

Series: Theological Treatises

The Holy Spirit

An in-depth study of the Third Person of the Trinity and his participation in the plan of salvation.



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1. General Introduction

The search for God’s knowledge and his purpose for man constitutes the most exciting of all the adventures that the human mind can propose. The challenge of finding in the Holy Book the golden thread of the plan of salvation will reward the scholar, who will be able to understand the majesty of the effort of the One who “**who did not spare His own Son**” (**Romans 8: 32**).

The set of Bible tracts, of which you have in your hands one of the studies, has been prepared to provide the lay member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the knowledge required to teach others about how to grow “**in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (**2 Peter 3: 18**) as well as for “**be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope in you**” (**1 Peter 3: 15**).

The author is a regular member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1977, a church elder since 1979, a husband, father, and grandfather, with the joy of having his entire family in “**the faith once delivered to the saints**” (**Jude 1: 3**) and a full subscriber to the 28 official doctrines of the church.



I reiterate that these tracts have been prepared for the church member, so he must graduate the dose of knowledge that he must transmit to those who are interested in knowing Jesus, whom the prophet calls the “**Desire of all nations**” (**Haggai 2: 7**).

That's why, at the same time, we also wanted to include supplementary material to the Bible study that we hope will allow you to expand your current knowledge, as well as to be prepared to deepen on “**things the angels desire to look into**” (**1 Peter 1: 12**). Your ability to introduce these subthemes in harmony with the central concepts is key to the transfer of knowledge that you and I intend to pursue.

Since the knowledge of our God and His purposes will, by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit, always be in full swing, you will be able to find regular updates of each treatise (see the date yy.mm.dd that accompanies the name of the file). These updates, of course, will also correct some of the human flaws that may have gone unnoticed by the author. On the other hand, your well-meaning intention to help us improve these issues will always be welcome. These treatises were originally written in Spanish, my mother language, but translated to English by the author to reach more people, as the latter is considered

world-wide as the commercial and technical language.

2. Structure of the Theological Treatise

At the beginning of each treatise, we will present the general structure of the set of these using a numbered block diagram, called the General Treatise Map. This chart (shown on one of the following pages) will allow you to see where the tract you have in your hands fits concerning the other topics. To make it easier to locate, in addition to the numbering, it will be marked in a different color than the others. Collect the topics, update them, and arrange them in this sequence if you find it useful to your knowledge development.

The numbers in each block simultaneously establish the order of creation of these treatises and the logical dependence between them as well. The blocks from number 70 onwards represent, in turn, a set of special treatises. I have grouped them into 6 major themes:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------|
| a. | Comparative Religions | Series 70.nn |
| b. | Chronologies | Series 75.nn |
| c. | Gospel Harmonies | Series 80.nn |
| d. | Genealogies | Series 85.nn |
| e. | Bible biographies | Series 90.nn |

The reading of these topics will give you the frame of reference to understand the most thematic treatises. These other topics have their own structure that will be related to the one mentioned here.

After the diagram of the whole, you will find a block diagram of the study itself, called the Treatise Map, where you will be able to notice the following:

- Each block of the diagram indicates the reference verse(s) at the bottom and a short phrase that corresponds to the logic of its inclusion in the topic.
- You will notice that there are some blocks, with different colored verses, that refer to parables that help to understand the central theme.



- c. Other blocks, which do not contain verses, expose issues that you might touch on when presenting the study; issues that have historical, geographical, scientific, technical, and other backgrounds. You will find in this study some information that will help you expose these concepts.
- d. These two types of blocks are not necessarily included in all studies.
- e. The arrows indicate the logical sequence in which the author thinks these topics should be presented. The sequence is set from left to right and from top to bottom. However, your initiative and the knowledge about your listeners' needs may point you in a different direction. Let yourself be guided in prayer by the One who cannot err.

At the end of this graphic phase, you will find the study in detail, which will follow, as far as possible, the structure of the block diagram. Some complementary materials to the study will be included at the end. I recommend that you read them in advance to find the exact moment to include them in your presentation.

To the extent possible, I have presented the source of some of these topics so that you can extend your understanding by reviewing them. I do not pretend to know everything these sources deal with, so I encourage you to go deeper and tell me how to improve this content. I have included some images found on the Internet to make your reading more enjoyable, I hope you like them.

The written phase of the study will contain:

- a. Headings for the main subtopics.
- b. Bible quotes (in red).
- c. Quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy (in green).
- d. Quotations from books or articles by various authors, aimed at expanding your knowledge on the subject (in blue).
- e. Comments on the mentioned quotations; in some cases, these will be presented before the quotation, as an anticipation of the statement, while in others they will be placed after it as a confirmation of the concept being held (in black).
- f. Maps, chronograms, genealogies, and other diagrams where appropriate to the subject matter.
- g. Complementary material grouped in a section that helps to understand some of the aspects that could arise when dealing with the central theme with other people. Not all topics necessarily contain this material.

Unless otherwise indicated, the quotes from the Holy Bible are from the King James Modern Version, my favorite in English. Sometime I will include other versions to compare or expand the understanding of a text.

When you develop a Bible study on this subject with non-church people, I recommend that you use the section corresponding to the study (with the verses included in the block diagram) without presenting the statements of the Spirit of Prophecy. Discuss the accompanying materials as they come up in the exposition, as well as in the question and answer phase.

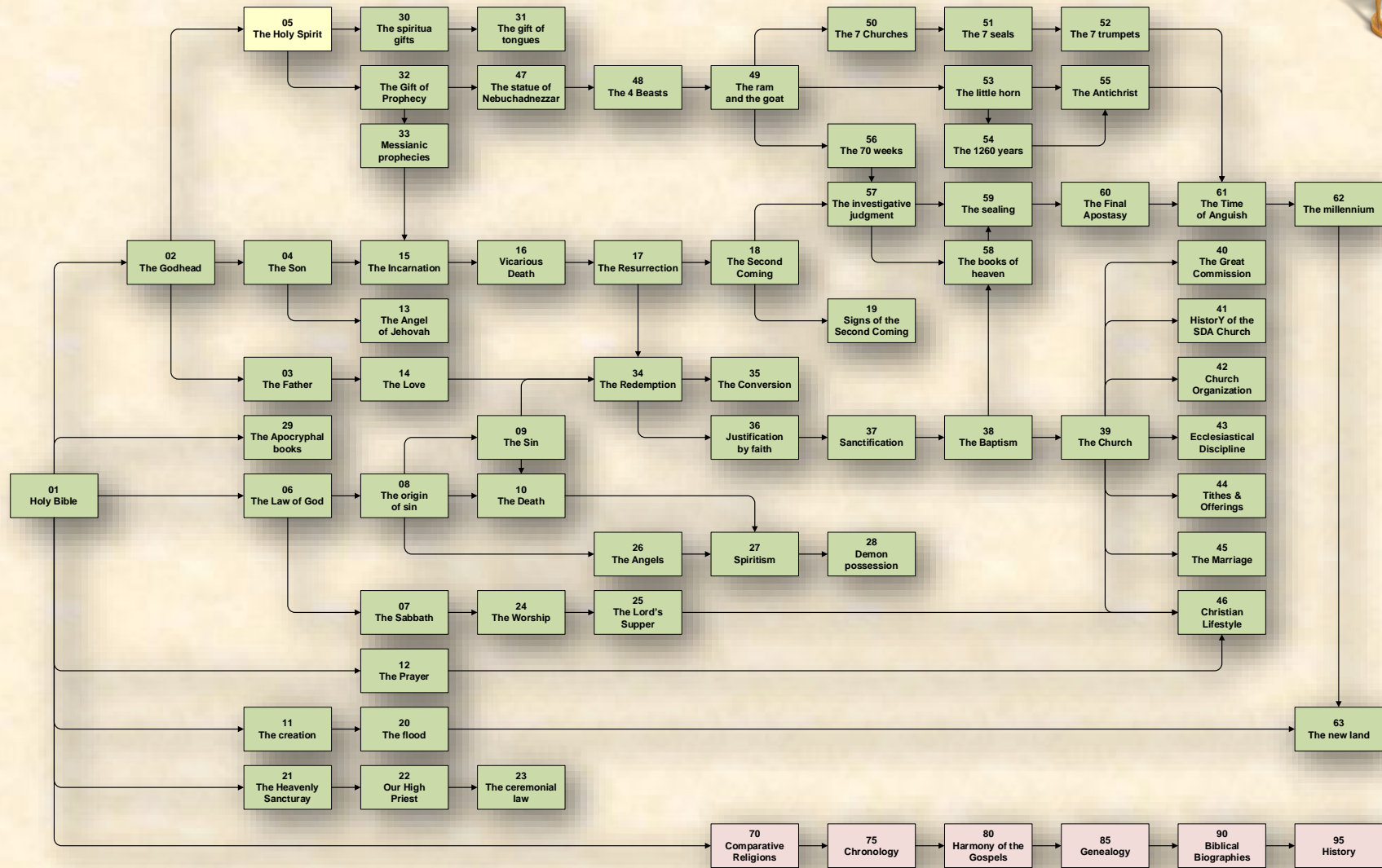
I have also prepared a file that includes all the block diagrams from the tracts so that they will be helpful to your memory when presenting the topic. I have also created a file with a copy of all the contents of the treatises so that you can review them without opening each of the documents, in case you are looking for a specific subtopic.

Allow me, as I have done so far, to address you personally during the study. I believe that this is how our Savior spoke to those He loved and wanted to save. Surely you will do the same with those who listen to you for this purpose.

This is a free material that has surely come to you from someone who appreciates you and wants you to know even more about Jesus and His wonderful plan of salvation. Spread the word in the same way, as you "have received freely, freely give" (**Matthew 10: 8**).

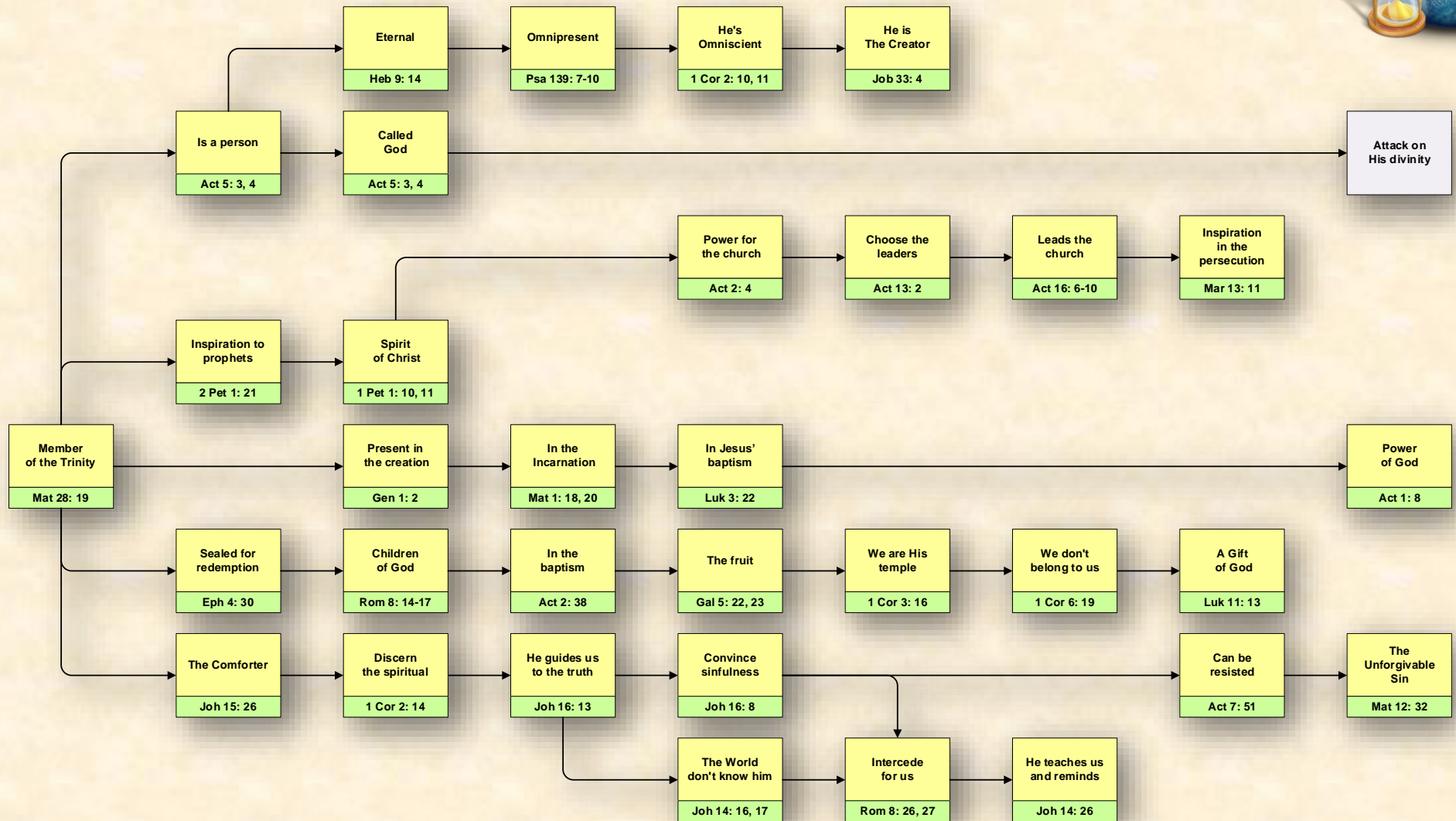


3. General Treatise Map





4. Treatise Map





5. Purpose of the Treatise

The purpose of the treatise is as follows:

- a. To present the work of the Holy Spirit, both in the inspiration of those who brought the Holy Book to us and in the transformation of our lives.
- b. Proving the divinity of the Holy Spirit.
- c. Contribute to the understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.
- d. Define the task of the Holy Spirit as an agent of spiritual change in man.

6. Development of the theme

6.1. Introduction

A study of the Trinity and especially of the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, would apparently provide Christians in general with an opportunity for theological agreement with little difference. The reality, as we have already discussed in other studies related to the Deity, is that there are great differences in the way the Trinity is perceived in general, and especially the nature and work of the Holy Spirit.

From those who attribute to the Holy Spirit the condition of God, in perfect equivalence with the Father and the Son, to those who consider Him a thing, an energy, to those who consider the Holy Spirit only a manifestation of the very Persons of the Father and the Son, theological positions are sometimes defended based on presuppositions or historical positions, without relying on what Revelation really shows.

It is difficult to accept, moreover, that among those who once confessed the Adventist message, today they rise up against this message to deny the divinity of the Holy Spirit. I have been painfully close to some cases of leaders who have left the church because of a misunderstanding of the Third Person's place and His importance in Christian theology.

This treatise will focus on presenting what the Word of God says about the Holy Spirit concerning the doctrine of the Trinity and taking into account what is already covered in the tract of "The Godhead", as well as the other two following that one.

6.2. The Divinity of the Holy Spirit

When Jesus presented the Great Commission to his disciples, He told them that they should baptize his disciples in the name of the Trinity. It is interesting that even though there are 3 Persons, He says "name" and not "names", this is because of the unity of the Trinity. It would be strange if Jesus, knowing the nature of the Deity, encouraged (or rather commanded) the apostles to use a baptismal formula that included God, a lesser god as some consider Jesus, and a force as some think about the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28: 19

The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.

Ellen G. White, Evangelism, 615

For Seventh-day Adventists, these statements should be sufficient to prove Ellen G. White's position on the Trinity and the nature of the Persons who comprise it in unity. I submit that it is not possible to believe in the Spirit of Prophecy and at the same time deny the Trinity, as some people, including some pastors, unfortunately, do today.

In the following verses, two concepts are very clear: the first is that the Holy Spirit is a person to whom you can lie (you cannot lie, for example, to the electrical power in your house) and the second is that Peter claims that by lying Ananias had lied "to God". This, like the verse quoted above, makes clear the personality and divinity of the Third Person of the Trinity.

I would like you to remember the case. Ananias and Sapphira, his wife, had sold an inheritance and pretended to give the full amount to the apostles while retaining a portion for their use. There would have been nothing wrong if they had wanted to hand over a part, and they would have shown that. But they

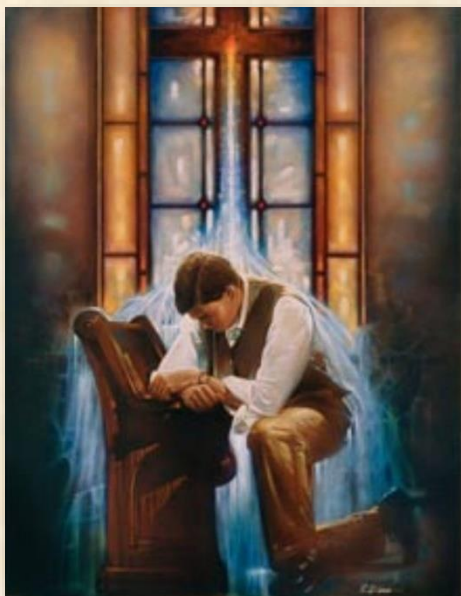


pointed out that they were giving away everything but keeping a part. Ananias received this terrible rebuke from Peter...

But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart for you to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own authority? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.

Acts 5: 3, 4

There is no way, furthermore, to support in this verse the idea that the Holy Spirit is a force or an energy. His personal nature is evident and he is also recognized as "God". This is not the only case of this type of interchangeable and comparative expression.



Another example of interchangeable expressions is given by Paul in **1 Corinthians 3** and **6**. In chapter **3: 16, 17**, he writes, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" Three chapters later, he uses almost identical language: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?" (**1 Corinthians 6: 19**). The temple of God or the temple of the Holy Spirit -God and Holy Spirit are used interchangeably by Paul. "The Holy Spirit is not a mere spirit", said Martin Luther, "a creature, for example, or something apart from God and yet given to men by Him, or merely the work of God which He performs in our hearts -but that He is a Spirit who Himself is God in essence".

Ron E. M. Clouzet, The Personhood of the Holy Spirit and why it matters, 19

Notice now some of the divine characteristics that the Holy Scriptures give to the Holy Spirit. The Word of God holds that the Spirit is eternal, a unique characteristic of the Godhead. Notice that in this verse the Three Persons of the Trinity appear, united as always, in their task of saving man.

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?

Hebrews 9: 14

The psalmist declares that the Spirit is omnipresent since he says that he cannot flee from Him, that wherever he goes He will find him. One of the gifts that created beings do not possess is that of ubiquity. We are restricted to being in only one place at a time. The opposite of what God can do is to be everywhere at once, anytime.

Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I go up into Heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the furthest parts of the sea; even there shall Your hand lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

Psalms 139: 7-10

The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.

Ellen G. White, Acts of the Apostles, 52

We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds, that the Lord God is our keeper, and helper. He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind.

Ellen G. White, Manuscript Release, Volume VII, 299

On the other hand, we can identify in the following verses another characteristic of the Deity. Paul says that "the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God" and it is not possible to attribute this capacity to a force or a creature, limited in comparison to God. In order to search everything must be as capable or as great as the search.

It also points out that it is capable of knowing "the things of God", something that only someone who



is not limited, as we are, could do. He must be God to be able to access such a volume of knowledge and be able to process it and know it. I discover and bow my mortal head before the Great I Am.

But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 2: 10, 11

The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God...

The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind 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" (**1 Corinthians 2: 11**).

Ellen G. White, Evangelism, 616, 617

The Spirit is also granted the quality of creator, which is evidently not something that creatures can possess; they are, as their very name indicates, created.

The Spirit of God made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Job 33: 4

We will deal later with the subject of the Comforter, but I want to advance this concept that has to do with the divinity of the Third Person.

Jesus told his disciples that by leaving them they would not be orphaned because he would send them another Comforter who would be with them always (**John 14: 16**). In Greek, there are two words for "other": "heteros", which means another of another kind, and "állos" which is "another" of the same class. This text uses "állos" or "other" from the same class. Jesus Christ is "Emmanuel: God with us" (**Matthew 1: 23**); therefore, the Holy Spirit, who is another of the same kind, is also "God with us".

The Divinity of the Holy Spirit, 2 (translated by the author)

6.3. Inspiration and Guidance

It is the Holy Spirit who has inspired the prophets who have brought to us the Word of God, which has no reflection of "will of man" but is the message of God brought through the human instrument chosen for that purpose. God the Holy Spirit has impressed the minds of these men to present the truth in their own words and on the basis of their own experience. The Word of God thus created is divine by origin.

For prophecy was not borne at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke being borne along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1: 21

I like the following verse because it holds that the prophets were not only in an attitude of waiting to receive inspiration but they "sought out and searched out, prophesying concerning the grace for you; searching...", that is, they sought the wisdom of God and it was granted to them, presenting us with the most beautiful themes of redemption for the future, but which they saw with the eyes of faith. Note that here the Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of Christ" showing once again the interrelationship and concurrence of purposes of the Persons of the Godhead. The terms Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, and Spirit of Christ are used as equivalents in the Holy Scriptures.



About which salvation the prophets sought out and searched out, prophesying concerning the grace for you; searching for what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ made clear within them, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow.

1 Peter 1: 10, 11

The Holy Spirit has been (and is today) the great giver of the Church's gifts, preparing His servants to give the message of salvation, providing the talents which the men and women, who place themselves in



His hands, need to fulfill the task which has been bequeathed to us. In those times the gift of tongues was very important so that unlearned men could extend the work of God among all nations. Today we can learn the languages of other countries and regions with relative ease, in colleges or universities, which at that time was unlikely or unavailable to many.

And they were all filled of the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2: 4

The Spirit was also, in the times of the apostolic church, the great guide of the church, separating those whom He judged to be suitable for the ministry. Today we must pray that in choosing our church leaders we will be able to hear the voice of the Spirit, as He did then, pointing us to His chosen ones.

He not only chose His ministers but He also showed them where to go so that the work would have the impact that God desired. As quoted, the Holy Spirit gave precise instructions when to speak or be silent, where to go or not to go, but also through visions He indicated God's purposes.

I believe that today we must submit our methods and plans to His guidance, without arrogance, so that He can point us in the direction of our efforts and resources. I am sure that Paul thought it was a good idea to preach in Bithynia, but God did not have the same idea. Notice that in one of these quotes, "Holy Spirit" is again equated with "God", because, after the Holy Spirit's prohibition of going to Asia and Bithynia, they are convinced by the vision of going to Macedonia where he says that "the Lord had called us in order to preach the gospel to them".

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, So, then, separate Barnabas and Saul to Me for the work to which I have called them.

Acts 13: 2

And coming through the Phrygian and the Galatian region; and by the Holy Spirit being forbidden to speak the Word in Asia; having come to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia. But the Spirit did not allow them. Then passing by Mysia, they came down into Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A certain man of Macedonia stood, begging him, saying, come over into Macedonia and help us! And after he saw the vision, we immediately tried to go into Macedonia, gathering that the Lord had called us in order to preach the gospel to them.

Acts 16: 6-10

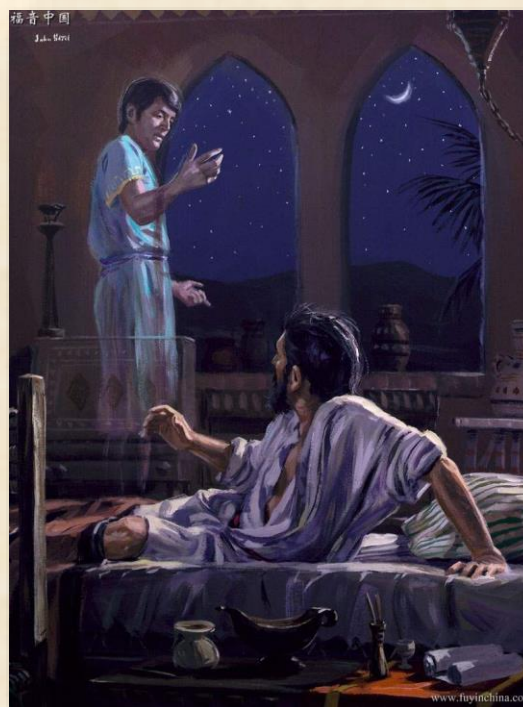
The guidance of the Holy Spirit is offered to us also in the future, even when we have to witness in the time of persecution of our faith. If we have been faithful in studying His word and living it, the Holy Spirit will put His powerful words in our mouth. I know that He has already done so with some people many times in the past and He will do so in the future, too.

But whenever they lead you away and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what you should speak or think. But speak whatever shall be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speaks, but the Holy Spirit.

Mark 13: 11

There are many, who, lacking spiritual discernment, take the bare letter of the Word, and find that unaccompanied by the Spirit of God, it quickens not the soul, it sanctifies not the heart. One may be able to quote from the Old and the New Testament, may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Word of God; but unless the Holy Spirit sends the truth home to the heart, enlightening the mind with divine light, no soul falls upon the Rock and is broken; for it is the divine agency that connects the soul with God.

Without the enlightenment of the Spirit of God, we shall not be able to discern truth from error, and shall fall under the masterful temptations and deceptions that Satan will bring upon the world.





We are near the close of the controversy between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness, and soon the delusions of the enemy will try our faith, of what sort it is.

Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, 126

6.4. Participation in the plan of salvation

The Holy Spirit is the first of the 3 Persons of the Godhead mentioned in the Bible and is shown to be active in the work of creation when He “hovered” (that is the most accurate translation) “on the face of the waters”.

And the earth was without form and empty. And darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters.

Genesis 1: 2

He actively participates in the incarnation of the Son. The verses presented below say that Mary conceived by the work of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing that Jesus was begotten by Him. The more one studies the Holy Spirit the more evident His personality, His divinity, and His power to create as in the case of the Incarnation.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was this way (for His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph) before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

And as he thought upon these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take to you Mary as your wife. For that in her is fathered of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1: 18, 20

The Spirit also appears in the form of a dove during Jesus' baptism, at the same time that the Father's declaration comes to us. I would like you to notice that the Spirit appears in the form of a dove, as it does at other times in the form of tongues of fire, but this does not mean that He has any of these forms.

We must not confuse in the appearances of the Divinity, or any of the Persons thereof, the form with the background. The message is that He was present, not that His form of God is like a dove.

And the Holy Spirit came down in a bodily shape, like a dove on Him. And a voice came from Heaven, which said, You are My Son, the Beloved; I am delighted in You.

Luke 3: 22

During his ascension, Jesus offered that the power of the Third Person would accompany the efforts of his disciples to bear witness to the Truth. This power to begin the work of the apostolic church remains available to us to finish the work. There is no reason why God's hand should have been shortened in our time to support His church in the work of preaching the Truth to a perishing world, that needs Jesus as its personal Savior.

But you shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you. And you shall be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Acts 1: 8

The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work.

Ellen G. White, Testimonies for Ministries and Gospel Workers, 511, 512

6.5. Sealed for salvation

Although we will discuss this in more detail some time, let me tell you that the Holy Spirit is the seal in our lives for salvation. The work of the Holy Spirit must be seen in our hearts so that when the time comes





the Lord will recognize us as His own. Pray with me that God's power will be poured out abundantly upon us, individually and corporately, in our homes and our churches, in our personal prayer place and our groups united in Christ... everywhere.

We need to be transformed by God's holy work. This verse tells me that I must not grieve (sadden) the Spirit with my life of sin and my deficient character. I must continue in the task of preparing to meet my God.

**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed until the day of redemption.
Ephesians 4: 30**

Usually, a child resembles its parents, sometimes more like the mother than the father or vice versa, but there is always something that is genetically transmitted. In the scenario of salvation, there is something that sustains our divine filiation. If we are "led by the Spirit of God" we are "sons of God", therefore it is the work of the Spirit that makes us understand our kinship with the Godhead, which will allow us to inherit, as children, eternal life.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if we are children, then we are heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; so that if we suffer with Him, we may also be glorified together.

Romans 8: 14-17

The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

Ellen G. White, Evangelism, 617

Because it is through baptism that this divine filiation is established, when we are recognized as sons and receive "the gift of the Holy Spirit".

Then Peter said to them, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ to remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2: 38

This relationship with God can only produce a wonderful fruit that is reflected in a change of character that is approved by heaven.

Let yourself be transformed by the Spirit of God, surrender your life to the Lord and He will lead you to a change of your paradigms, of your way of seeing life and He will teach you the difference between good and evil.

But the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5: 22, 23

Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1 Corinthians 3: 16

When this happens, God will rejoice to dwell in your heart, knowing that He has made your whole being a temple where He can dwell, where the purity of a holy God can make His abode. O God, dwell in this heart, transform it so that it may be worthy to be visited by You!

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit in you, whom you have of God? And you are not your own,

1 Corinthians 6: 19

Man is allotted a part in this great struggle for everlasting life; he must respond to the working of the Holy Spirit. It will require a struggle to break through the powers of darkness, but the Spirit that





works in him can and will accomplish this. But man is no passive instrument to be saved in indolence. He is called upon to strain every muscle in the struggle for immortality, yet it is God that supplies the efficiency.

Here are man's works, and here are God's works... With these two combined powers, man will be victorious, and receive a crown of life at last... He puts to the stretch every spiritual nerve and muscle that he may be a successful overcomer in this work, and that he may obtain the precious boon of eternal life.

Ellen G. White, Our High Calling, 91

I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of "refreshing" and the "latter rain" to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter!

Ellen G. White, Early Writings, 71

Don't be afraid that God won't give you this wonderful gift, ask for it in faith and it will be given to you, not because you or I may deserve it, no... but because God is good and merciful. God is more than willing to give it, just as a good father does everything he can (and sometimes more) for his children, only that God is Almighty and can give us everything we ask for, especially if we ask well.

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

Luke 11: 13

A knowledge of the truth depends not so much upon strength of intellect as upon pureness of purpose, the simplicity of an earnest, dependent faith. To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance, angels of God draw near. The Holy Spirit is given to open to them the rich treasures of the truth.

Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, 59

We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the day of Pentecost. If they needed the Spirit's power at that time, we need it more today. All manner of false doctrines, heresies, and deceptions are misleading the minds of men; and without the Spirit's aid, our efforts to present divine truth will be in vain.

God desires to refresh His people by the gift of the Holy Spirit, baptizing them anew in His love. There is no need for a dearth of the Spirit in the church. After Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting, praying, believing disciples with a fullness and power that reached every heart. In the future, the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God. A holy influence is to go forth to the world from those who are sanctified through the truth. The earth is to be encircled with an atmosphere of grace. The Holy Spirit is to work on human hearts, taking the things of God and showing them to men.

Ellen G. White, In Heavenly Places, 334



6.6. The Divine Agent of Change

We commented earlier that Jesus offered His disciples that the Comforter would come to replace Him in the task of leading the Church and the faithful, when He was removed from them. We already saw that this Comforter should be at least of the same nature as Jesus to accomplish the work in His place. Someone less capable than Jesus could not accomplish this mammoth task, should possess at least the same attributes as Jesus. Only someone omnipresent, for example, could support the church everywhere and at any time. He is called "the Spirit of truth" and will bear witness to Jesus.

And when the Comforter has come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He shall testify of Me.

John 15: 26

The Truth cannot be understood by our carnal intelligence. We all require being transformed by the Spirit of God to be spiritually capable of understanding not only our condition but the great truths of salvation.



You and I without the Lord ruling in our lives are carnal, subject to sin, with minds that do not understand God and hearts that have not been subdued to serve Him. As natural men and women, our intelligence is not capable of discerning eternal truths, for, in reality, this is not an intellectual matter, it is rather spiritual. It requires a level of spirituality that we do not possess without Jesus, without having been transformed by the Spirit of God.

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2: 14

Without the Spirit of God, a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.

Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, 411

Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit, the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.

Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, 671

It is good to know that when we let the Spirit of God speak to our hearts, we will understand what we are and how much we need a Savior. The Spirit will "lead us into all truth" and we will be able to find the beauty of Jesus' life, the love of the Father, and accept the Spirit's work in our lives.

However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself, but whatever He hears, He shall speak. And He will announce to you things to come.

John 16: 13

You may have noticed that if you ask anyone, on the street, at work, at college or in your own home, if they think they are good, they will almost certainly say yes.

In general, we as human beings have a very high (distorted would be better to say) view of ourselves. Almost all people think they will be saved (like the great majority of human beings, according to them) and if asked about a deceased relative or friend they will say the same thing, that is, that they are in heaven or enjoying God.

A deceased friend of mine, a bit cynical, used to say that there is no such thing as a bad death. If you attend a funeral you will always hear that person was a good man, best friend, exemplary father, etc. The reality is that we people do not accept our sinful condition, our tremendous inclination to evil, in a word... that we are lost without Jesus.

This is because without the work of God's Spirit, understanding our carnality is impossible. We need to be convinced of sin (I am a sinner and I am lost), of righteousness (that only the righteousness of Christ can replace my unrighteousness) and of judgment (because we will all have to be judged before Christ comes).

And when that One comes, He will convict the world concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment.

John 16: 8

The Holy Spirit is our efficiency in the work of character building, in forming characters after the divine similitude. When we think ourselves capable of molding our own experience, we make a great mistake. We can never of ourselves obtain the victory over temptation. But those who have





genuine faith in Christ will be worked by the Holy Spirit. The soul in whose heart faith abides will grow into a beautiful temple for the Lord. He is directed by the grace of Christ. Just in proportion as he depends on the Holy Spirit's teaching he will grow.

Ellen G. White, That I May Know Him, 57

By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Ellen G. White, Testimonies for Ministries and Gospel Workers, 506

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this, the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit, the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character on His church.

Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, 13

It is God's purpose to dwell with us, with those who have accepted Him and know Him. I am grateful that the Divinity through the Consoler has assured me that He can dwell in me... despite my evident unworthiness.

I also like the fact that this promise of Jesus was made in the upper room, after supper, when Jesus was about to be handed over and suffer a cruel death, abandoned by most of his followers. I am moved to think that when He was about to suffer, He was thinking of comforting me, when every fiber of His body was asking Him to care for the terrible struggle He would face at Calvary. What a wonder of God we have! How much we must love Him!

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, so that He may be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him nor know Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and shall be in you.

John 14: 16, 17

The Holy Spirit was promised to be with those who were wrestling for victory, demonstrating the power of might by endowing the human agent with supernatural strength, and instructing the ignorant in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit is to be our helper. Of what avail would it have been to us that the only-begotten Son of God had humbled Himself, endured the temptations of the wily foe, and wrestled with him during His entire life on earth, and died, the just for the unjust, that humanity might not perish, if the Spirit had not been given as a constant working, regenerating agent to make effectual in our cases what had been wrought by the world's Redeemer?

...It is the Holy Spirit that brings to the darkened minds the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness. It is the Holy Spirit that makes men's hearts burn within them with an awakened intelligence of the truths of eternity. It is the Holy Spirit that presents before the mind the moral standard of righteousness and convinces of sin. It is the Holy Spirit that produces godly sorrow which worketh repentance that needeth not to be repented of, and inspires faith in Him who alone can save from all sin. It is the Holy Spirit that works to transform character by withdrawing the affections of men from those things which are temporal and perishable, and fixing them upon the immortal inheritance, the eternal substance which is imperishable. The Holy Spirit re-creates, refines, and sanctifies the human agents, that they may become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.

Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, 355

Paul points out that the "Spirit also helps our infirmities" especially when we must present our requests to God.

We often ask God for things that in His wisdom He knows will not be good for us or our beloved. We should ask, but always accept God's will, that He will grant them to us if they go according to God's plan for our life. Know that the Third Person of the Godhead "makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered".

Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He searching the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession



for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8: 26, 27

No human reasoning of the most learned man can define the operations of the Holy Spirit upon human minds and characters, yet they can see the effects upon the life and actions...

Though we cannot see the Spirit of God, we know that men who have been dead in trespasses and sins become convicted and converted under its operations. The thoughtless and wayward become serious. The hardened repent of their sins, and the faithless believe. The gambler, the drunkard, the licentious, becomes steady, sober, and pure. The rebellious and obstinate become meek and Christlike.

When we see these changes in the character, we may be assured that the converting power of God has transformed the entire man. We saw not the Holy Spirit, but we saw the evidence of its work on the changed character of those who were hardened and obdurate sinners. As the wind moves in its force upon the lofty trees and brings them down, so the Holy Spirit can work upon human hearts, and no finite man can circumscribe the work of God...

You cannot see the operating agency, but you can see its effects.

Ellen G. White, In Heavenly Places, 22

6.7. The unforgivable sin

Unfortunately, we can also resist the loving attempts of the Spirit of God, I hope you don't do it, I don't want to do it either, but I know that many of us will do it, because many have done it already in the past. "O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears!"; what a tremendous description: haughtiness to keep one's head down or to humble oneself, an unregenerated impure heart and ears that do not want to hear the truth. Have you not come across people who think they are not wrong, who say they have nothing to repent of? Sometimes they ask a movie actor or a celebrity what their biggest flaw is. I smile when I hear them say things like, "I'm a perfectionist," "I'm too dedicated to my profession", "I trust people too much", and the like. Well, if those are their defects, what are their virtues? It is a problem of our time; we are not able to see our real situation. Our misery remains hidden from our minds and we convince ourselves that we are well, that we need nothing.

O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so you do.

Acts 7: 51

I would that all my brethren and sisters would remember that it is a serious thing to grieve the Holy Spirit; and it is grieved when the human agent seeks to work himself, and refuses to enter the service of the Lord because the cross is too heavy or the self-denial too great. The Holy Spirit seeks to abide in each soul. If it is welcomed as an honored guest, those who receive it will be made complete in Christ; the good work begun will be finished; and holy thoughts, heavenly affections, and Christlike actions will take the place of impure thoughts, perverse sentiments, and rebellious acts.

The Holy Spirit is a divine teacher. If we will heed its lessons, we shall become wise unto salvation. But we need to guard well our hearts; for too often we forget the heavenly instruction we have received, and seek to act out the natural inclinations of our unconsecrated minds. Each one must fight his own battle against self. Heed the teachings of the Holy Spirit. If this is done, they will be repeated again and again until the impressions are as it were lead on the rock forever.

God has bought us, and He claims a throne in each heart. Our minds and bodies must be subordinated to Him; and the natural habits and appetites must be made subservient to the higher wants of the soul. But we can place no dependence upon ourselves in this work. We cannot with safety follow our own guidance. The Holy Spirit must





renew and sanctify us.

Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, 33

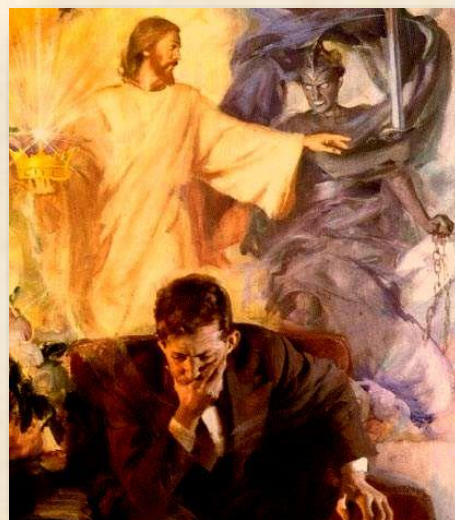
The pity is that repeated opposition to the work of the Holy Spirit in life leads to unforgivable sin, for which there is no forgiveness. This verse has complicated some people who think of the blasphemy against the Spirit as the cause of this absence of forgiveness. The reality is that the rejection of the Spirit's work comes to quench the voice of conscience (through which the Spirit of God speaks to us) and keeps us from being convinced of sin, without which there is no repentance, no forgiveness, and no salvation.

As we close our ears to the voice of God, we gradually lose sensitivity to sin, so that we are then totally deaf to His loving cry. Sometimes we see terrible crimes in our society and we say that how is it possible, it seems that these people have no conscience. Well, yes, it is possible, perhaps they no longer have one because they have ignored his voice for a long time.

And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this world or in the world to come. Matthew 12: 32

Whatever the sin, if the soul repents and believes, the guilt is washed away in the blood of Christ; but he who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him. It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul...

It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial numbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So, the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul...



It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light... The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven's invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.

Ellen G. White, God's Amazing Grace, 215

When God moves upon the hearts of men to draw them to Christ, it seems that a compelling power comes over them, and they believe, and give themselves up to the influence of the Spirit of God. But if they do not maintain the precious victory that God has given; if they permit old practices and habits to revive, and indulge in amusement or worldly luxury; if they neglect prayer, and cease resisting evil, then Satan's temptations are accepted, and they are led to doubt the verity of their former experience. They find that they are weak in moral power, and Satan declares to them that it is of no use for them to try the experiment of living a Christian life. He says, "The experience you thought was of God was only the result of undue emotion and impulse".

As soon as the human agent entertains these suggestions of the evil one, they begin to appear plausible, and then those who ought to know better, who have had a longer experience in the work of God, second the suggestions of Satan, and the Holy Spirit is grieved from the soul. There are those who almost imperceptibly come to take this position, who will immediately recover themselves when they realize what they are doing; but there are others who will continue to resist the Holy Spirit, until resistance appears to them as a virtue.

It is a dangerous thing to doubt the manifestations of the Holy Spirit; for if this agency is doubted, there is no reserve power left by which to operate on the human heart. Those who attribute the work of the Holy Spirit to human agencies, saying that an undue influence was brought to bear



upon them, are cutting their souls off from the fountain of blessing.

Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, 326

One of the most important things is that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, can remind us of all that Jesus has said, can teach us all things concerning salvation, He can, if we let Him, be our Great Teacher.

Let the Lord teach you, learn how to love Him, look in the Bible, after praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for what you need to be saved and to save others, especially those closest to you: your family. Pray that you will understand the truth, that you will be empowered to put it into practice, pray that God will give you a spirit of surrender to serve His Church, that He will give you love for the souls that are perishing. Pray that God will fix in your mind the wonderful words that Jesus spoke while He was in this world, clearing the darkness from the hearts of men with the light of His blessed Word.

But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said to you.

John 14: 26

7. Complementary material

7.1. Challenges to the Divinity of the Holy Spirit

I would like to supplement here what has already been said in the study of the Deity. Two aspects of the Trinity, the eternity of Jesus (sometimes considered a created or second-order god) and the divine nature of the Holy Spirit, have been questioned, as you well know.

This questioning, as I have already mentioned in this and other treatises, arises from neo-Arrian positions, such as that of our brothers the Jehovah's Witnesses, but it has found fertile ground in some members of the Adventist Church, fortunately, few. Those who walk these roads by denying the divinity of the Holy Spirit fall into "binitarianism" that is, two persons in the Godhead or two gods sharing the power and control of the universe. In other cases, without being able to explain the nature of the Spirit and his participation, they consider him an emanation or presence of God the Father or God the Son.

In the case of the Holy Spirit it has been held, among other things, that:

- a. He is a force or energy that comes from God and not a person.
- b. It is held that the concept of the Trinity is a spurious doctrine received from Catholicism.
- c. The Holy Spirit is said to be the presence of God (i.e. a manifestation of God) but not God Himself.
- d. It is held that the Spirit of Prophecy, as pointed out by Ellen G. White, discredits the doctrine of the Trinity and consequently the nature of the Holy Spirit.

Most of the issues I have already addressed in the development of this study. I will concentrate primarily on increasing the evidence of what the Spirit of Prophecy explains about the work and nature of the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. I'll let Ellen speak to us...

The eternal heavenly dignitaries -God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit- arming them [the disciples] with more than mortal energy, ...would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin.

**Ellen G. White,
Evangelism, 616**

The eternal Deity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is involved in the action required to give security to the human instrument.

**Ellen G. White,
Raise your eyes, 146
(translated by the author)**

The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit; for it is His representative.

**Ellen G. White,
Messages to Young People, 55**

Evil had been accumulating for centuries and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. Another spirit must be met; for the essence of evil was working in all ways, and the submission of





man to this satanic captivity was amazing.

Ellen G. White, Testimonies for Ministries and Gospel Workers, 392

Those who reject the Spirit of truth place themselves under the control of a spirit that is opposed to the word and work of God. For some time, they may continue to teach some phase of the truth, but if they refuse to accept all the light God sends, He will place them after some time where they will do the work of a false watchman... There will always be those who seek something new and who stretch and twist the Word of God to support their ideas and theories.

Ellen G. White, Sermons, and Talks, Volume I, 385, 387 (translated by the author)

This last quote should leave those who are always looking for something new and different from which they can surprise others thinking... I include myself...

Christ, as Mediator, is the great Minister in the work of redemption. The Holy Spirit is His representative in our world, to execute the divine purpose of bringing to fallen man, power from above, that he may be an overcomer.

Ellen G. White, SDA Bible Commentary, Volume VII, 922

The Holy Spirit unites with the powers of grace that God has provided to turn souls to Christ.

Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, July 18, 1907

By the Spirit which searches all things, even the deep things of God, have been revealed precious truths which cannot be described by pen or voice.

Ellen G. White, Sons and Daughters of God, 34

The Holy Spirit came into the schools of the prophets, bringing even the thoughts of the students into harmony with the will of God.

Ellen G. White, Ye Shall Receive Power, 146



The time had now come. The Spirit had been waiting for the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. For ten days the disciples offered their petitions for the outpouring of the Spirit, and Christ in heaven added His intercession.

Ellen G. White, SDA Bible Commentary, Volume VI, 1055

The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore, it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all.

Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, 669

Obviously, there are many aspects that we lack in understanding the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. Understanding it is beyond our ability, but it has been revealed to us enough to understand that He is God and that as the Godhead in His fullness, He is committed to the merciful work of saving us.

It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is...

The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.

Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, 51, 52

I don't think I need to add anything else in this regard.

For those who claim that the Holy Spirit is a force or a power, it is difficult for them to answer what the Holy Bible means when it speaks simultaneously of the Spirit and His power.

Wayne Grudem has raised an interesting detail about the way several verses in the Bible employ the impersonal term "power" in association with the Holy Spirit. Observe his argument carefully: "If it is understood that the Holy Spirit is simply a power of God rather than a distinct person, then a certain number of passages would simply not make sense, because they mention both the Holy Spirit and his power or the power of God. For example, **Luke 4: 14**: 'And Jesus returned in the



power of the Spirit into Galilee' would have to mean: Jesus returned in the power of God's power into Galilee. In **Acts 10: 38**, 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power' would mean: 'God anointed Jesus with the power of God and with power'.

**Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon & John W. Reeve, The Trinity, 80, 81
(translated by the author)**

God bless you.