spirit. Third, John's account of the Last Supper discourse clearly indicates the personality of the Holy Spirit.

The gospels reveal the Father through the life and message of Jesus Christ; but after Christ's ascension, the focus shifts to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. Thus, the Bible provides a progressive revelation of Yahweh in the Old Testament that leads successively to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the New Testament. This suggests that God had a systematic plan for revealing His nature through the story of salvation.

Schroeder also claims that visions of God's throne depict the Father and the Son, but the Holy Spirit is never seen (Dan 7:9-14, Acts 7:55-56, Rev 4-5, 7:10). He says that even in the Book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, the Father and the Son are seen, but the Holy Spirit is absent.<sup>208</sup>

However, this is easily explained by the nature and role of the Holy Spirit. The terms *ruah* and *pneuma* refer to invisible powers or entities; consequently, the work of the Holy Spirit reflects God's omnipotence and invisible omnipresence. For example, angels are incorporeal spirit entities who are also normally invisible unless they choose to manifest themselves. Thus, Balaam was unable to see what was clearly visible to his donkey (Num 22:22ff).

In addition, visions are not always depictions of physical reality and cannot be used to make general statements about the nature of the spiritual realm. Thus, while the Holy Spirit is invisible throughout much of Scripture, He is certainly never absent. Indeed, the voice of the Holy Spirit is heard throughout the Book of Revelation (2:7, 11, 17, 14:13)

Some authors attack the personality of the Holy Spirit by claiming that the doctrine of the Trinity was borrowed from paganism. They argue that the existence of various pagan triads indicates that the early Christian Church derived the Trinity from pagan religious sources and not from the Bible.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Schroeder, *Who Is God?*, 56-7.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>209</sup> Robin A. Brace, *Is the Trinity Pagan?* (Museltof Countercult and Apologetics UK, 2004), <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/robin.brace/1THEGODHEAD.html> (accessed Dec 16, 2005); William Ramey, *In Defense of the Trinity: A Response to Jehovah's Witnesses* (nl: np, 1998), <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/billramey/trinity.htm> (accessed Dec 16, 2005).

However, there are many problems with this position. First, pagan triads are usually polytheistic or include a female deity not seen in the Trinity. Second, some triads are actually modalistic, and therefore, not truly a trinity. Third, there is no evidence that early Christians knew about some of these triads. Fourth, early theologians cited biblical evidence as the basis for their doctrine and not pagan religious teachings.<sup>210</sup>

Carter says that the Judeo-Christian religion alone, out of all the other religions of humanity through the ages, had attained a true Trinitarian doctrine. While a pseudo-trinitarian doctrine appears in Mahayana Buddhism, he maintains that it was not part of the original Hinayana Buddhism and was most likely borrowed from Christianity during the early contacts between these two religions in Northern China. Consequently, the Judeo-Christian religion is unique in its ability to provide the truth about God and humanity.<sup>211</sup>

Even if critics could demonstrate a tenuous similarity between the Trinity and paganism, the only question that matters is the testimony of Scripture. While syncretism was a serious problem in the early Church, Scripture alone determines whether or not something is true.

Indeed, many parallels exist between paganism and the Bible, but that does not prove that the Bible is derived from paganism. Ancient pagan religions had their own (corrupted) versions of the Creation (the Enuma Elish), the Fall of Man (Pandora's Box), and the Flood (the Epic of Gilgamesh). They also had stories of gods who appeared as men or of men who became immortal. They even worshipped a savior who was born under miraculous circumstances before being killed and resurrected back to life (Osiris). Therefore, critics should either reject the Bible completely or admit that pagan triads could be a counterfeit version of a truly triune God.

## Conclusion

The personality of the Holy Spirit is a complex theological and philosophical concept. Biblical authors were not concerned with providing a systematic, ontological description of God's nature; therefore, the personality of the Holy Spirit is a reasoned inference that is gleaned from a careful analysis of incidental passages. It requires an understanding of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin terms, familiarity with biblical and systematic theology, as well as, an awareness of ecclesiastical and doctrinal history. In addition, defining the concept of personality, either human or divine, has been a difficult task, which has evolved considerably over time.

The Greek and Hebrew terms for "spirit" have a broad range of meanings, which makes translation and interpretation difficult. Depending on the context, *pneuma* or *ruah* can refer to wind, breath, vitality, emotional disposition, mental activity, or various supernatural entities.

Basically, these terms refer to invisible powers or beings, and the Holy Spirit epitomizes God's omnipotence and invisible omnipresence. The Spirit of God imparts life, works miracles, enhances natural abilities and mental faculties, reveals knowledge, changes human nature, and empowers individuals for special service.

The work of the Spirit is similar in both the Old and New Testament, but there is a marked difference in the nature of the Spirit. The Old Testament portrays Yahweh anthropomorphically, and the Spirit of Yahweh is associated with His breath, emotional disposition, or mental activity. The New Testament echoes some of these concepts, but there is a new and striking revelation of

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<sup>210</sup> Brace, *Is the Trinity Pagan?*; Ramey, *In Defense of the Trinity*

<sup>211</sup> Carter, *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit*, 28.

God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While the Old Testament hints at the triune nature of God, the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit emerges from the teaching of Christ and the apostles.

While the gospels reveal the Father through the work of Jesus Christ, the remainder of the New Testament gradually reveals the personal nature of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament indicates that the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son and that He possesses all the necessary attributes of deity and personality.

The personality of the Spirit is evident in the New Testament and the earliest writings of the Church. The period of doctrinal formation was plagued by heretical ideas and disagreement over theological terms. In addition to language barriers between the East and West, early writers struggled to find a precise vocabulary that captured the concepts they were trying to convey. In the end, the creeds of the great ecumenical councils affirmed the personality of the Holy Spirit, a view that has endured until relatively recent times.

However, the advent of Rationalism and theological liberalism undermined many traditional beliefs including the inspiration of Scripture and the personality of the Holy Spirit. Barth rejected liberalism and modalism but avoided the term “person” as misleading. Neo-orthodox theologians do not have a clearly delineated doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit; they usually deny the distinct personality of the Spirit and affirm His deity only in a Unitarian sense as a divine manifestation; consequently, the theological landscape is now littered with conflicting opinions.

In addition, modern philosophy has modified the concept of personality to such a degree that the language of the ancient creeds is now inadequate and needs to be restated in modern terms. The modern definition involves a self-conscious subject that exhibits intellect, volition, and emotion. Moreover, the definition of personality is not synonymous with that of corporeality; supernatural beings are persons whether they have a body or not.

While the definition of personality has changed over time, the biblical description of the Holy Spirit remains just as personal as that of either the Father or the Son. Indeed, passages that refer to the Holy Spirit in an impersonal fashion are purely figurative, and similar examples exist for both the Father and the Son.

Consequently, those who reject the personality of the Holy Spirit find themselves in a dilemma. While Scripture does not provide a detailed, ontological discussion of the Holy Spirit, one cannot dismiss the personality of the Spirit without questioning the personality of the Father and the Son on the same grounds.

Indeed, many of the objections against the personality of the Holy Spirit are based on a poor understanding of the nature of God or improper exegesis. Often, these objections involve an argument from silence or mistakes about figurative language.

While the concepts of spirit and personality are elusive and difficult to define, certain conclusions are possible. If personality is defined in terms of intellect, volition, and emotion, then the Holy Spirit is clearly a person. Scripture also supports the deity and consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. Consequently, the Holy Spirit is God proceeding from God, not the Father or the Son per se, but the Spirit of both.

## Appendix

Quotations of the early church writers cited in this paper are given below in alphabetical order by author or title. They were taken from public domain resource database of The Christian Classics Ethereal Library (see <http://www.ccel.org>).

Athenagoras *A Plea for the Christians* 10 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2)

The Holy Spirit Himself also, which operates in the prophets, we assert to be an effluence of God, flowing from Him, and returning back again like a beam of the sun. Who, then, would not be astonished to hear men who speak of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and who declare both their power in union and their distinction in order, called atheists?

Athenagoras *A Plea for the Christians* 12

...men who reckon the present life of very small worth indeed, and who are conducted to the future life by this one thing alone, that they know God and His Logos, what is the oneness of the Son with the Father, what the communion of the Father with the Son, what is the Spirit, what is the unity of these three, the Spirit, the Son, the Father, and their distinction in unity

Augustine *On the Trinity* 1.3.5 (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol 3)

And I would make this pious and safe agreement, in the presence of our Lord God, with all who read my writings, as well in all other cases as, above all, in the case of those which inquire into the unity of the Trinity, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; because in no other subject is error more dangerous, or inquiry more laborious, or the discovery of truth more profitable.

Basil *Letters* 214.4 (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2, Vol. 8)

The non-identity of hypostasis and ousia is, I take it, suggested even by our western brethren, where, from a suspicion of the inadequacy of their own language, they have given the word ousia in the Greek, to the end that any possible difference of meaning might be preserved in the clear and unconfounded distinction of terms. If you ask me to state shortly my own view, I shall state that ousia has the same relation to hypostasis as the common has to the particular. Every one of us both shares in existence by the common term of *essence* (ousia) and by his own properties is such an one and such an one. In the same manner, in the matter in question, the term ousia is common, like goodness, or Godhead, or any similar attribute; while hypostasis is contemplated in the special property of Fatherhood, Sonship, or the power to sanctify. If then they describe the Persons as being without hypostasis, the statement is *per se* absurd; but if they concede that the Persons exist in real hypostasis, as they acknowledge, let them so reckon them that the principle of the homoousion may be preserved in the unity of the Godhead, and that the doctrine preached may be the recognition of true religion, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the perfect and complete hypostasis of each of the Persons named.

*I Clement* 34:6 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 9)

For the Scripture saith, "Ten thousand times ten thousand stood around Him, and thousands of thousands ministered unto Him, and cried, Holy, holy, holy, [is] the Lord of Sabaoth; the whole creation is full of His glory."

2 *Clement* 9.5 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 9)

As Christ the Lord who saved us, though He was first a Spirit became flesh, and thus called us, so shall we also receive the reward in this flesh.

2 *Clement* 14.3

The church being spiritual, was made manifest in the flesh of Christ, signifying to us that if any one of us shall preserve it in the flesh and corrupt it not, he shall receive it in the Holy Spirit. For this flesh is the type of the spirit; no one, therefore, having corrupted the type, will receive afterwards the antitype. Therefore is it, then, that He saith, brethren, "Preserve ye the flesh, that ye may become partakers of the spirit."

*Didache* 7.1, 3 (Early Christian Fathers)

(1) Now about baptism: this is how to baptize. Give public instruction on all these points, and then "baptize" in running water, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." ... (3) If you cannot in cold, then in warm. If you have neither, then pour water on the head three times "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Gregory of Nazianzus *Orations* 42.16 (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2, Vol. 7)

Let us then bid farewell to all contentious shiftings and balancings of the truth on either side, neither, like the Sabellians, assailing the Trinity in the interest of the Unity, and so destroying the distinction by a wicked confusion; nor, like the Arians, assailing the Unity in the interest of the Trinity, and by an impious distinction overthrowing the Oneness. For our object is not to exchange one evil for another, but to ensure our attainment of that which is good. These are the playthings of the Wicked One, who is ever swaying our fortunes towards the evil. But we, walking along the royal road which lies between the two extremes, which is the seat of the virtues, as the authorities say, believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, of one Substance and glory; in Whom also baptism has its perfection, both nominally and really (thou knowest who hast been initiated!); being a denial of atheism and a confession of Godhead; and thus we are regenerated, acknowledging the Unity in the Essence and in the undivided worship, and the Trinity in the Hypostases or Persons (which term some prefer.) And let not those who are contentious on these points utter their scandalous taunts, as if our faith depended on terms and not on realities. For what do you mean who assert the three Hypostases? Do you imply three Essences by the term? I am assured that you would loudly shout against those who do so. For you teach that the Essence of the Three is One and the same. What do you mean, who assert the Three Persons? Do you imagine a single compound sort of being, with three faces, or of an entirely human form? Perish the thought! You too will loudly reply that he who thinks thus, will never see the face of God, whatever it may be. What is the meaning of the Hypostases of the one party, of the Persons of the other, to ask this further question? That They are three, Who are distinguished not by natures, but by properties Excellent. How could men agree and harmonize better than you do, even if there be a difference between the syllables you use? You see what a reconciler I am, bringing you back from the letter to the sense, as we do with the Old and New Testaments.

Hermas *Similitude* 5.6 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2)

The holy, pre-existent Spirit, that created every creature, God made to dwell in flesh, which He chose. This flesh, accordingly, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, was nobly subject to that Spirit,

Hermas *Similitude* 9.1

After I had written down the commandments and similitudes of the Shepherd, the angel of repentance, he came to me and said, "I wish to explain to you what the Holy Spirit that spake with you in the form of the Church showed you, for that Spirit is the Son of God.

Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 4.pref.4 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1)

Now man is a mixed organization of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God, and moulded by His hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit, to whom also He said, "Let Us make man."

Justin *Apology* 1.6 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1)

Hence are we called atheists. And we confess that we are atheists, so far as gods of this sort are concerned, but not with respect to the most true God, the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues, who is free from all impurity. But both Him, and the Son (who came forth from Him and taught us these things, and the host of the other good angels who follow and are made like to Him), and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore, knowing them in reason and truth, and declaring without grudging to every one who wishes to learn, as we have been taught.

Justin *Apology* 1.13

Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who also was born for this purpose, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judaea, in the times of Tiberius Caesar; and that we reasonably worship Him, having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third, we will prove.

Justin *Apology* 1.33

It is wrong, therefore, to understand the Spirit and the power of God as anything else than the Word, who is also the first-born of God, as the foresaid prophet Moses declared; and it was this which, when it came upon the virgin and overshadowed her, caused her to conceive, not by intercourse, but by power.

Justin *Apology* 1.61

Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Origen *First Principles* Pref. 4 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4)

Then, *Thirdly*, the apostles related that the Holy Spirit was associated in honour and dignity with the Father and the Son. But in His case it is not clearly distinguished whether He is to be regarded as born or innate, or also as a Son of God or not: for these are points which have to be inquired into out of sacred Scripture according to the best of our ability, and which demand careful investigation

Origen *First Principles* 1.3.7

Let no one indeed suppose that we, from having said that the Holy Spirit is conferred upon the saints alone, but that the benefits or operations of the Father and of the Son extend to good and bad, to just and unjust, by so doing give a preference to the Holy Spirit over the Father and the Son, or assert that His dignity is greater, which certainly would be a very illogical conclusion. For it is the peculiarity of His grace and operations that we have been describing. Moreover, nothing in the Trinity can be called greater or less, since the fountain of divinity alone contains all things by His word and reason, and by the Spirit of His mouth sanctifies all things which are worthy of sanctification, as it is written in the Psalm: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens strengthened, and all their power by the Spirit of His mouth." There is also a special working of God the Father, besides that by which He bestowed upon all things the gift of natural life. There is also a special ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ to those upon whom he confers by nature the gift of reason, by means of which they are enabled to be rightly what they are. There is also another grace of the Holy Spirit, which is bestowed upon the deserving, through the ministry of Christ and the working of the Father, in proportion to the merits of those who are rendered capable of receiving it. This is most clearly pointed out by the Apostle Paul, when demonstrating that the power of the Trinity is one and the same, in the words, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit: withal." From which it most clearly follows that there is no difference in the Trinity, but that which is called the gift of the Spirit is made known through the Son, and operated by God the Father. "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every one severally as He will."

Tertullian *Against Praxeas* 2 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3)

But keeping this prescriptive rule inviolate, still some opportunity must be given for reviewing (the statements of heretics), with a view to the instruction and protection of divers persons; were it only that it may not seem that each perversion *of the truth* is condemned without examination, and simply prejudged; especially in the case of this heresy, which supposes itself to possess the pure truth, in thinking that one cannot believe in One Only God in any other way than by saying that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the very selfsame Person. As if in this way also one were not All, in that All are of One, by unity (that is) of substance; while the mystery of the dispensation is still guarded, which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three *Persons*-the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three, however, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. How they are susceptible of number without division, will be shown as our treatise proceeds

Tertullian *Against Praxeas* 11

Still, in these few quotations the distinction of *Persons* in the Trinity is clearly set forth. For there is the Spirit Himself who speaks, and the Father to whom He speaks, and the Son of whom He speaks. In the same manner, the other passages also establish each one of several Persons in His special character-addressed as they in some cases are to the Father or to the Son respecting

the Son, in other cases to the Son or to the Father concerning the Father, and again in other instances to the (Holy) Spirit.

Tertullian *Against Praxeas* 12

But although I must everywhere hold one only substance in three coherent and inseparable (Persons), yet I am bound to acknowledge, from the necessity of the case, that He who issues a command is different from Him who executes it.

Tertullian *Against Praxeas* 13

Now, if there were found in the Scriptures but one Personality of Him who is God and Lord, Christ would justly enough be inadmissible to the title of God and Lord: for (in the Scriptures) there was declared to be none other than One God and One Lord, and it must have followed that the Father should Himself seem to have come down (to earth)...For although I make not two suns, still I shall reckon both the sun and its ray to be as much two things and two forms of one undivided substance, as God and His Word, as the Father and the Son.

Tertullian *Against Praxeas* 30

Meanwhile He has received from the Father the promised gift, and has shed it forth, even the Holy Spirit-the Third Name in the Godhead, and the Third Degree of the Divine Majesty; the Declarer of the One *Monarchy of God*, but at the same time the Interpreter of the *Economy*, to every one who hears and receives the words of the new prophecy; and "the Leader into all truth," such as is in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, according to the mystery of the doctrine of Christ.

Theophilus of Antioch *To Autolycus* 2.15 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2)

In like manner also the three days which were before the luminaries, are types of the Trinity, of God, and His Word, and His wisdom

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