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The Link

NORTH ROAD CHAPEL

BIDEFORD

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Commencing with this edition, a new series will consider the “I AM” statements of the Lord Jesus that are contained in the Gospel of John. Over the course of 224 sermons, Mr W. H. Molland preached through John’s Gospel between March 1988 and April 1993, and these articles are derived from various parts of those addresses. Whilst a greater number of editorial changes have been necessary to compile them into a written format, the substance accurately reflects the preaching of our late minister from some three decades ago. May the Lord graciously bless it to the mutual edification of all who read.

“Jesus answered and said unto them: this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. They said therefore unto Him, what sign shewest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto Him: Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them: I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” (John 6:29-35)

“I am the Bread of Life” (John 6:35). This is the first of seven ‘I am’ titles of Christ found in John’s Gospel, and recorded by none except John. The other six are as follows: “*I am the Light of the World*” (ch. 8:12), “*I am the Door*” (ch. 10:9), “*I am the Good Shepherd*” (ch. 10:11), “*I am the Resurrection and the Life*” (ch. 11:25), “*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life*” (ch. 14:6), “*I am the True Vine*” (ch. 15:1). These ‘I AM’ titles look back to Exodus 3:14, that memorable occasion when God appeared unto Moses in the burning bush and called him to the great work of bringing God’s chosen people out of Egypt. ‘Whom shall I say

has commissioned me in this?’ asks Moses. ‘Simply say **I AM** hath sent you’ replies the Almighty. By employment of the term ‘I AM’ in the New Testament, our Lord at once identifies Himself with Jehovah of the Old Testament, and again His absolute Deity is affirmed. What is more, in the varying analogies which He connects with that title – such as ‘light’, ‘door’, ‘shepherd’, and so on – He gives a sevenfold filling-in of detail regarding the different aspects of His glorious, mediatorial work as the incarnate I AM. All these will come before us in future articles, God willing.

Consider then this first ‘I am’ in John 6:48: “*I am that Bread of Life*”. Precious words are these – the great I AM, in the person of Christ, manifesting Himself as that which every sinner needs, and without which they will surely perish. ‘I am bread’ said Christ, ‘I alone can satisfy the soul, I alone can fill the aching void of the human heart’. But why liken Himself to bread? The analogies chosen by our Lord are so meaningful. Just as wheat is ground into flour, and then subjected to the intense heat of the oven before it becomes food fit for human consumption, so did the Saviour come down from Heaven as a corn of wheat (cf John 12:24). He passed between the millstones of God’s wrath; His holy soul was crushed and ground as Jehovah made to meet upon Him the iniquity of us all; the fires of hell gat hold upon Him; His tongue cleaved to His jaws, and with the parched lips known only to the damned, He cried “*I thirst*” (John 19:28). It was by this means that the Son of God – the great I AM – became bread to satisfy the sinners’ need.

“*Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead*” (John 6:49). This is an amplification upon verse 48. There it is a terse statement of fact: “*I am that Bread of Life*”, but now Christ describes one of the characteristic qualities of this Bread. The manna of the wilderness, of which their fathers had eaten, ministered to their temporal need; it fed their bodies; but eventually they all died. That bread never gave immortality. ‘I am not that kind of bread’, says Christ.

“This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die” (John 6:50). Obviously, two kinds of death are being referenced in verses 49 and 50. In verse 49 **physical** death in view, whereas in verse 50 it is **spiritual**. Those who ate of the manna all died natural deaths, but those who eat of the Bread that describes in verse 50 – the incarnate I AM come down from Heaven – will not die. This is spiritual; such persons will not die eternally; they will never experience the second death (cf Revelation 21:8). This is one of many verses in Holy Scripture that affirm the eternal security of believers. The life which God imparts in His sovereign grace to poor sinners is imperishable; it is *“hid with Christ in God”* (cf Colossians 3:3). It does not cease at physical death; indeed, in the hereafter it blossoms forth into glorious fruition.

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51). The verses preceding this portion emphasise the eternal purposes of God in salvation, the glorious truth of **sovereign election** and effectual calling; but our Lord did not end His discourse at verse 44, stating: *“no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him”*. While this is a true fact, man must also be addressed in terms of **human responsibility**; and the Lord’s preaching is always balanced in this respect, as demonstrated by verse 51. No sinner is ever ‘force-fed’ with the Bread of Life. So it is written: *“if any man eat”* – the Lord Himself introduces the figure of eating. This is most suggestive and must not be brushed aside, rather considered carefully:

Firstly, eating is a **necessary** act if a person is to receive any benefit. No bodily nourishment will be derived by looking at bread, or by analysing it and talking of its qualities. It is only by eating that bread becomes of value.

Secondly, eating is a response to a **felt need**. This links up immediately with verse 44. It is the “*drawing*”, or the inner work of the Holy Spirit who first creates an emptiness within. When a person is really hungry, he asks no questions, he raises no quibbles, but gladly and promptly eats. Is not this so, spiritually? Once a sinner is truly awakened to his lost condition, and the wrath of God; that without Christ he will perish eternally, he will not need coaxing, prompting or urging. Indeed not! He will swiftly and thankfully receive the Saviour.

Thirdly, eating is intensely **personal**. No one else can do it but I; there is no such thing as eating by proxy. If I am to be fed and nourished, then I must eat for myself. Further, it is no good watching others eat or mingling with those who are eating; that is not sufficient. So in the spiritual – attending church services, mixing with Christians – all good and worthy, but of no avail if there be not a personal reception of Christ as one’s own Saviour.

“They said therefore unto Him, What sign shewest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.” (John 6:30-31). These two verses obviously must be kept together, for verse 31 is part of verse 30. These Jews wanted a sign, then immediately to relate the record of Exodus 16, the giving of manna. In this, they draw a disparaging contrast between Christ and Moses. The gist of what they are saying is this: ‘We know that Thou didst work a miracle yesterday and fed five thousand people; but that was just once. If Thou wouldst have us believe that Thou art the One sent of God, as Thou claimest, then Thou must show a greater sign than that of yesterday. In the days of our great leader Moses, hundreds of thousands were provided with bread in a wilderness for forty years!’ To thus pit Christ against Moses was insulting to say the least. However, instead of turning away in disgust, as well He might, our blessed Lord continued His conversation in verse 32: *“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I*

say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.” Here is a further reminder of the **omniscience** of Christ. He looks right into the hearts of men, and saw that these Jews attributed the provision of the manna to Moses – *“Moses gave you not that bread”*. How foolish! Moses, of course, was only a human instrument; a sovereign God lay behind all the daily miracles of the wilderness.

Yes, foolish indeed were these Jews, but they are not alone. How many professing Christians today look to men rather than God! We hear and read of the wonderful happenings when Mr So-and-So or Dr Somebody has meetings in a certain town or city. No Doctor or Reverend or humble Mister can accomplish anything. The most any mortal can do is to plan and water; God alone giveth the increase. So our Lord stresses this point to His hearers in verse 32. He says, ‘It was not Moses who gave you that bread from heaven; and even that bread which was given was not the **true Bread** which endures unto everlasting life’. The blessed Lord, far from turning away in offence at their slurs, improves upon the situation, as it were; He leads them on into deeper truth. ‘I am concerned with food far different from the manna sent down for your ancestors. That was only material food for natural sustenance. I am here to treat of spiritual food, that which nourishes the soul unto everlasting life – the true Bread of God’. *“For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”* (John 6:33).

Do not lose the context. A contrast is being drawn here between **natural** bread and **spiritual** bread. In actual fact, it is between manna and Christ, as the next verse reveals. But dealing with each verse in order, we are told in verse 33 that the bread now being described came down from Heaven, as did the manna; but those who ate of that wilderness bread all eventually died. It was only given for the necessities of this life. Look on to verse 49 of this chapter: *“Your*

fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead ”. Further to this comes another contrast: the manna that fell in the wilderness fell only within the confines of Israel’s encampment. No other people in the desert partook of it. But the Bread of God spoken of in verse 33 giveth life not just to the Jews, but extends throughout the **world**.

Now again I must refute the folly of Arminianism – this term ‘world’ does not embrace the whole human race. God does not bestow spiritual life to every descendant of Adam; rather does it mean that the salvation which is in Christ Jesus extends to an election of grace taken out of every part of the world – Jewish and Gentile. Another point to register from the verse is this: it is nowhere said that the true Bread (which is, of course, Christ) **offereth** life unto the world; rather does it say He **giveth** life. Much more of this aspect comes out later in the chapter.

Three other Holy-Spirit-inspired expressions are used in this passage, which must be noted. Verse 32 refers to Christ, the ‘true Bread’: ‘**True**’ meaning that which is real, genuine and satisfying. ‘**From Heaven**’ tells of its celestial and spiritual character. Verse 33 refers to the ‘**Bread of God**’ – its origin is divine and eternal. What volumes had Christ unfolded in just a few sentences to those unbelieving Jews! To what good account had He turned their disparaging remarks.

“Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread ” (John 6:34). Sadly, this was but a passing phase; the outcome of a fleeting impression which our Lord’s words made upon them; which becomes more apparent further on in the same passage.

*“And Jesus said unto them, **I am the Bread of Life**: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.”* (John 6:35). The Lord has previously referred to Himself as the ‘Son of Man’, the ‘One whom God hath sent’, ‘He that cometh down from Heaven’, etc. But now He speaks in the first person; His language becomes more direct. Over thirty times in the remainder of this

discourse He says ‘I’ or ‘Me’. For example: “*I am the Bread of Life*”, “*Him that cometh to Me*”, “*I should lose nothing*”, “*Him that sent Me*”. If these Jews had previously been confused in any way, they could be excused no longer. Now in the plainest of language He says: “*I am the Bread of Life*”. ‘The Bread of God which I mentioned in verse 33 is, in reality, **Me**’.

The Lord places Himself before the Jews under the significant figure of Bread, that most **necessary** of foodstuffs. So needful for survival that Scripture describes it as the ‘stay’ and ‘staff of bread’ (cf Isaiah 3:1, Psalm 105:16), or in English parlance ‘the staff of life’. If a person can afford little else, they must have a loaf of bread. It is that which all need – the king, the pauper – all alike need and eat bread. It is that which the body never tires of. It is that which is on the table every meal. It is nourishing and indispensable. Such is Christ to the soul.

All this – and very much more – is wrapped up in the statement: “*I am the bread of life*”. The Lord then goes on to say: “*he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.*” (John 6:35). ‘Coming to Christ’ and ‘believing in Christ’ are difficult to define, as they mean almost the same thing. Yet there is a shade of difference: to **believe** on Christ is to receive and accept God’s testimony and the record of Holy Scripture concerning His Son, and to rest upon Him alone for salvation. Having this revealed, the sinner believing it to be true, **comes** to Christ in absolute trust and confidence. Hebrews 11:6 states the same truth: “*But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*”. J. C. Ryle has a pithy comment on this matter, where he says: “No man comes who does not believe; and all who come, go on believing”. Those who come to Christ shall never hunger and never thirst. Does this mean that a Christian will never feel an emptiness, or never again sense any deficiency? No! For he will hunger and thirst after righteousness (cf

Matthew 5:6), but in such hunger, there is abundant provision, and the soul will delight itself in spiritual fatness (cf Isaiah 55:2). Never will the believer know inward famine, such that his soul dies at the last for want of nourishment. Rather will he develop a healthy appetite and so feed and be satisfied. *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them”* (Jeremiah 15:16). The Christian constantly draws from the wells of salvation (cf Isaiah 12:3). Thus eating and drinking we are always satisfied; we are no longer coming to broken cisterns which can hold no water. We no longer dwell in Lo-Debar, where there is no pasture. Rather do we sit at the King’s table, and there eat bread continually (cf 2 Samuel 9:5-7).

W. H. Molland (1920 – 2012)

“Some feed on airy speculations, and ‘philosophy falsely so called’; some aim to satisfy their minds with gold, with fame, or power; some feed more grossly on sensual pleasure; and numbers attempt to allay their cravings after happiness by dissipated mirth, or the pride of life ... But [in Christ] the soul which hungers and thirsts for God, for righteousness, and true felicity, and is made sensible of its state and wants, finds a suitable and abundant provision. Here pardon, peace, hope, communion with God, and whatsoever can calm the conscience, serene and cheer the heart, or promote true holiness, is comprised in one glorious Object – a mighty Redeemer, ‘God manifest in the flesh’ (cf 1 Timothy 3:16), shedding His precious blood to atone for the sins of His rebellious creatures! This is the ‘living Bread which came down from heaven, that we might eat and live forever’ (cf John 6:51). Oh, how adorable, how stupendous is this love of our divine Redeemer! May this ‘love of Christ constrain us ... to live no longer to ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and rose again’ (cf 2 Corinthians 5:14-15).”

Thomas Scott (1747 – 1821)

NAMES AND TITLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” (Isaiah 11:1-2)

Words have a tremendous significance and weight. In His divine wisdom, it has pleased Almighty God to give languages unto humanity as a means of communication, reducible into smaller components of meaning called ‘words’, that can be spoken, written or otherwise expressed. This is not an act of mere necessity or convenience, but a vital part of the image of God in man; God who, in the beginning, with none to hear but Himself, “*said, Let there be light; and there was light*” (Genesis 1:3); God who calls the Second Person of His Trinitarian being, by whom He has fully declared Himself unto mankind, ‘The Word’ (cf John 1:1-2). All words are important (cf Psalm 19:4, Matthew 12:34-37, Colossians 4:6), but none more so than those which God has chosen to reveal His truth unto the world in the Holy Scriptures, frequently called ‘the Word of God’ (cf Luke 11:28, Romans 10:17, 1 Peter 1:23) – hence the repeated exhortations that its every word be carefully regarded and preserved: “*Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard*” (2 Timothy 1:13). And if any part of the vocabulary of Scripture deserved closer scrutiny than another, it must surely be those words that God has given wherewith to describe or denote **Himself**.

It is an act of immeasurable grace and condescension that the infinite, ineffable, indescribable God, should permit Himself to be the theme of mortal tongues, and feature in the ‘rude speech’ of mankind. It is nothing short of miraculous that He, ‘afar off’ from fallen humanity by so many measures, should yet be ‘nigh unto them’, in their mouths, on their lips, called upon by them, by virtue of language (cf Deuteronomy

4:7, 30:14). God Himself has sovereignly dictated and appointed the words by which He is known. This is amply demonstrated in the case of Moses' commission. Instructed to convey divine messages to Pharaoh and the Hebrew slaves, Moses knew well the polytheistic notions of Egypt, and the multitude of fictitious beings described as 'gods', and asked for more distinctive and unequivocal terminology: "*when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you*" (Exodus 3:13-14). From Heaven itself the word is given: Yahweh – Jehovah – the LORD. But to no less a degree, every Biblical epithet or appellation for the Divine Being is graciously imparted, and providentially bestowed. These are words that demand our sanctified attention.

Much has been written and preached concerning the names and titles of God found in the Old Testament; and the blessed descriptions of the Saviour contained in the New; but relatively little concerning the Third Person of the Trinity – the Holy Spirit. However, as will shortly be seen, there is a greater variety and number of expressions used in connection with Him, amounting to nearly 40 in total. This article will seek to list and examine these names in more detail.

SPIRIT. The first, fundamental word to register is that by which the Third Person is most frequently described: **Spirit** (cf Genesis 1:2, Matthew 3:16). This English word is used in translation of the Hebrew '*ruach*' and the Greek '*pneuma*', and provides the sense of the two original languages very well. In both tongues those words convey the multiple meanings of 'a motivating principle', 'a governing influence', 'animation', 'breath or wind', 'a non-corporeal being'. The English word 'Spirit', derived from the Latin *spirare*, has the same applications, being used in connection with breathing ('**respiration**'), external motivation ('**inspiration**'), animation ('spirited'), or a personified

entity ('a spirit'). It should be remarked that in numerous instances in the New Testament the translators have supplied 'Ghost' for *pneuma*, rather than 'Spirit', perhaps to emphasise His divine personality and identity. There is no difference in the original Greek however, which consistently uses '*pneuma*' throughout. On balance, from the perspective of English definitions, the word 'Spirit' has more to commend it.

Detail concerning the **nature** and the **operation** of the Third Person of the Trinity is conveyed by the word 'Spirit'. "God is a spirit" (John 4:24) says the Lord to the woman at Samaria, stressing the essential differences between God and men. God is infinitely superior, and 'other' than men are (cf Psalm 139:6, Isaiah 55:8-9). Humans by nature are material creatures, consisting of physical, tangible bodies; located at a particular place in space and time. But God is not like that – God is a Spirit, He transcends time and space, and is not subject to the same limitations, confinements and dimensions as His creatures. Thus it is entirely proper that the Third Person of the Trinity should be called **The Spirit** – setting forth His essential nature and Godhood.

The Second Person of the Godhead condescended to take on man's nature and likeness, and to wear a body like theirs; so He bore an earthly name – Jesus of Nazareth – the Son of Man. Here is an emphasis upon **humanity** united with the Divine, God and man in one. But in the case of the Third Person, the **spiritual** nature of God is being more particularly manifested and communicated, hence His name, The Spirit.

Regarding His operation – the way in which He works: He is a life-giving Spirit, a quickening Spirit. As breath is indispensable to and inseparable from natural life, so is the Holy Spirit essential to spiritual life. He is frequently described as operating like the wind, both in the vision that Ezekiel had (cf Ezekiel 37:8-10, 14) and in the famous words of the Saviour to Nicodemus (cf John 3:8); in fulfilment of

which in His Advent at Pentecost, the Spirit descended with “*a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting*” (Acts 2:2). How apposite a word ‘Spirit’ is for Him – invisible in His nature, and yet demonstrable in His effects and operations, and irresistible in His power. He is seen by that which He accomplishes and does, though invisible in Himself, to mortal senses. This is why the name ‘**Spirit**’ is so fitting.

HOLY. In Biblical references to the Father and Son, it is common to find certain of their Divine attributes used in connection with their names: ‘Almighty God’, ‘good Master’, ‘Everlasting Father’, ‘Jesus Christ the righteous’, etc. It is of special significance that the Third Person deigns to be associated with one attribute in particular, namely: **holiness**. In the majority of references to Himself, He is described as the **Holy Spirit**, or **Holy Ghost** (cf Psalm 51:11, Jude 20). Whilst there is a harmony and equality in the characteristics of God, holiness (the state of absolute purity and impeccable perfection) is deserving of prominence. It is an attribute which, like immutability and eternity, touches upon all the other attributes: God’s love is a holy love, His wrath is a holy wrath. Indeed, it could be said that the net result, or sum total of all God’s attributes, multiplied by His immortality and changelessness, is **holiness**.

This quality is defined and personified by God, unique in degree unto Him: “*There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside Thee*” (1 Samuel 2:2). It is the predominant feature of His divine being, eliciting the praises of angels: “*Holy, holy, holy*” (Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 4:8), no other feature of God inviting this threefold repetition. The very essence and nature of God is holiness – it is therefore entirely reasonable that His Spirit be called the Holy Spirit, or the **Spirit of Holiness** (cf Romans 1:4). It is also His particular work to impart and inculcate this aspect of God’s being into God’s people (cf Romans 15:16, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2).

DEITY. The Holy Spirit is one with God, and thus in certain places, words ordinarily associated with God are equally applied unto Him. He is called '**God**' directly in Acts 5:3-4 (to lie to the Holy Ghost is to lie to God). He is denoted as '**Lord**' in 2 Thessalonians 3:5, and more distinctly so in this verse: "*Now the Lord is that Spirit*" (2 Corinthians 3:17). A comparison of Scriptures in the Old Testament, quoted or referenced in the New, show that the title of '**LORD**' (Jehovah) is also applicable unto Him; for example, in the vision accompanying Isaiah's commission previously mentioned (Isaiah 6), the LORD of Hosts is said to be present, and to summon the prophet – while in the Apostle's remarks in Acts, it is stated that the Holy Ghost spake those words (cf Acts 28:25-6). Further emphasising the unity and order within the Trinity, the Third Person is elsewhere described as the **Spirit of God** (cf Romans 8:9), the **Spirit of the LORD** (cf Isaiah 11:2), the **Spirit of the Father** (cf Matthew 10:20), the **Spirit of Jesus Christ** (cf Philippians 1:19), the **Spirit of Christ** (cf 1 Peter 1:11), and the **Spirit of His [God's] Son** (cf Galatians 4:6). To attempt to expound or comprehend the Trinity of God is beyond mortal minds to do, nevertheless it is a fact that the Holy Spirit 'proceedeth' from both the Father and the Son (cf Luke 11:13, John 15:26, Acts 2:33, Galatians 4:6, Ephesians 1:17). This truth is amply set forth by His titles.

ATTRIBUTES. Other of the Spirit's names allude to His attributes. David, in his penitential psalm, prays thus: "*Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy **free Spirit***" (Psalm 51:12). Such terminology is sometimes heard in modern English parlance to explain or excuse a person's uncontrollable behaviour or irrational conduct. Its meaning in Scripture could not be more different. In the context of this Psalm, (the speaker moved to great self-abasement on account of sin), the wondrous grace of God is being set forth. The impartation of the Holy Spirit to undeserving sinners – with all the glorious, saving consequences of that gift – is an act of **free grace**. Even in his state of guilty despair the Psalmist could dare to pray for deliverance and sustenance, because the Spirit of God is freely bestowed. His presence,

effects and influences cannot be procured by means or bought with money. A wicked, misguided man in the early days of the New Testament church saw what the Spirit accomplished in the lives of the disciples and desired to obtain it for a payment. He was denounced: *“Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money”* (Acts 8:20). The Spirit is bestowed upon individuals as an act of God’s grace: unmerited, undeserved, unbought, unbuyable. He is free in that sense. But free also in the sense of His **divine prerogative** and sovereignty – He is not bound by human strictures, not limited by circumstance, or any power, force or factor external to Himself; but entirely Sovereign in His activities, as God alone is. Free also in the sense of **liberating** – David had been in a state of great bondage to sin, slave to his baser passions, thereafter brought under conviction and bound by a sense of guilt (also a work of the Holy Spirit in him). But here he desires the Spirit to set him at liberty, that he might be free from sin, and its dire consequences in his life and experience. This spiritual emancipation is a work of the Holy Ghost: *“where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”* (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Nehemiah, giving an historical account of Israel’s wilderness wanderings says: *“Thou gavest also Thy **good spirit** to instruct them, and withheldest not Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst”* (Nehemiah 9:20). This relatively simple adjective holds great significance in Scripture, as the Lord Jesus remarked to a polite enquirer: *“Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, that is, God”* (Luke 18:19). This honorific superlative can only truly be used of God – and as such, is rightfully applied to both the Son, and the Spirit too (cf Psalm 143:10).

The Hebrew epistle adds a further description: **Eternal Spirit** (cf Hebrews 9:14). Here is another word that can be used of God alone, in its fullest sense. For whilst many of the things that God has wrought will endure ‘world without end’ – the angelic hosts, the souls of men,

heaven and hell – all these things had their beginning. Only God has both a ‘pre-’ and ‘post-eternity’; only God is ‘from everlasting, to everlasting’ (cf Psalm 90:2); only God is without either beginning or end of days; (cf Hebrews 7:3); ‘He only hath immortality’ in this regard (cf 1 Timothy 6:16). And with that immeasurable, indescribable longevity is coupled His constancy – which is manifested as the faithfulness of God. Agreeable to all these details, the Holy Spirit is rightly styled ‘Eternal’.

OFFICES AND WORKS. There are names and titles of the Holy Spirit that speak of His position and activities relative to the people of God. Foremost among these is **Comforter** (cf John 14:16, 26; 15:26, 16:7). The context is the Lord’s discourse with His disciples in the Upper Room, in which He addressed their natural, emotional distress at the prospect of His departure. Rather than dismay, the disciples are instructed to rejoice in the prospect of the future provision made for them: the Divine presence in a personal and permanent way, by virtue of the Holy Spirit who would descend at Pentecost (cf John 14:18, 28; 16:7; 1 John 3:24; 4:13). Is it not a wonderful thought that Almighty God is concerned, not with the salvation and sanctification of His people only, but in the meanwhile, their comfort! (cf 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17). This is the particular responsibility of the Holy Spirit (cf Acts 9:31).

The original Greek word translated as ‘Comforter’ is *‘parakletos’*, the prefix *‘para-’* meaning ‘alongside’, or ‘with’; and this is its fundamental sense: One who will stand alongside, to be a ‘Right-hand Man’, to succour, strengthen and support. This the Holy Spirit does. However, the word Paraclete can be translated differently, and one other instance is found in 1 John 2:1. The Lord Jesus is in view here, and the translation used is **‘Advocate’** in the English New Testament. In a legal context, the ‘man standing alongside’ is the counsel for the defence, that one who appears on behalf of another, to defend them in a court of law. The Saviour is often depicted in this way, interceding

for His people before the Father's throne. But the Holy Spirit fulfils a similar role. "*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but **the Spirit [Himself] maketh intercession** for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 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*" (Romans 8:26-27). Here is the work of the Holy Spirit described. There is a double provision made for God's people. The Lord Jesus Christ is an Advocate above, who 'ever liveth to make intercession' for them. But that is not all! The Spirit **likewise also** maketh intercession, with groanings which cannot be uttered, according to the will of God. We have an Intercessor above and an Intercessor below! There is an Advocate dwelling with us, and Advocate with the Father. Double provision, double representation, double defence, double security!

He is also called a **Witness** (cf Acts 5:32, Romans 8:16, 1 John 5:6-8, Hebrews 10:15). The analogy of a courtroom is still in view, but now with the Holy Spirit fulfilling the function of witness – giving testimony to the Truth. This He does in many ways. As often as the saints are enabled to testify **for** the Lord, in whatever situation, it is the Holy Spirit who prompts and empowers them to do so. But as well as this 'outward' witness comes an 'inward' one: the Holy Spirit bears witness **to** God's people, enumerating all the evidences that their salvation is genuine, and their faith rightly founded. He gives His witness on earth, and will maintain it in heaven at the last, declaring the saints' entitlement to eternal blessedness.

He is also described as the **Unction from the Holy One** (cf 1 John 2:20), an allusion to the Old Testament practice of anointing both kings and priests – which exalted titles belong also to the people of God (cf Revelation 1:6, 5:10). What greater evidence could a struggling believer have that he is truly destined for Glory, than the 'anointing' which marks him out for it? And this the Holy Spirit

supplies. In a dark and doubtful world, He is oil to make Christians' faces shine (cf Psalm 104:15)! And as the fragrant ointment applied to the High Priest's head soon flowed down and impregnated all his diverse garments with the same unique, identifying aroma (cf Psalm 133:1-2), so the shared unction of the Holy Spirit brings a true union to the Lord's gathered people (cf Ephesians 4:2-6).

GIFTS AND EFFECTS. There are many other verses of Scripture speaking of the Holy Ghost that use the following form of words: "**The Spirit of ...**" with a particular quality or virtue appended. These descriptions pertain to His effects and influences upon the people of God; gifts that He imparts and causes to grow within believers. Some readers might quibble at the texts which are quoted here. In many instances a lower-case 's' is used for 'spirit', and it could be argued that nothing more than a human characteristic or general attitude is meant. But let it be asked, if a child of God is blessed with 'the spirit of power, and of love and of a sound mind' (cf 2 Timothy 1:7), from whence do these things come, if not by the impartation of the Holy Ghost? These traits of godliness are the 'fruit of the Spirit' (cf Galatians 5:22-23). What man would ever know or manifest the 'things of God', but by the Spirit of God (cf 1 Corinthians 2:11)? In Isaiah 11 there is a Messianic prophecy concerning Christ, unto whom – says John in his Gospel – the Spirit was given without measure (cf John 3:34). He was possessed with and by the Holy Spirit in His entirety and fullness (cf Colossians 2:9). Thus when the blessed attributes of the Lord Jesus Christ are listed – wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, the fear of the Lord – all are prefaced: "the Spirit of...". The Third Person of the Trinity is described as imparting or enduing these qualities. The matter of English-language capitalisation should not be allowed to hide the Holy Ghost and His power from view.

So He is elsewhere to be found, called the **Spirit of Truth** (John 14:17, 16:13), the **Spirit of Prophecy** (cf Revelation 19:10) and the **Spirit of Revelation** (cf Ephesians 1:17). The 'Spirit of Truth' can

be understood in absolute terms. As with the Being of God, so with the Third Person of the Trinity, everything pertaining to Him is true; without guile, deception, error or fault. What He says is true, what He does is true. It is not subject to change, alteration, repentance or revocation. And the Spirit of Truth, the Lord states (cf John 16:13), shall lead others into truth. In these particular names, the work of transmitting God's Word is also included. All Scripture is given by **inspiration** of God (cf 2 Timothy 3:16). That same word is part of the Holy Spirit's name – He is '**the Breath of the Almighty**' (cf Job 33:4); all Scripture is given by Him. He very particularly visited and dwelt upon those individuals whom God used throughout history to transmit His truth. They did nothing by private interpretation, but spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (cf 2 Peter 1:21); the Spirit that was in them did testify (1 Peter 1:11). He inspired the written Holy Scriptures, and applies that truth to the lives of individual believers in the present day (cf 1 Corinthians 2:13).

Connected with this, He is also described as the **Spirit of knowledge**, the **Spirit of understanding**, the **Spirit of wisdom**, the **Spirit of counsel** (cf Isaiah 11:2, Ephesians 1:17). The Holy Spirit guides into all truth, suggestive of a journey. And this is the progress of it: to begin with, a growing familiarity with Biblical principles and language – knowledge; as one is led on more deeply into the things of God, there comes understanding (cf Acts 8:30), which, as applied and acted upon makes the individual 'wise unto salvation' (cf 2 Timothy 3:15). Thereafter, the Scriptures become that whereby enlightened believers direct all their heavenward steps – the whole counsel of God.

He is also called the **Spirit of Judgment** (cf Isaiah 28:6) – this is a particular application the spiritual wisdom just described. He enables the Lord's people to 'judge righteous judgment', and have their senses exercised to discern good and evil (cf John 7:24, Hebrews 5:14). He has also a reproofing work – He will reprove the world of sin,

righteousness and judgment, says the Lord Jesus (cf John 16:8). In the elect, this operation produces conviction and contrition unto repentance. In the masses of unbelieving humanity, it stands to their condemnation, leaving them without excuse, and increasing the terrors of the Last Great Day of the Lord. There is no contradiction here. Rightly is He called ‘the **Spirit of Burning**’ (cf Isaiah 4:4), an analogy borne out by His appearance on the Day of Pentecost as cloven tongues of fire (cf Acts 2:3). The same fire that purifies and refines metal, also consumes the dross. That fire which is a source of light, heat and life to one, may be destruction and death to another.

Elsewhere He is called the **Spirit of grace** (cf Zechariah 12:10, Hebrews 10:29) and the **Spirit of faith** (2 Corinthians 4:13). In these two titles both the sovereignty of God is displayed (the impartation of the Holy Spirit, and His saving works, are all an act of Divine grace, unconditional and free); and also the manward aspect, (the exercise of faith, wherein an individual believes according as it is written, and speaks as he believes). Yet even this faith is ‘not of oneself, but the gift of God’, bestowed by the same Holy Ghost.

The new birth – that mysterious process whereby the Sons of Adam are re-made as the Sons of God – is one of the Holy Spirit’s particular activities. It is He who ‘quickens’ at the first and instigates the principle of life (cf John 6:63); it is He who brings each new-born soul to the delivery (cf John 3:5-6); it is He who renews and regenerates (cf Titus 3:5). In recognition of this, He is rightly described as ‘**the Spirit of [our] Father**’ (cf Matthew 10:20); ‘**the Spirit of His Son**’, or of sonship, imparted to all who are the children of God, motivating their infant cries of ‘Abba, Father’ (cf Galatians 4:6); ‘**the Spirit of Adoption**’ (cf Romans 8:15), since He has effected their transfer from the lineage of sin to the blood-line of Christ. Still more fundamentally, He is ‘**the Spirit of Life**’ (cf Romans 8:2, 10) – life from the death of trespasses and sins, and ultimate resurrection from physical death unto immortality (cf Romans 8:11). None of these

verities are to be doubted, nor the glorious consequences of sonship questioned, for He is also ‘**the Spirit of Promise**’ (cf Ephesians 1:13). All that God has pledged is ratified by Christ, who adds a ‘yea and Amen’ – and they are sealed by the Spirit, who is Himself the ‘earnest’ and guarantee of them (cf 2 Corinthians 1:20-22.)

He is ‘**the Spirit of Power**’ (cf 2 Timothy 1:7) or ‘**the Spirit of Might**’ (cf Micah 3:8). The best and greatest of the Lord’s people still cannot achieve anything in their own strength. But the Third Person of the Trinity, who has all the omnipotence of God, enables the least and lowest to do ‘all things’. Not by natural skill or force, “*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts*” (Zechariah 4:6). The same verse in Timothy calls Him ‘**the Spirit of Love**’, which is equally true. It is the Spirit who communicates and makes known the Lord’s love toward His people: “*the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*” (Romans 5:5), and who stimulates a reciprocal love for God within them: “*the Lord [Spirit] direct your hearts into the love of God [Father], and into the patient waiting for Christ [Son]*” (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

He is called ‘**the Spirit of Glory**’ (1 Peter 4:14). – how much is contained in this expression! He is glorious in Himself as God; and when He lives and resides in the hearts of believers, He is their glory also. And He is leading and guiding them, safely and surely, to Glory at last (cf 2 Corinthians 3:18). With good reason does the Bible’s final book add another expression: ‘the seven – or **sevenfold** – **Spirit of God**’ (cf Revelation 1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6). This symbolic number speaks not of plurality, but of the breadth and diversity of His acts, and His divine omnipresence, of His sufficiency for the needs of all the churches (seven candlesticks) and all God’s servants (seven stars). Such is the fullness of the Spirit as expressed in His names and titles. May God’s people be enabled to better “*know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you*” (cf John 14:17).

R. J. Steward

EDITORIAL

Some nine hundred years after first being threatened with exile (cf Leviticus 26:33) the rebellious Jews were finally deported to Babylon. Even then, after centuries of repeated warnings by the prophets, they refused to accept that God’s judgments had any direct bearing upon them, trying to blame their present afflictions on the sins of others: *“The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”* (Ezekiel 18:2). But God makes it clear – His ways are perfectly equitable. There is no ‘collateral damage’ in His sovereign purposes, no innocents inadvertently caught in the crossfire of providence, none righteous accidentally destroyed with the wicked. This is a truth both comforting, and searching. For if trouble draws near, rest assured: *“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished”* (2 Peter 2:9); but if that trouble toucheth thee, then: *“despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him”* (Hebrews 12:5).

ERRATA

We regret that some incorrect details appeared in the Link Index supplied with last quarter’s 50th Anniversary Edition. The ‘Serialised Articles Index’, page xvi, first column, should be amended thus:

The Lord’s Day		
W. H. Molland		
1	Introduction	2016(4)2
2	Institution of the Sabbath	2017(1)2
3	Sabbaths: Creation to Sinai	2017(2)2
4	The Moral Law of God	2017(3)2
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6	Sabbath in the Old Covenant	2018(1)2
7	Sabbath in the New Testament	2018(2)2
8	Sabbath in the New Testament	2018(3)2
9	The First Day of the Week	2018(4)2
10	The First Day of the Week	2019(1)2
11	End of the Jewish Sabbath	2019(2)2
12	Man’s Duty to the Sabbath	2019(3)2
13	Public Worship of God	2019(4)2
14	The Christian’s Sabbath Duty	2020(1)2
15	Creation, Redemption, Heaven	2020(2)2
16	Preaching on the Sabbath	2020(3)2
17	The Abiding Law of God	2020(4)2
18	Conclusion	2021(1)2