

VOL. 3

REFORMED
SYSTEMATIC
THEOLOGY

Spirit and Salvation

JOEL R. BEEKE
PAUL M. SMALLEY

Praise for Reformed Systematic Theology, Volume 3

“With the publication of this third volume of *Reformed Systematic Theology*, the monumental Beeke and Smalley journey of theological exploration now takes us into territory overseen by the Holy Spirit. Here we are given a reverent survey of the biblical witness to his ministry; a five-hundred-page exposition of the *ordo salutis*; and an extensive exploration of the Beatitudes, the fruit of the Spirit, and the Decalogue, leading us appropriately to the loving fear of the Lord and prayer. Here the comprehensive knowledge of the Reformed tradition characteristic of volumes one and two is now combined with the authors’ specialist expertise in the experiential dimensions of biblical doctrine. Those who join them on the journey will find themselves traveling with reliable guides and agreeable companions. En route, students will find the information they require, pastors and teachers will discover the stimulus they need, and all Christian readers will receive a theological education that will help them to live *coram Deo*.”

Sinclair B. Ferguson, Chancellor’s Professor of Systematic Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary; Teaching Fellow, Ligonier Ministries

“I tell my students that I am not interested in theology that can’t be preached. I sense the same when reading this third volume. What we have here is a systematic theology that covers all bases—scholarly and pastoral, Reformed and worshipful. No topic is left unaddressed. A monumental achievement.”

Derek W. H. Thomas, Senior Minister, First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, South Carolina; Teaching Fellow, Ligonier Ministries; Chancellor’s Professor, Reformed Theological Seminary

“One of Joel Beeke’s most prized contributions to the field of systematic theology is his understanding that Christian theology is for living. A hallmark of Beeke’s preaching and writing is that it follows Martin Bucer’s dictum: ‘True theology is not theoretical, but practical. The end of it is living, that is to live a godly life.’ This present volume is no exception. Here is theology for the church of God and not just for the academy. It is a privilege to commend this latest volume, with the prayer that it will find its way into the bloodstream of the church.”

Ian Hamilton, Professor, Westminster Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Newcastle, UK

“The third volume of Joel Beeke and Paul Smalley’s *Reformed Systematic Theology* gives attention to the doctrines of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) and salvation (soteriology). We are treated to, among many other significant features, a knowledgeable defense of the *ordo salutis*, which sincerely engages the main objections to this important formulation of classic Protestant soteriology. We meet a beautiful exposition of the Holy Spirit and the *historia salutis*, which nicely complements the treatment of the *ordo*. The volume concludes, as you might have expected in a book coauthored by Joel Beeke, with a rich summary of the Holy Spirit’s work in the Christian experience of salvation (*experientia salutis*). I must confess that I turned immediately to peek at the section on preparatory grace and also that on assurance, knowing Beeke’s interest and expertise in those areas. I will be utilizing this volume as I teach systematic theology, and will be commending it to others. I’ve already learned and benefited from it greatly. This is a welcome addition to the current flourishing of Reformed systematics.”

Ligon Duncan, Chancellor and CEO, Reformed Theological Seminary

Praise for the Reformed Systematic Theology Series

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!” This expression of praise from Paul’s great doxology is a fitting response to reading this wonderful work of doctrine and devotion. Though the Reformed faith is often caricatured as merely intellectual, this work demonstrates that Reformed theology is also profoundly experiential, as no chapter fails to move from theology to doxology.”

John MacArthur, Pastor, Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California;
Chancellor, The Master’s University and Seminary

“*Reformed Systematic Theology* not only takes readers into the depths of our triune God, but also shows what these great truths have to do with the Christian life. No contemporary systematic theology will bring the reader to a greater understanding of how theology blossoms into doxology than this one.”

Matthew Barrett, Associate Professor of Christian Theology, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Executive Editor, *Credo Magazine*; editor, *Reformation Theology*

“Beeke and Smalley have written a work useful to the church at large that teaches Christians what they should believe and how they should love, but they have not sacrificed academic rigor to achieve these goals.”

J. V. Fesko, Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi

“Joel Beeke has continued his decades-long service to Christ and his church by presenting us with his mature reflections on the nature of systematic theology. This work is fully reliable, well written, easily understood, and thoroughly researched.”

Richard C. Gamble, Professor of Systematic Theology, Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary

“Joel Beeke is a rare gift to the church, a noted Christian leader who combines the skills of a learned theologian, master teacher, noted historian, and yet also a caring pastor. *Reformed Systematic Theology* is a virtual gold mine of biblical doctrine that is systematically arranged, carefully analyzed, historically scrutinized, and pastorally applied.”

Steven J. Lawson, President, OnePassion Ministries; Professor of Preaching, The Master’s Seminary; Teaching Fellow, Ligonier Ministries

“Here is theology functioning as it ought to function—calling us to worship. You will not need to agree with the authors at every point to believe and to hope that this work will serve Christ’s church well in our generation and for generations to come.”

Jeremy Walker, Pastor, Maidenbower Baptist Church, Crawley, UK; author, *Life in Christ*; *Anchored in Grace*; and *A Face Like a Flint*

REFORMED
SYSTEMATIC
THEOLOGY

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Volume 3:
Spirit and Salvation

Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley

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For
Mary Beeke,
my precious gift-of-God helpmeet, in whose
tongue is the law of kindness
and who beautifully models the doctrine of salvation for me,
for our children and grandchildren, and for our church and seminary.
Thank you for being easy to love and for your
unflagging loyalty and support.
I love you—your integrity, godliness, humility,
and joy—with all my heart.
—Your grateful husband, Joel

And for
Dawn Smalley,
my beloved Proverbs 31 wife and *ezer kenegdi*,
who has taught me much about the love of the Savior
by her daily kindness to me, our children, and many others.
You are one of the most diligent, generous, organized,
hopeful, and perceptive people I know.
I don't deserve you, but I am so thankful to have you as my bride.
—Love, Paul

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Abbreviations

ACCS/NT	<i>Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament.</i> Edited by Thomas Oden. 12 vols. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005–2006.
ACCS/OT	<i>Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Old Testament.</i> Edited by Thomas Oden. 15 vols. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001–2005.
ANF	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers.</i> Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe. 9 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918.
CR	<i>Corpus Reformatorum.</i> Edited by Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider et al. 101 vols. Halis Saxonum: Apud C. A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1834–1959.
LW	<i>Luther's Works.</i> Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan et al. 80 vols. St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1958–2020.
NIDNTTE	<i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis.</i> Edited by Moisés Silva. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

- NIDOTTE* *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997.
- NIDPCM* *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Edited by Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van der Maas. Revised and expanded edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- NPNF*¹ *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series*. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. New York: Christian Literature Co., 1888.
- NPNF*² *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. New York: Christian Literature Co., 1894.
- The Psalter* *The Psalter, with Doctrinal Standards, Liturgy, Church Order, and Added Chorale Section*. Preface by Joel R. Beeke and Ray B. Lanning. 1965; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans for Reformation Heritage Books, 2003.
- Reformed Confessions* *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: 1523–1693*. Compiled by James T. Dennison Jr. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008–2014.
- RST* Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley. *Reformed Systematic Theology*. 4 vols. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019–.

TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964.
<i>The Three Forms of Unity</i>	<i>The Three Forms of Unity</i> . Edited and introduced by Joel R. Beeke. Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground, 2010.
<i>Trinity Hymnal—Baptist Edition</i>	<i>Trinity Hymnal—Baptist Edition</i> . Revised by David Merck. Suwanee, GA: Great Commission Publications, 1995.
WJE	<i>The Works of Jonathan Edwards</i> . 26 vols. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957–2008.

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Preface to Volume 3

With much gratitude to God we present the third volume of *Reformed Systematic Theology*. In a sense, the project started here in 2016, when we began a significant revision of theological lectures, presented at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, on the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and his work in applying salvation. Those revised lectures became the seed from which this systematic theology grew.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is discussed in systematic theology under the locus of *pneumatology* (from Greek *pneuma*, “spirit,” and *logos*, “word, speech”).¹ However, here we encounter a complication, for the study of the Holy Spirit’s work overlaps with another locus, *soteriology*, the doctrine of salvation (Greek *sōteria*). In God’s plan of salvation, the Holy Spirit applies to the elect the salvation accomplished by the work of Christ as Mediator (Titus 3:5–6). Therefore, we have chosen to combine these two loci and consider them as one. Hence, this volume contains part 5 of our systematic theology, “Pneumatology and Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation Applied by the Holy Spirit.”

However, in order to provide an orderly structure for our treatment of the various aspects of the Spirit’s work, we consider it from three perspectives.

First, from the perspective of the history of salvation (Latin *historia salutis*), we trace the work of the Spirit through the history of God’s mighty works: creation, God’s covenantal and redemptive dealings with the patriarchs and Israel, the incarnation and work of Jesus Christ, the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost and its implications for the church today, and the Spirit’s work in transforming God’s creation into the new creation.

Second, from the perspective of the order of salvation (*ordo salutis*), we trace the Spirit’s work in applying salvation to individual persons by

1. On the loci of systematic theology, see *RST*, 1:64–66.

union with Christ, including the general call of the gospel, conviction of sin, regeneration and conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, and preservation and perseverance.

Third, from the perspective of the practical experience of salvation (*experientia salutis*), we explore the work of the Spirit with respect to the indwelling of the Spirit, assurance of salvation, the fruit of the Spirit in personal godliness, Spirit-worked obedience to God's commandments, the fear of God, various Christian virtues, and prayer.

We desire to make it clear from the outset that these are not three separate categories, but three perspectives on the work of God the Holy Spirit. God's mighty works in history (*historia salutis*) aim at the salvation of individuals (*ordo salutis*), and God's works in history and individual lives are profoundly experiential in producing piety (*experientia salutis*).

Before we proceed to these topics, we must review a doctrine introduced in volume 1 under the doctrine of the Trinity—the person of the Holy Spirit—for we must know who the Spirit is before we can adequately consider what he does. This we do in the introductory chapter, where we also answer objections to the study of the Spirit and offer reasons why this is such an important doctrine for us to know.

We thank Justin Taylor and the team at Crossway for their enthusiasm for this project and the Christian professionalism they constantly exhibit in their work. We particularly thank Greg Bailey, our editor, for the countless improvements he has made in our writing. We also gratefully acknowledge the labors of Ray Lanning, Keith Mathison, Wouter Pieters, and Liz Smith in reviewing our manuscript. And we thank God for our wives, Mary Beeke and Dawn Smalley, for their faithful love and prayers. They are both beautiful examples of the power of God's salvation and the reality of the Holy Spirit's indwelling his saints. Consequently, we gratefully dedicate this volume to them. *Soli Deo gloria!*

Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley

PART 5

**PNEUMATOLOGY AND
SOTERIOLOGY:
THE DOCTRINE OF
SALVATION APPLIED
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Analytical Outline: Pneumatology and Soteriology

Section A: The Holy Spirit and the History of Salvation (*Historia Salutis*)

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- A. Biblical Teaching about Sanctification
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- E. The Cultivation of Assurance
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 - b. A Systematic Description of Christlike Love
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 - b. Temporary, Emotional Fear of God
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 - i. Believe That God Answers the Prayers of His Children
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- C. The Hope of Glorification
1. The Grace of Christian Hope
 2. The Experiential Exercise of Christian Hope

Section A

*The Holy Spirit and the
History of Salvation*
(Historia Salutis)

Introduction to the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

One of the most remarkable statements of the Bible appears in Christ's words to his disciples: "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" (John 16:7). How could it possibly be "expedient"—that is, to our advantage—for the Lord Jesus Christ to leave us? Christ must highly value the ministry of "the Spirit of truth" (14:16–17). If we treasure Christ as the only Mediator between God and man (v. 6; 1 Tim. 2:5), then we will treasure the work of the Holy Spirit.

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) said, "The Holy Spirit, in his indwelling, his influences and fruits, is the sum of all grace, holiness, comfort and joy, or in one word, of all the spiritual good Christ purchased for men in this world: and is also the sum of all perfection, glory and eternal joy, that he purchased for them in another world."¹

However, studying the doctrine of the Holy Spirit presents special challenges. Sinclair Ferguson says, "While his work has been recognized, the Spirit himself remains to many Christians an anonymous, faceless aspect of the divine being."² In part, this is because it is rare to find extended discussions of the Holy Spirit in the Bible; most references to him come

1. Jonathan Edwards, *An Humble Attempt*, in *WJE*, 5:341.

2. Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, *Contours in Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 12.

in connection with other doctrines.³ This problem is further complicated when people stumble over the older usage of “Holy Ghost,” which has nothing to do with ghosts but is another way of saying “Holy Spirit.”⁴

However, these difficulties should not turn us aside from the great task of studying the Spirit’s work and the application of redemption. The task is worthy of our highest effort. Instead, the difficulties should stir us up to take on this great work with determination, careful thinking, perseverance, submission to God’s Word, and constant prayer for the Spirit to illuminate our minds (Ps. 119:18; Eph. 1:17–18). We need the work of the Holy Spirit if we are going to successfully study the Holy Spirit. Pause now, before you read further, and pray for the Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth by his Word.

Objections to the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

A number of objections might be raised against doing a biblical and theological study of the Holy Spirit. Some of the more common ones are as follows.

Objection 1: We should not study the Spirit but be filled with the Spirit.

In response, we agree that we must not rest in mere understanding, but must seek the Spirit’s grace and serve the Lord with all our hearts. However, an individual may be filled with the influence of a “spirit” that is not the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:1–2). The apostle Paul was deeply concerned that churches not be deceived into receiving “another spirit” (2 Cor. 11:2–4). Therefore, we must cultivate discernment by knowing the true Spirit of God and his works. Knowing God’s Spirit is knowing the person who gives life to the church. Geoff Thomas says, “The essential, vital, central element in the life of every congregation is the person and work of the Spirit of God as illuminated . . . by the Spirit-breathed Word.”⁵

Objection 2: Focusing on the Spirit leads to bizarre behavior. In reply, we assert that we must not overreact against one error and fall into its opposite. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981) said, “The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is neglected because people are so afraid of the spurious, the false, and the exaggerated that they avoid it altogether.”⁶ We must study

3. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 773.

4. “Ghost” is related to a German root (*Geist*) while “spirit” comes from Latin (*spiritus*), but both mean the same.

5. Geoffrey Thomas, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011), 2.

6. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, vol. 2, *God the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 5.

this doctrine because the Spirit is a person in the Trinity, the Word of God teaches us of him, and, since “the Holy Spirit is the one who applied salvation, it is of the utmost practical importance that we should know the truth concerning Him.”⁷

Objection 3: The doctrine of the Spirit divides Christians. In response, we acknowledge that aspects of this doctrine are flashpoints of debate among Reformed theologians, Lutherans, Arminian evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, and charismatics. The answer, however, is not to neglect Christian polemics—for they are necessary (Titus 1:9; Jude 3). The way to heal divisions among true Christians and distinguish them from false Christians is to learn the truth about the Holy Spirit from God’s Word and to embrace that truth with humility, love, and the fear of God. The Holy Spirit is not a divisive force among God’s children; there is “one Spirit,” and he unites the church as one body (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:18; 4:4).

Objection 4: Studying the Spirit distracts us from Jesus Christ. In reply, we observe that it is possible to focus on the Spirit in an unhealthy manner that draws us away from Jesus Christ, but studying the biblical doctrine of the Spirit does not have this harmful effect. The Holy Spirit came to glorify the Son (John 16:14). To study the Spirit magnifies Christ, for the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9). Richard Sibbes (1577–1635) wrote, “The Holy Ghost fetches all from Christ in his working and comfort, and he makes Christ the pattern of all; for whatsoever is in Christ, the Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of Christ, works in us as it is in Christ.”⁸ Two Reformed theologians noted for their writings on the glory of Christ, John Owen (1616–1683) and Thomas Goodwin (1600–1679), also wrote lengthy treatises on the Holy Spirit.⁹ If we neglect the doctrine of the Spirit, then we actually diminish the glory of Christ, for all the things of Christ are ours only by the Spirit.

The Importance of Studying the Holy Spirit

It is sufficient that God’s Word speaks much of the Spirit, for the only warrant we need to study a truth is that God teaches it in his Word. However,

7. Lloyd-Jones, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, 2:6.

8. Richard Sibbes, *A Description of Christ*, in *The Works of Richard Sibbes*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart, 7 vols. (1862–1864; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1973), 1:18.

9. John Owen, *Pneumatologia*, in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (1850–1853; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), vols. 3–4; and Thomas Goodwin, *The Work of the Holy Ghost in Our Salvation*, in *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 12 vols. (1861–1866; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), vol. 6.

to strengthen our motivation to study this topic deeply, let us consider reasons why it is crucial that we study the Holy Spirit.

1. *To know the Spirit is to know our God.* The Holy Spirit is God. Therefore, to study the person and works of the Holy Spirit is a great opportunity to know God in a better way. Nothing is more valuable, transforming, or life-giving than the knowledge of God (Jer. 9:23–24; 31:33–34; John 17:3). In particular, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, who especially brings us into communion with the Father and the Son (2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:4–6). Millard Erickson writes, “The Holy Spirit is the point at which the Trinity becomes personal to the believer.”¹⁰ Christ promised that when he ascended to heaven he would not leave his disciples as orphans, but would come to them and dwell in them with the Father—all by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16–23). Wayne Grudem observes, “The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.”¹¹

2. *To know the Spirit is to know our salvation.* Man cannot discover the wisdom of God, but God reveals his salvation by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9–16). Man by his own power cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God, but God brings sinners into the kingdom by causing them to be born again by the Spirit (John 3:3–5). No one can confess Jesus as Lord without the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). Thus, in the Nicene Creed, the church confesses that the Spirit is “the Lord and Giver of life.”¹² Just as the Father especially ordained salvation and the Son accomplished salvation, so the Spirit applies salvation to people’s lives.¹³ The Westminster Shorter Catechism (Q. 29) says, “We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us (John 1:11–12) by his Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5–6).”¹⁴ The doctrine of the Spirit is crucial to knowing how God saves sinners and knowing whether or not *you* are saved.

3. *To know the Spirit is to understand sanctification,* the process of spiritual growth in holiness. Sanctification is “of the Spirit” (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2). William Perkins (1558–1602) said, “The Father sanctifies by the Son and by the Holy Ghost; the Son sanctifies from the Father and

10. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 772–73.

11. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 634.

12. *The Three Forms of Unity*, 7.

13. William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. John D. Eusden (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968), 1.14.1–2 (149).

14. *Reformed Confessions*, 4:357.

by the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost sanctifies from the Father and from the Son by Himself immediately.”¹⁵ Owen said that sanctification is “the universal renovation of our natures by the Holy Spirit into the image of God, through Jesus Christ.”¹⁶ He noted, “All this increase of holiness is immediately the work of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁷ It is by the Holy Spirit that the people who belong to Christ are made holy (1 Cor. 3:16–17; 6:19–20), overcome sin (Gal. 5:16), pray (Rom. 8:15; Eph. 6:18), receive illumination (Eph. 1:17–20), are transformed into Christ’s glory (2 Cor. 3:17–18), and magnify Christ in life and death (Phil. 1:19–20). If we listed every aspect of the Christian life, beside each item we could add, “by the Spirit.”

4. *To know the Spirit is to balance the Christian life.* Christians and churches are prone to become imbalanced in their preaching and experience. We must maintain a proper balance between knowledge of doctrine and experience of spiritual life. This is the balance of the Word and the Spirit. To overemphasize the Word or the Spirit results in the coldness of intellectualism or the confusion of emotionalism, either of which can harden hearts so that people fall away into skepticism. J. van Genderen (1923–2004) and W. H. Velema (1929–2019) wrote, “The Word does not exist apart from the Spirit. It is the Word of the Spirit. The Spirit does not come without the Word. He is the Spirit of the Word. Whenever the Word is believed, it is entirely due to the work of the Spirit, who opens the heart to it.”¹⁸

5. *To know the Spirit is to worship God rightly.* Our worship should be Trinitarian, just as we are baptized “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19). We worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God.¹⁹ Thomas Watson (c. 1620–1686) wrote, “There is an order in the Godhead, but no degrees . . . therefore we must give equal worship to all the persons.”²⁰ Furthermore, an appreciation for the Holy Spirit’s work is essential to worship. Under the old covenant, God’s people worshiped in a physical temple using a complex system of rituals through which the Spirit revealed Christ (Heb. 10:1). In the new covenant, the outward rituals have given way to simplicity as

15. William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbol*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, series eds. Joel R. Beeke and Derek W. H. Thomas, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014–2020), 5:305.

16. Owen, *Pneumatologia*, in *Works*, 3:386.

17. Owen, *Pneumatologia*, in *Works*, 3:393.

18. J. van Genderen and W. H. Velema, *Concise Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. Gerrit Bilkes and Ed M. van der Maas (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 767.

19. Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbol*, in *Works*, 5:322.

20. Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 112.

the church worships through Christ, with access to the Father, and in one Spirit (Eph. 2:18). It is the Spirit who binds us together in unity and peace despite our personal, ethnic, and social differences so that the church is one body of worshipers (1 Cor. 12:12–13; Eph. 4:3–4). The Spirit fills us with truth and joy so that we sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to the Lord (Eph. 5:18–20). Therefore, the knowledge of the Spirit protects the simplicity, unity, and spirituality of worship.

6. *To know the Spirit is to appreciate historic Christian orthodoxy.* From the beginning of the church, Christians have treasured the fundamentals of right doctrine (“orthodoxy”) and confessed it in their creeds. In the Apostles’ Creed, the Christian confesses, “I believe in the Holy Ghost.”²¹ The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is rooted in the Scriptures, was developed in the early church, and was renewed and made all the more fruitful in the Reformation of the sixteenth century. B. B. Warfield (1851–1921) called John Calvin (1509–1564) “the Theologian of the Holy Spirit.”²² Warfield said, “The developed doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit is an exclusively Reformation doctrine, and more particularly a Reformed doctrine, and more particularly still a Puritan doctrine.”²³ Therefore, to neglect this doctrine is to neglect our Christian and Reformed heritage.

7. *To know the Spirit is to be equipped to speak to our culture.* Science has provided us with much technology but no answers to life’s deepest questions. People desire to experience something transcendent and glorious, but our nations are adrift without direction from moral standards or divine wisdom. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit equips us to show people that Christianity offers true knowledge and genuine spiritual experience. As Erickson writes, “In a culture that stresses the experiential, it is primarily through the Holy Spirit’s work that we feel God’s presence within and the Christian life is given a special tangibility.”²⁴ As long as people view Christianity as a mere social institution, system of beliefs, or set of behaviors, they will not recognize its uniqueness. George Smeaton (1814–1889) wrote,

21. *The Three Forms of Unity*, 5.

22. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism*, in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 10 vols. (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2008), 5:21.

23. Benjamin B. Warfield, introduction to Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri de Vries (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1946), xxxiii.

24. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 773.

Wherever Christianity has become a living power, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has uniformly been regarded, equally with the atonement and justification by faith, as the article of a standing or falling Church. The distinctive feature of Christianity, as it addresses itself to man's experience, is the work of the Spirit, which not only elevates it far above all philosophical speculation, but also above every other form of religion.²⁵

8. *To know the Spirit is to be prepared for spiritual warfare.* The Christian life consists of a battle against enemies that we can conquer only by means of the Spirit as our supernatural ally. When Christ engaged in direct combat with the Devil in the wilderness, Jesus did so as a man "full of the Holy Ghost" (Luke 4:1). Our great offensive weapon in the battle against the unseen powers of darkness is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17), the same weapon Christ used. The only way for us to make effective use of the armor of God is by "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (v. 18). Though this world is full of evil spirits that would draw us away from Christ, John wrote, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

9. *To know the Spirit is to feel our dependence.* The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is full of man's inability and God's sovereignty. The Lord's word to Zerubbabel remains the banner that flies over all Christian endeavors: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). While the doctrines of sovereign grace empower human activity (Phil. 2:12–13), they undermine the independence of man's proud spirit. A. W. Pink (1886–1952) warned, "In the great majority of cases, professing Christians are too puffed up by a sense of what they suppose they are doing for God, to earnestly study what God has promised to do for and in His people."²⁶ As Irenaeus (fl. 180) said, we are but "dry earth," and the Holy Spirit is the "water from heaven . . . [and] dew of God" that we must have in order to bear fruit pleasing to God.²⁷ John Dagg (1794–1884) said, "No believer, who has any just sense of his dependence on the Holy Spirit, for the divine life which he enjoys, and all its

25. George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, foreword by W. J. Grier (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2016), 1.

26. Arthur W. Pink, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1970), 8.

27. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.17, in ANF, 1:445.

included blessings, can be indifferent towards the Agent by whom all this good is bestowed. . . . And to him, therefore, the study of the Holy Spirit's character and office, will be a source of delight."²⁸

10. *To know the Spirit is to know Christ.* This is so because of both the triune nature of God and the plan of salvation. In the Trinity, the Son and the Spirit are distinct in their personalities but inseparable in their being and activity. So closely united are they in all their works that Paul could write of Jesus Christ, "Now the Lord is that Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17). Furthermore, God has so ordered salvation that the Spirit comes to apply what the Son has accomplished (John 16:13–14). The great work of the Spirit is union with Christ: "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). Calvin wrote, "The Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself."²⁹ This union in the Spirit is the means of our personal communion with Christ. Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635–1711), echoing the Heidelberg Catechism, wrote, "The Holy Spirit makes believers partakers of Christ and His benefits. . . . This union results in the mutual use of possessive pronouns. 'My beloved is mine, and I am His' (Song of Sol. 2:16)."³⁰

Do you know the Holy Spirit? Have you felt his convicting power, his converting power, his power to enable you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved, his power to crucify the lusts of your flesh, his power to sanctify you, and his power to uphold you and cause you to persevere in grace? Have you come to see how much you need him in every aspect of your salvation and sanctification? Have you discovered the unity you have in the Spirit with other believers? Has the Spirit borne witness with your spirit that you have passed from death into life, that your sins are forgiven, and that you are an heir to everlasting life?

If so, then you will love the Holy Spirit and will want to have a right understanding of who he is and what he does. As the Spirit leads you into all truth, shedding the Father's love abroad in your heart and glorifying Christ in you as the hope of glory, you will say, "I do not know which of the divine persons I need the most, but one thing I know: I need each of

28. John Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, 2 parts (Charleston, SC: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1859), 1:235.

29. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20–21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 3.1.1.

30. Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, trans. Bartel Elshout, ed. Joel R. Beeke, (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 1992–1995), 1:184. See the Heidelberg Catechism (LD 1, Q. 1; LD 20, Q. 53), in *The Three Forms of Unity*, 68, 84.

them, and I love them all.” If, however, you are a stranger to this Spirit, then you have an urgent need to know his saving work both in your understanding and, by faith, in your experience.

The Person of the Holy Spirit

Many people today are like the disciples in Ephesus who said, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost” (Acts 19:2). He may be to them just a name in a creed that they recite in church, or even less. Some people have opinions of the Spirit that are in error, such as viewing him to be an angel or the impersonal energy of God. Other people may confess biblical truth about the Spirit but live in practical ignorance of him. If he were suddenly to withdraw his saving and sanctifying presence from the earth, it would make no difference at all in their lives.

There is a profound mystery to the Holy Spirit. Our Lord Jesus once compared being born of the Spirit to the blowing of wind: you cannot control it or see where it starts or ends, but you can observe the results (John 3:8). If it were not for the Word of God, we would not know God the Spirit. Yet he reveals himself in the Holy Scriptures. The Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit ninety-four times in the Old Testament and more than two hundred and fifty times in the New Testament.

The Names of the Spirit

At times the Bible gives to the Spirit names or titles related to works he does or graces he gives, such as the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of faith, the Spirit of grace, and the Spirit of glory.³¹ He is the Comforter or Advocate.³² Although these titles teach us things about the Holy Spirit, they pertain more directly to his works than his nature. Some names speak of the Spirit’s close relationship to God’s Son. He is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Son, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ.³³ We will consider these functional and relational titles in other chapters.

31. Spirit of wisdom: Ex. 28:3; Deut. 34:9; Isa. 11:2; Eph. 1:17. Truth: John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:6. Holiness: Rom. 1:4. Life: Rom. 8:2. Adoption: Rom. 8:15. Faith: 2 Cor. 4:13. Grace: Heb. 10:29. Glory: 1 Pet. 4:14.

32. Comforter or Advocate (*paraklētos*): John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.

33. Spirit of Christ: Rom. 8:9; 1 Pet. 1:11. Spirit of the Son: Gal. 4:6. Spirit of Jesus Christ: Phil. 1:19. The unique expression “Spirit of Jesus” (Acts 16:7) appears in several early uncial manuscripts, but not in the Majority Text.

Here we want to give attention to three designations for this divine person, two used primarily in the Old Testament and the other almost entirely in the New Testament.

1. *The Spirit of God* or *the Spirit of the Lord*. These are his predominant names in the Old Testament, also occurring several times in the New, for a total of about sixty times. Of course, God is spirit in his divine nature (Isa. 31:3; John 4:24). Charles Hodge (1797–1878) wrote that *spirit* communicates “invisible power” and thus “immaterial, invisible agents.”³⁴ All three persons of the Trinity share this same spiritual essence; they are invisible, intelligent, and alive without the limitations, needs, or complexities of a physical body.³⁵

How then is the third person of the Trinity distinctly called “the Spirit of God” if God in the whole Trinity is spirit? The word *spirit* often refers to the wind that blows or the breath we breathe. This is mysterious, but the Bible implies that the Spirit is like the breath of God—the living, energetic, personal, intelligent, dynamic life of God. Herman Bavinck (1854–1921) wrote, “The Holy Spirit is the breath of the Almighty (Job 33:4), the breath of his mouth (Ps. 33:6). Jesus compares him to the wind (John 3:8) and ‘breathes’ him upon his disciples (John 20:22).”³⁶

Owen connected the idea of breath to the abiding, living presence of a person, “as the vital breath of a man has a continual emanation from him, and yet is never separated utterly from his person.”³⁷ The eternal procession of the Spirit of God from the Father and the Son is a matter properly discussed under the doctrine of the Trinity.³⁸ It suffices to say here that the name “Spirit of God” teaches us that the Spirit is the living and life-giving presence of God, invisible and yet personal and powerful in his being and operations. Calvin wrote, “Through him we come into communion with God, so that we in a way feel his life-giving power toward us.”³⁹ If we desire God’s life and nurturing presence, we should seek the Spirit of God from the Father.

2. *The Holy Spirit*. This name appears only three times in the Old Testament (Ps. 51:11; Isa. 63:10–11). However, it dominates the New

34. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 1:522.

35. On God’s spirituality, see *RST*, 1:606–22 (chap. 32).

36. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003–2008), 2:277.

37. Owen, *Pneumatologia*, in *Works*, 3:55.

38. On the procession of the Spirit, see *RST*, 1:915–17, 940–44.

39. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.13.14.

Testament descriptions of the Spirit, appearing ninety-four times. With the coming of Christ, the Spirit of God became known to us preeminently as the *Holy Spirit*.

As with spirituality, holiness is an attribute of God that pertains to the whole Trinity. The holiness of God is his majesty and moral excellence that sets him above all things and against all sin for the sake of his glory.⁴⁰ Ferguson writes that the word *holy* emphasizes “the ‘otherness’ of the Spirit’s being.”⁴¹ Owen wrote about the Spirit, “This is the foundation of his being called ‘Holy,’ even the eternal glorious holiness of his nature.”⁴² Holiness sets the Holy Spirit apart from all that is not God, as Exodus 15:11 says: “Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” Since the Spirit is holy, we should always relate to him with fear, awe, wonder, and reverence.

He is called the Holy Spirit because both his nature and his work are holy. Antonius Thysius (1565–1640) said, “He is called also Holy Spirit (Isaiah 63:10) and Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30) because of his nature, office, and effect.”⁴³ Negatively, he is called the Holy Spirit because he implacably opposes the unclean spirits of this world. To slander the Spirit’s work as being of the Devil is to blaspheme the Spirit, for it accuses the Holy Spirit of being an unholy spirit (Mark 3:29–30).⁴⁴ His very name, as Smeaton wrote, sets him in “antithesis to every unholy spirit, whether human or Satanic.”⁴⁵ Consequently, those indwelt by the Holy Spirit must separate themselves from the sins and false worship promoted by the unclean spirits of this world (2 Cor. 6:14–17). As one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, a Christian who gives himself to uncleanness and worldliness provokes God to jealousy (James 4:4–5).

The Spirit’s greatest work of holiness is the sanctification of God’s people. Martin Luther (1483–1546) summarized the Apostles’ Creed when he said, “I believe in God the Father, who created me; I believe in God the Son, who redeemed me; I believe in the Holy Spirit, who makes me

40. On the holiness of God, see *RST*, 1:566–82 (chap. 30).

41. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 16.

42. Owen, *Pneumatologia*, in *Works*, 3:56.

43. Johannes Polyander, Antonius Walaeus, Antonius Thysius, and Andreas Rivetus, *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae, Synopsis of a Purer Theology: Latin Text and English Translation*, vol. 1, *Disputations 1–23*, trans. Riemer A. Faber, ed. Dolf te Velde, Rein Ferwerda, Willem J. van Asselt, William den Boer, and Riemer A. Faber, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions: Texts and Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 9.3 (230).

44. Owen, *Pneumatologia*, in *Works*, 3:56.

45. Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 101.

holy.”⁴⁶ Francis Turretin (1623–1687) wrote that the Spirit is “called Holy by way of eminence” both “subjectively (because he is most holy)” and “efficiently (because he sanctifies us).”⁴⁷ Perhaps this is the reason why he is preeminently called the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. With the finished work of Christ, the old covenant emphasis on outward, ceremonial holiness has been replaced by the new covenant emphasis on inward, moral sanctification. Smeaton said that the frequent joining of the word *Holy* to the Spirit “gives us a nearer view of the Spirit’s special work in connection with man’s salvation.”⁴⁸

This is the great display of the Spirit’s holiness throughout redemptive history: he makes God’s people holy. Perkins said, “The third person [of the Trinity] is called holy, because besides the holiness of nature His office is to sanctify the church of God.”⁴⁹ That is the thrust of Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 6:19–20: “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” We dare not claim the Spirit as our own while living in unrepented sin. On the contrary, knowing the Holy Spirit should greatly increase our sorrow over sin, humility before God, meekness with men, and zeal to pursue practical holiness in every area of life. He is the *Holy Spirit*.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God. Though the Spirit is not the Father or the Son, the Spirit shares the same divine nature with them and is rightly called God the Spirit. It is a serious mistake for us to view the Holy Spirit as a created spirit, such as an angel. When the Arians of the fourth century denied that Christ is God, they also denied that the Holy Spirit is God, and some

46. The Large Catechism (2.7), in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, trans. Charles Arand et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 432. See also the Heidelberg Catechism (LD 8, Q. 24), in *The Three Forms of Unity*, 75.

47. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., 3 vols. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992–1997), 3.30 (1:303).

48. Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 101.

49. Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbol*, in *Works*, 5:305. Thus also James Ussher: “Why is he called the Holy Spirit? Not only because of his essential holiness as God; for so the Father and the Son are also infinitely holy as he: but because he is the author and worker of all holiness in men, and the sanctifier of God’s children. Why, does not the Father and the Son sanctify also? Yes verily: but they do it by him: and because he does immediately sanctify, therefore he hath the title of Holy.” *A Body of Divinity*, ed. Michael Nevarr (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground, 2007), 3rd head (75).

speculated that he is an angel—provoking a vigorous response from Athanasius (c. 297–373), the great champion of orthodox, biblical faith against Arianism.⁵⁰ Though the Qur’an is not explicit on this matter, it is commonly believed among Muslims that the Holy Spirit is the angel Gabriel.⁵¹

However, the Bible clearly reveals that the Holy Spirit is God and does so in a number of ways. The Holy Scriptures ascribe to the Holy Spirit:

1. The *names and titles of deity*, for the Holy Spirit is called “God” (Acts 5:3–4) and is identified in the New Testament as the source of statements in the Old Testament attributed to “the LORD” (*YHWH* or *Jehovah*).⁵²

2. The *attributes of deity*, for the Bible reveals the Spirit’s omniscience (Isa. 40:13; 1 Cor. 2:9–11), omnipotence (Luke 1:34–37), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7; 1 Cor. 6:19), eternity (Gen. 1:2), foreknowledge (Acts 1:16; 1 Pet. 1:11–12), goodness (Neh. 9:20; Ps. 143:10–11), love (Rom. 15:30), truth (John 14:17), holiness (Isa. 63:10–11; Rom. 1:4), infinity (John 3:34), vitality (2 Cor. 3:3, 6), and simplicity (Rom. 8:10; 1 John 5:6).⁵³

3. The *relations of deity*, in which the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father (Matt. 10:20) who proceeds from the Father (John 15:26), and he is the Spirit of the Son (Gal. 4:6) and the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9). The Father, the Son, and the Spirit appear together repeatedly in the New Testament as the three persons active in the works of the one God: the initiation of Christ’s ministry (Mark 1:9–11); the salvation of sinners (Gal. 4:4–6; Titus 3:4–6); the exercise of spiritual gifts in the church (1 Cor. 12:4–6); and the spiritual strengthening and growth of believers (Eph. 1:17–20; 3:14–17). The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 3:17), sharing with them the one divine knowledge, power, life, and will of the triune God.⁵⁴

4. The *actions of deity*, for the Spirit created all things and people,⁵⁵ gives life to the creatures (Ps. 104:30), inspired God’s Word,⁵⁶ worked

50. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (London: Continuum, 1972), 339–40.

51. Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 35. The Qur’an attributes its revelation both to Gabriel (Surah 2:97) and to the Holy Spirit (16:102).

52. Acts 28:25–27, citing Isa. 6:9–10; Heb. 10:16, citing Jer. 31:33.

53. See RST, 1:888. See the references to the Spirit’s holiness (1:573–74, 579), vitality (1:619), simplicity (1:626), aseity (1:646), omnipresence (1:656), eternity (1:665–66), omniscience (1:726, 730–31), authority (1:769), power (1:363–68, 771–72), love (1:793), truth (1:809), and joy (1:845).

54. John 7:37–39; 1 Cor. 12:11; Rev. 5:6. See RST, 1:896–97.

55. Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4; Ps. 33:6. See chap. 2.

56. 2 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16; Heb. 3:7; 9:8; 2 Pet. 1:21. On the inspiration of Scripture, see RST, 1:316–32 (chap. 17)

miracles through Christ and the apostles,⁵⁷ regenerates and gives spiritual life to sinners,⁵⁸ and raises the dead.⁵⁹ As we proceed in this volume, we will see that the Holy Spirit does works that can only be the works of God.

5. The *presence of deity*, by which we mean that the presence of the Holy Spirit is the presence of God, and the Spirit is the divine resident in the temple of God.⁶⁰ William Ames (1576–1633) said, “A temple is not legitimately consecrated to anyone except God. . . . But in this place, this temple is said to be set up [to be] especially holy for the Holy Spirit.”⁶¹ Since God’s temple is a people scattered across the world among the nations, the Holy Spirit must be God to dwell simultaneously in them all.⁶²

6. The *authority of deity*, for the Spirit exercises sovereignty over the church “as he wills” (1 Cor. 12:11 ESV; cf. Acts 13:2). The Spirit led Israel through the wilderness (Isa. 63:14), leads God’s children in the ways of righteousness (Ps. 143:10; Rom. 8:14), and even led the incarnate Mediator (Matt. 4:1). Pink wrote, “Who but a Divine person had the right to direct the Mediator? And to whom but God would the Redeemer have submitted!”⁶³

7. The *honors of deity*, as when the Spirit is equally honored with the Father and the Son in the ordinance of baptism (Matt. 28:19) and the invocation of God’s blessing on his people (2 Cor. 13:14). Consequently, the church confesses in the Nicene Creed that the Holy Spirit “with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified.”⁶⁴

The deity of the Holy Spirit is central to Christian orthodoxy. As Douglas Kelly writes, the theologians of the early church wrote of “the supreme and regal authority of the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus (330–389) said,

The Holy Ghost, then, always existed, and exists, and always will exist. He neither had a beginning, nor will He have an end; but He was everlastingly ranged with and numbered with the Father and the

57. Matt. 12:28; Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38; Rom. 15:19; Heb. 2:4.

58. John 3:3–6; 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Titus 3:5.

59. Rom. 1:4; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:42–45.

60. Ps. 139:7; Hag. 2:1–5; 1 Cor. 3:16–17; Eph. 2:21–22.

61. William Ames, *A Sketch of the Christian’s Catechism*, trans. Todd M. Rester, *Classic Reformed Theology 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), 104.

62. Ambrose, *Of the Holy Spirit*, 1.7, in *NPNF*², 10:104.

63. Pink, *The Holy Spirit*, 15.

64. *The Three Forms of Unity*, 7.

65. Douglas F. Kelly, *Systematic Theology: Grounded in Holy Scripture and Understood in the Light of the Church*, vol. 1, *The God Who Is: The Holy Trinity* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2008), 341–42.

Son. For it was not ever fitting that either the Son should be wanting to the Father, or the Spirit to the Son. . . . Himself ever the same with Himself, and with Those with Whom He is ranged; invisible, eternal, incomprehensible, unchangeable . . . self-moving, eternally moving, with free-will, self-powerful, All-powerful . . . Life and Lifegiver; Light and Lightgiver; absolute Good, and Spring of Goodness . . . ; the Right, the Princely Spirit; the Lord, the Sender, the Separator; Builder of His own Temple; leading, working as He wills.⁶⁶

Since the Spirit is God, God's people should adore him. It is good and right to apply the great commandment to all the Trinity: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37; cf. Deut. 6:5). Do you love the Holy Spirit? When you read the Bible and encounter one of the many references to the Spirit, does your soul respond in a sweet motion of worshipful love? When you hear the Bible preached faithfully in church, do you delight that you are hearing what the Spirit says to the churches? Do you desire the Spirit to fill you, not just to get power for service, but that you may know more of his glory and help others to do the same? Believers should pray and strive to grow in their love for the Holy Spirit.

The person who does not love God does not belong to Christ. However, even in this case the deity of the Holy Spirit can give you hope and motivate you to call on the name of the Lord Jesus to save you. The Holy Spirit is a miracle worker, the God who raises the dead. Though your soul may be as dead as a valley of dry bones, God the Holy Spirit can make you alive. Make this your prayer:

Eternal Spirit, by whose breath
The soul is saved from sin and death,
Before Thy throne we sinners bend;
To us Thy quickening power extend.⁶⁷

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

Another major error concerning the Holy Spirit is to conclude that he is not a person, but only the energy or presence of God. The denial of the Spirit's personality is presently a more common heresy than the denial of

66. Gregory of Nazianzus, *On Pentecost*, chap. 9, in *NPNF*², 7:382.

67. Edward Cooper, "Father of heaven, whose love profound," cited in Kelly, *Systematic Theology*, 1:313.

his deity. We find it in Socinianism, historic Unitarianism,⁶⁸ and the teachings of the Watchtower Society or Jehovah's Witnesses.⁶⁹ The father of modern liberal theology, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), spoke of the Holy Spirit as the presence of the divine essence active within human beings.⁷⁰ Such formulations reduce the Spirit to a mode of God's activity, "the old Sabellian error that the Holy Spirit is only an expression of God's power," as Geerhardus Vos (1862–1949) observed.⁷¹

The Bible reveals the Holy Spirit to be personal⁷²—that is, someone with a rational, volitional nature; a unique "I" in relationships with other persons.⁷³

1. *The Holy Spirit is someone, not something.* It may be argued that the Spirit's being poured out like water (Acts 2:17) or quenched like fire (1 Thess. 5:19) proves that the Spirit is impersonal. However, the Bible compares God himself to a "fountain of living waters" (Jer. 2:13) and "a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24). These are figures of speech, "imagery, pure and simple."⁷⁴ They do not indicate that God or the Spirit is impersonal but refer to his operations. John Brown of Haddington (1722–1787) wrote, "In all these texts of Scripture, in which something not proper to an intelligent and eternal person is ascribed to the Spirit or Holy Ghost, his name must be understood as meaning not himself, but his gifts and influences."⁷⁵

Close attention to the Greek New Testament reveals that the Scriptures speak of the Spirit grammatically as a person. In John 14:16, our Lord Jesus Christ did not say that the Father would give his disciples "comfort" but "another Comforter" (cf. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7).⁷⁶ The word translated

68. Robert Wallace, *A Plain Statement and Scriptural Defence of the Leading Doctrines of Unitarianism* (Chesterfield, England: for the author, by T. Woodhead et al., 1819), 34. Present-day Unitarian Universalism has morphed into vague humanism that encompasses those who are "agnostic, theist, atheist, and everything in between." "Existence of a Higher Power in Unitarian Universalism," Unitarian Universalist Association, December 21, 2015, <http://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/higher-power>.

69. "In the Bible, God's holy spirit is identified as God's power in action. . . . God's active force." "Is the Holy Spirit a Person?" *Awake!* (2006), Watchtower Online Library, December 21, 2015, <http://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/102006245>.

70. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 571–72, 738. Cf. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:534.

71. Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. and ed. Richard B. Gaffin et al., 5 vols. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012–2016), 1:67. On Sabellianism, see RST, 1:904.

72. See RST, 1:889–90.

73. See RST, 1:931–33.

74. Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 830.

75. John Brown of Haddington, *Systematic Theology: A Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015), 143.

76. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1958), 96.

as “Comforter” (*paraklētos*) refers to an advocate, a person called upon to represent another person in court and speak on his behalf.⁷⁷ “Another” compares the Spirit to Christ, and the term *paraklētos* is used of Christ as the heavenly “Advocate” of his people (1 John 2:1). Though the Greek word translated as “Spirit” is neuter in gender,⁷⁸ the word translated as “Comforter” is masculine, and masculine pronouns are used of him: “He [*ekeinos*] shall teach you all things” (John 14:26); “he [*ekeinos*] shall testify of me” (15:26); and “when he [*ekeinos*], the Spirit of truth, is come . . . he [*ekeinos*] shall glorify me” (16:13–14).⁷⁹ By calling him “another Comforter,” Jesus implied that the Spirit would be like Christ, standing in for him after he ascended to the Father (14:2–3, 12, 18; 16:7). In this way, our Lord taught us to view the Holy Spirit as a person who witnesses for God on earth just as Jesus did.

2. *The Holy Spirit is someone with a rational, volitional nature.* The Spirit knows glorious things: “No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:11 ESV). Impersonal objects may contain information, but only a person knows truth. The Holy Spirit also makes moral judgments about actions: “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things” (Acts 15:28).

The Holy Spirit has a will that he exercises in making choices. Regarding the spiritual gifts, Paul writes, “All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills” (1 Cor. 12:11 ESV). Energy does not make choices. The will of the Spirit ardently opposes sin. When the people of Israel rebelled against the Lord in the wilderness, they “vexed” (grieved and provoked) the Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:9–10). Paul warned the saints in Ephesus, “Grieve not the holy Spirit

77. TDNT, 5:800–803.

78. The Greek language has three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter, which are merely a matter of morphology (linguistic form). The neuter gender of the word translated as “Spirit” (*pneuma*) does not deny that the Holy Spirit is personal; the Greek word translated as “child” (*paidion*) is also neuter.

79. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:278. Many theologians argue that the use of the masculine demonstrative pronoun *ekeinos* for the Spirit in John 14:26, 15:26, and 16:13–14 contradicts the normal agreement of gender between a pronoun and its antecedent, and therefore indicates that the Spirit is a person. For example, see Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 140; and Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 784. However, others argue that in each context, the antecedent of the masculine pronoun is not the neuter Greek word translated as “Spirit,” but the masculine word translated as “Comforter” (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7). Thus, Daniel B. Wallace, “Greek Grammar and the Personality of the Holy Spirit,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 13, no. 1 (2003): 97–125, especially 97–111. At the very least, we believe that the masculine word translated as “Comforter” is a manifestly personal term, which is confirmed by the masculine pronouns.

of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). While we should not attribute grief to God in a way that implies suffering or passion, the text teaches that the Spirit treats people in a personal and relational manner.⁸⁰ Hodge wrote, “He is represented, therefore, as a person . . . whom we may please or offend.”⁸¹

3. *The Holy Spirit is someone unique in relationships with other persons.* As a person, he is distinct from the Father and the Son, relating to the other two persons according to the order of the Trinity.⁸² He displays his personhood by relating to human beings in a personal manner. He teaches, testifies, reproves, and guides them (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7, 13). He intercedes for them (Rom. 8:26). John Gill (1697–1771) wrote, “Now as the advocacy and intercession of Christ, prove him to be a Person, and a distinct one from the Father, with whom he intercedes; so the intercession of the Spirit, equally proves his personality, even his distinct personality also.”⁸³

The Holy Spirit speaks and acts as the personal Lord. The Spirit said to Peter, “Go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them” (Acts 10:19–20). When the church at Antioch gave itself to prayer and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke, commanding the church to set apart for him Barnabas and Saul for the work to which “I have called them,” and so they were “sent forth by the Holy Ghost” (13:1–4). The Holy Spirit is not an *it*, but an *I*, a person “who speaks of himself in the first person,” as Bavinck said.⁸⁴

Practical Implications of the Spirit’s Divine Personality

Since the Holy Spirit is God and a living person, Perkins said that each Christian must “acknowledge the Holy Ghost as He has revealed Himself in the Word, . . . believe that He is my Sanctifier and Comforter, . . . [and] put all the confidence of my heart in Him for that cause.”⁸⁵

80. Owen wrote of grief and anger, “Such affections and perturbations of mind are not ascribed unto God or the Spirit but metaphorically.” However, he also noted that our duty not to “grieve” the Spirit is an example of how we are to relate to him “as he is a holy, divine, intelligent person, working freely in and toward us for our good.” Owen, *Pneumatologia*, in *Works*, 4:413–14. See also *Communion with God*, in *Works*, 2:265–66. On divine affections and impassibility, see *RST*, 1:829–73 (chaps. 43–44).

81. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:525.

82. Luke 4:1, 18; John 14:16, 26; 16:26. See *RST*, 1:890–91.

83. John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* (1839; repr., Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1995), 168. Henceforth cited as Gill, *Body of Divinity*.

84. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:278.

85. Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbol*, in *Works*, 5:306.

This last point highlights how important it is to believe that the Spirit is God. Only God can bear the full weight of our total trust. No mere creature is worthy of such faith. The Spirit, however, is worthy. Do you honor him with your faith? Do you trust in the Spirit with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding? Does your faith in Christ lead you to trust in the Spirit of Christ, by whom the Lord Jesus works in your life?

The personality of the Spirit teaches us that true spirituality involves a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. We must not treat him as a mere power to be used, much less manipulated for our selfish ends. We must not seek him in the pursuit of nothing more than a transcendent experience. He dwells in each believer as a divine person within a human person. He is grieved by sin and delighted by holiness. Marvel over his love, undeserved grace, and patience toward you. As Lloyd-Jones said, it is astonishing that the Holy One would lower himself so far as “to dwell in you and me.”⁸⁶ He is the Author of the Scriptures, and there he will teach you how to please him. Hear what the Spirit says in the Word and obey him.

The deity of the Spirit calls us to worship him together with the Father and the Son. If we do not worship the Spirit, we undermine the doctrine of the Trinity.⁸⁷ Let us exalt the Spirit in our praises for his divine attributes. Let us celebrate the glory of the Spirit revealed in his mighty works. If you are a pastor, plan and lead the worship of your church to lift up the congregation’s hearts to the triune God, to the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If you are the head of a household, make sure that your family worship does not neglect the Spirit. All Christians, take hold of every opportunity to give thanks to the Holy Spirit, for apart from him you would not exist, and without him you have no spiritual life.

Sing to the Lord

Praying for the Leading of the Spirit

When morning lights the eastern skies,
O Lord, Thy mercy show;
On Thee alone my hope relies,
Let me Thy kindness know.

86. Lloyd-Jones, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, 2:21.

87. See Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 422.

Teach me the way that I should go;
I lift my soul to Thee;
For refuge from my cruel foe
To Thee, O Lord, I flee.

Thou art my God, to Thee I pray,
Teach me Thy will to heed;
And in the right and perfect way
May Thy good Spirit lead.

For Thy Name's sake, O gracious Lord,
Revive my soul and bless,
And in Thy faithfulness and love
Redeem me from distress.

Psalm 143:8–11

Tune: Lynton

The Psalter, No. 391

Questions for Meditation or Discussion

1. What objections might be raised against the doctrine of the Holy Spirit? How can we answer such objections?
2. Why does knowing the Holy Spirit and his work help us to know God, Christ, and our salvation better?
3. How does the doctrine of the Holy Spirit contribute to the following?
 - a balanced Christian life
 - right worship
 - evangelism in our culture
 - spiritual warfare
4. What is “orthodoxy”? What do the authors mean when they say, “To neglect this doctrine [of the Holy Spirit] is to neglect our Christian . . . heritage”?
5. Why should studying the Holy Spirit increase our dependence on God and faith in Jesus Christ?
6. Why is the Spirit named “the Holy Spirit”?
7. List seven lines of argument to prove that the Holy Spirit is God, with a few Scripture references for each.
8. How do the Holy Scriptures show us that the Spirit of God is a person?

9. What is one practical application from this chapter that you needed to hear? How will you put it into practice?

Questions for Deeper Reflection

10. How can Christians from different traditions and churches talk with each other about the Holy Spirit and his work in a way that is faithful to the truth but not unnecessarily divisive?
11. The authors say, “This is mysterious, but the Bible implies that the Spirit is like the breath of God.” What biblical truths does this comparison suggest? What might be possible dangers in comparing the Holy Spirit to “the breath of God”?
12. Someone from a heretical group says to you, “Everything that the Bible says about the Spirit of God can be explained simply by understanding ‘spirit’ to mean God’s power.” How do you answer this assertion?