

What Did He Hear and Where Did He Hear It?
Apologetic Reflections on the Person of the Spirit in John's Gospel

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“With the Holy Ghost through one Son, we preach one God.”¹

In a minimalist culture devoid of a sense of history, Trinitarian apologists have encountered various attempts (textual, theological, and philosophical) to depersonalize the Spirit of God. From the university (where it has been rigorously questioned since the Enlightenment), to the Church (where it is difficult to find anyone willing to champion it) to the street, even as defense of the Trinity has fallen on hard times, defense of the Person of the Spirit has likewise suffered.² In a Barna survey in 2000, 61% of Americans surveyed agreed with the statement that “the Holy Spirit is “a symbol of God’s presence or power, but is not a living entity.”³ Among those identifying themselves as “born-again” believers, the number was not appreciably different, 53% of those respondents affirmed that the Holy Spirit does not exist.

A number of cultists and even Jewish biblical interpreters view the Bible’s references to the Holy Spirit as merely personifications related to God’s exercise of power.⁴ There is a long history of rebutting challenges to Christian orthodoxy concerning the Spirit through a competent systematization of passages or analysis of grammatical considerations. The present study focuses on historical setting and peculiarities and specific commonalities in the inter-Trinitarian dialogue within a single book (John’s gospel) and the implications of such dialogue for doctrine and apologetics pertaining to

¹ Cyril of Jerusalem, “Catechism Lecture” XVI.4 in H. Wace and P. Schaff, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st series (New York: Christian, 1887), 2 VII, p. 116. Hereafter abbreviated as NPNF.

² I do not mean that there is a paucity of writing on the subject of the Spirit in orthodox Christianity, only that many presentations highlight the relation between the Father and Son to establish the possibility (reality) of a plurality of persons within the one God and then proceed to defend the Person of the Spirit in a less rigorous manner than that of the Son. Once one has granted the status of the Son as related to the Father, it is not difficult to allow the possibility that the Spirit also subsists in that eternal relationship.

³ 41% agreed “strongly,” with this statement and 20% agreed “somewhat” with this statement. Barna Group is aware that not all persons using the term “born again” have the same definition in mind and has recently added the category of “Evangelical Born Again.” See George Barna, www.barna.org.

⁴ Among the persons and groups holding to an impersonal Spirit are Alamo Christian Ministries represented by Tony Alamo (see his pamphlet, “Spiritual War,” pp. 1-3, where he described the Holy Spirit as a kind of substance that fills the Bible and Jesus); the Christadelphians, who hold that the Holy Spirit is a “God-derived energy” (see “God is One, Not Three, n.d., p. 15); and the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who contend that Trinitarians improperly personalize the “invisible active force” that is sent forth from God “to accomplish what is holy” (see the Watchtower Society publication, “Holy Spirit—The Force Behind the Coming New Order,” 1976, p. 11). Perhaps the main Jewish way of looking the Spirit was as a life force or energy of God, the operational side of what a Christian would term “the Father” rather than a Person in the Trinitarian sense. The psalmist speaks of God’s Spirit acting in a personal way (Psalm 143:10), but the use of spirit there was probably another way to say God. Isaiah and Ezekiel give hints toward envisioning the Person-ness of the Spirit, but it is not until the writings between the testaments that this vision takes on a clearer shape, and not until Christ that it is given its full dimension. For a fuller discussion, see James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 131ff.

the personality of the Holy Spirit from a biblical theology. This under-utilized approach in contemporary Christian apologetics can complement and augment traditional systematic arguments for the personality of the Spirit.

An Historical Brief of Early Church Apologetics for the Personality of the Spirit

Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced (ridiculous as the expression may seem) more true than the truth itself.

Irenaeus of Lyons, (c 180 AD) *Adversus Haeresus* Book 1:2

There is value, at the outset, in tracing out the framework for a valid apologetic with respect to the Holy Spirit in the writings and apologies of the early church. How often has any one of us been rescued from a novel thought by a careful and retrospective study? As I often tell my theology students, “I used to think that I thought original thoughts, and then I studied history and found that I had merely parroted an argument for which the fathers had given several answers.” With this spirit in view, let us begin by looking backward to the early church discussions, if only briefly.

Peter Toon has observed that, although the Old Testament in its entirety uses the word *ruach* (רוּחַ ; רִיחַ) with reference to the Spirit of God approximately 90 times, the apostle Paul himself used the word *pneuma* (πνεῦμα) 115 times with reference to God’s Spirit within a much smaller corpus of material.⁵ Paul’s use of the Spirit is consistent with other apostolic testimony in Scripture. In the larger body of NT literature, the Holy Spirit is active at every stage of redemption, though with an invisibility and anonymity discovered only by discerning His action.⁶

As Millard Erickson has observed, comparatively little was said in the extant writings of the early church about the Holy Spirit.⁷ References to the Holy Spirit were not infrequent, but most often either personal, experiential, catechetical, or doxological.⁸ It was not until 360 AD that the Church formally pondered and defended the personhood of the Spirit in depth.⁹ Other doctrines occupied the polemical activities of the early

⁵ Peter Toon, *Our Triune God: A Biblical Portrait of the Trinity* (Wheaton, IL: Bridge Point, 1996), 117. Toon comments further: “...only a dogmatic binitarianism denies a Trinitarian consciousness and an implicit Trinitarianism.” (125).

⁶ There is insufficient space here to flesh out the details of this statement. Tracking the life of Jesus from conception to ascension, however, one can track the Spirit’s activity with respect to this backstage, behind the scenes, position. See further Appendix One, The Spirit in the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ.

⁷ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 864.

⁸ One example of this would be Clement of Rome who coordinated three Persons in an oath: “As God lives, and the Lord Jesus Christ lives, and the Holy Spirit.” In the same account he asks: “Have we not one God, and one Christ, and one Spirit of grace poured upon us?” (*Mart. Polyc.*, 58,2; 46,6). He also spoke of the Holy Spirit inspiring the prophets of God both in the OT and NT (*ibid.*, 8,1; 13,1; 16,2; 63,2).

⁹ Some, seeing the paucity of historical treatment, have argued that the NT expresses a binitarian rather than Trinitarian faith. For these positions, see Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988). To this we object that the implicit presence of the Spirit in relationship with Father and Son in much of the NT weighs against

church, specifically the nature of God and Christ. Much of what was said about the Spirit in this early period related to the Spirit's role in producing the written Word of God, the Bible. There is also what T. F. Torrance has recognized about the "self-effacing nature" of the Holy Spirit:

It is not the function of the Spirit, then, to bear witness to himself in his distinctive personal Being, but to bear witness to Christ and glorify him as Lord and Saviour, whereby God the Father also is glorified...*(therefore)*... We do not know the Holy Spirit directly in his own personal Reality or Glory. We know him only in his unique spiritual mode of activity and transparent presence in virtue of which God's self-revelation shines through to us in Christ, and we are made through the Spirit to see the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father.¹⁰

Only the Son shares our nature as incarnate Word and explains God to us. Only the Father incarnated and sent the Son. The Spirit fades to the background but simultaneously highlights these distinctions that are incapable of reduction between the Persons.

The Holy Spirit in Earliest Christianity to the Apostolic Fathers

The Didache used the threefold Name once (Did 7.1.3); otherwise, the Spirit is not *fully* discussed therein.¹¹ Theophilus of Antioch held that the Spirit was preexistent (that is, the Spirit was there before the universe was created), and thus definitely not a created being. Theophilus of Antioch (180 AD) stated a Trinity as such in formalized terms (Of the Fourth Day, To Autolytus 2:15), but the form he used was God/Word/Wisdom.

Written in A.D. 177, Athenagoras may have been writing to the Stoic Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius:

Who, then, would not be astonished to hear those called atheists [a common charge against the Christians], who speak of God the Father and of God the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and who proclaim Their power in union and Their distinction in order? (Athenagoras of Athens, *Supplication for the Christians*, 10)

Similarly, Irenaeus, writing between A.D. 180-199 wrote against Gnosticism, of his and the Church's faith in Three:

For the Church, although dispersed throughout the whole world even to the ends of the earth, has received from the Apostles and from their disciples the faith in

such a conclusion. We aver that the Spirit's presence is indicated in what He does. See further discussion below.

¹⁰ T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 66, brackets my emphasis.

¹¹ By "fully," I understand that the Spirit's relationship in the Trinity was implicit, not explicit and that specific defense of the Person and role of the Spirit in His Trinitarian relationships was not fully expressed.

one God, Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who announced through the prophets the dispensations and the comings, and the birth from a Virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord... (Ireneaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1,10,1)

These references aside, it was perhaps not until Tertullian (220 AD) that a leading Church theologian gave the Church a pragmatic teaching of the Holy Spirit as God. Tertullian was not one to mince his words and did not hesitate to describe both Son and Spirit as *persons* (*prosopon*) within a *trinitas*. The Spirit was coordinated with the Father and the Son, and was joined with them in substance, coming from the Father through the Son in some way: “All the Scriptures give clear proof of the Trinity, and it is from these that our principle is deduced...the distinction of the Trinity is quite clearly displayed.” (*Against Praxeas*, chapter 11). And, further:

Still, in these few quotations the distinction of *Persons in the Trinity* is clearly set forth. For there is the Spirit Himself who speaks, and the Father to whom He speaks, and the Son of whom He speaks. In the same manner, the other passages also establish each one of several Persons in His special character—addressed as they in some cases are to the Father or to the Son respecting the Son, in other cases to the Son or to the Father concerning the Father, and again in other instances to the (Holy) Spirit.¹²

Athanasius is responsible for taking Tertullian’s structure and building upon it, contributing to the expression of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity the form it has today. He makes it clear that the Spirit is God by what he says about the Spirit, that is, the same basic things he says about the Father and Son:

[The Trinity] is a Trinity not merely in name or in a figurative manner of speaking; rather, it is a Trinity in truth and in actual existence. Just as the Father is he that is, so also his Word is one that is and is God over all. And neither is the Holy Spirit nonexistent but actually exists and has true being. Less than these the catholic Church does not hold, lest she sink to the level of the Jews of the present time, imitators of Caiaphas, or to the level of Sabellius” (Letters to Serapion 1:28).¹³

For Athanasius, the Spirit does not change, is present everywhere, and is intimately involved in all the activity of the Father and the Son. Athanasius found himself in the epicenter of Arian teachings, as the pastor of a city that Arius had taught in. He dealt not only with Arius’ ideas, but also with the sects that developed from them (such as the

¹² NPNF, 606. Tertullian was concerned with the unity of the Godhead. The three persons were a *dispositio* (distribution) of the divine nature, but not a *separatio* (division) of it. The three are one in *substantia*. The diversity of the Godhead Tertullian referred to as Persons.

¹³ J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Graeca* (Paris, 1886ff). Vols. 25 and 26 contain the works of Athanasius. Hereafter abbreviated as PG.

Tropici).¹⁴ Since the Arian approach to the Spirit was often inferred rather than out-front, the Church took up the struggle with it after dealing with Arianist notions about Christ.

It has been well observed that the primary theological movement well into the fourth century had a Christological character. The focus of Church thought was the dual image of Christ as both God-Man and Logos (or Word Incarnate). To confess the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father was to confess the completeness of the divine nature in Christ. This was tied into and understood as necessary for understanding the incarnation as the basis for the salvation of mankind. The correlation of these dogmas was fully and clearly developed in the theological system of men like Athanasius. Any denial of consubstantiality would invalidate the redemption which is based on the true union between creation and God. It was from this point of view that the doctrine of the *Pneumatomachi* (see below), who detracted from or denied the consubstantiality and complete Divinity of the Holy Spirit, was debated and rejected.

Origen (185-254) is perhaps best known for his doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son.¹⁵ It is possible that many scholars have read the conclusions of the later Arians back into his writings.¹⁶ In the preface to his work *On First Principles*, Origen affirmed in his preface that the “Holy Spirit was associated in honour and dignity with the Father and the Son.”¹⁷ Further, in chapter III of the same work, one reads his comment on John 16:12-13:

For if the Holy Spirit knows the Father through the Son’s revelation, He passes from a state of ignorance into one of knowledge; but it is alike impious and foolish to confess the Holy Spirit and yet to ascribe to Him ignorance. For even although something else existed before the Holy Spirit, it was not by progressive advancement that He came to be the Holy Spirit; as if any one should venture to

¹⁴The Tropici were Egyptians in the Nile delta. They were labeled Tropici because of their figurative interpretation of Scripture [from the Greek *tropos* = figure]). They had argued that the “spirit” was created *ex nihilo* and was no different from the “ministering spirits” of Hebrews 1:14. Athanasius countered in such groups in several ways: The Scriptures consistently distinguish between the Spirit and mere creatures (the Spirit, said Athanasius, “belongs to and is one with the Godhead which is in the Triad” [Ad Serap., 1,21]). As proof, he predicated of the Spirit immutability, omnipresence, and uniqueness. The Spirit is referred to as “of God” and “of Christ”. Thus, he argued, since the Godhead is eternal and indivisible the Spirit must be consubstantial with the Father and Son. He appealed to the common work of Son and Spirit: creation, inspiration, illumination, sanctification, and the like and concluded that only God can act in perfect conjunction with God. Further, since it is by the Spirit that we are made “partakers of God’s nature” and by Him that God dwells in us (1 Cor. 3:16), how could we have communion and participation with God through Him if he were merely a creature?

¹⁵ See the excellent discussion in Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity in Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2004), 101-107.

¹⁶ Origen is distinct in at least two senses from the later Arians. First, while he was unsure whether the Spirit was *natus an innatus* (born or unborn), he renders the same honor and dignity to the Spirit as he does to the Father and the Son. Second, in contrast to the Arians, he affirms in his discussion of Wisdom that there was never a time when the Son (Wisdom) was not (“never at any time non-existent,” PG 1.2.9). Origen did not view the Son’s derivation of substance from the Father as meaning inherent inferiority. The use of the terms in this way came later.

¹⁷ Origen, *De Principiis*, preface 4, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, editors, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994 reprint), IV: 240. Hereafter ANF.

say that at the time when He was not yet the Holy Spirit He was ignorant of the Father, but that after He had received knowledge He was made the Holy Spirit.¹⁸

In the Eastern Church tradition apart from Origen, where the Spirit is the principle and power Who sanctifies and deifies creation,¹⁹ a teaching parallel to Athanasius' arguments held primacy. For the Eastern Fathers, the sanctification which the Spirit brings is of no avail if he is not truly God.²⁰ Cyril of Alexandria (430), a contemporary of Augustine, developed his doctrine about the Holy Spirit in rather great detail. For Cyril, the Holy Spirit is of God and is God (consubstantial with the Father and the Son) and is not at all lower or less than them in divine dignity. The Holy Spirit has "an essence, which exceeds all," and "the purest and most perfect nature." He is God of God, "Self-Wisdom and Self-Power" (αυτόχροημα σοφία και δύναμις).²¹ Therefore, the Holy Spirit joins us to Divine Nature and, moving into us, through communion makes us temples of God and gods (deification) through grace. Through the Holy Spirit, God Himself dwells in His people.

It would seem that Cyril went further than any of his predecessors in affirming the Spirit's dependence on the Son. Daley, writing on the Spirit, maintains that it is Cyril's emphasis on the immediacy of God, an emphasis that would set him on a collision course with the Antiochenes, which drives his thinking about the Spirit.²² Cyril's purpose was to affirm the divinity of the Spirit and "to reflect on the significance of the Spirit's personal presence, as the gift of both Father and Son, in the believer and the Church."

Since the Arian approach to the Spirit was often inferred or implicit rather than explicit in their arguments, the Church again wrestled with it after defeating Arian notions about Christ. The time had come for efforts for the Church to become clearer about the Holy Spirit. Thus the work of Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzos) and Ambrose, led the Church to understand what it meant when it confessed the Holy Spirit. Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394 AD) pointed to the Holy Spirit's work in baptism to show that the Spirit is God. Basil (d. 379 AD) argued that the Spirit was to be worshipped as God, based on what the Spirit gives us, including adoption as children of God and the inheritance of God's blessings now and (fully) to come, and for giving us cause to rejoice. Gregory of Nazianzos (d. 389 AD) undertook the practical task of leading the church in Constantinople away from Arianism. Hilary of Poitiers (d. 367 AD), wrote about the Spirit's role in "divinizing" the

¹⁸ Ibid., 249.

¹⁹ See Dan Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*, Second edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 117ff; and Robert V. Rakestraw, "Becoming Like God: An Evangelical Doctrine of Theosis," in *JETS* 40 (1997): 257-269.

²⁰ Gary D. Badcock, *Light of Truth & Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 54.

²¹ See Boris Bobrinskoy, *The Mystery of the Trinity: Trinitarian Experience and Vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition*, trans. A. P. Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999).

²² See B. Daley, "The Fullness of the Saving God" in T. G. Weinandy and D. A. Keating, eds, *The Theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 117. By virtue of the perfect and indivisible consubstantiality of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit is also a "property" of the Son, "joined to the Son in essence." By nature the Holy Spirit is "innate" and belongs to the Son, abiding in him naturally. The Holy Spirit is the "proper" Spirit of the Father and the Son." What is more, the Holy Spirit exists hypostatically in himself. By virtue of this identity of natures, the Spirit is inseparable from the Son and by nature *proceeds through Him*.

faithful, wherein the Christian follower is being re-made by God to be like God, in a process which is not completed until the coming of the Kingdom.

The work of these thinkers led to the additions to the Nicene Creed which came out of the Council of Constantinople in 381. These changes gave the Church the version of the Nicene Creed now used in worship services, except for one small change made later that is not used in the Orthodox churches. The “Nicene-Constantinopolitan” creed states that:

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and Giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke through the prophets...

At Constantinople 381 it was affirmed that the Holy Spirit does divine things such as giving life, is of divine origin, reveals to us what God wills, and is worshipped as God. The idea that the Holy Spirit *is* God is stated indirectly but clearly, by the fact that there is a specific section for the Spirit in the Creed, under which come the Church and the teachings of the Church about what is to come. Thus the early church came around to an understanding of what it meant when it baptized in the three names of God

One could cite many other historical examples, such as through Augustine, but the basic groundwork for understanding most, if not all, heretical views on the Spirit of God was quite well expressed within the first four centuries of the church and within the Trinitarian debate.

Historical, Sectarian and Recent Cultic Arguments Against a *Personal* Holy Spirit

Early forms of Pneumatological heresy included both Dynamic and Modalistic Monarchianism. In Dynamic Monarchianism the Spirit was viewed as the impersonal “power” or energy of the Father by which the Son was anointed and adopted at the time of his water baptism (the Christ or the Spirit came upon him).²³ In Modalistic Monarchianism the distinct personality of the Spirit was emphatically denied.²⁴ The title “Spirit” was simply another name for, or mode by which, the One God was manifest in history.

Paul of Samosata’s (Antioch) formula of God the Father, with Jesus the Word (Jesus is “from hence” and God works on him “from above”) and the “Spirit of the believing church”²⁵ made around 260 AD is very much in line with some modern reformulations of the Trinity, but not at all in line with the historic Creeds, whether Nicene, Apostolic, or Athanasian. It does, however, correspond well with the United Church of Christ or the United Church of Canada and their officially stated positions on theology. Leaders in both those church bodies have publicly stated their held assumption

²³ See Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology* (Malden MA: Blackwell, 1998), 41.

²⁴ See Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 146-159.

²⁵ See John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 475. Feinberg adds that Paul of Samosata saw the Spirit “as nothing more than a term for the grace that God poured out on the apostles.”

that Jesus is just a man. Paul's teaching is what is called dynamic monarchianism. That is, the power (*dynamis*) of the one true God (*monarch*—i.e. only ruler/only creator) indwelt Jesus in the same way as God indwelt the Temple or the Holy Spirit indwelt the prophets of the Old Testament. In their view, Jesus never really had the power of God for his own, since he never was true. At Jesus' baptism the Logos came to indwell the man Jesus, and so he became the Christ. Thus, Paul of Samosata was an earlier representative of what today is the rationalistic Socinian (with its 16th century European roots) or Unitarian faith (no official statements on the Spirit), as well as the faith of many liberal theologians.

Tertullian's deeply rooted concern for matters of the Holy Spirit and holiness led him to become one of the Church's great theologians. It also led him into the Montanist movement, a movement which stressed the Spirit's work happening now, not just as a past or future thing. As time went by, Montanus and Montanist leaders claimed great eternal stature for themselves, and claimed authority beyond bishops and traditions, even beyond Scripture. While the movement itself slipped off into heresy, some of those drawn to it did not. Tertullian himself grew even more extreme on matters of personal holiness, to the point that it overrode his sense of freedom in the Spirit.

Montanism arose in Phrygia in about 155 AD. Eusebius and Jerome both date the movement to 173 AD (while more recent scholarship puts it in the 160's). It spread from Asia Minor to Rome and eventually to North Africa. The following in Rome was small, but in North Africa, Montanism became quite popular. Our greatest obstacle in understanding what Montanists believed and taught is that virtually extant information is fragmentary in nature and comes from opponents to the movement. As Trevett has noted, "the bulk of the evidence is from the anti-Montanist side."²⁶

Initially, at least one bishop of Rome, Victor, endorsed the Montanist movement. The endorsement was short-lived, however, as Praxeas (a heretic in his own right who introduced Patripassian Monarchianism into Rome) succeeded in turning Victor against Montanism. It was condemned by certain synods of the church in Asia around 200 AD and then also by Zephyrinus, Victor's successor as bishop of Rome, in the early part of the 3rd century.

Yet while Montanism didn't cause direct problems for the theology of the Spirit, Arianism did. Arius taught, starting at around 318 AD, that Jesus was not God but a created being. The idea itself was not new, but Arius gave it a challenging level of depth, and he vigorously spread the idea, especially throughout his home base of North Africa. For a short time, the leading Christian cities of Alexandria and Constantinople were strongly influenced by Arianism. The logic of Arius' view of Jesus leads to the view that the Spirit is also a created being and not God; this became a central feature of the teachings of Macedonius.

The *Macedonians* (named after their leader, Macedonius {d. ca. 362}), also called *Pneumatomachians* (i.e., "spirit-fighters"), introduced three assertions into Trinitarian discussion. First, based on a false interpretation of John 1:3, they argued that the Holy Spirit was a creature. They punctuated the verse as follows: "All things were made by Him [i.e., the Son], and without Him was not anything made. That which was made in Him was life [a reference to the Spirit]." Second, they insisted that since the Spirit was

²⁶ Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, authority and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4.

neither unbegotten (as is the Father) nor begotten (as is the Son), he must be a creature. Third, they insisted that the New Testament does not command believers to worship or adore the Spirit, as it does with respect to both Father and Son. Athanasius maintained instead the deity of the Spirit and his *homoousia* with the Father and the Son. After this the pneumatomachians (literally "Spirit-fighters") appeared within the *homoiousion* party. Led by Eustathius of Sebaste (after 373), they tried to assert a nondivine, noncreaturely, intermediate status for the Spirit, even after affirming the *homoousia* of the Son. They were opposed by the Cappadocians, who taught the full deity and *homoousia* of the Son. They were opposed by the Cappadocians, who taught the full deity and *homoousia* of the Spirit both implicitly (as in Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*) and explicitly (as in Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 31*). It is this Cappadocian (and Athanasian) theology which prevailed at the Council of Constantinople.

The modern day Christian Churches of God headquartered in Australia would be an example of successors to the mantle of semi-Arianism.²⁷ Their doctrinal statement pertaining to the Spirit reads:

The Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) is that **essence or power of God** which Christ promised to send to the elect (Jn. 16:7). It is **not a person but the extension of the living power of God**. It is the means whereby we become partakers of the Divine Nature (2 Pet. 1:4), being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17; Eph. 5:18) and hence all Sons of God (Job 38:7; Rom. 8:14; 1Jn. 3:1-2) and co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29; Tit. 3:7; Heb. 1:14, 6:17, 11:9; Jas. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:7). It is given by God to those who ask (Lk. 11:9-13) and obey him, dwelling in those who keep God's commandments (1 Jn. 3:24; Acts 5:32). The Holy Spirit is the comforter that leads God's servants into all truth (Jn. 14:16, 17, 26). The Holy Spirit confers the power to witness (Acts 1:8). It administers gifts as recorded in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and has fruits as described in Galatians 5:22-23 not being given by measure (Jn. 3:34 RSV; Rom. 12:6). It is the means by which God can finally become all, in all (1 Cor. 15:28; Eph. 4:6).²⁸

The impression of the Spirit as an extension of the power of God (or the exercise of God's power) arises from a failure to read the full context and argument of the gospel of John (as will be seen below). For the apologist, then, understanding the nuances of John's presentation of the Spirit can be of additional assistance in refuting cultic error on the person of the Spirit. It is to this issue we now direct our attention.

²⁷ See the website: www.logon.org.

²⁸ See "Statement of Beliefs" (No. A1), Edition 1.0 19971223-19971223 as found at: logon.org/english/S/a1.html. Bold emphases mine.

The Spirit of God in John's Gospel

The identity of the Spirit is intimately tied with the person of the Son in John's gospel.²⁹ More than one commentator has observed that while John's identification of the Son as God is explicit in John, his expression of the role and relationship of the Spirit in the Godhead is best described as more subdued.³⁰ John introduces the Spirit to the reader in association with Jesus' ministry but does not present reciprocity from the Spirit toward the Father. In the language of the gospel, the Spirit proceeds from the Father (14:16-17, 26) and the Son (15:26; 16:7), but John does not directly relate any factors of mutual indwelling between Spirit and Father or Spirit and Son (whereas he does note the Son indwelling the Father and the Father indwelling the Son).³¹ How, then, does John portray the person of the Spirit and how does this relate to the person of the Son?

The Spirit: A Progressive Doctrine in John

John, in his gospel, presents a progressive doctrine of the Spirit which must be viewed in its totality and in contextual harmony in order to avoid heterodox and even heretical affirmations of the nature of the Spirit. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to trace all of John's argument, the following survey can provide some departure points for an effective apologetic.³² Via John's early affirmations on the Spirit in his gospel one may draw conclusions about the nature of God's work in the world through the Spirit. Via his later gospel statements concerning the Paraclete (John 14-17), John demonstrates that the Spirit *cannot* merely be equated with God's power or presence. As John related his story of Messiah in the narrative portions of his account (1-12, 18-21), he identifies the Spirit as the "Holy Spirit" only in John 1:33. Apart from John the Baptist's recognition of the Spirit in this way, John references the Spirit's action with the simple word *pneuma* outside of the Upper Room Discourse (13-17).

We begin our survey, then, with an exploration of those passages in which the Spirit is portrayed as an Actor or Agent in the narrative sections of John's gospel. Here, John presents God's Spirit as descending and remaining upon Jesus (1:32-33);

²⁹ See James D. G. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit: Volume 1 Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 26; Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: the Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 41. See also Walt Russell, "The Holy Spirit's Ministry in the Fourth Gospel," *Grace Theological Journal* 8.2 (Fall 1987), 227-239.

³⁰ David Crump, "Re-examining the Johannine Trinity: perichoresis or deification?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 59.4 (2006): 395-412 is an example. Crump argues that the force of John's argument is to display mutual indwelling of Father and Son with disciple as opposed to an interpenetrating Spirit. I am thinking, in particular, of his assertion on page 408: "...a discussion of the Johannine Spirit is a discussion of the life of the church, not the life of the Trinity. John is simply not interested in answering questions about threeness-in-oneness and oneness-in-threeness." Crump's intent is not to deny the Person of the Spirit his due place in the Trinity, only to point out that John's emphasis is on the believer's relationship to the Trinity that is established by virtue of the Spirit indwelling the believer. That said, I believe he overstates his case for John's understanding when he suggests that for John, the Spirit "may not commune with heaven" in light of the language parallels in Jesus' speeches regarding his role and the Spirit's role in relation to heaven (p. 409, see further comment below).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 399-401. Again, this is not to deny the idea of perichoresis, only to suggest that John is not concerned with such a concept here.

³² Some good departure points for such a study are also traced out in Royce Gordon Gruenler, *The Trinity in the Gospel of John: A Thematic Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986).

engendering the new birth from above (3:5-6); fostering and enabling true worship of God (4:23-24); and giving life (6:63; 7:37-39). John emphasizes the heavenly origin of Jesus (see Appendix One) and with equal care, the heavenly origin of the Spirit (see Appendix Two).

Jesus as “Bearer” and “Giver”³³ of the Holy Spirit

In John 1:32-33 the Spirit descends (*katabai/non* from *katabai,nw* ~ descending) “as a dove *out of* heaven.”³⁴ This was how John the Baptist knew that Jesus was the one who would baptize with (or give) the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit descended “upon” him. While the effect of the vision of the descended Spirit confirmed John’s knowledge of Jesus’ identity, the text does stress the *abiding* nature (*me,non* from *me,nw*; cf. 14:23 where the Father and Son make their abode with the believer) of the Spirit’s presence in Jesus’ ministry.³⁵ The Spirit thus attests both to the nature of Jesus’ ministry and to Jesus’ identity: He is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit (1:33 and, *importantly*, 20:22). The difference between the Spirit’s ministry to the Son and his ministry to believers is that the Son does not benefit from the Spirit’s life-giving ministry, but has life in himself (John 1:4; 5:21-26). In John’s gospel, Jesus is not a mere acquiescent *recipient* of the Holy Spirit, but the dynamic *agent* of God who *gives* the Spirit (John 1:33; 7:39; 20:22; and cf. Acts 1:8; 2:33). The Spirit draws attention to Jesus as the one who gives the cleansing needed for life from God (Gen 1:2). But as Jesus points out in John 3:5-6, he accomplishes this admittedly divine task in concert with a life-giving Spirit *from above* affecting a new birth. Note carefully that the activity of Jesus in giving the Spirit does not obliterate distinctions between Jesus and the Spirit.

Several important apologetic points follow from this passage. First, the Spirit performs an action in the presence of, not *upon*, the Son. Contra the arguments of Monarchians, John presents the effect of the Spirit’s action as for the benefit, *not of Jesus* (to “make” him the Christ), but of John the Baptist (to identify him as the one who baptizes in the Spirit). Contra the arguments of Modalism, Son and Spirit carry out actions simultaneously (within the same time frame) in a context that requires an I-thou relationship for such an event to occur. Unlike the Synoptic accounts, the Spirit’s relationship to Jesus is not one in which the signal feature for John’s account is an assumed empowering of Jesus for ministry,³⁶ but in attesting to John the Baptist, as a

³³ I do not believe a contradiction exists between the Synoptics and John, as though it is either Jesus has the Spirit to bestow it (Him; M. M. Thompson’s view of John’s gospel or Jesus has the Spirit to empower Him (Matthew, Mark, Luke). Why could it not be both? John’s emphasis is on the presence of the Spirit in Jesus’ ministry as the “Spirit giver.” The Synoptics merely point to Jesus as the Spirit-empowered man.

³⁴ It is possible that the dove manifestation of the Spirit is, simultaneously, an allusion to the dove of Noah; a portent of the new life God brought in Jesus as in Genesis 8:8-12 (and compare 4 Baruch 7:8).

³⁵ The Baptist may have in mind Isaiah 11:2, “the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him.” The difference between upon (*epi*, John 1:33) and in (*evn*, John 14:10-11) does not rule out the Synoptic account of Jesus as one under the directives of the Spirit during his earthly ministry. See Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles and Relavance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 128-129.

³⁶ Observe, however, that the point of the Synoptic accounts is to show the submission of the Son to the Spirit’s direction (Jesus is “impelled” by the Spirit to go into the wilderness prior to his baptism (Matt 4; Luke 4). John does not observe this activity of the Spirit for he desires to portray Jesus to his

witness from heaven, of the identity of the Son. This role is also prominent in John 14-17, where the Spirit also draws attention to Jesus and brings to mind his word. Modalists might object that this is merely the power of God acting in this way in Jesus' life, but the cumulative effect of references to the Spirit in John's gospel (see below) make this impossible to sustain.³⁷

It is important to read the reference to the Spirit in John 3:5-6 in the context of John's double entendre statement: *eva.n mh, tij gennhqh/ | a;nwqen(ouv du,natai ivdei/n th.n basilei,an tou/ qeou/* (“unless one is **born from above/again**”). John often used words like *a;nwqen* with double meanings, both of which are true. Being “born of the Spirit” (*gennhqh/ | evx u[datoj kai. pneu,matoj*), from above, is contrasted with fleshly birth, from below. It is possible, if not likely, that “born of water” is to be interpreted as a hendiadys (in light of John 7:39 and its reference to the Spirit as the “water” Jesus brings from a man's innermost being).³⁸ In other words, “unless you are born by water (which is) the Spirit” fits the context and the dynamic of the Spirit introduced in John 1.

Once again, the emphasis on the Spirit's action in this passage is directed, not upon Jesus, but upon believers in generating a new birth. The activity is thoroughly divine, requiring the exercise of the power of God. The One who opens and closes wombs in the natural world must generate the life that is required for a spiritual rebirth. Here, then, Jesus invites Nicodemus to undergo a spiritual proselyte baptism patterned after Ezekiel 36, where the Spirit's act of purification is associated with water:

Ezekiel 36:24-27³⁹

For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ Then I will **sprinkle clean water on you**, and you will be clean; I will **cleans** you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put **a new spirit within you**; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ **I will put My Spirit within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Jesus may also⁴⁰ have in mind the life imparted by the Spirit in view of John 6:63 and Ezekiel 37:9-14:

Ezekiel 37:9-14

Then He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Come from the four winds, O breath, and

community as the one who gives the Spirit. In the Synoptic accounts, particularly in Luke-Acts, as in the Upper Room Discourse in John, the Spirit surrenders his authority over the Son as He is sent at Pentecost.

³⁷ John is not suggesting that Jesus somehow “merited” a beatific vision here. The Son who was face to face with the Father (1:1, 1:18) has seen the Father. The Spirit's presence upon Jesus makes him known to Israel's prophet (John the Baptist) as the Son of God.

³⁸ See the explanation in Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, volume 1 (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson, 2003), 550-51. Observe that Origen, certainly not too distant from this context, regarded this as a likely explanation of the construction (note 169).

³⁹ All references are taken from the New American Standard Bible unless noted otherwise.

⁴⁰ Keener, *John*, I:551, sees the possibility of “an implicit midrash on Ezekiel 36....”

breathe on these slain, that they come to life.”¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. ¹¹ Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.’ ¹² “Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. ¹⁴ **I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life**, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it,” declares the LORD.”¹⁴

This is also in keeping with Jesus’ affirmation of the meaning of his words in John 6 as he spoke of appropriating his flesh and blood in order to have true life: “**It is the Spirit who gives life**;⁴¹ the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” These words are to be understood in the context of John 5:20-27, where two divine prerogative powers are placed into the hands of the Son by God the Father: Giving life and giving judgment:

For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. ²¹For **just as the Father raises the dead** and gives them life, **even so the Son also** gives life to whom He wishes. ²²For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, ²³so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. ²⁵Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶For **just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also** to have life in Himself; ²⁷and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man.

Before leaving John 3, it is important to consider the effect of Spirit-generated birth from verse 8. Jesus drew upon the nature of the wind to describe the effect of the Spirit upon the believer. Just as the source and outcome of the wind are mysterious to man, so are those born by the Spirit. They reflect the character of the Spirit who affects their rebirth just as children reflect the nature of their parents. Their origin is related to the Spirit’s origin, from above (making them an anomaly to fleshly men). Their destiny, however, is tied to Jesus (John 14:3). Just as people did not know where Jesus was from or where he was going (see Appendix Three), so it is with the Spirit and people born of him.

There are, however, two double-entendre words in John 3:8. Consider the effect of this rendering of the verse in keeping with the tenor of Ezekiel 37:9-14:

⁴¹ In the activity of giving life, the Spirit joins company with Father and Son who do likewise (cf. John 5:21; Romans 4:17; 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:22).

The Spirit (wind) blows where it wishes and you hear the voice (sound) of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

It is possible that John intends this double force in the message of the book. The Spirit is speaking in the words of Jesus, but Nicodemus does not recognize it.

At the end of John 3, a dispute arises amongst John's disciples about Jesus and the meaning of his baptism for John's ministry. John's reply⁴² sets the stage for a later reference to the Spirit doing what Jesus does in his "from heaven" ministry:

John 3:31-35 ~ What the Son has Heard and Seen

He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. ³²What He has seen and heard, of that He bears witness; and no man receives His witness. ³³He who has received His witness has set his seal to *this*, that God is true. ³⁴For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure. ³⁵The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.

John testifies that Jesus is above all in having come from above (α;νωθεν ~ heaven) and truthfully bearing witness to what he has seen (cf. 3:11) *and heard* (ἠ;κουσεν) in the presence of the Father, the very words of God. What is significant is that John's figurative language here parallels his figurative use of ἀκου,ω with reference to the Spirit in 16:13. There the Spirit speaks what he "hears." It is a very important matter to discern *what the Spirit hears* and *where he hears it*. We shall return to this point below. John's implicit patterning of the Son taking what he has seen and heard from the Father. When viewed from the standpoint of Jesus' statement in John 3:8, it is actually the "voice" of the Spirit that provides puzzlement to the world. Keener summarizes:

John sometimes uses hearing as an image spiritually synonymous with vision (e.g., 8:38). The ἠ;νωη, or "sound" of the wind is also its "voice," the usual sense of the term in John. Friends of the bridegroom rejoice at his voice (3:29), and Jesus' sheep know his voice (10:3-5, 16, 27); Jesus' voice raises the dead (5:25, 28). Although God's voice occurs in other forms (12:28, 30), by virtue of his being God's word, Jesus is in effect God's voice, his form, his sent one, and the embodiment of life (5:37). One who rejects his message cannot "hear" God (8:47). Everyone who is from the truth hears Jesus' voice (18:37); hence only those born from the Spirit know the voice of the Spirit.⁴³

Later, in the upper room, Jesus will speak in a very similar way of the ministry of the Spirit. Jesus speaks God's words, we know, because God attested him by the Spirit

⁴² It is plausible to regard the entirety of the statement in these verses as proceeding from John the Baptists' testimony to Jesus.

⁴³ Keener, *John*, I:558.

(3:34; 15:26). Because the Father gave him,⁴⁴ Jesus possesses the Spirit in limitless measure and the Spirit abides on him.⁴⁵ The Spirit is Jesus' possession to give, but not to give away. Hence, the One whom God has sent (Jesus) speaks the words of God; God has given to the Son the Spirit without measure; and the Father has placed all things into the hands of the Son.

There is a sword to wield, apologetically, from this passage. At issue, in part, is Jesus' authority and how it is confirmed. It is established through the Father's confirmation of the words of Jesus as God's own words. If one asks, "How is this established?" it is replied that the unlimited presence of the Spirit upon Jesus authenticates him as more than mere prophet speaking on God's behalf. Whereas prophets received a measure of the Spirit in the past, Jesus *receives* from the Father *and gives* (4:10 a greater gift than water ~ through water imagery; 7:38-39) the Spirit without limitation (something no mere prophet could do). One might immediately bring to mind the passing of the mantle from Elijah to Elisha (the double portion). However, Jesus confers the Spirit from within⁴⁶ (7:37-39; 19:34 {if water there indicates the Spirit's presence}; 20:22) whereas Elijah passes the Spirit to Elisha. The Spirit is the evidence of God's authority in Jesus' ministry and word. The Spirit who abides upon Jesus (1:33) will abide upon his disciples (15:1-4), though with different purpose and results.

Once again, the *personal* nature of God's Gift to the Son and the Son's Gift to believers is, as yet in the progression of the narrative, undefined. Observe that the gift of the Spirit to the Son, once again as in 1:32ff does not occur through the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus. In the Baptist's perception, however, the Spirit does not "create" a relationship between Father and Son. Rather, the relationship between Father and Son that exists means that the Son *has* and *can give* the Spirit! This is not to suggest that the personal nature of the Spirit is ruled out by these references, only that it is not explicit. It would appear that the focus of heterodox and heretical groups has been upon the focus of John in the early narrative sections of John's gospel. Even these sections, however, implicitly give an argument for the deity and personality of the Spirit when coordinated with references to the Paraclete using similar terminology to that used of the Son in his relationship with the Father in these early narrative accounts.

In Jesus' dialogue with Samaritan women at the well of Jacob (John 4:13-14), he references *living water*: "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." In Jeremiah 17:13, God himself is imaged as living water: "O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the LORD." In addition, in 7:37-39, John draws the analogy of living water at the Feast of Booths:

⁴⁴ This rendering reflects God as the subject of the verb for giving. Hence, the One whom God has sent (Jesus) speaks the words of God; God has given to the Son the Spirit without measure; and the Father has placed all things into the hands of the Son.

⁴⁵ So D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 213.

⁴⁶ He does so not as though the Spirit were foreign to him, but as a result of the fact that the Father has committed all things into his hand; God has granted him to have this power in himself!

Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹But **this He spoke of the Spirit**, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Here, then, is the express equation of the Spirit with living water in John's record of Jesus' teaching. Since God is imaged in Jeremiah as living water, the intent of Jesus in making this promise in John 4 and 7 is to promise a future *internal abiding presence of God* as a result of belief in the Son. Several Old Testament passages were tied in with the festal celebration including Zechariah 14:8-9, Isaiah 44:3 and Joel 2:28. These passages depict waters flowing from Jerusalem as the Spirit of God is being poured out like water upon Israel. In addition, there is the editorial identification of the event of which Jesus spoke as future from the perspective of this occasion.

Jesus gives the Spirit from what he has had from the beginning: A relationship with the Father that implied the Spirit's presence all along. Just as the presence of the Spirit is continually associated with the presence of the Father, John does not argue for the deity of the Spirit in these initial chapters, he merely assumes it. John presents no arguments for the unity of the Spirit with God and, as we shall see, no arguments or illustrations for the mutual indwelling of the Father in the Spirit and the Spirit in the Father.⁴⁷ He is vitally concerned with presenting Jesus as the source of the life that comes from God. That life is connected with the Spirit who "gives life" as do the Father and the Son.

Jesus as Sender of the Spirit with the Father: The Activity of the Spirit *Before* and *After* Jesus' Resurrection

In Jesus' discourse of John 14-17, he addressed the perichoretic⁴⁸ relationship between the Father and the Son, but did not directly discuss any interpenetration of the Father and Son by the Spirit. This observation is not to affirm that such a relationship does not exist, only that John's gospel did not address it explicitly. Perhaps the closest John's terminology comes to broaching the doctrine is when Jesus affirms in John 16:13 that the Spirit will take what he "hears" and communicate it to the disciples. Instead, John depicts the believer "indwelling" the Father and the Son, in some sense, as a result of Jesus having sent the Spirit of God. The details of this indwelling are spelled out below.

The other function of Trinitarian relationships spelled out in John's gospel as a whole, and in the upper room discourse in particular, is the submissive relationship of the Son to the Father (and the Spirit to the Father and Son). It is important that apologists in the contemporary debate qualify their use of the term "subordinate" so as not to be

⁴⁷ Crump, "Re-examining," 398.

⁴⁸ Perichoresis is the "interrelationship or interpenetration of the Persons of the Trinity; the manner in which the three Persons are regarded as conjoined or interlinked without each one's distinct identity being lost. Cf. 'circumincession'" (the Latin translation of the term). The doctrine teaches us that members of the Trinity "cleave" but do not "intermingle." *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "perichoresis." The idea is that in their "cleaving" they are distinct from one another, yet are inseparable from one another. Thus, identity and interdependence are both preserved, and taught, in the doctrine of *perichoresis*.

misunderstood as introducing a hierarchical relationship within the Trinity (the Arian heresy of subordinationism). In using the word subordinate, one should imply the orthodox sense of $\tau\alpha\chi\iota\iota$ or “order” designating a proper disposition⁴⁹ rather than the Arian sense of ranking. It is perhaps best to avoid use of the term “subordinate” altogether. The Three are of identical essence (one being) and indwell each other with none being less or more God than the other. What is meant by $\tau\alpha\chi\iota\iota$ is that in the relation of the Father to the Son he begets the Son. In the relation of the Father and the Son to the Spirit they “spirate” (for want of a better term) the Spirit. In the economy of actions, the Father sends the Son and the Son and the Father send the Spirit.

John 14:17 ~ The Spirit-Paraclete in the Disciple of Jesus

In the context of his explanation of the Father in himself and himself in the Father (John 14:10 ~ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?), Jesus promises not to abandon his disciples, but to send the Paraclete⁵⁰:

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Observe the bold statement of fact that the Father will acquiesce to the Son’s request! The Spirit of truth (here, 15:26; 16:13) is always connected in John’s gospel to the Helper/Advocate {Paraclete}. Functionally, the presence of the Spirit in the disciple is proof of the presence of the Son in the disciple. The result of the accomplishment of this action by Jesus is explicit in verse 20: “In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” The presence of the Spirit within the disciples will confirm Jesus’ testimony that there is a perichoretic union between the Father and the Son and, further, a perichoretic union between individual disciple and Jesus. This is not merely the presence of the Spirit, but the indwelling of the believer in the Son. Further, the Paraclete is “another” ($\alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon$) paraclete;⁵¹ one of the same kind as Jesus. As Jesus mediated the presence of the Father to the disciples (there is no relationship with the Father apart from the mediation of the Son), this One will mediate the presence of the Son.

The language John uses is clearly not modalistic. The Son does not go away in order that God may “manifest” His presence as Spirit. The Spirit is not said to “replace”

⁴⁹ G. W. H. Lampe, editor, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 1372-1373.

⁵⁰ There is insufficient space to devote to the issue of the identity of the Paraclete from Johannine studies here. For purposes of this paper, his identity with the Spirit in earlier references is assumed and made explicit in John’s use of the term *pneuma* in the context as One who regenerates {gives life} in 3:5-8 and 6:63.. For additional discussion on the Paraclete, compare Anthony J. Casarella, *The Johannine Paraclete in the Church Fathers: A Study in the History of Exegesis* (Tubingen: J.C. B. Mohr, 1983).

⁵¹ Raymond E. Brown, “The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel” *New Testament Studies* 13 (1966-1967), 126-127 parallels Jesus’ ministry with the Spirit’s post-resurrection activities and suggests that the Spirit is functioning as Jesus alter-ego or replacement. It is clear that the Spirit takes Jesus place and carries on His ministry. See also Brown, *The Gospel of John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 2:1143.

Jesus or even to “become the real presence of Jesus” to the disciples.⁵² The Spirit assists in making the presence of Jesus real as his emissary, but Jesus sees the coming of the Spirit as accomplishing more than “bringing God” to the disciples. It is the bringing of his own presence in a way that he is actually present through the advocacy of *another* of the same kind! The Spirit ministers to the disciples by *making Jesus known*, testifying to *him*, and disclosing *him* because he (the Son) is absent. There must be a distinction with a difference here between Spirit and Son for the wording to make any sense. Jesus’ language differentiates between the Advocate and himself. True enough, the Spirit will carry forward specific ministries of the incarnate Son:

- **Teaching:**
 - As Jesus’ ministry (7:14-15 {to the astonishment of the Jews}; 18:19)
 - As the Spirit’s ministry (14:26 {teaching and bringing Jesus’ words to remembrance})
- **Bearing Witness:**
 - As Jesus’ ministry (5:31-32 – in concert with the Father’s testimony {cf. 8:13-14}; 7:7 – of the world’s evil deeds)
 - As the Spirit’s ministry (15:26 – testifying about Jesus/the Son)
 - Son and Spirit, speaking of what they have “heard” (Divine Discourse)
 - Jesus (7:17; 8:26; 14:10)
 - The Spirit (14:26; 16:13-14)
- **Disclosing and Revealing:**
 - As Jesus’ ministry (1:18 – mediating/exegeting the Father; 4:25 – declaring all things to God’s people)
 - As the Spirit’s ministry (16:13 – disclose what is to come)

But this carrying forward is not the Son “acting as though” he *were* the Spirit, but as the remainder of the discourse will make clear, the person of the Spirit acting on the Son’s behalf. The domains of ministry surely overlap, but the Persons are distinct as the Spirit does not receive glory from the Father or the Son (in the wording of John’s gospel) in acting on their behalf.

An implicit argument for the deity of the Spirit can be made by drawing parallels between the ministry of the Spirit on Jesus’ behalf and the similar wording in John’s gospel used to describe the ministry of the Father on Jesus behalf (Figure 1.1):

⁵² Ibid. Brown’s wording in his commentary diminishes the distinction between persons when he presents Jesus as “acting as the Paraclete.” Compare the similar wording in Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 141: Jesus acts “as the Spirit” is not as clear as “God acts through the Person of the Spirit.” It is the Spirit’s action on Jesus’ behalf.

Activities of Father and Spirit in Relation to Son and Believers in John's Gospel

Activity	FATHER	SPIRIT
Judge/Convict	5:22-30 ~ Father gives to the Son the right to judge 8:16 ~ Father judges <i>with</i> the Son	16:8-11 ~ Prosecutorial (convicting) role of the Spirit toward the world concerning belief in Jesus
Testify to Jesus	5:37 ~ Father testifies of the Son He sent 8:18 ~ testifies in concert with the Son's testimony of himself	15:26-27 ~ Spirit who proceeds from the Father will testify about Jesus
Glorify Jesus	5:44 ~ Jesus seeks glory from the Father 8:54 ~ Father glorifies Jesus	16:14 ~ Spirit glorifies Jesus by taking of what belongs to Jesus (all that the Father has) and disclosing it to disciples.
Teaching	6:45 ~ Prophets taught that God would teach; all who have learned from the Father come to Jesus	14:26 ~ Sent by the Father, the Spirit teaches disciples 16:13 ~ As Spirit of truth he guides to truth based on what he "hears."
Coming to disciples; making abode with them	14:23 ~ He is present enough for the disciples to ask Him, not Jesus	14:17 ~ the One who is with them will be in them.

Figure 1.1

Given these parallels, are the references to the Spirit in the table above merely references to the Father "exercising power" as *the* Holy Spirit in acting on Jesus' behalf?⁵³ Before drawing conclusions, Modalists and cultists should see that Jesus further pressed the distinctions between the persons of the Trinity in the wording of John 14:23-26:

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

⁵³ As do the Jehovah's Witnesses in their publication, "Should You Believe in the Trinity" (Watchtower Publications, 1989) This brief excerpt illustrates the point: THE Bible's use of "holy spirit" indicates that it is a **controlled force** that Jehovah God uses to accomplish a variety of his purposes. To a certain extent, it can be likened to electricity, a force that can be adapted to perform a great variety of operations. At Genesis 1:2 the Bible states that "God's active force ["spirit" (Hebrew, *ru'ach*)] was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters." Here, God's spirit was his active force working to shape the earth. ...The holy spirit is **God's active force** that he uses to accomplish his will. It is not equal to God but is always at his disposition and subordinate to him. {Bold emphasis mine}

Perhaps the best way to understand the modalistic view of God is as teaching that at no time did or have all three members of the Godhead act both *distinctly and simultaneously*. Here the Johannine account emphasizes *distinction*: The Father, on the Son's behalf (in My name) will send the Spirit who is expressly identified as the Paraclete or Helper to which Jesus referred earlier. In addition to the use of the personal pronouns in reference to the Holy Spirit⁵⁴ (suggesting an "I-thou" relationship to the Father), Jesus distinguishes what the Spirit will do as done "in his name."⁵⁵ The passage also emphasizes *simultaneity*: Even though Jesus' promise to "come" (14:18, 23) to the disciples presages his coming to them in John 20:19-23 where he imparts the Spirit to them through his breathing on them (see below), the action is performed concomitantly with clear distinction in the activity of the persons. The Holy Spirit is "another Counselor," distinct from the Father and the Son (John 14:16). Yet in the Spirit's action of indwelling, the Father and the Son also are present (John 14:23).

If the Spirit of God can be said to do all of the things listed in Figure 1.1, and the Spirit and the Paraclete are one, and if the Spirit is the life-giving entity that Jesus gives at the Father's pleasure (as the literal "breath of God" in 20:22), one might expect that John would write of the work of God and the work of the Spirit in interchangeable terms. But in the Upper Room discourse John draws clear distinctions between the Paraclete as the one whom the Father sends in Jesus' name (14:6, 26) and the Father himself. It may very well be that John builds no case for the unity of the person of the Spirit with God because he assumes it! Where else would the Holy Spirit come, if not from God?

In His Testimony Concerning Jesus, the Spirit "Personally" Promotes the Disciples' Evangelism

John 15:26-27

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,²⁷ and you *will* testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Though the world could not receive the Spirit, the Spirit would testify to it about Jesus. Even as the world did not receive the testimony of Jesus about himself (John 1:11; 3:11, 32, 8:37-43); it will not receive the testimony of the Spirit about Jesus. In the words of Jesus, both Spirit and Son are "sent" by the Father. The Father sent the Son with His words, Jesus sends (πε, μρω) the Spirit who goes forth (εκπορευ, ομαι)⁵⁶

⁵⁴ The cultist may object that the word "spirit" is neuter in gender and cannot be a person? John's Gospel twice refers to the Holy Spirit in a masculine gender: In 15:26: But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me and in John 16:13: Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. Helpfully the last passage also clarifies the nature of the relationship of the Spirit to the Father. Further, the identification of the Spirit as the Paraclete eliminates Dan Wallace's concern regarding the use of pronouns in arguments for the personhood of the Spirit.

⁵⁵ The name represented the character of a person or his actual presence. In this instance, the mediatorial presence of the Spirit who shares the full and singular essence with Father and Son implies both aspects.

⁵⁶ While the discussion is fruitful, we have not examined the doctrine of the procession of the Spirit to this point. John expresses no clear distinction in roles of Father and Son in this regard beyond the

from the Father (15:26) with His words (“what is mine” equated with “all that the Father has,” 16:15). Observe that, once again, there is simultaneity and distinction. Once again the Three act in concert in the interest of believers.

The result of the Spirit’s presence is that Jesus’ disciples are invigorated to plead the Son’s case before a hostile world.⁵⁷ The cultic idea of personification as applied to the Spirit in this context is implausible. Personification would suggest that Jesus is taking poetic license in ascribing to the Spirit something that is logically implausible for a spiritual being. There is nothing in these descriptions that cannot be true of an actual spiritual being. A purely spiritual being, (non-somatic) like the Spirit, can possess *personal characteristics* or perform *personal actions* so long as physical actions are not ascribed to it. Physical beings perform physical actions. A close reading of 15:26 supports the conclusion that this is not mere personification of a force:

...the Spirit of truth...will bear witness of Me...
 ...you also.....will bear witness (of Me...)

Jesus’ words reflect an understanding of the Spirit of truth as every bit as personal as the disciples who are invigorated by him to testify to Jesus. Consider also the actions of the Spirit and the consequent actions of the disciples or Jesus: The Spirit comes, guides, speaks, hears, discloses, and glorifies. All this he does on behalf of the disciples. In the larger present context, 15:26 extending through 16:13, Jesus, too, comes goes, and speaks on behalf of or for the benefit of the disciples! By the same kind of reckoning that such use of personification suggests, perhaps Jesus is not to be considered a person!

Now, there can be no doubt that the Bible does use personification often and in a variety of contexts. But to identify personification, to be consistent, one should provide clear evidence that the nature of the object/force/power thus personified is consistently non-personal. Some have employed a similar line of reasoning to conclude that the Holy Spirit the personification of the Bible or of God’s own mind.⁵⁸ The Holy Spirit does not fit in with this criterion. Let us illustrate.

Some have argued using personification arguments to a false view of the nature of Satan. They view the devil, not as a separate personal evil being, but as the personification of sin and disease (or other natural evils).⁵⁹ When Peter wrote: “the Devil prowls around seeking someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8), the idea is to make the nature of evil persistent, like a stalking beast. This would be a zoomorphism, likening sin and evil

taxis (order) in which the Son submits to the Father. It seems clear that what comes forth from God shares his qualities in some sense.

⁵⁷ See James M. Boice, *Witness and Revelation in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 153.

⁵⁸ An example would be the Dawn Christadelphians represented in Robert Roberts, *Christendom Astray* (by the author, 1922). An online version is available at <http://users.aol.com/bible4/chrast01.htm>.

⁵⁹ This would include the Bahá’í Faith which denies the existence of Satan, a devil, or an “evil force.” In their teaching, evil does not have independence existence, but is rather the absence of good, “just as darkness is the absence of light and cold is the absence of heat. Just as the sun is the unique source of all life in a solar system, so ultimately is there only one force or power in the universe, the force we call God. Bahá’u’lláh explained that references to Satan in the Scriptures of earlier religions are symbolic and should not be taken literally. Satan is the personification of man’s lower nature which can destroy him if it is not brought into harmony with his spiritual nature.” See Peter E. Smith, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá’í Faith* (Boston: Oneworld Publications, 2000).

to the form of a predatory beast. But actually, the zoomorphism would be applied to a personal being, Satan. It is hard to believe that Jesus had a conversation with a force in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 when he addressed Satan by name and called him “the prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Jesus also told us of some of the characteristics of Satan. Christ said he was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him, and that when he speaks he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). They argue their case by selectively choosing qualities that overlap and attempt to demonstrate that both share common qualities. They then conclude that since they have the same qualities, they are, indeed, identical.

The Spirit’s Particular Ministry to Believers and the Implications of that Ministry

The ministry of the Spirit in the life of Jesus differs from the ministry of the Spirit in the life of believers in several important ways. Nowhere in John’s gospel is Jesus said to *need* the guiding and teaching ministry of the Spirit elucidated in 16:12-15 in order to accomplish his mission. Instead, Jesus served to represent the One who sent him, speaking what he heard (3:32) from One whose voice he hears (5:37) and whose face he has seen (1:1). Jesus has the Spirit upon him at the outset of his ministry and, as we saw in the baptismal accounts, it was not for the benefit of Jesus so much as for John. Apart from all of this, Jesus is the one who gives (baptizes in) the Spirit as a means of imparting life. The disciples, however, have much to gain from the Spirit’s ministry that Jesus does not. As Athanasius wrote centuries ago: “Apart from the Spirit we are strange and distant from God, and by participation of the Spirit we are knit into the Godhead; so that our being in the Father is not ours, but is the Spirit’s which is in us and abides in us, while by the true confession we preserve it in us.”⁶⁰ What, then, do believers gain through the ministry of the Spirit according to John?

The first distinct gain that can be garnered from John is impartation of new life or regeneration. We have already seen that the Spirit gives life, an action of God (6:63). Incorporation into the life of fellowship with God, as a salvific action, is something that can only be accomplished by God himself. The coming of the Spirit inaugurates the coming of a new fellowship of God with the believer, for according to John’s gospel:

- The Father is *in* the Son (10:38; 14:10a; 17:21-23) and the Son is *in* the Father (10:38; 14:10b, 20; 17:21).
- The Father and Son will be *in* believers (14:18, 23; 17:22-23)
- Believers will be *in* the Son (“abide” language of 15:4ff)
- The Spirit will be *in* the disciples (14:17) and therefore the Son and the Father will make their abode in believers in the Son (14:18)

The fellowship is described by John using the intimate idea of “indwelling” God the Son by means of the indwelling Spirit. Through the Spirit, the Father and the Son come to the believer to indwell and the believer comes to indwell Father and Son: “If anyone loves

⁶⁰ Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, in NPNF, 2nd series, IV. Eds. James Donaldson and Alexander Roberts (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 406-407.

Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.” (14:23).

Yet the One who makes it possible for believers to be indwelt by Son and Father also ministers in a remarkable way in bringing forth what he hears. Jesus had borne witness to that which he had seen “and heard” (h;kousen tou/to marturei/), now the Spirit will “speak” only “whatever He hears” (o[sa avkou,sei lalh,sei):

John 16:7-15

I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but **whatever He hears, He will speak**; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose *it* to you. ¹⁵All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose *it* to you.

The cumulative effect of the Spirit’s ministry, thus sent, is that Jesus is glorified. The Father *sent* the Son with a message that could be trusted as coming from One who did not speak or come on His own initiative (John 8:28, 42; 12:49), but bore witness to what he had “*seen and heard.*” Now the Spirit who comes to the apostles is sent by Father and Son (or by the Father at the Son’s request), not of his own initiative (of himself). What he speaks is what he has heard and it that speaking is to be viewed as coming from Jesus’ things, which include all that belongs to the Father (16:15).

One need not resolve the issue of the meaning of the phrase “disclose to you what is to come” to get the full force of John’s argument. To reject the message thus disclosed/sent by the Spirit is to reject Jesus’ own message; to reject Jesus’ message is to reject God’s message! A second point to be raised here is that Jesus mediated the message of the Father to the disciples in a way that no prophet had in the past or could do in the present. Many had “received” (lh,myetai, from lamba,nw) messages from God, but none with the authority that Jesus presented. Jesus had received the words of the Father, the revelation of the Father. In a similar way, the Spirit’s announcement of what is to come along with what he *has heard* may hint at the counsel taken within the Godhead.

John 17: The Communication Within the Trinity

John 17 presents Jesus in his human and his divine nature. John 17:1 portrays the human nature of Jesus: “After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed.” Jesus’ prayer proceeds from his divine-human nature as well. In John 17:5 he spoke of “the glory I had with you before the world began.” The verse speaks of an eternal existence in the past. Such existence applies only to Jesus’ divine nature. We must conclude that Jesus is here speaking not merely from his human nature alone, but from his divine nature also. Such speaking continues throughout the chapter. The chapter contains repeated references to “glory,” alluding back to verse 5. And near the conclusion it contains another reference to eternal existence: “to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world” (verse 24). It says,

“You loved me.” Here again “me” refers to one who existed “before the foundation of the world.” It thus affirms Christ’s divine nature.

Verses 5 and 24 provide an *inclusio* for the passage. Together they indicate that the whole passage is a conversation between the Son and the Father. Father and Son converse meaningfully with one another. They also indwell one another, so that they are in unity (17:20). The Father is God, and the Son also is God (John 1:1; 20:28). Yet there is only one God (Deut. 6:4). John 17 does not explicitly mention the Holy Spirit (he is present in chapter 16 and earlier). Elsewhere the Bible shows a close correlation between the Spirit and the “glory” of God (1 Pet. 4:14 ~ “If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”). Glory is closely related to the Spirit as a manifestation of the Spirit or an effect produced by the Spirit. Hence, one may infer that the Spirit is obliquely represented in John 17 through the mention of “glory.” But even apart from this, the near context references the Spirit and Jesus has moved, in context, to pray for oneness such as that he has described in chapters 14-16.

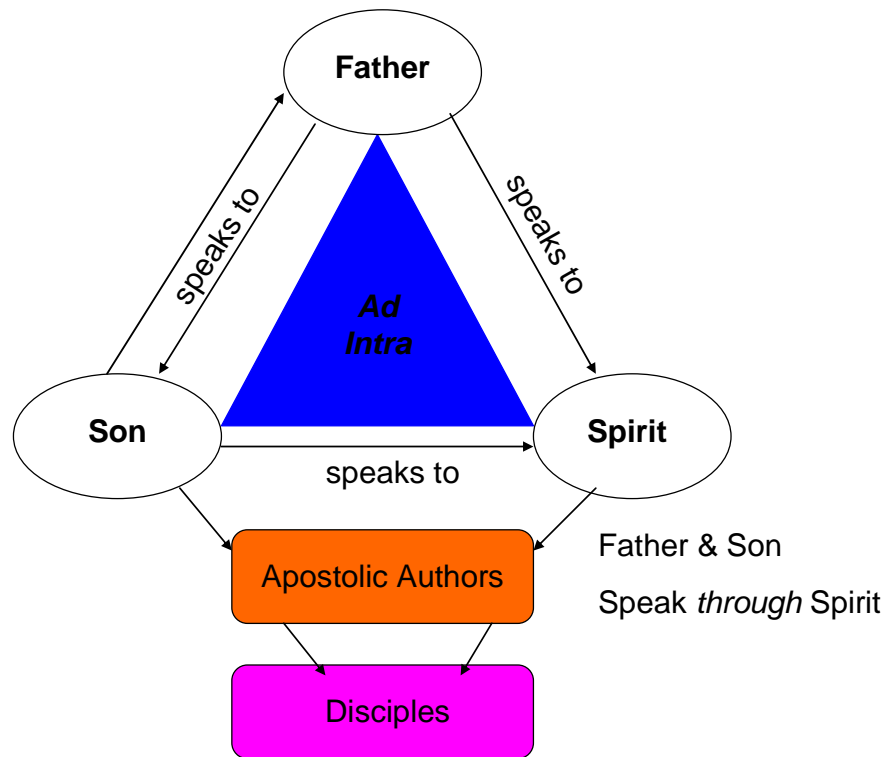
John 17 references a past communication between Father and Son. Jesus refers to the “word” or “words” that the Father has given him (17:8, 14, 17) that he, in turn, has given to the disciples (verse 8) or the very “words you gave me”⁶¹ (verse 8; cf. 14). “The words you gave me” (John 17:6) are those to which God the Son responds in the rest of the chapter. God the Son must first have heard the Father in order to respond. *What Jesus heard and bore witness to is referenced in this chapter.* Several types of speech occur in John 17. First, at some point, the Father spoke to the Son to give him his “word” or “words.” Further, the Son spoke to the Father, in the whole of John 17 and acknowledges having received the Father’s words to speak to his disciples. Jesus made it explicit: When the Son speaks, the Father also speaks: “The words that I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work” (John 14:10). Jesus says, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (verse 17). His request clearly hints that the word of the Father, as delivered through the Son, *remains accessible among the disciples, in order to sanctify them.* This provides the clue for what the Spirit hears and discloses to the disciples of Jesus. Jesus’ words found their origin in the Father. The Spirit’s words are from the same Counsel. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is present as divine Teacher (John 14:26-27; 15:26-27; 16:12-15, 25-28). The Father, the Son, and the Spirit, by virtue of mutual indwelling, have a deep unity in their speech.

Thus, through the text of the Gospel of John, we moderns also enjoy the Spirit’s ministry, and thus become recipients of the word of Christ. The Father speaks to and through the Son (John 17:8). The Son speaks to the Father (John 17:1-26) and to the disciples (John 17:13). The Spirit hears from the Father and the Son (John 16:13) and speaks to the apostles and other inspired writers (John 16:14-15). This results in the deposit of the Scriptures which are also a ministry of the Spirit (Figure 1.2).

⁶¹ The language of “giving” is closely associated with the language of “sending,” as in the expression “you sent me into the world” (17:18; and the “sent” nature of the Spirit).

The Three in Communion and Communication Divine Discourse in John's Gospel

Figure 1.2 Divine Discourse in John's Gospel



Concluding Observations

The gospel of John paints a portrait of the Holy Spirit in relationship to the Son that focuses first and primarily on the Spirit's role in having a ministry toward disciples and not toward the Son or the Father. Because of this emphasis, the early chapters of the gospel of John focus less on the role that the Spirit plays in relationship to the Father and the Son. John assumes his readers will understand the Spirit as coming forth from God and focuses rather on the benefit for his readers in understanding Jesus' role as the one who gives the Spirit and gives regenerating life through the Spirit. John does not explicitly confirm the Spirit's interpenetration of Father and Son, but instead presents Jesus' teaching that the Spirit will represent him effectively in things pertaining to God and salvation and revelation, just as he (Jesus) has effectively represented the Father in his earthly ministry. En route to drawing his readers' attention to this fact, John portrays a mutual exchange of divine communication in which the Son and the Spirit hear, bear witness, and speak in the fellowship of the Trinity. *What is heard* finds its origin in the Father's words (which Jesus speaks and the Spirit echoes and amplifies). That it

originates in the Father is clear, for all that belongs to the Father is the Son's. The Spirit discloses not only what belongs to Jesus, but "what is to come." This is John's important clue to as to **where he heard it**.

Why should the children of a king
Go mourning all their days?
Great Comforter, descend and bring
Some tokens of your grace.

Do you not dwell in all your saints,
And seal the heirs of heaven?
When will you banish my complaints,
And show my sins forgiven?

Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood;
And bear your witness with my heart,
That I am born of God.

You are the earnest of his love,
The pledge of joys to come;
And your soft wings, celestial Dove,
Will safe convey me home.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Appendix One

THE HEAVENLY ORIGIN OF CHRIST IN JOHN'S WRITINGS

Johannine Passage	Occasion	Exegetical Features
John 1:15, 18, 30	John the Baptist's testimony	"He comes before me" "manifested to Israel"
John 3:13, 16, 31	Jesus with Nicodemus	"Son of Man which is in heaven (descends)"
John 6:33, 38, 42, et al	Jesus with unbelieving crowds seeking bread	Jesus is "bread from heaven" (manna)
John 7:29	Jesus in the Temple targeted by leaders	"I am from Him (God), He has sent Me."
John 8:23, 42	Jesus in the Temple Treasury; confronted by the Jewish leaders	"I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world."
John 9:39	Healing of blind man; spiritual blindness.	For judgment I have come into this world . . .
John 14-17	Upper Room Discourse	"I prepare a place" "Glorify thou Me . . . with the glory which I had with Thee (17:5)"
1 John 1:1-4; 4:1ff.	John defines apostolic fellowship	With the Father from the beginning
2 John 7	Deception in Church	Antichrist denies Jesus has come in the flesh.

Origin of Jesus' Authority:
Themes in John 8:12-20 are Expanded in 8:21-59

Where Does Jesus Come From?	Where is Jesus Going?	Who is the Father?	Who is Jesus?
"from above" (23)	A place where "you can't come" (21-22)	He who sent the Son {God} (26-27)	The One to come, who will judge (23-26)
With the Father (26)	"When you lift up the Son of Man..." (28)	Abraham's God and Jesus' Father (38)	Proceeded forth from God (38)
Father "sent" Jesus (29)		"of Whom you say "He is our God" (54-55)	Glorified by the Father God (54-55)
Reversal of Themes Applied to Unbelieving Jews			
The Jews are "of this world, from below" (23)	"You cannot come where I go" (24)	"...you are of your father, the devil" (44)	"a demon-possessed Samaritan" (48)

Appendix Two

The Heavenly Origin of the Spirit in John's Gospel

Passage in Gospel	Occasion	Exegetical Features
1:32-33	Jesus' baptism	"out of heaven" "descending"
3:6-7	Nicodemus' encounter with Jesus	"from above" "born of the Spirit"
14:16-17	Upper room to disciples	"Spirit of truth" World cannot see him, does not know him, though he was currently abiding "with" the disciples
14:26	Upper room to disciples	Father will send Him in Jesus' name
15:26	Upper room to	Jesus will send Him

	disciples	from the Father (who is in heaven) Spirit “goes forth” from the Father
16:14-15	Upper room to disciples	He will “take of mine” (which means he will take of what is the Father’s in heaven)
20:22	After the resurrection to the disciples	Receive the Spirit (breath of God) through Jesus’ breath

APPENDIX THREE
REFUTING A COMMON CULTIC
MISREPRESENTATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit or the Holy Bible?		
The Word of God	Commonality	The Spirit of God
James 1:18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth , so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.	Giving of life to believers	2 Corinthians 3:6 who also made us adequate <i>as</i> servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. ⁶²
2 Peter 1:23 you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, <i>that is</i> , through the living and abiding word of God	born again through it	John 3:5-8 Unless one is born of water and the Spirit , he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
2 Timothy 4:2	Both reprove	John 16:8

⁶² Even this reference to the word of God qualifies why the word of God has this effect: It is the product of the life-producing God who gives life.

2 Timothy 3:16-17	Both teach	1 Corinthians 2:13
James 1:21	Both save	Titus 3:5

Logically, however, the fact that two things have similar qualities does not require that they are identical. An orange and a baseball share roundness. Humans and grapes have skin. Even identical twins have many similar qualities but are distinct persons.

In addition, there are several qualities the Holy Spirit has that the word does not. Admittedly, the Bible is ascribed functions that might in the proper context imply personhood, (speaking, convicting, leading, teaching, etc). But these terms are not the exclusive domain of persons. They are also normal applications of what a book is capable of doing.

Certain actions are never credited to the Bible, that are attributed to the Holy Spirit. This includes things like emotion, intercession, and the ability to choose, exercise free will, or be worshipped. The many similarities between what the Bible is said to do and what the Holy Spirit is said to do, is because the Bible is the product of the Spirit's creative breath (2 Peter 1:21) and the instrument the Holy Spirit uses to convict, convert and guide the church. The Bible is the "sword of the Spirit," not the Spirit Himself, because it is an instrument he uses to accomplish His will (Ephesians 6:17).

In order to illustrate these points, one might construct a chart that illustrates characteristics or actions that God the Father shares with the Holy Spirit and that the Bible cannot do:

The Holy Spirit	God the Father	The Bible
Raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11).	Raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:24)	Does not raise any from the dead
Will give life to our mortal bodies (Romans 8:11); Gives life (John 6:63)	Gives life to the dead (Romans 4:17; 1 Timothy 6:13)	Does not originate life but authenticates the existence of life.
Adopts believers and confirms the adoption (Romans 8:15-16)	Adopted Israel by covenant as sons (Romans 9:4)	Does not adopt
Our Comforter, by identity (<i>parakletos</i> ~ John 14:26)	The Father of all comfort (<i>paraklesis</i> ~ 2 Corinthians 1:3-4)	Not a lawyer or "one who comes alongside of another"
Scripture is the product of	Giver of revelation at	The Bible did not reveal

the Spirit “buoying along” those who wrote it (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16)	Sinai (Exodus) and of all true Scripture as His breath (2 Timothy 3:16)	itself or give itself, or lead authors in its production.
Believers bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)	We are temples of God because the Spirit dwells in us (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)	The Bible does not make us temples individually or corporately