

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE.

It is of the highest importance from the standpoint of worship that we decide whether the Holy Spirit is a divine person worthy to receive our adoration, our faith, and our love, or simply an influence emanating from God, or a power that God imparts to us. If the Holy Spirit is a divine person and we do not act on it, we are robbing a divine being of the love and adoration which are his due.

It is of the highest practical importance that we decide whether the Holy Spirit is a power that we in our weakness and ignorance are somehow to get hold of and use or whether the Holy Spirit is a personal being infinitely wise, infinitely holy, infinitely tender, who is to get hold of us and use us.

The one conception is heathenish, the other Christian. The one conception leads to self-humiliation, self-emptying, and self-renunciation; the other conception leads to self-exaltation.

It is of the highest experiential importance that we know the Holy Spirit as a person. Many can testify to the blessing that came into their lives when they came to know the Holy Spirit not merely as a gracious influence (emanating, it is true, from God), but as an ever-present loving friend and helper.

II. THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE USE OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS

[Joh 15:26](#) — -"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me. [Joh 16:7-8](#) — "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when he is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." [Joh 16:13-14](#)" Howbeit when He, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he will not speak of Himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

First Proposition: Various pronouns that clearly imply personality are repeatedly used of the Holy Spirit.

The use of these pronouns is remarkable considering that in the Greek language the word for "spirit" is a neuter noun, and according to Greek usage, the pronouns that refer to spirit should be neuter. Yet in numerous instances a masculine pronoun is used, thus bringing out very strikingly how the Bible idea of the personality of the Holy Spirit dominates grammatical construction. There are instances, of course, where the natural grammatical usage is followed and a neuter pronoun used ([Rom 8:16](#); [Rom 8:26](#)). But in many instances this construction is set aside and the masculine personal pronoun used to refer to the neuter noun.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS ASCRIBED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

[1Co 2:10-11](#) — "For God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

Knowledge is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. [1Co 12:11](#) — "But all these worketh that one and the self:same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

Will is ascribed to the Spirit. [Rom 8:27](#) — "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is in the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Mind is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The word here translated "mind" is a comprehensive word including the ideas of thought, feeling and purpose. (Compare to [Rom 8:7](#) — "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.") [Rom 15:30](#) — "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."

Love is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. [Neh 9:20](#) — "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst."

Intelligence and goodness are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Note that this passage is from the Old Testament, where the truth of the personality of the Holy Spirit is not as fully developed as in the New Testament. [Eph 4:30](#) — "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Grief is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit thinks, feels, purposes, knows, wills, loves, grieves.

Second Proposition: Many characteristics that only a person can possess are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

PERSONAL ACTS ASCRIBED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

[1Co 2:10](#) — "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

The Holy Spirit searches the deep things of God. [Rev 2:7](#) — "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

The Holy Spirit speaks. [Gal 4:6](#) — "And because ye are sons. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

The Holy Spirit cries out. [Rom 8:26](#), R.V. — "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered."

The Holy Spirit intercedes. [Joh 15:26](#) — "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

The Holy Spirit testifies. [Joh 14:26](#) — "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (Compare [Joh 16:12-14](#) "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." [Neh 9:20](#) — "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldst not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.") The Holy Spirit teaches all the truth. [Rom 8:14](#) "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

The Holy Spirit leads, or directs believers in what to do. [Act 16:6-7](#) — "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not."

The Holy Spirit commands. [Act 13:2](#) — "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." [Act 20:28](#) — "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

The Holy Spirit calls us to work and appoints our role or office. [Joh 15:26](#) — "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

The Holy Spirit goes forth upon missions to which He is sent.

Third Proposition: Many acts that only a person can perform are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

PERSONAL OFFICE

[Joh 14:16-17](#) — "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

It is the office of the Holy Spirit to be "another Comforter" (or paraclete) to take the place of the absent Savior. Is it possible that Jesus Christ could use such language in speaking of an impersonal influence or power?

Fourth Proposition: An office is predicated of the Holy Spirit that could only be predicated of a person.

PERSONAL TREATMENT ASCRIBED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

[Isa 63:10](#) R.V. — "But they rebelled, and grieved his holy spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them."

The Holy Spirit can be rebelled against and grieved, or offended. (Compare to [Eph 4:30](#).) [Heb 10:29](#) — "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he is sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

The Holy Spirit can perceive when people treat it with despise. [Act 5:3](#) — "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"

The Holy Spirit can be lied to. [Mat 12:31-32](#) — "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

The Holy Spirit can be blasphemed against.

Fifth Proposition: A treatment is predicated of the Holy Spirit that could only be predicated of a person.

Concluding Proposition: The Holy Spirit is a person.

Theoretically we may believe this. Do we in our real thought of Him, or in our practical attitude toward Him, treat Him as a person? Do we regard Him as indeed as real a person as Jesus Christ — as loving, wise and strong, as worthy of our confidence and love and surrender, as He? He came to be to the disciples, and to us, what Christ had been to them during the days of His personal companionship with them ([Joh 14:16-17](#)). Do we know "the communion or fellowship" of the Holy Ghost ([Corinthians 13:14](#))?

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

I. DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

[Heb 9:14](#) — "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

First Proposition: The Holy Spirit is eternal. <19D907> [Psa 139:7-10](#) — "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

Second Proposition: The Holy Spirit is omnipresent. [Luk 1:35](#) — "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Third Proposition: The Holy Spirit is omnipotent. [1Co 2:10-11](#) — "For God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." [Joh 14:26](#) — "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." [Joh 16:12-13](#) — "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

Fourth Proposition: The Holy Spirit is omniscient.

Concluding Proposition: Each of the four distinctly divine attributes is ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

II. DIVINE WORKS.

[Job 33:4](#) "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." <19A430> [Psa 104:30](#) — "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth."

First Proposition: Creation is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. [Joh 6:63](#) — "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." [Rom 8:11](#) — "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." [Gen 2:7](#) — "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Second Proposition: The impartation of life is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. [2Pe 1:21](#) R.V. — "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." [2Sa 23:2-3](#) — "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

Third Proposition: The Bible ascribes authorship of divine prophecies to the Holy Spirit.

Concluding Proposition: The Bible ascribes three distinctively divine works to the Holy Spirit.

III. STATEMENTS THAT REFER TO THE LORD OR JEHOVAH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT APPLIED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

[Isa 6:8-10](#) — "Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." (Compare to [Act 28:25-27](#) — "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word.

Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts and should be converted, and I should heal them.") This same passage is applied to Jesus Christ. Could it be that in the threefold "holy" of the seraphic cry in [Isa 6:3](#), "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory," we have a hint of the triune personality of the Jehovah of Hosts and hence the propriety of the threefold application of the vision? [Exo 16:7](#) — "And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; and what are we, that ye murmur against us?" (Compare [Heb 3:7-9](#) — "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.") See also [Psa 95:8-11](#).

Proposition: Statements which in the Old Testament distinctly name the Lord, God, or Jehovah as their subject are applied to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament; thus, the Holy Spirit occupies the position of deity in the New Testament thought.

IV. THE WAY IN WHICH THE NAME OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS COUPLED WITH THAT OF GOD.

[1Co 12:4-6](#) — "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." [Mat 28:19](#) — "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." 2 Corinthians 13-14 "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

Proposition: The name of the Holy Spirit is coupled with the name of God in a way that it would be impossible for a reverent and thoughtful mind to couple the name of any finite being with that of the deity.

V. THE DIVINE NAME APPLIED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

[Act 5:3-4](#) "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

Proposition: The Holy Spirit is called God.

By the ascription of all the distinctively divine attributes and several distinctively divine operations; by referring statements that in the Old Testament distinctly name Jehovah, the Lord, or God as their subject to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament; by coupling the name of the Holy Spirit with the name of God in a way that it would be impossible to couple that of any finite being with that of the deity; by calling the Holy Spirit "God" — in all these unmistakable ways, God in His word distinctly proclaims the Holy Spirit is a divine person.