

# THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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## CHAPTER 1

# THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**W**H<sup>O</sup> IS THE HOLY SPIRIT? If we consider only Acts 1:8, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you," we might think that the Spirit is merely a power, strength coming from God, a blessing which He grants us. However, it is easy to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is more than this. He is a person.

### I. THE HOLY SPIRIT ACTS AS A PERSON

Let us note some of the actions which are attributed to Him and cannot be the expression of a power or of a thing.

1. He dwells in believers (John 14:17)
2. He teaches; He brings to remembrance (John 14:26)
3. He testifies (John 15:26)
4. He convicts of sin (John 16:8)
5. He guides into all truth; He hears, He speaks, He shows (John 16:13)
6. He inspires Scripture and speaks through it (Acts 1:16; II Peter 1:21)
7. He spoke to Philip (Acts 8:29)
8. He calls to the ministry (Acts 13:2)
9. He sends forth His servants (Acts 13:4)
10. He forbids certain actions (Acts 16:6, 7)
11. He intercedes, etc. (Rom. 8:26)

### II. HE POSSESSES THE ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES OF PERSONALITY

The Spirit is endued with

1. A will. He bestows His gifts upon every man as He will (I Cor. 12:11)

2. Thought. God knows what is the mind of the Spirit (Rom. 8:27)

3. Knowledge. The Spirit knows and searches the things of God (I Cor. 2:10, 11)

4. Language. "We speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:13)

5. Love. Paul exhorts the Romans for the love of the Spirit, to strive together with him in their prayers (Rom. 15:30)

6. Goodness. "Thou gavest . . . thy good Spirit to instruct them" (Neh. 9:20)

### III. THE NAMES WHICH ARE GIVEN HIM REVEAL BOTH HIS PERSONALITY AND HIS DIVINITY

#### 1. He is called

- a. My Spirit (Gen. 6:3)
- b. The Spirit of God (II Chron. 15:1)
- c. The Spirit of the Lord (Isa. 11:2)
- d. The breath of the Almighty (Job 32:8)
- e. The Spirit of the Lord God (Isa. 61:1)
- f. The Spirit of your Father (Matt. 10:20)
- g. The Spirit of (Acts 16:7, A.S.V.)
- h. The Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9)
- i. The Spirit of His Son (Gal. 4:6)

Since the three divine Persons are one, it is not surprising that the Holy Spirit should receive without distinction one or the other of these appellations.

#### 2. His other names completely demonstrate His qualities

##### He is the Spirit

- a. Of holiness—the Holy Spirit (Psa. 51:11; Rom. 1:4)
- b. Of wisdom (Isa. 11:2)
- c. Of counsel (Isa. 11:2)
- d. Of understanding (Isa. 11:2)

- e. Of supplications (Zech. 12:10)
- f. Of worship (John 4:23)
- g. Of truth (John 14:17)
- h. Of comfort (John 14:26—the Comforter)
- i. Of life (Rom. 8:2)
- j. Of adoption (Rom. 8:15)
- k. Of faith (II Cor. 4:13)
- l. Of love (II Tim. 1:7)
- m. Of might (II Tim. 1:7)
- n. Of sound judgment (II Tim. 1:7, Weymouth)
- o. Of revelation (Eph. 1:17)
- p. Of power (Eph. 3:20; Rom. 15:13—the power of the Holy Ghost)
- q. Of eternity—the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14)
- r. Of grace (Heb. 10:29)
- s. Of glory (I Peter 4:14)

#### IV. THE SPIRIT CAN BE TREATED LIKE A PERSON

He can be

1. Lied to (Acts 5:3)
2. Tempted (Acts 5:9)
3. Resisted (Acts 7:51)
4. Grieved (Eph. 4:30)
5. Outraged (Heb. 10:29)
6. Blasphemed against (Matt. 12:31)
7. Called upon (Ezek. 37:9)

#### V. IN SPEAKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, JESUS USES THE MASCULINE, NOT THE NEUTER PRONOUN

In the original Greek text, the neuter word *Spirit* should be followed by the neuter pronoun. However, contrary to grammatical rules, the pronoun is masculine (e.g., John 16:7, 8, 13, 14, etc.) to emphasize the fact that the Holy Spirit is a person and not a thing.

## CHAPTER 2

# THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**T**HE SCRIPTURES do not limit themselves in emphasizing the personality of the Holy Spirit; at the same time, they affirm His divinity in a most positive way.

### I. THE SPIRIT BEARS DIVINE NAMES

When He is called "the Spirit of God," that means that He is the very Person of God. I Corinthians 2:11 clearly shows that as man and his spirit make one and the same being, so God and His Spirit are only one: "For who among men knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so, the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God."

### II. THE SPIRIT POSSESSES DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

1. Omniscience. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10, 11).

2. Omnipresence. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" (Psa. 139:7). The Spirit dwells at the same time in the hearts of all believers (see John 14:17).

3. Omnipotence. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit . . ." (Zech. 4:6). It is in fact the Spirit which creates. "The Spirit of God hath made me" (Job 33:4); "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created" (Psa. 104:30).

4. The Truth. Jesus can say, "I am the truth" because He is God. In the same manner, in I John 5:6, the Spirit is declared to be the Truth.

5. Unsearchable greatness. "Who hath directed the Spirit

of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him?" (Isa. 40:13).

Many other divine qualities are attributed to the Spirit by the very names that He bears.

6. He is the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2) as God is the living God.

7. He is the Spirit of love (II Tim. 1:7) as God is love.

8. He is the Spirit of sound judgment (II Tim. 1:7, Weymouth) as God alone is wise (Rom. 16:27, etc.).

### III. THE SPIRIT IS THE THIRD PERSON OF THE TRINITY

First of all, let us underline the fact that the Spirit is associated with the Father and the Son, and placed on the same level as They are (Matt. 28:19); the disciples must baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as the blessing is given by all three (II Cor. 13:14).

On the other hand, Jesus calls the Spirit "another" Comforter, thus referring to Him as to another Self (John 14:16). It is with the same meaning that He declares to His disciples that it is expedient for them to lose His bodily presence and to receive the Spirit in themselves (John 16:7). According to Romans 8:9-10, to receive the Spirit is to have Christ dwelling in us.

The unity between the three divine Persons is so great that Paul can declare with equal truth:

"Your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you" (I Cor. 6:19).

"Ye are a temple of God" (I Cor. 3:16).

"Christ in you" (Col. 1:27).

Indeed, God is indivisible, and it is impossible either to conceive of, or to receive one of the three Persons of the Trinity without the other two. This unity in plurality is incomprehensible to many people, and even becomes a pretext for unbelief. However, we must not forget that man himself is formed of three elements, the intimate union of which forms

his personality: spirit, soul, and body (I Thess. 5:23). That which appears to be admissible with regard to man is far more so concerning the Deity. The latter is also one, although composed of three elements.

The unity of the three Persons of the Trinity does not prevent Them from each playing a particular part. The Father is greater than all (John 10:29). The Son does only what He sees the Father doing and fulfills His will (John 5:19, 30). The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and by the Son (John 14:26 and 16:7); He is given in answer to the prayer of the Son and in His name; and His role is to glorify the Son by putting His presence in the hearts of His disciples (John 14:16, 26 and 16:14).

On the other hand, the unity between the Son and the Spirit is marked by the fact that the attitude adopted by men toward the one determines that which they maintain toward the other: he who rejects Christ resists the Holy Spirit; the one who accepts the Saviour receives the Holy Spirit; he who yields entirely to Jesus is used by the Holy Spirit.

#### IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD HIMSELF

In summarizing, we can affirm the essential divinity of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, this truth is clearly proclaimed in the following texts:

The Lord is the Spirit (II Cor. 3:17).

God is a Spirit (John 4:24).

To lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God Himself (Acts 5:3, 4).

Other passages in the New Testament attribute directly to the Spirit words or acts which, in the Old, were attributed to God.

1. "Moses said unto them [the people], . . . Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? . . . And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, . . . because they tempted the Lord" (Exod. 17:2-7). "Even as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye

hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation . . . wherewith your fathers tempted me by proving me" (Heb. 3:7-9).

2. "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, . . . Go, and tell this people: Hear ye indeed, but understand not" (Isa. 6:8-10). "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying: Go thou unto this people, and say . . ." (Acts 28:25-27).

3. The Lord said, "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts . . ." (Jer. 31:31-34). "And the Holy Ghost also beareth witness to us: for after he hath said, This is the covenant that I will make with them . . ." (Heb. 10:15-17).

The Spirit is therefore undeniably God Himself. In conclusion, let us examine two accessory points.

#### V. IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND THE SPIRIT OF THE GLORIFIED JESUS?

Some people say: When one believes, he receives the spirit of Jesus (I John 4:2; Rom. 8:9); when he is baptized with the Spirit, he receives the Holy Ghost. Can this be true? Are there two Spirits?

No, there is one divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit; He is at the same time the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, since they are one. Moreover, since the Father and the Son are God, the Spirit of the one or the other must equally be God.

It is for this reason that the Bible repeatedly states that there is only one Spirit.

"There is . . . one Spirit" (Eph. 4:4).

"We both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18).

"All these worketh the one and the same Spirit . . . in one

Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:11, 13).

The following passages testify clearly to this one Spirit, and at the same time give Him different names:

"Having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word . . . they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not" (Acts 16:6, 7).

"If so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9).

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God . . . Ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:14).

"But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit [the spirit of Christ] . . . Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 6:17-19).

Therefore, what was stated above proves to be exact: in the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are one and the same Person. In this connection, it is striking to note that in the same manner the Bible refers without distinction to the Gospel of God and the Gospel of Christ.

"Separated unto the gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1).

"God . . . whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his son" (Rom. 1:9).

"Ministering the gospel of God" (Rom. 15:16).

"I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:19).

Further mention is made of the grace of God (Gal. 2:21; 4:6) and the grace of Christ (Gal. 1:6; 6:18). And yet, nobody would think of saying that these are two kinds of Gospel or two kinds of grace.

#### VI. IF THERE IS ONLY ONE SPIRIT, WHY DOES REVELATION (1:4; 3:1; 4:5 AND 5:6) SPEAK OF "THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD"?

Considering all these passages which demonstrate the unity

of the Spirit, this expression cannot mean that there are seven different ones. In order to understand it, let us remember that the Revelation often uses symbolical language. In this language, the number seven constantly signifies fullness and perfection (as already seen in the Old Testament). In Revelation 5:6 the Lamb slain has seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God; this is an allusion to the perfect power and knowledge imparted to Him by the Spirit which He possesses without measure (John 3:34). The fact that the Holy Spirit in His perfect fullness remains one is further proved by Revelation 1:4-5: grace and peace are given to the churches from God, from the seven spirits which are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, just as the blessing is given in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, for example in II Corinthians 13:14. It is therefore evident that there is one Spirit, and that this Spirit is God.

### CONCLUSION

We have just seen that the Holy Spirit is a Person and the third Person of the divine Trinity.

The establishment of this fact is what gives a deep interest to the study which we are about to make on His work in the human heart. Indeed, if the Spirit were merely a power coming from above, it would be at my disposal and I could use it at will. But if the Spirit is a Person, and more than that, if He is God Himself, it is I who should be at His disposal, and love and obey Him in all things. Besides, receiving into our hearts not only a blessing, but the presence of the Almighty God is to have within us the source of all grace and of all possibility. Let us beware of failing to recognize the true nature of the Holy Spirit.

## CHAPTER 3

# THE SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**T**HE HOLY SCRIPTURES use the following symbols to represent the Spirit and to help us to understand better either His person or His work.

### I. THE BREATH OR THE WIND (in the original language, the word "spirit" also means "breath")

According to Genesis 2:7 God breathed upon Adam a breath of life in the same manner as later on He will give to "the new man" the breath of the Spirit. We read in Job 32:8: "But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding," and in Job 33:4: "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty giveth me life."

Ezekiel prophesies and says: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live" (37:9). Jesus Himself, speaking of the regenerative work of the Spirit, says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth" (John 3:8). Then, when He sends forth His disciples, He breathes upon them saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22). Finally, when the Spirit Himself descends on the day of Pentecost, He is accompanied by a sound as of a rushing mighty wind, which fills all the house where the disciples are sitting (Acts 2:2).

What does this symbol mean? The above passages allow us to think that he stresses the impetuous, invisible and unexpected action of the Spirit; it shows also that this action is

heavenly, that it comes from above, that it is sovereign and infinitely above man. Finally, if the Spirit is called the Breath of the Almighty, it is because He is His direct emanation, the manifestation of His very presence.

Since we are speaking of the impetuous action of the Spirit, the following passages are of interest, as they will illustrate it in a special manner: "And the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem . . . The Spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate . . . And the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and he said unto me . . ." (Ezek. 8:3; 11:1, 5). "The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip . . . [who] was found at Azotus . . ." (Acts 8:39-40). In these different cases, does not the Spirit seem to act as a sudden and mighty wind, which seizes an object and makes of it that which He desires?

## II. THE DOVE

While Jesus was being baptized by John the Baptist, "the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as a dove upon him" (Luke 3:22).

Some people think that the dove set free by Noah, when he was in the ark (Gen. 8:8-12), is also an image of the Holy Spirit. On the sin-laden and devastated earth, the Spirit, as He cannot find a pure place wherein to dwell, comes back and rests upon Christ, represented by the Ark of salvation. Then, the Spirit takes the Church away from the earth (draws it up into the heavens) as the first fruit of humanity in the same way that the dove brought back an olive branch in her beak. Then when the time is fully come, the Spirit will be able to spread over all the earth which, during the Millennium, will be effectively filled with the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea. The raven which is an unclean bird feeding upon dead bodies, is an image of the flesh which delights itself in the midst of all impurities.

Why does the Scripture use this image? Without a doubt it

is to remind us that, like the dove, the Holy Spirit is characterized by gentleness, tenderness and purity. He not only possesses irresistible power, He is also a Spirit of love, grace, consolation and innocence.

### III. OIL

The New Testament speaks constantly of the "unction" of the Holy Spirit. Jesus attributes to Himself the word of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me" (Luke 4:18). Peter says in Acts 10:38: "God hath anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." The Epistle to Hebrews adds, "Therefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness" (1:9). Finally, Paul and John declare, "Now he . . . who hath anointed us, is God" (II Cor. 1:21). "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (I John 2:20).

All these passages are allusions to the unction of oil described in the Old Testament for priests, prophets and kings. The Holy Spirit therefore applies the indispensable preparation for the ministry (Acts 1:8).

On the other hand, it seems that the oil which the wise virgins carefully put into their lamps (Matt. 25:4) also represents the Spirit without whom no one belongs to Christ (Rom. 8:9). In the Old Testament the holy oil alone continually lighted the temple, where God was worshiped and where the person and the work of Christ were wholly symbolized (Exod. 27:20-21). In the same manner, the Spirit illuminates and glorifies Christ before our eyes; He gives us understanding of heavenly truths, and enables us to worship in spirit and in truth (John 16:14; I John 2:27; Phil. 3:3).

According to Leviticus 14:17 and 8:30, the oil was put over the blood to sanctify the lepers and the priests. In the same manner we, as sinners called to serve the living God, are sanctified by the blood of the cross and by the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:2-3). Finally there is a beautiful illustration of the

source, constant renewal and light of the divine "oil" in Zechariah 4:2-5, the conclusion, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" in verse 6.

#### IV. THE FIRE

On the day of Pentecost, tongues resembling tongues of fire rested upon each of the disciples, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3-4). Twice John the Baptist in speaking of Jesus said: "He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17).

The fire, according to the constant use made of it by the Scriptures (Lev. 10:2; Mal. 3:2-3, etc.), seems to make allusion, not to the power of the Spirit, but to His purifying action, which judges and consumes all impurity. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin and of judgment, and He burns within us all that which is not in conformity with the will of God.

Note that the two passages related above, where Matthew and Luke refer to the words of John the Baptist, "He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," are immediately followed by a very clear allusion to the fire of eternal judgment. On the other hand, Mark 1:8 and John 1:33 speak in the same terms of the baptism of the Spirit, not having mentioned the fire; neither do they make any allusion to the judgment. Combine with this the very words of Jesus with regard to Hell-fire: "For everyone shall be salted with fire" (Mark 9:49), and those of Paul, "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire" (I Cor. 3:13-15). The repentant sinner shall see sin judged and consumed within him by the Spirit who will regenerate and sanctify him; his work will be judged on the last day, and all imperfections consumed by fire. On the contrary, he who

refuses to be saved and purified will be cast into eternal fire. Thus, if we pray to be "baptized with fire" it means asking God to consume the sin within us.

#### V. LIVING WATERS

Jesus Himself used this image when He said, "He that believeth on me as the Scripture hath said, out of his body shall flow rivers of living water." He spoke of the Spirit "which they that believed on him were to receive" (John 7:38-39). The Saviour also declared to the Samaritan woman, referring without doubt to the Spirit who will come to live in the heart of the believer: "The water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). And again, in Isaiah 44:3 we read: "For I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed."

This symbol is easy to understand. As living water, the presence of the Spirit in our heart refreshes and quenches thirst; it causes life to appear where reigned beforehand only desolation and death; it brings fullness and plenty and an outpouring of abundant blessing.

In this connection, we see an allusion to the Trinity in Exodus 17:6: "The Lord said to Moses . . . Behold, I will stand before thee, there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." Paul clearly tells us that the rock smitten for the salvation of the people was Christ (I Cor. 10:4). As to the living water, we have just seen that it frequently represents the Holy Spirit. This provides a striking image of the manner in which the three divine Persons collaborate in the work of our salvation.

#### VI. THE SEAL

When we believe, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13; 4:30; II Cor. 1:22). Among the Jews, the seal was a token of the completion of a transaction; and when the agreement was concluded, the act passed

and the price paid, the seal was appended to the contract to make it definite (Jer. 32:9-10). Thus the Holy Spirit becomes the divine stamp upon us, the mark of God's property. He imparts to us the assurance that we are saved and chosen for the day of glory, when our redemption will be perfected.

#### VII. THE EARNEST

"Ye believe and ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13-14).

"Now he which stablished us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Cor. 1:21-22).

This image helps us to understand that the actual gift of the Holy Spirit is a solemn guarantee, and is like the first installment of our full salvation. If we have received the Spirit, we can now rely upon this wonderful certainty, and be filled with joy at the thought of the moment when we shall be effectively "filled unto all the fullness of God."

In terminating this chapter on the symbols of the Holy Spirit, may we thank God for helping us by these images to a better understanding of many precious truths and may we endeavor to realize them through faith.