



THE OFFICE OF HOLY SPIRIT

D A V I D S I M S

The Office of Holy Spirit

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I. Introduction

First, I wish to acknowledge to the reader that there are certain aspects of the subject before us which are not revealed in Scripture and remain a mystery. As one author states:

It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. ... (Acts of the Apostles p. 51 par. 3)

The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. ... (Acts of the Apostles p. 52 par. 1)

However, please take notice that in the very next paragraph the same author states:

The *office of the Holy Spirit* is distinctly specified in the words of Christ: "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8. ... (Acts of the Apostles p. 52 par. 2)

Noah Webster – 1828, defines nature as:

The essence, essential qualities or attributes of a thing, which constitute it what it is

In modern times there has been a rapid increase in scientific knowledge, yet even with DNA modifications aiming for changes in physical characteristics, there are unexpected surprises. Scientists have recently discovered that there are tens of thousands of unintended, off target changes that take place from what was previously thought a precise technology.¹ How much more ignorance prevails when it comes to abstract differences in the psychological aspects of the nature of a species.

What causes the difference of thinking, between a cat that is so obsessed with cleaning itself and avoiding mud, and a pig that delights in rolling in the mud, or of a dog that barks when it sees strangers, and a cat that hides? These things cannot be explained

1 Genetic Editing Goes Rogue by Dr. Joseph Mercola
https://everlast.mercola.com/r/?id=h2452b906,1c82e407,1cbd5e2a&et_cid=DM286080&et_rid=609401094

by training alone. What makes a sinner delight in sin, yet Jesus loved righteousness and hated sin? What is there about the Mind and Word of God that brings worlds into existence, or that gives intelligence and power of speech to humans far exceeding that of most animals? The physical components, flesh and blood, are shared by both animals and humans. Many animals have similar organs and body systems as humans. The proteins and various elements that make up the different species of animals and men, of the bodies and even the brains, are the same in each, yet there are fundamental differences in the working of the minds of different species which we cannot explain. We cannot comprehend what life is and how that spark of life is imparted to inanimate clay, making it a living soul, nor what it is that causes the change in a person's desires, and his whole mindset at conversion. We cannot understand what constitutes the essence of the difference between an angel, a human or God. The nature of humans and animals remains a mystery, how much more the nature of the Holy Spirit.

Though we are warned against speculation about the nature of the Holy Spirit, surely there is nothing wrong with studying and understanding that which is revealed in the 124 places the Scripture mentions "Holy Spirit", "Holy Ghost", "Spirit of God", and "Spirit of Christ", or studying the 332 other times the Scripture speaks of "my spirit", "his spirit", the spirit", etc. Furthermore, we have just read that the "office of the Holy Spirit" **is** distinctly specified, and thus it demands our study. These are the topics to be examined in this book.

The secret [things belong] unto the LORD our God: but those [things which are] revealed [belong] unto us and to our children for ever, that [we] may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

The subject of the Holy Spirit and its office ought to be of interest to every Christian. Paul dwelt largely upon it in his numerous letters in the New Testament. Its importance was such that it was a part of Jesus closing discourse before His death and that he bade His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem until they were

endowed with it.² Its presence enabled the disciples to “turn the world upside down”³ and was a reality in the personal lives of the early believers to such an extent that they came to consider it a privilege and an honor to suffer or even die for Christ's sake. The promise that the Holy Spirit would be with God's church till the close of time⁴ is one that Christians still find comfort in.

It is ironic, however, that a subject so vital for our salvation, so comforting, and spoken of so often in Scripture, is one of the least understood subjects. A good comprehension of that which is revealed concerning the Holy Spirit and its office work will, I believe, shed light on numerous subjects and help us to be able to discern our duty and occupy the position God requires us to fill.

Furthermore, let us remember that we should not avoid studying difficult subjects, because all Scripture is to be searched out for its study is vital to our salvation.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. (John 5:39)

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. (Matthew 13:44)

¹⁵And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (2 Timothy 3:15-16)

The author recognizes that what is presented concerning the Holy Spirit and its office in this booklet is not exhaustive. There are aspects which we may never fully understand. However, the fact that we cannot fully comprehend a subject should not prevent us from stretching our mental faculties to ascertain all that God is willing to reveal. God was pleased with Moses when

2 Luke 24:49

3 Acts 17:6

4 John 14:16; Acts 2:38, 39; Ephesians 4:30

he requested “show me thy glory”. It is our privilege to understand much more of the deep things of God than we do.

... Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. Far more than we do, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. Angels desire to look into the truths that are revealed to the people who with contrite hearts are searching the word of God, and praying for greater lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the knowledge which He alone can give. (Christ’s Object Lessons p. 133 par. 1)

II. The Spirit

The Scriptural Meaning of “Spirit”

First let us consider the two words in the original language of the Old Testament from which the English word *spirit* comes from. In the Authorized Version, also known as the King James Version, the Hebrew word ***ruach***, Strong’s Concordance number **07307**, was translated *spirit* - 232 times, but it was also translated *wind* - 92 times, *breath* - 27 times, *mind* - 5 times, *blast* - 4 times, etc. It comes from 07306, a word meaning *to smell*. The abstract meanings - *spirit* and *mind*, come from *ruach*’s concrete meaning - *wind*, *breath*, or *blast* (of air). The other Hebrew word for spirit, ***nesh-aw-maw***, Strong’s number **05397**, was translated *breath* - 17 times, *spirit* - 2 times, *blast* - 3 times, *inspiration* - 1 time, *soul* - 1 time, etc. It comes from 05395, a word with a concrete meaning of, *to pant*, or *to blow (away)*. The abstract meaning of 05397 - *spirit*, comes from its concrete meaning - *breath* or *blast* (of air). The context must determine how it is translated. *Ruach* (07307) and *neshawmaw* (05397) are synonyms, and in the following passages, it can be seen that they are often used interchangeably.

All the while my ***breath*** <05397> [is] in me, and the ***spirit*** <07307> of God [is] in my nostrils; (Job 27:3)

The ***Spirit*** <07307> of God hath made me, and the ***breath*** <05397> of the Almighty hath given me life. (Job 33:4)

In the verses just quoted, <07307> and <05397> are used synonymously to refer to the breath of life from God in man, and in the following verse, both words are used to refer to the understanding, or the mind.

But [there is] a spirit <07307> in man: and the inspiration <05397> of the Almighty giveth them understanding. (Job 32:8)

No Conscious Entity or Personal Identity Separates from the Body and Goes to God at Death

The word *spirit*, though denoting different shades of meaning, contrary to popular opinion, does not imply intelligence, or consciousness separate from one's body (except in a parable, a dream, someone's concept of a good or evil angel, or other misconceptions.⁵). Neither does it infer, personal identity. This is the case in Scripture, whether speaking of God or man, for we have just seen that it is God's spirit that is in man.

¹⁴If he set his heart upon man, [if] he gather unto himself *his* spirit <07307> and *his* breath <05397> ¹⁵All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust. (Job 34:14, 15)

Here in Job both words describe something that belongs to God, which goes to Him when someone dies. In the following verse "*ruach*", <07307> is said to "*return*" to God

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit <07307> shall *return* unto God who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

Only something which "*came*" from God can "*return*" to God. What was it that came from God when man was given life?

And the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath <05397> of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7)

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- 5 1 Kings 22:21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.

Mark 6:49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

Luke 4:33 And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

Luke 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

Acts 23:9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes [that were] of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

“Neshawmaw” is used in Geneses 2:7 to describe the spirit or breath of life that came from God at Adam’s creation, therefore it must also refer to that which returns to God at death. Like **“ruach”**, its synonym, it means breath, or life, whether in humans or animals, and does not imply personal identity.⁶

In Adam’s creation, God breathed into man the breath of life. This breath, called in Scripture both **“ruach”** and **“neshawmaw”**, is what returns to God at death, not a conscious entity, personal identity, or even the record of one’s life. It is the spark of life that God breathed into man in the beginning, that returns to God at death. To believe that the spirit that returns to God at death includes personal identity necessitates the belief that in Adam’s creation, and at the conception of every baby, that God transferred, or transfers a preexisting intelligent entity to a new body, as is the case in reincarnation theology, which equates to ***immortality of the soul***, Satan’s first lie.

God has an accurate record of every aspect of our lives.

²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. ³⁰But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (Matthew 10:29-30)

How important is the number of hairs on our heads in comparison with the blueprint of our souls⁷. He must already have an accurate knowledge of what individually identifies a person.⁸ There is nothing residing in man that needs to take its flight to God at death, so that God can know how to raise a person to life at the resurrection. In death, consciousness simply ceases, like the

6 See the use of “nesh-aw-maw” in the following verses where it simply refers to the breath of air in animals or man, or the blast of air from God’s nostrils: Genesis 7:22; Deuteronomy 20:16; 2 Samuel 22:16; Job 4:9; Job 37:10; Psalms 18:15; Isaiah 2:22; Isaiah 30:33; Daniel 10:17

7 Psalms 56:8 “Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: [are they] not in thy book?”

8 Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

light from a light bulb, when the current is withdrawn, the light simply goes out.

We also read in Ecclesiastes that animals and human beings have the same spirit (07307).

¹⁹For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all **one breath** <07307>; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all [is] vanity. ²⁰All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. ²¹Who knoweth the spirit <07307> of man that goeth upward, and the spirit <07307> of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? (Ecclesiastes 3:19-21)

This comparison illustrates that man, like the beast does not have a personal identity or a conscious existence after death apart from the body.

“Spirit” Can Refer to the Mind or its Various Faculties

As we already mentioned, “ruach” was translated “**mind**” 5 times, and even where it was translated “spirit”, it at times is clearly referring to the mind.

The following text in the old testament was quoted by Paul in the new.

Who hath directed the **Spirit** of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? (Isaiah 40:13, as translated from the Hebrew in the Authorized Version)

For who hath known the **mind** of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (Romans 11:34)

Paul quotes it from the Greek version, the Septuagint, where it translates “spirit” as “mind.”

Pharoah’s Spirit

And it came to pass in the morning that his **spirit** was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh. (Genesis 41:8)

Pharaoh's spirit was troubled. In other words, his mind was troubled.

Moses' Spirit

³²They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: ³³Because they provoked his ***spirit***, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. (Psalm 106: 32, 33)

Once again, "spirit" refers to the mind, in this case, Moses' mind.

Nebuchadnezzar's Spirit

And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my ***spirit*** was troubled to know the dream. (Daniel 2:3)

Notice that in each of these instances, when speaking of the spirit of a person, it is not referring to someone else, but rather to certain faculties of the person's own mind. Secondly notice, that while "***spirit***" can refer to the emotional or other faculties of a person's mind it does not necessarily infer any conscious existence separate from the body.

"One Spirit" Does not Refer to Individual Identity

Scripture does not distinguish between the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the ***Spirit*** <4151> (***Greek - pneuma***) of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the ***Spirit*** <4151> of Christ, he is none of his. (Romans 8:9)

It speaks of there being "one spirit".

For through him we both have access by ***one Spirit*** <4151> unto the Father. (Ephesians 2:18)

But consider the following verses.

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in ***one spirit*** <4151>, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; (Philippians 1:27)

But he that is joined unto the Lord is **one spirit** <4151>. (1 Corinthians 6:17)

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be **one**, even **as we are one**: (John 17:22)

Although the passages just quoted use spirit to mean “mind”, it obviously does not refer to personal identity. Notice, it enjoins believers to have one spirit with each other and with Christ. Though believers have one spirit, they remain separate individual beings.

It is the same with the Father and the Son. Jesus words “that they (His disciples) may be one, even as we (the Father and Son) are one”, reveal that Scripture is referring in these places to “**one**” in the sense of **unity**, not **number**. They have one spirit in the sense of having the same thoughts, purposes, and way of thinking, etc. but this “one” spirit does not include a merging of identity. Also, here in these verses we can see that “**pneuma**”, (Strong’s number 4151), the Greek word in the New Testament translated “**spirit**” or “**mind**”, like its Hebrew counterparts, does not mean or include individuality or personal identity either.

Receiving God’s Spirit Does not Involve Personality

When God and Christ pour on us their Spirit, or dwell in us, it is not as a “**ghost**” - an, intelligent individual identity apart from its body, taking over our bodies. That would destroy our identity. Yet, something **from** God does come upon, or in us. His life, power, nature, thoughts, etc. come upon and in us, and His living messengers come to us bringing these blessings.

Commenting on the distinction to be made between a being and its spirit, Elder John Loughborough, in an article printed by James White, says:

Now, no one would contend that Christ had been on the earth personally ever since the disciples commenced to fulfill this commission. But his Spirit has been on the earth; the Comforter that he promised to send. So in the same manner God manifests himself by **his Spirit** which is also the **power** through which he works. "But

if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. viii, 11. Here is a ***plain distinction made between the Spirit, and God*** that raises the dead by that Spirit. ... (Is the Soul Immortal? September 18, 1855 James White editor, Advent Review and Sabbath Herald)

Elder Loughborough makes the point here that God's Spirit is the power by which He works, not He Himself as a separate conscious identity working independently from His body.

Paul says:

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you ***in the spirit***, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. (Colossians 2:5)

Paul is not referring to his spirit as a conscious entity being separate from his body, hovering in their meetings listening to what was going on beholding their order and faith, while physically he was somewhere else. He tells us in Colossians 1:8 that Epaphras had told him of their state. He was with them in spirit by the communications taken back and forth by messengers - Epaphras and Tychicus⁹. "Spirit" can refer to various faculties of the mind, but not the sum total of disembodied identity, or, in other words, a conscious existence apart from the body. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 2:11, Elder E. J. Waggoner, said:

...That there is a spirit in man, is plainly stated many times in the Bible; but that that spirit is an entity of itself, distinct from the man; that it of itself alone is capable of thought; or that it can maintain an existence separate from the body, is not stated either by this text or any other. (E. J. Waggoner, Signs of the Times, November 15, 1883)

The Spirit of God is of and from God, it is a part of God, but it is not all that there is of God. If God is present somewhere by His Spirit, it does not mean He is present bodily, in all his glory. Nor

9 Colossians 4:7-8 "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;"

does it mean that a Divine conscious entity separate from God's physical form is present, but rather His power, His life, His omniscience, or His thoughts, etc. are present.

At the creation of Adam, when God breathed into man His own Spirit, it was not himself personally that entered the nostrils of Adam. Adam did not become a kind of extension or second manifestation of Himself. When a man fathers a child, his seed carries with it life, human nature, attributes, characteristics etc. from the man, and forms the fetus. It is of and from the man, but not the man himself. The Holy Spirit may refer to the divine nature, life, power, thoughts, attributes, and an open line of communication, etc. of and from the Father and Son, but it is not the Father or Son personally.

However, there is an interesting statement I will quote which illustrates how it is with receiving the Spirit.

The *gospel* of Christ *becomes personality* in those who believe, and makes them living epistles,¹⁰ known and read of all men. (Review and Herald, December 15, 1891 par. 9)

Since the mind, or Spirit of Christ includes His character and his moral nature, in the process of assimilating His Word, we assimilate His nature:

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4).

Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. (Desire of Ages p. 671)

God's Spirit and Man's Spirit

Elder Leroy Froom, was a Seventh Day Adventist theologian and historian, partly responsible for the acceptance by the church of the doctrine of the trinity. In his book defending the doctrine of the non-immortality of the soul, he acknowledged the point we

10 2 Corinthians 3:2 "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:"

have brought out in this chapter, that the word “*spirit*” does not convey the idea of a conscious existence separate from the body.

There is nothing in the Old Testament that even hints that ruach as the life principle has a separate conscious existence, that it is the man himself as distinct from the body. It is given to man when he comes into existence, and is withdrawn, or surrendered, when he dies... (1966 Leroy E. Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers* vol. 1, p. 155.1)

However in order to maintain a preconceived idea, the trinity, he takes a most unscholarly position, retreating from Biblical Hermeneutics and systematic theology,¹¹ when he says:

We are dealing with man and his nature, and we may therefore ***properly ignore all the uses of ruach (spirit) that refer to God and angels.*** We are interested in breath as evidence of life, and in the principle of life with which God has endowed man. (Ibid 153.2)

Without presenting any Scriptural evidence, he assumes that there must be a difference in the meaning of the word when used for God’s Spirit and when used for man’s spirit. But the opposite

11 Biblical hermeneutics would demand an understanding consistent with the meaning of the word, not creating a new definition to harmonize with one’s thinking. Elder Froom admits when addressing the non-immortality of the soul, that: “There is nothing in the Old Testament that even hints that ruach as the life principle has a separate conscious existence, that it is the man himself as distinct from the body”, yet he says we must ignore all the usages of ruach that refer to God and angels. Obviously, when studying the Holy Spirit, he would have to use this reasoning and ignore the definition and usage of the word “ruach” (spirit), whenever it is not referring to God’s Spirit or angels and impose his own definition on the word in order to sustain the doctrine of the trinity, which states that the Holy Spirit (ruach), (also called the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ), is a conscious “person”, distinct from the Father and Son, yet, without body, parts or passions,

Secondly, systematic theology would imply that, since man was made in the image of God, if man’s spirit does not have a separate conscious existence apart from his body, then neither would God’s Spirit.

is true. Man was made in the image of God¹²; hence, man's spirit is related to man, the way God's Spirit is related to 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)

Furthermore, God breathed into man His own spirit when man was created¹³. Man was made a living soul by the breath/spirit of God. Man's spirit is of and from God. It is a part of, or an aspect of, or a degree of the ***"Spirit of God", for it came from God.*** In that breath, Adam received life, reason, intellect and some of the attributes of God (by sinning, however, he lost for a time, the spiritual attributes). And again, after His resurrection, when Christ breathed onto His disciples the ***"Holy Spirit"***,¹⁴ they received the thoughts, and attributes of Christ and thus were fitted to perform their official duties in connection with His church. Understanding the Holy Spirit of God does not require a special definition of "ruach" (spirit), but rather the same definition of spirit applies that we have been seeing throughout this book.

But on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was given in greater degree still. Then, not only life, intellect, reason, attributes of Christ, but also love, and power were imparted.

(John 20:22, 23 quoted) The Holy Spirit was not yet fully manifested; for Christ had not yet been glorified. The more abundant impartation of the Spirit did not take place till after Christ's ascension. Not until this was received could the disciples fulfill the commission to preach the gospel to the world. But the Spirit was now given for a special purpose. Before the disciples could fulfill their official duties in

12 Genesis 1:27

13 Genesis 2:7

14 ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on [them], and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: ²³Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; [and] whose soever [sins] ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:22, 23)

connection with the church, Christ breathed His Spirit upon them. ... (Desire of Ages p. 805 par. 2)

The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the **attributes of Christ**. Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church. (Desire of Ages p. 805 par. 3)

We are told to have the mind of Christ

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (Philippians 2:5)

Jesus is also telling us His desire for us to have His mind in the following words.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. (John 15:4)

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, ... (Ephesians 3:17)

As the branch's life is the life of the vine itself, so, our life is to be that of the life of Christ dwelling in us. It is not in a physical sense that He, as a being is to dwell inside us. One being can dwell in another in a sense, not contrary to sense. He dwells in us in spirit.

In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God **through the Spirit**. (Ephesians 2:22)

Having the Holy Spirit is having Jesus dwell in us.

We Abide in Him and He in Us Through His Word

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (John 6:56)

Jesus went on to say how they were to eat His flesh, or how they were to dwell in Him:

... words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life.
(John 6:63)

It is through the Word that we can dwell in Christ and He dwell in us. Words, whether audible or written convey the thoughts and feelings of the mind.

Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my **spirit** unto you, I will make known my **words** unto you. (Proverbs 1:23.)

We partake of someone's mind/spirit by receiving their word. It is similar with receiving the mind of Christ. We abide in Christ and He in us by having His word abide in us, for that will create His thought expressed by the word in our minds too. However, we should bear in mind that having the Word of Christ abide in us means far more than merely having another person's spirit. Christ is divine, and His word carries with it life, light, divine power, character, talents, gifts, thoughts, and His nature. His word brought worlds into existence. When He said "Let there be light", there was light. His word has transforming power to change a heart.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you . . . (John 15:7)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. (Colossians 3:16)

It is ***through the word that Christ abides in His followers***. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are **spirit** and life.¹⁵

Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matt. 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ. (Desire of Ages p. 677)

The words of men express their own human thoughts; but those of Christ are spirit and life. "If ye continue in My word," He says, "then are ye My disciples indeed." ... (Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5 p. 433 par. 2)

15 John 6:63

God's Spirit is in His Word

God himself speaks to the believing, trusting soul; for ***God's Spirit is in his word***, ... It is thus that the believer eats of Christ, the Bread of Life. Truth is seen in a new light, and the soul rejoices as in the visible presence of Christ. (Signs of the Times, October 10, 1895 par. 9)

Since breath is exhaled when speaking, in the poetic language of the Bible, ***breath*** is used synonymously with word and spirit as well. In the following verses we see that it was in this sense that the Spirit of God was present at the creation of the earth.

²And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the ***Spirit*** of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³And God ***said***, Let there be light: and there was light. (Genesis 1:2)

By the ***word*** of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the ***breath*** <07307> of his mouth. (Psalms 33:6)

Jesus' Promise of the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth

When Jesus left to the disciples the promise of the Holy Spirit/Comforter in his closing discourse, He made sure they understood who and what He was talking about.

¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another ***Comforter***, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷[Even] the ***Spirit of truth***; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ***ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*** ¹⁸I will not leave you comfortless: ***I will come to you.*** ¹⁹Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. ²⁰At that day ye shall know that I [am] in my Father, and ye in me, and ***I*** in you. ²¹He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and ***I*** will love him, and will ***manifest myself*** to him. ²²Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? ²³Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and ***we*** will come unto him, and make ***our*** abode with him." (John 14:14-23)

Jesus plainly told His disciples that He was speaking of Himself, that **He** would come to them, manifest **Himself** to them, and dwell in them, not someone else. He was the one about whom He said “ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

The book of Hebrews depicts Christ after His ascension as being in the Sanctuary in heaven, interceding as our High Priest before God, but this does not prevent Him from dwelling in His disciples, and we have already seen how it is that He is to dwell with and in us. He dwells in us through His word/Spirit, or aspects of His mind.

The Holy Spirit at Jesus Baptism

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (Matthew 3:16)

And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the **Spirit** like a dove descending upon him: (Mark 1:10)

And the **Holy Ghost** descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. (Luke 3:22)

And John bare record, saying, I saw the **Spirit** descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. (John 1:32)

In the passages quoted above, reference is made to the same scene in all four gospels, but the Holy Spirit, referred to in three different ways, takes the form of a dove. The following quote speaks of this scene as well.

But, no; direct from the Father issues the light of his glory. The heavens were opened, and **beams of glory** rested upon the Son of God, and assumed the form of a dove, in appearance like burnished gold. (Spirit of Prophecy vol. 2 p. 60 par. 2)

Notice that what is called “Spirit”, “Spirit of God”, and “Holy Ghost”¹⁶, in Scripture, is defined here as “**beams of glory**” from the Father, assuming the form of a dove.¹⁷

The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

But when the Pharisees heard [it], they said, This [fellow] doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. (Matthew 12:24)

But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. (Matthew 12:28)

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy [against] the [Holy] Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. (Matthew 12:31)

The Pharisees attributed the miraculous works of Jesus to the power of Satan. Jesus warned them that a refusal to recognize the character of the works that He was doing, and that they were done by the Spirit of God, was sinning against the Holy Ghost.

"The last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so," said Jesus, "shall it be also unto this wicked generation." There are none so hardened as those who have slighted the invitation of mercy, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. 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. (Desire of Ages p. 324 par. 2)

In ***rejecting Christ*** the Jewish people committed the ***unpardonable sin***; and by ***refusing the invitation of mercy***, we may commit the same error. We offer insult to the Prince of life, and put Him to shame before the synagogue of Satan and before the heavenly

16 The term “Holy Ghost” in Scripture is always from the same Greek original words as “Holy Spirit” and is merely the translators choice of words in the particular instance.

17 Ephesians 3:16 “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;” The Spirit is given in proportion to God’s glory. There is a relationship between God’s glory and His Spirit in this passage.

universe when we refuse to listen to His *delegated messengers*, and instead listen to the agents of Satan, who would draw the soul away from Christ. So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God. (Desire of Ages p. 324 par. 3)

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. (Desire of Ages p. 321 par. 3)

These references make it clear that the sin against the Holy Spirit is the rejection of Christ by the persistent refusal to heed the call of mercy to repent through the various agencies which He uses to communicate with us (which we will soon show to be the office of the Holy Spirit). When we reject the only remaining means through which God can communicate with us, God's resources to draw us to repentance are exhausted, for He will not force the will. We are left to our own choices.

III. Office Work

“Office” is mentioned numerous times in Scripture, referring to offices of a: butler, baker, midwife, priest, singer, porter, treasurer, Levite, king, treasurer, apostle, bishop, deacon, and in fact every member of the church is to have an office.¹⁸

For as we have many members in one body, and all **members** have not the same **office**: (Romans 12:4)

Christian Author Ellen White has written extensively on the topic of Christian service, elaborating on the various **offices** Christ has bestowed upon the members of His church, by giving its members different gifts of His Spirit. Taking up the theme mentioned in Romans 12:4, quoted above, she says:

... But we are all represented as being **members** of the body, united in Christ. In this body there are various members, and one member cannot perform exactly the same **office** as another. The eyes are made for seeing, and in no case can they perform the work of the ears, which is that of hearing; neither can the ears take the place of the mouth, nor the mouth perform the **office** of the nose. Yet all these organs are necessary to the perfect whole and work in beautiful harmony with one another. The hands have their **office**, and the feet theirs... (Testimonies vol. 4, p. 127 par. 4)

The dictionary defines **“office”** this way:

Noah Webster 1828 - Dictionary

A particular duty, charge or trust conferred by public authority and for a public purpose; an employment undertaken by commission or authority from government or those who administer it. Thus we speak of the office of secretary of state, of treasurer, of a judge, of a sheriff, of a justice of the peace, etc. Offices are civil, judicial, ministerial, executive, legislative, political, municipal, diplomatic, military, ecclesiastical, etc.

18 Genesis 41:13, Exodus 1:16, Exodus 28:1, 1 Chronicles 6:32, 1 Chronicles 9:22, 1 Chronicles 9:26, 1 Chronicles 9:31, 1 Chronicles 23:27, 28, 2 Chronicles 24:11, Nehemiah 13:13, Psalms 109:8, Romans 11:13, 1 Timothy 3:1, 1 Timothy 3:10

Christ has many offices.

Office of Intercessor/Mediator

... As our *intercessor*, *Christ's office work* is to introduce us to God as His sons and daughters. ...¹⁹ (Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students p. 14 par. 1)

Office of Priest

... Christ then entered into the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and is there performing the closing work of his *priestly office*, ...²⁰ (Review and Herald November 27, 1883 par. 9)

Office of Servant

Christ ate the passover supper with his disciples, ... He then performed the humiliating *office* of washing the feet of his disciples. ...²¹ (Spirit of Prophecy vol 1 p. 201 par. 2)

Office of Redeemer and Representative

Shortly before his ascension, Christ had prayed, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." He had given himself wholly to the *work of human redemption*. Charged with this exalted *office*, Christ stood as the head of humanity, the visible *representative* of an invisible God. "He that hath seen me," he declared, "hath seen the Father;" and again, "I and my Father are one." And having embodied in himself the love of God, Christ has imparted it to those who believe on his name,

19 1 Timothy 2:5 "For [there is] one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" Hebrews 9:24 "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, [which are] the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:"

20 Hebrews 9:11 "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;"

21 Luke 22:15 "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:"

that the copies of his character may be multiplied.²² (Review and Herald, March 15, 1898 par. 14)

Office of Supreme Judge

... He for whom his people have looked will assume his right,--the **office of Supreme Judge**. "The Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son. . . . And he hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." It was he, says Peter, who was ordained to "judge the quick [the living] and the dead." "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."²³ (Review and Herald, January 1, 1889 par. 1)

Office of Holy Spirit

Though often not recognized as such, the Holy Spirit is yet another office that Christ performs.

These are our themes--Christ crucified for our sins, Christ risen from the dead, Christ our intercessor before God; and closely connected with these is the **office work of the Holy Spirit**.-- (Letter to J. E. White, September 25, 1895; 1888 Materials p. 1456 par.1)

This Office is Performed Through Various Agencies

For the church on earth, those who are obedient to God's Word, Christ is performing **His office work. Through His appointed instrumentalities**, He carries forward His work. If we walked in accordance with the light of God's Word, we should understand better the mysteries of redemption. Mysteries into which angels desire to look, which prophets and kings and righteous men desired to understand, the church will carry in messages from God to the world. ... (Signs of the Times, February 14, 1900 par. 15)

While **Christ** is the minister in the sanctuary above, he is also, **through his delegates**, the minister of his church on earth. He speaks to the people through chosen men, and **carries forward his**

²² Hebrews 9:12 "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us]."

²³ John 5:22; 1 Peter 4:5; Acts 17:31

work through them, ... Christ, the True Shepherd, superintends his work **through the instrumentality** of these under-shepherds (Testimonies for the Church vol. 4 p. 393 par. 1)

Jesus might have done all this work for Paul directly, but this was not His plan. Paul had something to do in the line of confession to the men whose destruction he had premeditated, and God had a responsible work for the men to do whom He had ordained to act in His stead. Paul was to take those steps necessary in conversion. He was required to unite himself to the very people whom he had persecuted for their religion. Christ here gives all His people an example of the manner of His working for the salvation of men. The Son of God identified Himself with the **office and authority of His organized church. His blessings were to come through the agencies** that He has ordained, thus connecting man with the **channel** through which His blessings come. ... (Testimonies vol. 3 p. 431 par. 2)

In the statement above, it is pointed out that men are to act in God's stead, to represent Him to others. It goes on to say that Christ's blessings were to come through agencies or channels, and it calls this work of God and Christ through agencies, an office. Furthermore, notice that it says that this experience of Christ working through human agencies in the salvation of man was an example of His manner of working.

The greatest blessing Christ bestows upon us is the gift of the Holy Spirit²⁴. One aspect of the gift of the Holy Spirit is the "gifts of the spirit"²⁵, enabling men to serve Him in various offices.

⁸Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave **gifts** unto men... ¹¹And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (Ephesians 4:8, 11)

... No higher **office** is given to man. No joy can equal the assurance of being an instrument in the hands of God for the saving of souls. It is a grand thing to look back upon an experience of labor all marked

24 Luke 11:13

25 1 Corinthians 12:4 "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

with glorious results; to see precious souls progressing in the light through your efforts; to feel that God has worked with and through you in the harvest field of the world. (Review and Herald, October 22, 1914 par. 15)

We can speak of an office from two different perspectives. We might speak of the office of Aaron, and speaking of the same office, call it the office of the priesthood. It is not speaking of two different offices. Both ways of speaking are correct, but they are coming from two different angles. In the first example, “of” is used to denote the possessive, in other words, “Aaron’s office.” In the second example, “of” is used as a preposition, forming part of a compound noun, “office of priest”.

In the same way, the “office of the Holy Spirit”, is a compound noun referring to the office itself, not to the possessor of that office. This office originates from Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, thus it is rightly called Christ’s office work, like the office of priest in the heavenly sanctuary or supreme judge, are Christ’s offices. As we have already seen, this office of the Holy Spirit, Christ carries on through instrumentalities.

“For the church on earth, those who are obedient to God’s Word, Christ is performing His office work. Through His appointed instrumentalities, He carries forward His work.” (Signs of the Times, February 14, 1900 par. 15)

This work of Christ, called the office work of the Holy Spirit, and which is carried out through angelic and human instrumentalities, is mentioned numerous times by inspiration.

God has expended amazing sacrifices upon men, and mighty energies for the reclaiming of man from transgression and sin to loyalty and obedience; but I have been shown that ***he does nothing without the co-operation of human agencies***. ... The ***Holy Spirit’s office*** is to bring decidedly to your minds the important, vital truths. ... Through the Spirit, it is quick and powerful upon human minds, not because of the smartness, the educational power of the human agency, but because the divine power works with the human, and to the divine belongs all the credit. (Home Missionary, November 1, 1893 par. 12)

The ***office work of the Holy Spirit*** is to convince of sin, and I know that it is a sin for any one of us to be indifferent now. ... Nothing is wanting on the part of God; the lack is on the part of the ***human agency***, who refuses to co-operate with divine intelligences. Through the plan he has devised, nothing can be done for the salvation of man save through the ***co-operation of man***. ... (Home Missionary, April 1, 1895 par. 3)

Wake up, brethren and sisters, wake up. Sleep no longer. "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Jesus calls you, saying, "Go work today in my vineyard." Whoever has received the Holy Spirit, will make it manifest; for all his powers will be employed in the most active service. All who actually receive Christ by faith, work. They feel the burden of souls. God now calls upon every one who has a knowledge of the truth, who is a depository of sacred truth, to arise and impart the light of heaven to others. Those who have been illuminated by the Holy Spirit, will show its ***office work*** upon life and character. They will be ***mediums*** through which the Holy Spirit will communicate light and knowledge to others. The wonderful truth revealed to us in these last days, is to be revealed to others. ... (Review and Herald, December 5, 1893 par. 10)

Christ, our Mediator, is the one who gives the Holy Spirit; and by the ***office work of the Holy Spirit***, the atonement made on Calvary is brought in contact with the soul of man to transform his character, and change his nature, until it can be said in heaven, "Ye are laborers together with God, wearing Christ's yoke, bearing his burden."

Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, man becomes the agent through which souls are brought into the kingdom of heaven. ... Through the imputed righteousness of Christ, the Christian is placed on vantage ground, and becomes a ***channel*** through which the Holy Spirit can work, and the work done through the ***human agent***, does not disappoint our Redeemer; for in such ***instruments*** he does not plead in vain with the souls of men. ... (Youth's Instructor, July 5, 1894 par. 6)

The great ***office work of the Holy Spirit*** is thus distinctly specified by our Saviour, "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin." ... "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." (John 16:7) (1888 Materials, p. 1493 par. 1)

IV. The Agency of Angels and Men in the Office Work of the Holy Spirit

Angelic Agencies

One of the obvious agencies making up part of Christ's office staff are the angels. This is illustrated by the fact that inspiration often speaks synonymously of the Holy Spirit and angels. If we don't understand the office work of the Holy Spirit, this can leave us in some confusion. Let us consider some examples.

Deliverance of the Apostles from Prison

¹⁹But the **angel** of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, ²⁰Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. (Acts 5:19, 20)

This story is recited in two different ways by Ellen White. In the first quote below, we find the angel speaking, as stated in the Bible. But in the next reference, the one speaking is called the Holy Spirit.

By night the **angel** of the Lord opened the prison doors and said to the disciples, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." (Acts of the Apostles p. 80 par. 1)

The command given by the **Holy Spirit**, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life," was obeyed by the apostles; "they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. (Testimonies to Ministers p. 71 par. 1)

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Another example of this is given in the following example.

"And, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet." This Ethiopian was a man of good standing and of wide influence. God saw that when converted he would give others the light he had received and would exert a strong influence in favor of the gospel. **Angels** of God were

attending this seeker for light, and he was being drawn to the Saviour. By the ministration of the **Holy Spirit** the Lord brought him into touch with one who could lead him to the light. (Acts of the Apostles p. 107 par. 3)

Philip was directed to go to the Ethiopian and explain to him the prophecy that he was reading. "Go near," the **Spirit** said, "and join thyself to this chariot."²⁶ ..." (Acts of the Apostles p. 107 par. 4)

An **angel** guided Philip to the one who was seeking for light and who was ready to receive the gospel, and today angels will guide the footsteps of those workers who will allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify their tongues and refine and ennoble their hearts. The **angel** sent to Philip could himself have done the work for the Ethiopian, but this is not God's way of working. It is His plan that **men are to work for their fellow men**. (Acts of the Apostles 109.2)

How Christ Ministers to His Church

He has sent forth His **angels** to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people. (Acts of the Apostles p. 11 par. 2)

... While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by **His Spirit** the minister of the church on earth. He is withdrawn from the eye of sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20. While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church. (Desire of Ages p. 166 par. 2)

The preceding references use "**angels**" and "**Spirit**" interchangeably. At one moment, it tells of the angel doing something, and the next moment, it says it is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is understandable in light of the fact that "**Holy Spirit**" is an office, which involves not only that which is imparted by Christ, but also agencies used to communicate it.

26 Acts 8:29 "Then the **Spirit** said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot."

Human Agencies

The Work of the Holy Spirit Requires Human and Angelic Agencies

Christ, our Mediator, is the one who gives the Holy Spirit... A measure of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Through the ministry of the angels, the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the ***human agent...*** ***Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, man becomes the agent*** through which souls are brought into the kingdom of heaven. (Youth's Instructor, July 5, 1894 par. 5, 6)

The heavenly angels are waiting to unite with the ***human agent***, that many souls may hear and be impressed by the Holy Spirit, and be converted. (Review and Herald, May 16, 1893 par. 11)

... Those who are engaged in any branch of the work, are acting a noble part in doing service for God. They are to stand loyal and true at their post of duty, appreciating the privilege of so close a connection with ***heavenly instrumentalities***. ***Angels*** are supervising the work, and ***you*** are co-operating with the ministry of the delegates of heaven. ... (Bible Echo, September 18, 1899 par. 3)

God requires that ***his agents*** may put forth practical, personal efforts in doing whatever he calls upon them to do, so that the truth may be set before human minds, and the ***Holy Spirit have an opportunity*** to convict and convert the soul. No man can do this part of the work. There has been but a feeble effort made to set into operation every talent in the service of God. (The Home Missionary, December 1, 1894 par. 8)

One hundred years ago, Seventh-day Adventist Minister Elder Wilcox summed up his understanding of this relationship in the following words:

Wherever God's children are, there is the Spirit - not an individual person as we look upon persons, but having the power to make present the Father and the Son. That Spirit is placed upon God's messengers, the angels; but the ***angels are not the Spirit***. That Spirit is placed upon God's servants, His human messengers, but the ***human messengers are not the Spirit***. They are possessed by the Spirit, and used by the Spirit, and have within them the power of the

Spirit; but they are not the Spirit. The Spirit is independent of all these human or material agencies. ... (M. C. Wilcox, Questions and Answers Vol. 11, 1919)

Communication Between Heaven and Earth

Inspiration – The Line of Communication

Approaching the subject from a slightly different angle, notice how inspiration has come to us.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:21)

The Revelation of (2)Jesus Christ, which (1)God gave unto him, to shew unto his (5)servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his (3)angel unto his servant (4)John. (Revelation 1:1)

In the passage from 2 Peter 1:21, quoted above, we find that the Scripture came to us through the working of the Holy Ghost upon the minds of men. In the next passage just quoted, however, we can trace the exact route and the agencies involved of this communication of God with men. God gave the revelation to Christ, who gave it to His angel, who gave it to John, who was to communicate it to the messengers of the churches, who were to communicate it to their flocks.

Notice that in this passage, the Holy Spirit does not fit into the line of communication as a separate individual, yet we are told “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”. We are led to conclude that the **communication - whether of life, light, blessings, power, glory, or thoughts** from heaven to earth, is itself called the Holy Spirit, and is communicated through the various agencies mentioned.

Another example of this is seen in the vision of Daniel.

And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a (1)man. And I heard a man’s voice between the

banks of Ulai, which called, and said, (2)Gabriel, make this man ((3)Daniel) to understand the vision. (Daniel 8:15-16)

Christ, called here a “man”, is telling Gabriel to make known the Scripture to Daniel, who was to make it known to us. These are examples of the inspiration or communication of the Scripture from God to men through agencies. 2 Peter, quoted above, calls this being “*moved by the Holy Ghost*”.

Jacob was shown this truth in a dream in Bethel. In this dream, we can see that angels are the messengers between heaven and earth.

And he (Jacob) dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. (Genesis 28:12)

Jesus highlights this teaching in his comments to Nathaniel.

And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. (John 1:51)

Angels are called ministering spirits.

But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Hebrews 1:13,14)

Communication from God to Man is Only Through Angels, and just one Divine Being – Christ.

Jacob’s dream of the ladder highlights the truth stated in the following statements that all communion with God is through Christ and angels.

Since the sin of our first parents there has been no direct communication between God and man. The Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through His mediatorial work He may redeem man and vindicate the authority and holiness of the law of God. All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been *through Christ*. (Patriarchs and Prophets p. 366 par. 1)

Without the atonement of the Son of God there could have been no ***communication of blessing or salvation*** from God to man. God was jealous for the honor of his law. The transgression of that law had caused a fearful separation between God and man. To Adam in his innocence was granted communion, direct, free, and happy, with his Maker. After his transgression, ***God would communicate to man only through Christ and angels.*** (Signs of the Times, January 30, 1879 par. 19)

The angels of God are ever moving up and down from earth to Heaven, and from Heaven to earth. All the miracles of Christ performed for the afflicted and suffering were, by the power of God, ***through the ministration of angels.*** Christ condescended to take humanity, and thus he unites his interests with the fallen sons and daughters of Adam here below, while his divinity grasps the throne of God. And thus Christ opens the communication of man with God, and God with man. All the blessings from God to man are through the ministration of holy angels. (Spirit of Prophecy vol. 2 p. 67 par. 2)

The Holy Spirit is the Communication from God

In the references just quoted, they tell us that God would communicate to man only through Christ and angels, and all the blessings come through angels. If its author believed that the Holy Spirit is a Divine being as is the Father or Son, then the statement would be telling us that the Holy Spirit cannot directly communicate to us, bringing comfort, truth, power, etc. That communication would have to come to us, first through Christ and then through angels. But Scripture tells us it is the other way around. The Holy Spirit is the representative of Christ to us. This quotation demonstrates that its author did not believe the Holy Spirit is a separate divine being. Instead, as we have seen, its author teaches that the Holy Spirit is the office of communication, and the communication itself, of the Spirit of Christ - grace, life, light, blessings, power, thoughts, etc. between heaven and earth, rather than the source of the communication.

Zechariah's Vision of the Two Olive Trees and Golden Lampstand

That the Holy Spirit is an office, and includes that which is communicated and the agencies of communication (angels, men, the written word, etc), and not the source of the communication is brought out in the vision of Zechariah 4 as well.

The oil with which the wise virgins filled their lamps represents the **Holy Spirit**. "The angel that talked with me came again," writes Zechariah, "and waked me, as a man is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon ... (Zechariah 4:5, 1, 2) (Review and Herald, July 20, 1897 par. 5)

And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive-branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. (Zechariah 4:12-14) (Review and Herald, July 20, 1897 par. 5)

The **anointed ones standing by the Lord of the whole earth, have the position once given to Satan as covering cherub**. By the holy beings surrounding his throne, the Lord keeps up a constant **communication** with the inhabitants of the earth. The golden **oil** represents the **grace** with which God keeps the lamps of believers supplied, that they shall not flicker and go out. Were it not that this holy oil is poured from heaven in the **messages of God's Spirit**, the agencies of evil would have entire control over men. (Review and Herald, July 20, 1897 par. 6)

God is dishonored when we do not receive the **communications** which he sends us. Thus we refuse the golden **oil** which he would pour into our souls to be communicated to those in darkness. (RH, July 20, 1897 par. 7)

In this article the Holy Spirit (represented by the oil) is referred to in several different ways.

Holy Spirit

1. grace
2. messages of God's spirit
3. communications

This vision does not depict the Holy Spirit as doing the communicating with us, but rather, as the blessings communicated, the **messages, communications**, or **grace** from God.

The oil is communicated through the two anointed ones, two branches or pipes, a golden bowl, seven pipes, and finally to the individual lamps. This would be very strange if the Holy Spirit were a divine being like the Father and Son, to have to be carried or taken to us first through the two anointed ones, identified as the ones that took the place of Lucifer (angels), then to various other agencies before finally reaching the individual. The following statement also highlights this point.

From the two olive trees the golden oil was emptied through the golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick, and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So ***from the holy ones that stand in God's presence His Spirit is imparted to the human instrumentalities*** who are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate to God's people that heavenly grace which alone can make His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 4:6. (Christ's Object Lessons p. 408 par. 1)

The description of God's Spirit being imparted by angels to human instrumentalities, as we have already seen, is the office of Holy Spirit. When Zechariah questioned the meaning of the vision, the whole line of communication of blessings from heaven to earth was summed up as ***"my spirit"***.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. (Zechariah 4:6)

The Holy Spirit is the Non-bodily Presence of Deity

When we speak of a non-bodily presence, we could liken it in a small degree to how a person can be present with a group on the other side of the world through a video-conferencing call. While not bodily present, he can see, hear, and communicate through audio and video.

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought ***afar off***. (Psalms 139:2)

Whither shall I go from thy ***spirit***? or whither shall I flee from thy ***presence***? (Psalms 139:7)

Cast me not away from thy ***presence***; and take not thy ***holy spirit*** from me. (Psalms 51:11)

God and Christ are not dependent on telephone lines or Internet, yet they can hear, see, communicate, and impart gifts and power to us “afar off”.

Angels bring us the presence of the Father and Son by bringing to us their Spirit, as has been shown in this booklet in several places, including, the chapter entitled “The Agency of Angels and Men in the Office Work of the Holy Spirit”.

The ***Father, the Son, and the holy angels*** will be present with you to behold your faith, your steadfast principle, and ***there you will have of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit***. (Signs of the Times, February 10, 1890 par. 4)

Angels are part of the office staff. They are agents that Christ uses in His office of Holy Spirit, to communicate His Spirit or various aspects of it to men. Sometimes, as we have shown, the agencies, or channels, are not distinguished from the Spirit itself, but are collectively, along with the blessing communicated through them, referred to as the Holy Spirit. This understanding clarifies certain statements by Christian author Ellen White that otherwise would seem to contradict each other. Let us consider some of these difficult statements.

V. Light on Some Seeming Contradictions

Understanding the office work of the Holy Spirit and the numerous references to it in the writings of Ellen White sheds light on some of her otherwise difficult to understand statements. One class of these statements speaks of the “Third Person” of the Godhead.

Third Person of the Godhead

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 upon His church. (Desire of Ages p. 671 par. 2)

Notice that the term “Third Person” of the Godhead is in the context of the “*office work*” of the Holy Spirit. Let me pose a question here that may sound odd. We all know what “*person*” means, right? Or do we? Let us turn to the dictionary again.

Noah Webster 1828 Dictionary -

Person - 6. Character of Office.

"How different is the same man from himself, as he sustains the Person of a magistrate and that of a friend."

One of the definitions for “person” is character of *office*. It is used when speaking of a person in one of two or more offices. That this is the case for the term “Third Person” in the paragraph we are considering, can be seen for several reasons.

Firstly, the paragraph’s opening sentence tells us the office work of the Holy Spirit is the subject of the paragraph.

Secondly, when describing which spirit is that “Third Person”, it says that it is the “His (Christ’s) Spirit”, not someone else’s. In others words, this third person refers to an office work of Christ.

Thirdly, it says that “Sin could be resisted and overcome only through” this “**Third Person**”, and we find an almost identical phrase on page 324 of the same book, where it identifies who this is.

“The only defense against evil is the *indwelling of Christ* in the heart through faith in His righteousness. ... “ (Desire of Ages p. 324 par. 2)

Once again, it is confirmed that this “third Person”, is Christ in the heart, which is clearly stated even in the passage under consideration itself as “**His Spirit**”.

The Bible also testifies that overcoming sin is through our union with Christ, not with someone else. It says:

Whosoever abideth in him (that is Christ) sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. (1 John 3:6)

The author of Desire of Ages is not disagreeing with the Bible, nor is she contradicting herself. It is clear that the term “**Third Person**” is referring to Christ’s office of Holy Spirit, not to another member of the Godhead.

Three Living Persons of the Heavenly Trio

The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fulness 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. . . . (Special Testimonies Series B number 07 p. 63 par .2)

... Work will be done in the simplicity of true godliness, and the old, old times will be back when, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, thousands were converted in a day. When the truth in its simplicity is lived in every place, then *God will work through His angels as He worked on the day of Pentecost*, and hearts will be changed so decidedly that there will be a manifestation of the influence of genuine truth, as is *represented in the descent of the Holy Spirit*. (Ibid par. 4)

The italicized words above have been often misunderstood because of a failure to understand the statement in the light of our subject, the office work of the Holy Spirit. I have included the second paragraph from the statement to help us understand the context. Notice that it tells us that *God working through angels* on the day of Pentecost was *represented as the descent of the Holy Spirit*.

In the following paragraph, it tells us that the agency of the Holy Spirit was at work in the apostolic church in those early days, and it refers to it as its "office work".

... When we read, "The whole multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one mind," we understand that the agency of the Holy Spirit was doing its work on human hearts. Until the Holy Spirit is accepted and allowed to do its *office work* upon the heart, each individual will strive to become a center of influence for himself. ... (Bible Training School, March 1, 1909 par. 1)

We are led to conclude from the context and associated passages on the subject, that in the statement "*three living persons*", the word "*person*" in reference to the Holy Spirit, is referring to Christ's office of the Holy Spirit, not to a separate individual. This is in harmony with the use of the word that we have seen from Noah Webster "*character of office*", and in harmony with the quote already examined above on the "Third Person of the

Godhead”. This is emphasized in another statement, quoted a little later in this book, where Ellen White speaks of the “three ... heavenly *characters*”²⁷.

Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave themselves

The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave themselves to the *working out* of the plan of redemption. In order to fully *carry out* this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love? (Australasian Union Conference Recorder 04-01-01 par. 10)

The *inhabitants of the heavenly universe* are appointed to go forth to come into close touch with *human instrumentalities* who act as God's helping hand. In the performance of this mission of love, angels mingle with the fallen race, ministering to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Divine and human agencies unite in the work of restoring the image of God in man. All who partake of the divine nature are appointed of God to unite with the angels in *carrying forward* with untiring zeal the plan of redemption. (Ibid par.16)

Shall we not as a people awaken to our responsibility? Shall we not manifest our love for God and our fellow-men by giving of our means to *carry forward* the work for this time, while the way is still open for work to be done? (Ibid par.17)

One interpretation of the statement above would indicate that the Holy Spirit was helping to plan the work of redemption. However, a study of the way the author used that term shows that she used the term most often to mean *carry out, and not plan out*. In fact, the very next sentence uses the term “carry out”. This usage is in harmony with modern English as well as Scripture usage. Let us look at some examples in Scripture and the author's other writings:

... *work out* your own salvation with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12)

27 Manuscript 45, 1904, pp. 9

In the work in which my husband and I were called by the providence of God to act a part, even from its very beginning in 1843 and 1844, we have had the Lord to devise and plan for us, and He has **worked out** His plans through His living agents. (Maranatha p. 155 par. 1)

My patience, My longsuffering, My forbearance, My meekness, My lowliness, be **worked out** in your character, as one that abides in Me and I in him. Then you have the promise not only "I will give," but "Ye shall find rest to your souls." (Bible Training School 08-01-03 par. 3)

In each one of the quotes above, "worked out" means "carried out". The second point to notice is who the agencies are that actually carry out the plan of Redemption. In paragraph 16 of the article under consideration, it tells us who those agencies are - inhabitants of the heavenly universe and human instrumentalities. It uses the synonymous term **carry forward** in that connection. Our conclusion about the quote in question is that it is **using the term "Holy Spirit" to refer to the office work of the Holy Spirit, inclusive of the angels**. Notice the following quote:

The **three great and glorious heavenly characters** are present on the occasion of baptism. All the human capabilities are to be henceforth consecrated powers to do service for God in representing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost upon whom they depend. **All heaven is represented by these three** in covenant relation with the new life. (Manuscript Releases vol. 6 p. 389 par. 3)

The quote tells us that **all heaven** is represented by these three ("Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost), and we know that **all** heaven includes angels. So, one of these three **"characters"** is inclusive of the angels. This further supports what the book you hold in your hands has already shown, that "Holy Spirit" is an office in which the "ministering spirits",²⁸ as agencies, are included.²⁹

28 Hebrews 1:7, 14 ⁷And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. ... ¹⁴Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

29 Previously quoted: Signs of the Times, February 10, 1890 par. 4 "The **Father, the Son, and the holy angels** will be present with you to behold

So, to word the statement under consideration, in light of the context and the author's usage of the words, we would state it in this way: "the Father, the Son, and the (office of the) Holy Spirit (that portion of the office staff residing in heaven – the **angels**) gave themselves to the working (**carrying**) out of the plan of redemption."

your faith, your steadfast principle, and ***there you will have of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit.***"

VI. Conclusion

We have seen that *Holy Spirit*, does not infer personal identity, or conscious entity apart from its body, but refers to one or more aspects of the Spirit or mind of Christ, (such as: life, the divine nature and influence, light, power, thoughts, whether audible, written, or otherwise manifested, etc.) and to His *office* of communicating that Spirit to others, inclusive of the agencies of men, angels, the written word, etc. Consider the ramifications of the following paragraph, equating Christ's promise of the Comforter, the "Holy Spirit", to an *office*.

The theme Christ chose to dwell upon in his last discourse to his disciples was that of the *office of the Holy Spirit*. He opened before them a wide tract of truth. They were to receive his words by faith, and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, was to bring all things to their remembrance. The consolation given by Christ in this promise was found in the fact that the *divine influence* was to be with his followers to the end. But this promise is not accepted and believed by the people today, and therefore is not cherished by them, nor is its fulfillment seen in the experience of the church. The *promise of the gift of the Spirit of God* is left as a matter to be little considered by the church. It is not impressed upon the people, and the result is only that which might be expected,--spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the mind and soul, but *divine power* which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, which would if possessed, bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, although it is offered to us in infinite plenitude. Just as long as the church is satisfied with small things, it is disqualified to receive the great things of God. (The Home Missionary November 1, 1893, Art A, par. 25)

But why do we not hunger and thirst after the gift of the Holy Spirit, since it is the means whereby the heart may be kept pure? The Lord designs that divine power shall co-operate with human effort. *It is all-essential for the Christian to understand the meaning of the promise of the Holy Spirit just prior to the coming of our Lord Jesus the second time.* Talk of it, pray for it, preach concerning it; for the Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit than parents are to give good gifts to their children. "For God so loved the world, that

he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." {HM, November 1, 1893 par. 26}

Appeal

The church of Christ, every individual disciple of the Master, is heaven's appointed channel for the revelation of God to men. Angels of glory wait to communicate through you heaven's light and power to souls that are ready to perish. Shall the ***human agent fail of accomplishing his appointed work? Oh, then to that degree is the world robbed of the promised influence of the Holy Spirit!*** (Mount of Blessings p. 40 par. 2)

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