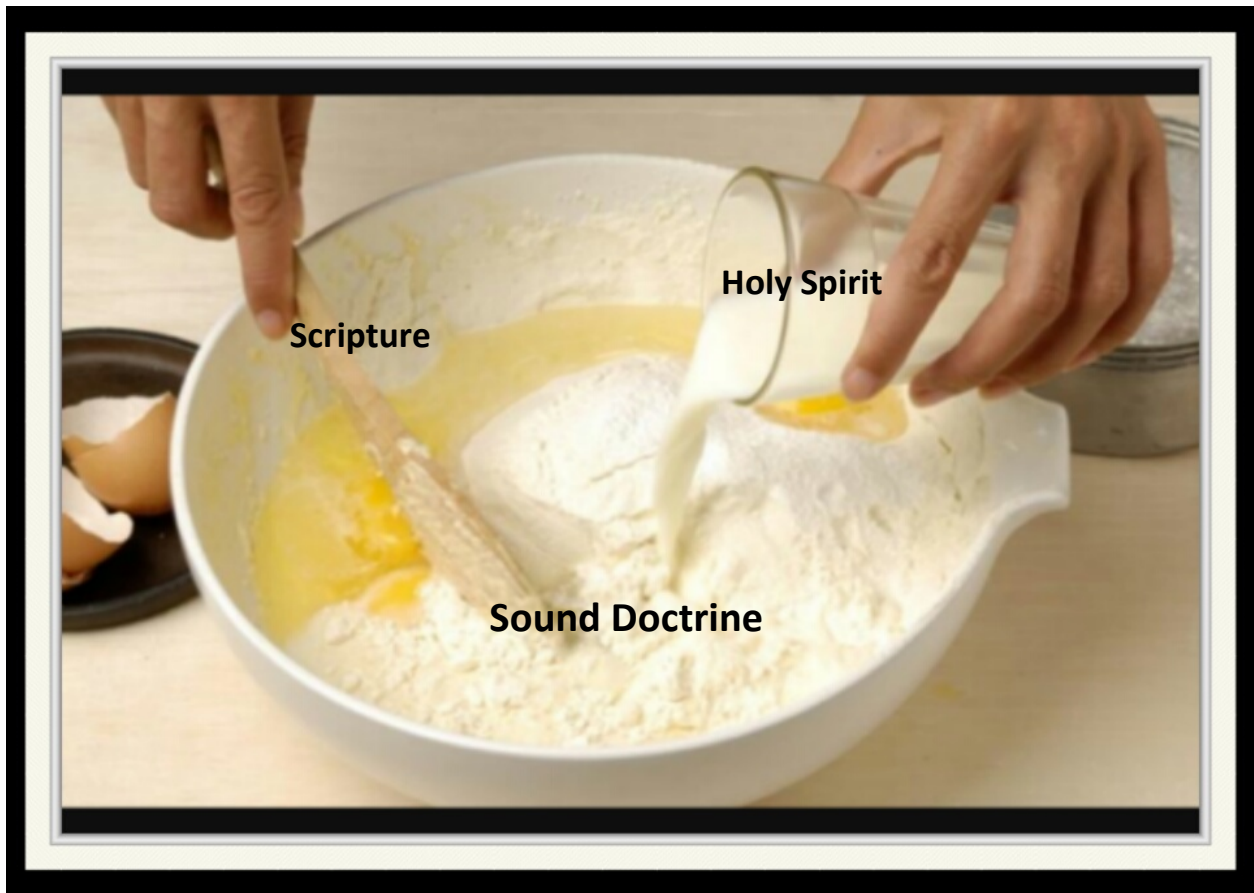


**National Baptist Congress of
Christian Education
Moderator's Division
Dr. W.J. Wyne, Moderator's President**

**Two Necessary Ingredients for
Sound Doctrine**



Dr. Cato Brooks, Jr., Instructor

What is *Sola Scriptura*?

God's Word Alone: The Authority of Scripture, which is another way of saying *sola Scriptura*. *Sola Scriptura* means that only Scripture, because it is God's inspired Word, is our inerrant, sufficient, and final authority for the church.

First, this means that Scripture alone is our *final* authority. *Authority* is a bad word in our day of rugged individualism. But the Bible is all about authority. In fact, *sola Scriptura* means that the Bible is our chief, supreme, and ultimate authority. Notice, however, that I didn't say the Bible is our only authority. *Sola Scriptura* is too easily confused today with *nuda Scriptura*, the view that we should have "no creed but the Bible!" Those who sing this mantra believe that creeds, confessions, the voices of tradition, and those who hold ecclesiastical offices carry no authority in the church. But this was not the Reformers' position, nor should it be equated with *sola Scriptura*.

Sola Scriptura acknowledges that there are other important authorities for the Christian, authorities who should be listened to and followed. But Scripture alone is our *final* authority. It is the authority that rules over and governs all other authorities. It is the authority that has the final say. We could say that while church tradition and church officials play a *ministerial* role, Scripture alone plays a *magisterial* role. This means that all other authorities are to be followed only inasmuch as they align with Scripture, submit to Scripture, and are seen as subservient to Scripture, which alone is our supreme authority.

Second, *sola Scriptura* also means that Scripture alone is our *sufficient* authority. Not only is the Bible our supreme authority, but it is the authority that provides believers with all the truth they need for salvation and for following after Christ. The Bible, therefore, is sufficiency for faith and practice. This notion of the Bible's sufficiency has been powerfully articulated by Reformation and Reformed confessions. The Belgic Confession (1516) states: "We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein." The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) says; "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which

nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men [Gal 1:8-9; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2Tim 3:15-17]”. In short, the Bible is enough for us.

Third, *sola Scriptura* means that only Scripture, because it is God’s *inspired Word*, is our *inerrant* authority. Notice that the basis of biblical authority- the very reason why Scripture is authoritative- is that God is its divine author. The ground for biblical authority is divine inspiration. As the Westminster Confession of Faith says, “The *authority* of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church, but wholly upon God (who is the truth itself) *the author thereof*; and therefore it is to be received, *because it is the Word of God* [1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19, 21; 1 John 5:9.” Scripture is the church’s final and sufficient authority because Scripture *is* the Word of God. Scripture and Scripture alone (not Scripture *and* Tradition) is God-breathed and, on this basis, stands unshakable as the church’s final, flawless authority. What Scripture says, God says.

To get a full picture of *sola Scriptura*, we need to go beyond saying the Bible is inspired or God-breathed. *Inspiration should lead to an understanding that the Bible is perfect, flawless, and inerrant.* In other words, inerrancy is the necessary corollary of inspiration. They are two sides of the same coin, and it is impossible to divorce one from the other. Because it is God speaking- and he is a God of truth, not error- his Word must be true and trustworthy in all that it addresses.

Because inerrancy is a biblical corollary and consequence of divine inspiration-inseparably connected and intertwined-it is a necessary component to *sola Scriptura*. The God of truth has breathed out his Word of truth, and the result is nothing less than a flawless authority for the church. In saying this, I am aware that my inclusion of inerrancy in our definition of *sola Scriptura* will prove to be controversial, given the mixed identity of evangelicalism today. However, were we to divorce the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture from its authority, disconnecting the two as if one was unrelated to the other, then we would be left with no doctrine of *sola Scriptura* at all. Should Scripture contain errors, it is unclear why we should trust Scripture as our supreme and final authority. And should we limit, modify, or abandon the total inerrancy of Scripture, we set in motion tremendous doubt and uncertainty, regarding the Bible’s competence as our

final authority. The ground for the believer's confidence that all of Scripture is the Word of God is shaken.

The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy makes this point as well: “The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine *inerrancy* is in any way limited or disregarded.” In other words, to reject inerrancy is to undermine confidence in the Bible's authority, and what could have more relevance to *sola Scriptura* than biblical authority? As Roger Nicole once exclaimed, “What is supremely at stake in this whole discussion [of *inerrancy*] is the recognition of the *authority* of God in the sacred oracles.” It should not surprise us to find that in the recent history of evangelicalism, leaders have rallied around statements such as the Cambridge Declaration (1996), affirming inerrancy's inseparability from *sola Scriptura* in stating, “Scripture alone is the *inerrant* rule of the church's life,” and they “reaffirm the *inerrant* Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can *bind* the conscience.”

The Holy Spirit

Man has two great spiritual needs. One is for forgiveness. The other is for goodness. Consciously or unconsciously, his inner being longs for both, and there are times when man actually cries for them, even though in his restlessness, confusion, loneliness, fear, and pressures he may not know what he is crying for.

God heard the first cry for help, that cry for forgiveness, and answered it at Calvary. God sent His only Son into the world to die for our sins, so that we might be forgiven. This is a gift for us—God's gift of salvation. This gift is a permanent legacy for everyone who truly admits he has “fallen short” and sinned. It is for everyone who reaches out and accepts God's gift by receiving Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Paul calls it God's “incredible” gift (2Cor. 9:15).

But God also heard our second cry, that cry for goodness, and answered it at Pentecost. God does not want us to come to Christ by faith, and then lead a life of defeat, discouragement, and dissension. Rather, He wants to “fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; in order that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you” (2 Thess. 1:11, 12). *To the great gift of forgiveness God adds also the great gift of the Holy Spirit. He* is the source of

power who meets our need to escape from the miserable weakness that grips us. He gives us the power to be truly good.

If we are to live a life of sanity in our modern world, if we wish to be men and women who can live victoriously, we need this two-sided gift God has offered us: first, the work of the Son of God for us; second, the work of the Spirit of God in us. In this way God has answered mankind's two great cries: the cry for forgiveness and the cry for goodness.

As a friend of mine has said, "I need Jesus Christ for my eternal life and the Holy Spirit of God for my internal life."

If you believe in Jesus Christ, a power is available to you that can change your life, even in such intimate areas as your marriage, your family relationships, and every other relationship. Also, God offers power that can change a tired church into a vital, growing body, power that can revitalize Christendom.

Unfortunately, this power has been ignored, misunderstood, and misused. By our ignorance we have short-circuited the power of the Holy Spirit.

Many books are written about this power, many prayers are said pleading for this power. Scores of Christians would like to have it, but they aren't sure what it is.

When the world looks at a Christian, certain mental clichés come to mind: it sees the believer as a stiff-necked, sober-faced person without a sense of humor: a person who can't make it himself so he uses "God as a crutch"; one who has left his brain in kindergarten.

Now, if this cold stereotype applies in any way to us or the Church, then we need to know about the exciting revolutionary power available exclusively to Christian believers. No one can buy it, claim it, or use it without first knowing its source.

The Holy Spirit Was Promised

When Jesus was teaching His disciples, preparing them for what He knew was the end, his heart ached for them because He knew they were confused and sad. I can imagine that He moved from one to another, putting his arms around them. To each He explained in simple fashion, as we do to our children, the important truths He wanted them to understand. At one point He said, " But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you"(John 16:5-7).

There was a promise! The coming of the Spirit was based upon the word of the Lord Jesus Christ. No conditions were attached. Jesus didn't say that He would send the Helper (or "Comforter") to some believers and not to others. Nor did He say that we had to belong to some special organization or be higher on the scale of spiritual performance than someone else. He simply said, "If I go, I will send Him to you."

When Jesus Christ makes a promise, He does not break or forget it. We may doubt the promises of friends or family; we may even doubt our own promises to others. But we have never been given a promise by Jesus that has not been a certainty.

Some people dismiss Jesus Christ as a "great teacher" or one of the outstanding religious leaders of the world. However, when it comes to promises, it's interesting to contrast his words with other great religious and philosophical leaders. For example, as the founder of Buddhism was bidding his followers farewell he said, "You must be your own light." Or when Socrates was about to take that fatal cup, one of his disciples mourned that he was leaving them orphans. The leaders of the world's religions and philosophies were unable to promise that they would never leave their followers.

The disciples of Jesus Christ however, were not left alone. He said, "I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you" (John14:18). It is interesting that the Greek word for "orphans" is the same as the word used by the disciple of Socrates when he realized that his master was going to leave him alone.

The Promise Fulfilled

Jesus said He would leave His disciples for a while, and He did. During the dreadful hours of the crucifixion, death, and burial, agonizing doubt gripped the minds of those who loved Him. He had not yet been “glorified,” so the promise of His Spirit was not yet a fact.

But we know what happened. God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. Addressing Christians, the Scriptures say that Christ came “for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God” (1 Peter 1:20, 21).

God had said to “wait” for the Spirit to come. Jesus rose from the dead and was sent by His disciples. Unable to grasp what was happening, they failed to recognize Him at first and were frightened because they thought they were seeing a ghost. To confirm His physical reality, Jesus told them to touch Him, and even asked for something to eat. A spirit didn’t have flesh, did it? A ghost couldn’t eat, could it?

So this was truly Jesus, no the Spirit He had promised. However, he told them still to wait! The time was not yet.

Fifty days later the promise was fulfilled at Pentecost. What a day it was! It is difficult for us to imagine, with our practical, earth-bound, scientific mentality, the amazing happening of that day.

“And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

The one for whom they were asked to “wait” had come!

What a difference the emphasis of one word makes in the description of a happening of such world-shaking importance! Before the day of Pentecost the emphasis was on the world “ask.” “If you then, being evil, know how to give good

gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?") Luke 11:13).

After Pentecost the emphasis was on the word “receive.” In his powerful sermon that day, Peter said, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

This is good news: we are no longer waiting for the Holy Spirit—He is waiting for us. We are no longer living in a time of promise, but in the days of fulfillment.

The members of the early Church, those men, women, and children who knew the reality of the Holy Spirit as a force, were totally transformed. The rush of power they experienced on the day of Pentecost is characteristic of the age that gave us the New Testament. The Holy Spirit was promised, the promise was fulfilled, the disciples were changed, and the glory of it for us is that He is present in every true believer today. And so his power is available today.

Who is this person whom Christ promised to send to earth in His place? Who is this Person whom He used to transform human nature? Who is this Person who can give you supernatural power to face any crisis? And how can you and I know His power in our lives day by day?

We will find out.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Some years ago a teacher in a fifth-grade class asked his students if anyone could explain electricity. One boy raised his hand. The teacher asked, “How would you explain it, Jimmy? Jimmy scratched his head a moment and then replied, “Last night I knew it, but this morning I’ve forgotten.” The teacher shook his head sadly and said to the class, “What a tragedy. The only person in the world ever to understand electricity, and he’s forgotten!”

That teacher’s position may describe you and me when we study the doctrine of the Trinity. We accept the fact that the Holy Spirit is God, just as much

God is God the Father and God the Son. But when it comes to explaining Him, we are loss.

In recent years people have talked more about the Holy Sprit and written more books about Him than possibly any religious theme other than the occult. This has come about largely because of the influence of the charismatic movement, which has been called Christendom's “third force” alongside Catholicism and Protestantism. The more recent charismatic movement, which has some of its roots in historic Pentecostalism and stresses the Holy Spirit, is now deeply entrenched in most of the mainline denominations and in Catholicism. We may feel that it is such a vast subject and we know so little about it. Nevertheless, God in His Word has revealed all we should know.

Many questions will arise in this book for which answers are being sought by puzzled and at times untaught believers. In fact, millions of Christians on every continent are now asking these questions. They are seeking and deserve biblical answers.

For example: What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? When does it take place? Is speaking in tongues *possible* or necessary today? Is there an experience called a “second blessing”?

To start our study, we need to ask a critical question at the very beginning: Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit Is a Person

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person. Jesus never referred to “it” when He was talking about the Holy Spirit. In John 14, 15, and 16, for example, He spoke of the Holy Spirit as “He” because He is not a force or thing but a person. Whoever speaks of the Holy Spirit as “it” is uninstructed, or perhaps even undiscerning. In Romans 8:16 the King James Version refers to the Holy Spirit as “itself.” This is a mistranslation. Nearly all of the newer translations have changed “itself” to “himself.”

We see from the Bible that the Holy Spirit has intellect, emotions, and will. In addition to this, the Bible also ascribes to Him the acts we would expect of someone who was not just a force, but a real person.

He speaks: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7).

“And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2).

He intercedes: “And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words” (Romans 8:26).

He testifies: “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, He will bear witness of Me” (John 15:26).

He leads: “And the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go up and join this chariot’” (Acts 8:29).

“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Rom. 8:14).

He commands: “And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into **Bithynia**, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them” (Acts 16:6, 7).

He guides: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will **guide** you into all the **truth**; for he will **speak** on his own **authority**, but whatever he hears he will **speak**, and he will declare to you the things that are to come” (John 16:13 RSV).

He appoints: “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the **Holy Spirit** has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He **purchased** with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

He can be lied to: “But **Peter** said, ‘**Ananias**, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained **unsold**, did it not remain your **own**? And after it was sold, was it not under **your** control? Why is it that you have **conceived** this deed in **your heart**? You have not lied to men, but to **God**’” (Acts 5:3, 4).

He can be insulted: “How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:29).

He can be blasphemed: “Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the spirit shall not be forgiven. And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come” (Matt. 12:31,32).

He can be grieved: “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).

Each of the emotions and acts we have listed are characteristics of a person. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force, like gravity or magnetism. He is a Person with all the attributes of personality. But not only is He a Person; He is divine as well.

The Holy Spirit Is a Divine Person:

He Is God

Throughout the Bible it is clear that the Holy Spirit is God Himself. This is seen in the attributes which are given to the Holy Spirit in Scripture, for example. Without exception these attributes are those of God Himself.

He is eternal: This means that there never was a time when He was not. “How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:14).

He is all-powerful: “And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God’” (Luke 1:35).

He is everywhere present (that is, omnipresent) at the same time: “Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence?” (Ps. 139:7).

He is all-knowing (that is omniscient): “For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:10, 11).

The Holy Spirit is called God: “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? *You have not lied to men, but to God*’” (Acts 5:3, 4).

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18).

He is the Creator: The first biblical reference to the Holy Spirit is Genesis 1:2 (Moffatt) where we are told “the spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” Yet Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” And in Colossians 1 where Paul is writing to the Church at Colossae about the Lord Jesus Christ, among other tremendous truths he tells us, “For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and earths, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” [cohere] (Col. 1:16, 17).

Thus, God the father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were together creating the world. To understand and accept these facts is of the greatest importance to every Christian, both theologically and practically.

One day I made a few of these assertions about the Holy Spirit to some seminary students. One asked, “But He is usually mentioned last. Doesn’t that imply inferiority?” Yet in Romans 15:30 He is not mentioned last: “Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive

together with me in your prayers to God for me.” And in Ephesians 4:4 Paul says, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling.”

But more than this, the usual placement of the three persons of the Trinity in the New Testament has to do with their order and function. Thus we say that we pray to the Father through the Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, I have already shown that *functionally* the Father came first, then the Son became incarnate, died and rose again. Now the Spirit does His work in this age of the Spirit. The order has nothing to do with equality, but only with function and chronology.

The Trinity

When I first began to study the Bible years ago, the doctrine of the Trinity was one of the most complex problems I had to encounter. I have never fully resolved it, for it contains an aspect of mystery. Though I do not totally understand it to this day, I accept it as a revelation of God.

The Bible *does* teach us that the Holy Spirit is a living being. He is one of the three persons of the Holy Trinity. To explain and illustrate the Trinity is one of the most difficult assignments to a Christian. Dr. David McKenna once told me that he was asked by his small son Doug, “Is God the Father God?” He answered. “Yes” “Is Jesus Christ God?” “Yes” “Is the Holy Spirit God?” “Yes” “Then how can Jesus be His own Father?” Davis thought quickly. They were sitting in their old 1958 Chevrolet at the time. “Listen, son,” he replied, “under the hood is one battery. Yet I can use it to turn on the lights, blow the horn, and start the car.” He said, “How this happen is a mystery—but it happens!”

The Bible *does* teach us the reality of the Trinity, both in the Old and New Testaments. Let us look at some of the major passages.

God unfolds His revelations of Himself in the Bible progressively. But there are indications from the very beginning of the Book of Genesis that God subsists in the three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and that these three

persons constitute the one God. Christianity is Trinitarian, not Unitarian. There is only one God, not three, so it is clear that the Christian faith is not polytheistic.

The Bible begins with the majestic statement: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

Hebrew scholars have told me there are three numbers in the Hebrew language: Singular, one; dual, two; plural, more than two. The word translated “God” in Genesis 1:1 is plural, indicating more than two. The Hebrew word used here is *Elohim*. Matthew Henry says it signifies “the plurality of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This plural name of God. . .[confirms] our ~~faith in the doctrine of the~~ Trinity, which, though but darkly intimated in the Old Testament, is clearly revealed in the New.”

As we have seen concerning creation, even from the beginning God gives us glimpses of truth that the Godhead consists of more than one person. **I have highlighted some key words.** In Genesis 1:26, God said, “Let **us** make man in **our** image, according to **our** likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Further, in Genesis 3:22 the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of **Us**, knowing good and evil.” And in Genesis 11:6, 7, the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let **Us** go down and, confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” When Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for **us**?” he answered, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isa. 6:8).

The New Testament’s doctrine of the Trinity is much more fully developed than that of the Old Testament. Since revelation is progressive, more light is thrown on this subject as God more fully disclosed Himself at the time of Christ and the apostles.

The last command of Jesus before His ascensions is recorded in Matthew 28:19-20. In it he ordered His followers to “make disciples of all nations,” baptizing converts “in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always,

even to the end of the age.” Here Jesus taught that after He left this earth, His followers were to carry His gospel message to all nations. The Holy Spirit with God the father and God the Son as their equal. He is God the Holy Spirit.

It is thrilling to note that Jesus says believers will not be left alone. Through the Holy Spirit whom He and the Father sent, He will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). He will remain with every believer right to the end. This thought has encouraged me a thousand times in these dark days when satanic forces are at work in so many parts of the world.

Along this line the apostle Paul also said, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:14). This benediction clearly indicates that the Holy Spirit is one with the father and one with the Son in the Godhead. *It is not one plus one plus one equals three. It is one times one times one equal one.* The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son. If the Father is God, and Jesus is God, then the Holy Spirit is also God.

The chief problem connected with the doctrine of the Trinity concerns Christianity’s claim to be also monotheistic. It rejects polytheism, the belief in more than one God. The answer is that trinitarianism preserve the unity of the Godhead, and at the same time it acknowledges that there are three persons in that Godhead which is still of one essence. God is one, but that oneness is simple—it is complex.

This is a terribly difficult subject—far beyond the ability of our limited minds to grasp fully. Nevertheless, it is extremely important to declare what the Bible holds, and the silent where the Bible is silent. God the father is fully God. God the Son is fully God. The Bible presents this as fact. It does not explain it. Nevertheless, many explanations have been suggested, some of which sound logical, but they do not preserve the truth of Scriptural teaching.

One Christian heresy in the early church was called “modalism.” It taught that God appeared at different times in three different modes or forms—as Father, then as Son, and finally as Holy Spirit. Those who held this view thought it preserved the unity of monotheism. But it also meant that when Jesus prayed, He had to be talking to Himself. Further, to say, as Acts 2 does, that the Father and

the Son sent the Holy Spirit, makes little sense if we accept modalism. Moreover, it violated the clearest presentation of the Trinity-in-unity as expressed in Mathew's statement by Jesus in the Great Commission. It was Jesus who said that His disciples were to baptize their converts "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." The Greek construction makes it clear that Jesus is referring to three separate persons. He clearly taught the doctrine of the Trinity.

We have seen that the Holy Spirit is a person, and is God, and is a member of the Trinity. Anyone who fails to recognize this is robbed of his joy and power. Of course, a defective view of any member of the trinity will bring about this result because God is all important. But this is especially true for the Holy Spirit at work in us that all truth becomes living and operative in our lives.

The most important [point I can make in summary is this: there is nothing that God is that the Holy Spirit is not. All of the essential aspects of deity belong to the Holy Spirit. We can say of Him exactly what was said of Jesus Christ in the ancient Nicene Creed: he is very God of very God! So we bow before Him, we worship Him, we accord Him every response Scripture requires of our relationship to Almighty God.

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is God!