

*The*  
PRESENCE & WORK  
OF THE  
HOLY  
*Spirit*



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HOLY  
*Spirit*

R. A. TORREY



**Publisher's note:**

The author's selection of Bible versions has been retained whenever possible, including the Revised Version when it was originally cited. The text of this book, however, has been updated for the modern reader. Words, expressions, and sentence structure have been revised for clarity and readability.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible. Scripture quotations marked (ASV) are from the American Standard Edition of the Revised Version of the Holy Bible.

Scripture quotations marked (RV) are taken from the  
Revised Version of the Holy Bible.

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**THE PRESENCE AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**  
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One

## The Personality of the Holy Spirit

**B**efore one can correctly understand the work of the Holy Spirit, he must first of all know the Spirit Himself. A frequent source of error and fanaticism about the work of the Holy Spirit is the attempt to study and understand His work without first of all coming to know Him as a person.

It is of the highest importance from the standpoint of worship that we decide whether the Holy Spirit is a divine person, worthy to receive our adoration, our faith, our love, and our entire surrender to Himself, or whether it is simply an influence emanating from God or a power or an illumination that God imparts to us. If the Holy Spirit is a divine person and we do not know Him as such, then we are robbing a divine Being of the worship and the faith and the love and the surrender to Himself that are His due.

It is also of the highest importance from a practical standpoint that we decide whether the Holy Spirit is merely some mysterious and wonderful power that we, in our weakness and ignorance, are somehow to get hold of and use, or whether the Holy Spirit is a real person, infinitely holy, infinitely wise, infinitely mighty,

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and infinitely tender, who is to get hold of and use us. The former conception is utterly heathenish, not essentially different from the thought of the African fetish worshiper who has a god that he uses. The latter conception is sublime and Christian. If we think of the Holy Spirit, as so many do, as merely a power or influence, our constant thought will be, "How can I get more of the Holy Spirit?" But if we think of Him in the biblical way as a divine person, our thought will instead be, "How can the Holy Spirit have more of me?"

The conception of the Holy Spirit as being a divine influence or power that we are somehow to get hold of and use leads

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**The Holy Spirit  
is a person,  
infinitely wise  
as well as  
infinitely mighty.**

---

to self-exaltation and self-sufficiency. One who so thinks of the Holy Spirit and who at the same time imagines that he has received the Holy Spirit will almost inevitably be full of spiritual pride and strut about as if he belonged to some superior order of Christians. One frequently hears such people say, "I am a Spirit-filled man," or "I am a Spirit-filled woman."

But if we once grasp the thought that the Holy Spirit is a divine person of infinite majesty, glory, holiness, and power, who in marvelous condescension has come into our hearts to make His abode there and take possession of our lives and make use of them, it will put us in the dust and keep us in the dust. I can think of no thought more humbling or more overwhelming than the thought that a person of divine majesty and glory dwells in my heart and is ready to use even me.

It is of the highest importance from the standpoint of experience that we know the Holy Spirit as a person. Thousands and tens of thousands of men and women can testify to the



## THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

blessing that has come into their own lives as they have come to know the Holy Spirit. They have come to know the Holy Spirit not merely as a gracious influence (emanating, it is true, from God) but as a real person, just as real as Jesus Christ Himself. He is an ever-present, loving Friend and mighty Helper who is not only by their sides at all times but also dwells in their hearts every day and every hour. He is ready to undertake for them in every emergency of life. Thousands of ministers, Christian workers, and Christians in the humblest spheres of life have spoken to me or written to me of the complete transformation of their Christian experience that came to them when they grasped the thought (not merely in a theological but in an experiential way) that the Holy Spirit is a person and consequently came to know Him.

There are at least four distinct proofs in the Bible that the Holy Spirit is a person.

### Proof #1—The Character of the Holy Spirit

All the distinctive characteristics of personality are ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Bible. What are these distinctive characteristics, or marks, of personality? Knowledge, feeling or emotion, and will. Any entity that thinks and feels and wills is a person. When we say that the Holy Spirit is a person, there are those who understand us to mean that the Holy Spirit has hands and feet and eyes and ears and mouth and so on, but these are not the characteristics of personality but of bodily substance. All of these characteristics, or marks, of personality are repeatedly ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments.

We read in 1 Corinthians,

*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man*

## THE PRESENCE AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*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 2:10–11)

Here, knowledge is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. We are clearly taught that the Holy Spirit is not merely an influence that illuminates our minds to comprehend the truth but a Being who Himself knows the truth.

We also read, “*But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will*” (1 Corinthians 12:11). Here, will is ascribed to the Spirit, and we are taught that the Holy Spirit is not a power that we get hold of and use according to our desires but a person of sovereign majesty who uses us according to His will.

This distinction is of fundamental importance in our getting into right relations with the Holy Spirit. It is at this very point

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**The Spirit  
does not just  
illuminate; He  
Himself knows  
the truth.**

---

that many honest seekers after power and efficiency in service go astray. They are reaching out after and struggling to get possession of some mysterious and mighty power that they can make use of in their work according to their own desires. They will never get possession of the power they seek until they come to recognize that there is not some divine power for them to get hold of and use in their blindness and ignorance but that there is a person, infinitely wise as well as infinitely mighty, who is willing to take possession of them and use them according to His own perfect will.

When we stop to think of it, we must rejoice that there is no divine power that we beings, so ignorant and so liable to err as we are, can get hold of and use. How appalling might be the results if there were. But what a holy joy must come into our hearts

## THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

when we grasp the thought that there is a divine person, One who never errs, who is willing to take possession of us, impart to us such gifts as He sees best, and use us according to His wise and loving will.

We read in Romans 8:27, *“And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”* In this passage, “mind” is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The Greek word translated *mind* is a comprehensive word, including the ideas of thought, feeling, and purpose. It is the same word used in Romans 8:7 where we read that *“the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”* So in this verse, all the distinctive marks of personality are included in the word *mind* and are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

We find the personality of the Holy Spirit brought out in a most touching and suggestive way in Romans 15:30: *“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”* Here we have “love” ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The reader would do well to stop and ponder those five words: *“the love of the Spirit.”*

We dwell often upon the love of God the Father. It is the subject of our daily and constant thought. We dwell often upon the love of Jesus Christ the Son. Who would think of calling himself a Christian if he passed a day without meditating on the love of his Savior? But how often have we meditated upon *“the love of the Spirit”*?

Each day of our lives, if we are living as Christians ought, we kneel down in the presence of God the Father, look up into His face, and say, “I thank you, Father, for Your great love that led You to give Your only begotten Son to die upon the cross of

## THE PRESENCE AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Calvary for me.” Each day of our lives we also look up into the face of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and say, “Oh, glorious Lord and Savior, Jesus the Son of God, I thank You for Your great love that led You not to count it a thing to be on equality with God but to empty Yourself, and forsaking all the glory of heaven, come down to earth with all its shame and take my sins upon Yourself and die in my place upon the cross of Calvary.”

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**If it had not  
been for the  
love of God, I  
would be in  
hell today.**

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But how often do we kneel and say to the Holy Spirit, “Oh, eternal and infinite Spirit of God, I thank You for Your great love that led You to come into this world of sin and darkness and to seek me out and to follow me so patiently until You brought me to see my utter ruin and need for a Savior and to reveal to me my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as just the Savior whom I need.” Yet we owe our salvation just as truly to the love of the Spirit as we do to the love of the Father and the love of the Son.

If it had not been for the love of God the Father looking down upon me in my utter ruin and providing a perfect atonement for me in the death of His own Son on the cross of Calvary, I would have been in hell today. If it had not been for the love of Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God, looking upon me in my utter ruin and, in obedience to the Father, putting aside all the glory of heaven for all the shame of earth and taking my place, the place of the curse, upon the cross of Calvary and pouring out His life utterly for me, I would have been in hell today. But if it had not been for the love of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in answer to the prayer of the Son (see John 14:16), leading Him to seek me out in my utter blindness and ruin, I would have been in hell today. He followed me day after day, week after week, and year after year when I persistently turned a deaf ear to His pleadings,

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following me through paths of sin where it must have been agony for that holy One to go until at last I listened. And He opened my eyes to see my utter ruin and then revealed Jesus to me as just the Savior that would meet my every need. He then enabled me to receive this Jesus as my own Savior. If it had not been for this patient, long-suffering, never-tiring, infinitely tender love of the Holy Spirit, I would have been in hell today. Oh, the Holy Spirit is not merely an influence or a power or an illumination but is a person, just as real as God the Father or Jesus Christ His Son.

The personality of the Holy Spirit comes out in the Old Testament as truly as in the New, for we read in Nehemiah 9:20, *"Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst."* Here, both intelligence and goodness are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. There are some who tell us that while it is true the personality of the Holy Spirit is found in the New Testament, it is not found in the Old. However, it is certainly found in this passage. While it is true that the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit is not as fully developed in the Old Testament as in the New, the doctrine is nevertheless there.

There is perhaps no passage in the entire Bible in which the personality of the Holy Spirit comes out more tenderly and touchingly than in the following: *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption"* (Ephesians 4:30). Here, grief is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a blind, impersonal influence or power that comes into our lives to illuminate, sanctify, and empower us. No, He is immeasurably more than that. He is a holy person who comes to dwell in our hearts, One who sees clearly every act we perform, every word we speak, every thought we entertain, even the most fleeting fancy that is allowed to pass through our minds. If there is anything in act or word or deed that is impure, unholy, unkind,

## THE PRESENCE AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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selfish, mean, petty, or untrue, this infinitely Holy One is deeply grieved by it. I know of no thought that will help a person more than this to lead a holy life and to walk softly in the presence of the Holy One.

How often a young man is kept back from yielding to the temptations that surround young manhood by the thought that if he should yield to the temptation that now assails him, his godly mother might hear of it and would be grieved by it beyond expression. How often some young man has had his hand upon the door of some place of sin that he is about to enter and the thought has come to him, "If I should enter there, my mother might hear of it, and it would nearly kill her," and he has turned his back upon that door and gone away to lead a pure life that he might not grieve his mother.

There is One who is holier than any mother, One who is more sensitive against sin than the purest woman who ever walked this earth and who loves us as even no mother ever loved. This One dwells in our hearts, if we are really Christians, and He sees every act we do by day or under cover of the night. He hears every word we utter in public or in private. He sees every thought we entertain. He beholds every fancy and imagination that is permitted even a momentary lodging in our mind. If there is anything unholy, impure, selfish, mean, petty, unkind, harsh, unjust, or in any way evil in act or word or thought or fancy, He is grieved by it. If we will allow those words, "*grieve not the holy Spirit of God,*" to sink into our hearts and become the motto of our lives, they will keep us from many a sin. How often some thought or fancy has knocked for an entrance into my own mind and was about to find entertainment there when the thought came, "The Holy Spirit sees that thought and will be grieved by it," and then the thought has gone.

## THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### PROOF #2—THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Many acts that only a person can perform are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, and we deny the personality of the Holy Spirit, many passages of Scripture become meaningless and absurd. For example, we read in 1 Corinthians 2:10,

*“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”*

This passage sets before us the Holy Spirit not merely as an illumination whereby we are enabled to grasp the deep things of God but as a person who Himself searches the deep things of God and then reveals to us the precious discoveries that He has made.

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**The Spirit who dwells in our hearts sees every act we do by day or by night.**

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We read in Revelation 2:7, *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”* Here, the Holy Spirit is set before us not merely as an impersonal enlightenment that comes to our mind but as a person who speaks and, out of the depths of His own wisdom, whispers into the ear of His listening servant the precious truth of God.

In Galatians 4:6 we read, *“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”* Here, the Holy Spirit is represented as crying out in the heart of the individual believer. The Holy Spirit is not merely a divine influence, producing in our own hearts the assurance of our sonship; no, He is also one who cries out in our hearts, who bears witness together with our spirit that we are sons of God (see Romans 8:16).

The Holy Spirit is also represented in the Scripture as one who prays: *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we*



## THE PRESENCE AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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*know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"* (Romans 8:26).

It is plain from this passage that the Holy Spirit is not merely an influence that moves us to pray, not merely an illumination that teaches us how to pray, but rather a person who Himself prays in and through us.

There is wondrous comfort in the thought that every true believer has two divine persons praying for him. One is Jesus Christ, the Son who was once upon this earth, who knows all about our temptations, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and who is now ascended to the right hand of the Father and in that place of authority and power ever lives to make intercession for us. (See Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1.) There is another person, just as divine as Christ, who walks by our side each day; who dwells in the innermost depths of our being; who knows our needs even as we do not know them ourselves; and who, from these depths, makes intercession to the Father for us. The position of the believer is indeed one of perfect security with these two divine persons praying for him.

We read in John 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.*" Here the Holy Spirit is set before us as a person who gives His testimony to Jesus Christ not merely as an illumination that enables the believer to testify of Christ but rather as a person who Himself testifies. A clear distinction is drawn in this and in the following verse between the testimony of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the believer to whom He has borne His witness, for we read, "*And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning*" (John 15:27). So there are two witnesses: the Holy



## THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Spirit bearing witness to the believer and the believer bearing witness to the world.

The Holy Spirit is also spoken of as a teacher: “*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*” (John 14:26). And in a similar way, we read,

*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 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. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.*

(John 16:12–14)

And in the Old Testament, we read, “*Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them*” (Nehemiah 9:20).

In all these passages it is perfectly clear that the Holy Spirit is not a mere illumination that enables us to apprehend the truth but a person who comes to us to teach us day by day the truth of God. It is the privilege of the humblest believer

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**The Holy Spirit leads and guides the children of God.**

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in Jesus Christ not merely to have his mind illumined to comprehend the truth of God but to have a divine teacher who daily teaches him the truth he needs to know. (See 1 John 2:20, 27.)

The Holy Spirit is also represented as the leader and guide of the children of God. We read in Romans 8:14, “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” He is not merely an influence that enables us to see the way that God would have us go, or merely a power that gives us strength to go that way, but rather a person who takes us by the hand and gently leads us on in the paths in which God would have us walk.

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The Holy Spirit also has authority to command men in their service of Jesus Christ. We read of the apostle Paul and his companions,

*Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.* (Acts 16:6–7)

Here, it is a person who leads and directs Paul and his companions and a person whose authority they recognized and to whom they instantly submitted.

Further still than this the Holy Spirit is represented as the One who is the supreme authority in the church, who calls men to work and appoints them to office. We read in Acts 13:2, “*As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*” And, “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*” (Acts 20:28). There can be no doubt to a candid seeker after truth that it is a person of divine majesty and sovereignty who is here set before us.

From all the passages here quoted, it is evident that many acts that only a person can perform are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

### PROOF #3—THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

An office is asserted by the Holy Spirit that can only be asserted by a person. Our Savior said,

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither*

## THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* (John 14:16–17)

Our Lord had announced to the disciples that He was about to leave them. An awful sense of desolation took possession of them. Sorrow filled their hearts (see John 16:6) at the contemplation of their loneliness and absolute helplessness when Jesus would thus leave them alone. To comfort them, the Lord told them that they would not be left alone, that in leaving them, He was going to the Father and that He would pray that the Father would give them another Comforter to take the place of Himself during His absence.

Is it possible that Jesus Christ could have used such language if the other Comforter who was coming to take His place was only an impersonal influence or power? Still more, is it possible that Jesus could have said as He did in John 16:7, *“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,”* if this Comforter whom He was to send was simply an impersonal influence or power? No, one divine person was going, another person just as divine was coming to take His place. For the disciples, it was necessary that the One go to represent them before the Father because another just as divine and sufficient was coming to take His place. This promise of our Lord and Savior of the coming of the other Comforter and of His abiding with us is the greatest and best of all for the present dispensation. This is the promise of the Father (see Acts 1:4), the promise of promises. We will take it up again when we come to study the names of the Holy Spirit.

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**The Holy Spirit is the supreme authority in the church.**

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## THE PRESENCE AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### PROOF #4—THE TREATMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A treatment is asserted by the Holy Spirit that could only be asserted by a person. We read in Isaiah 63:10 (ASV), *“But they rebelled and grieved his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.”* Here, we are told that the Holy Spirit is rebelled against and grieved. (Compare Ephesians 4:30.) Only a person, and only a person of authority, can be rebelled against. Only a person can be grieved. You cannot grieve a mere influence or power.

In Hebrews we read,

*Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*

(Hebrews 10:29)

Here, we are told that the Holy Spirit is *“done despite unto”* (treated with contempt). There is but one kind of entity in the universe that can be treated with contempt (or insulted), and that is a person. It is absurd to think of treating an influence or a power or any kind of being, except a person, with contempt.

We also read, *“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?”* (Acts 5:3). Here, we have the Holy Spirit represented as one who can be lied to. One cannot lie to anything but a person.

In Matthew we read,

*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. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*

(Matthew 12:31–32)

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Here, we are told that the Holy Spirit is blasphemed against. It is impossible to blaspheme anything but a person. If the Holy Spirit is not a person, it certainly cannot be a more serious and decisive sin to blaspheme Him than it is to blaspheme the Son of Man, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ Himself.

Here, then, we have four distinctive and decisive lines of proof that the Holy Spirit is a person. Theoretically most of us believe this, but do we, in our real thoughts of Him and in our practical attitudes toward Him, treat Him as if He were indeed a person?

At the close of an address on the personality of the Holy Spirit at a Bible conference some years ago, one who had been a church member many years, a member of one of the most orthodox of our modern denominations, said to me, "I never thought of the Holy Spirit before as a person." Doubtless this Christian woman had often sung,

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Doubtless she had often sung,

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost.  
As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be.  
World without end,  
Amen, Amen.

However, it is one thing to sing words; it is quite another thing to realize the meaning of what we sing. If this Christian woman

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had been questioned in regard to her doctrine, she would doubtless have said that she believed that there were three persons in the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But a theological confession is one thing; a practical realization of the truth we confess is quite another. So the question is altogether necessary, no matter how orthodox you may be in your doctrinal statements: Do you indeed regard the Holy Spirit as real a person as Jesus Christ, as loving and wise and strong, as worthy of your confidence and love and surrender as Jesus Christ Himself?

The Holy Spirit came into this world to be to the disciples of our Lord after His departure, and to us, what Jesus Christ had been to them during the days of His personal companionship with them. (See John 14:16–17.) Is He that to you? Do

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**The Scriptures  
are clear  
that the  
Holy Spirit  
is a person.**

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you know Him? Every week in your life you hear the apostolic benediction, "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all*" (2 Corinthians 13:14), but while you hear it, do you take in the significance of it? Do you know the communion of the Holy Spirit? The fellowship of the Holy Spirit? The partnership of the Holy Spirit? The comradeship of the Holy Spirit? The intimate, personal friendship of the Holy Spirit?

Here lies the whole secret of a real Christian life, a life of liberty and joy and power and fullness. To have the Holy Spirit as one's ever-present friend and to be conscious of this fact, and to surrender one's life in all its departments entirely to His control—this is true Christian living. The doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit is as distinctive of the religion that

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Jesus taught as the doctrines of the deity and the atonement of Jesus Christ Himself. But it is not enough to believe the doctrine; one must know the Holy Spirit Himself. The whole purpose of this chapter (God, help me to say it reverently) is to introduce you to my friend, the Holy Spirit.