

ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 148

“The Personality and Deity of the Spirit”

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“The Da Vinci Cracks”

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Greeting from London, England, where I am spending the next two weeks speaking at three Adventist rallies and at a *Friends of the Sabbath* conference on May 28-29, 2006, in Gloucester, near Bristol. The conference is sponsored by non-SDA Sabbatarian groups, most of whom were former members of the Worldwide Church of God.

It is always with a sense of joyful anticipation that I come to England. First, because our believers always give me a warm reception and response. Most of our members are eager to deepen their understanding and experience of Bible truth.

Second, in London I can enjoy some of the peace and tranquillity that is often missing at home, where the phone never seems to stop ringing. Here in London I can read and write in a peaceful setting. A most gracious Adventist couple have adopted me as their “son,” and always welcome me with open arms to the peaceful and comfortable home. During the past three years I have been a guest in their home a dozen of times. They provide me highspeed internet, a tasty cooked vegetarian breakfast, and a well furnished room with a double-glazed window overlooking a splendid manicured garden with an incredible variety of flowers, fruit trees and a well-stocked and colourfully-lit fish pond.

Coming to London for me it means enjoying for a few days a peaceful retreat. If your Summer travels include London, feel free to contact Gary and Araxi Keshishian at + 44 (0) 20 8866 8821, or gary@advent.plus.com They will offer you *royal* hospitality. For pictures and details, visit <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Promotions/BED&BREAKFAST.htm>

Responses To the Last Newsletter

The last newsletter generated encouraging responses and even offers of essays for future newsletter. Several wrote expressing appreciation for the fresh insights gained from reading the essay on the importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity for our religious and socio-political life. Some were surprised to learn that historically the understanding of the functioning of the Trinity has served as a model for religious, political, and social institutions.

The exercise of power in most societies generally reflects the prevailing understanding of how God rules the universe. The tendency has been to represent God as the only all-powerful ONE, who rules the world as a monarch. The usual conclusion has been that those who wield power on earth, are to act as God's natural representatives. The result has been authoritarianism in church government, totalitarianism in politics, and machismo in the family.

The evolution which has taken place in Western countries from totalitarian to democratic forms of government, appears to have been partly inspired by the evolution in the concept of God. The gradual replacement of the medieval conception of God who rules the universe as an absolute, autocratic monarch, has been gradually replaced by the new vision of a Triune God, who functions as a loving communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The rediscovery of the biblical vision of the Godhead, as three Beings living as equal in a perfect, loving communion, has provided a much needed corrective for the autocratic and often abusive exercise of power in the church, state, and the family. It has provided a powerful inspiration to live lovingly in a world where pride and selfishness prevail.

The study of the Trinity continues in this newsletter with an important essay on "The Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit," by Prof. Woodrow Whidden, a personal friend who has been serving for the past 16 years at Andrews University as Professor of Church History and Theology.

The next two newsletters will feature two essays by Prof. Jerry Moon, chairman of the Church History Department at Andrews University Theological Seminary. The first essay is “An Historical Survey of the Trinity Debate in the Adventist Church.” The second essays continues the survey by examining the role of Ellen White in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Adventist Church. Prof. Moon has already given me the two essays. This means that I will be able to post them shortly in rapid succession in the forthcoming newsletters. Both Whidden and Moon’s essays are excerpted from *The Trinity: Its Implications for Life and Thought* (Review and Herald, 2002). You can order the book at your local ABC or by calling the ABC toll free number: 800-876-9222.

The Da Vinci Decode

Perhaps the most pleasant surprise I received, was a message from Grenville Kent and Philip Rodionof, two Australian Adventist scholars who have authored of the newly released book *The Da Vinci Decode* (Signs Publishing Comppany, 2006). They graciously emailed me a digital copy of the book (PDF format). When I received it, I dropped everything and spent the next two hours reading the 128 pages booklet.

Kent and Rodionof have done a superb job in examining the major heresies embedded in *The Da Vinci Code*.. I felt that their book could not have come to my attention at a better time, since *The Da Vinci Code* movie has just been released this past week.

I contacted Professor Kent immediately, asking him two things: First, if he would he be willing to summarize the book in two lengthy articles for our ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER. Second, if he would negotiate an agreement with the Australian *Signs Publishing Company*, for me to print and distribute the book in the USA to the subscribers of this newsletter and to the participant at my weekend seminars.

The answer to the first question has been positive. Kent is currently preparing two essays excerpted from *The Da Vinci Decode*, that will soon be posted in our newsletter. The two essays will offer an extensive summary of the book. The answer to the second question so far has been negative. It appears that at this point in time, *Signs* is not prepared to grant me permission to print the book in the USA.

The refusal of *Signs* has been a blessing for me, because it has motivated me to become personally involved in this research project—an assignment that I was trying to avoid in view of other pressing commitments. But the reading I have done during the past few days, has convinced me that there are critical errors in *The Da Vinci Code*, that have been ignored by most reviewers, including Kent and Rodionof.

The Da Vinci Code's Error on the Origin of Sunday

For example, on pages 232-233, *The Da Vinci Code* says: “‘Originally,’ Langdon said, ‘Christianity honored the Jewish Sabbath of Saturday, but Constantine shifted it to coincide with the pagan’s veneration day of the sun.’ He paused, grinning, ‘To this day, most churchgoers attend services on Sunday morning with no idea that they are there on account of the pagan sun god’s weekly tribute—Sun-day.’”

This explanation is familiar to traditional Adventists who have been taught that Constantine changed the Sabbath to Sunday with the help of Pope Sylvester. This legend may be as popular among some Adventists as that of the notorious inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei*, allegedly found on the papal tiara. It is possible that Dan Brown, the author of *The Da Vinci Code*, may have found this erroneous teaching about the change of the Sabbath to Sunday by Constantine, in some Adventist publications. Unfortunately this view of the origin of Sunday is wrong.

My dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday* has shown that pagan Sun Worship on the Day of the Sun, was indeed a major factor that influenced the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of the Day of the Sun by most Christians. But this historical change began almost two centuries before Constantine’s Sunday Law, promulgated in A. D. 321. I will discuss this important question in the next newsletter, which I plan to call *The Da Vinci Cracks*.

The Alleged Role of Constantine

The fundamental problem of *The Da Vinci Code*, is that the whole novel is based on the totally mistaken assumption that Constantine, the first Christian emperor, radically changed the beliefs structure and practices of

Christianity, by means of drastic actions. For example, Dan Brown, the author of the book, claims that “Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier Gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned” (*The Da Vinci Code*, p. 234).

Constantine also allegedly pressured the church leaders, called Holy Fathers, that convened at the Council of Nicea in A. D. 325, in order for them to issue a creed that rejected what had been the early Christian “strict human view” of Christ and replaced it with a new “strict divine view” of Christ—of the same divine substance of the Father. He also instituted Sunday observance to facilitate the integration of the pagans into the Christian church. More important still, he empowered the Catholic Church to cover up the early Christians “strict human view” of Christ, and promote instead the divine view of Christ. This cover up has largely remained undetected for the past 1700 years until Dan Brown “cracked the code” with the help of forgotten ancient documents.

What Makes *The Da Vinci Code* So Popular?

The whole novel would be laughable, were it not for the fact that many readers think that they are finding the “truth” about the deceptions of the Christian Church in Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*. Such a belief stems from Dan Brown’s deceptive claims. In the opening page titled “Fact,” Brown states: “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.” The truth of the matter is that Brown grabs bits and pieces of factual information, and tosses them together in a salad consisting of a multitude of errors.

A major reason so many people, including Christians, are attracted to this book, is because the novel mixes together elements that are quite appealing to our a postmodern, secular culture: a relativistic attitude toward truth and religion, radical feminism, dislike for organized religion and the implicit belief that religious beliefs can be customized to suit each person’s wishes.

Some Adventists Are Attracted to *The Da Vinci Code*

Some Adventists seem to be attracted to the book and movie version of *The Da Vinci Code*. These seem to resonate with some Adventists because of the relentless attacks against the Catholic Church. It appears that our Adventist prophetic identification of the Beast of Revelation 13 with the Papacy, has fostered an anti-Catholic mind-set. This has happened in spite of the constant explanation given by our evangelists and pastors that the prophecy applies to the Catholic religious system, and NOT to the Catholic people.

Some Adventists who read the book or viewed the movie, have shared with me their thrill at the relentless and brutal attacks against the Catholic Church. For example, a subscriber to our newsletter emailed me this message:

“Dear Professor Bacchiocchi:

I went and saw the *Da Vinci Code* movie and to be quite frank, it only placed one Catholic Order against another Catholic Order (namely, Opus Dei against the Knights Templars), so I can understand why the Catholic Church would be against the movie. Actually I am quite glad at a point of glee at seeing one Order attacking another or Satan attacking Satan. I can hardly wait to see the horrific Vatican and its linchpins of demons finally burn at the end of earth’s history. . . .

I really hope that the movie blows the Catholic Church out of the water and into disarray. Sorry for being so very vindictive towards the Catholic Pagan Church that it really is!!!!!! May it raught (?) in hell. Amen!

Forgive me for saying this but if God were to allow me, I would burn the Vatican down myself, but I won’t have to do it, because God Himself will do in the end. I really hope that He Napalms the Whore.”

Frankly, I am embarrassed and ashamed by the use of such language. The saving grace of God should dispel any feeling of hate and empower us to love even those whom we perceive to be our religious enemies. By fostering feelings and attitudes of hate toward the Catholic or Protestant

religious systems, we may be paving the way for these systems to make us, Adventists, the focus of their future hate and intolerance. Simply stated, we may bring upon us the Time of Trouble by reaping what we have sown.

Fundamental Heresies Embedded in *The Da Vinci Code*

Any Adventist support for *The Da Vinci* book or movie because of their attacks against the Catholic Church, ignores that what is being attacked is not merely the Catholic Church, but the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. Among its many heresies, *The Da Vinci Code* puts forth the following as factual truths:

- * Jesus was only a man and not the divine Son of God.
- * Jesus married Mary Magdalene and had a child from her.
- * Jesus “intended the future of His church to be in the Hand of Mary Magdalene” (*The Da Vinci Code*, p. 248).
- * Through the Catholic Church, Constantine altered the Bible to make it teach that Jesus is divine.
- * The Cup of the Last Supper, known as the Holy Grail, is not a chalice, but Mary Magdalene whose womb served as the chalice from which the royal blood of Jesus flowed in a royal posterity.
- * The Catholic Church has covered up these facts and even murdered people to protect these secrets.

Instead of lending any support to *The Da Vinci Code*, Adventists need to dust off their Bibles and reread the prophetic description of the dragon, sea-beast, and land-beast (Rev 13), that will form an unholy trinity to lead mankind away from the true worship of God into idolatrous forms of worship. Could it be that by placing all our eggs in the basket of the papacy, we have failed to see other significant manifestations of the End-time Antichrist like *The Da Vinci Code*.

If we accept the biblical definition of the Antichrist as being any one who does not accept that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God (1 John 4:2-3), then *The Da Vinci Code*, is one of the most tangible manifestation of the endtime Antichrist of our time. It represents an unprecedented endtime fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

What About a DVD Exposing *The Da Vinci Cracks*?

While reading and reflecting upon the heresies promoted worldwide by *The Da Vinci Code*, I have been wondering: How can I best help people reject these heresies and accept the saving truths of the Bible? Ideally, I would like to write a 250 pages book entitled *The Da Vinci Cracks*. But, such a project could easily take several months to complete, especially because of all my extensive travelling and lecturing.

A quicker response would be a video-taping of a two hours lecture, that can readily be distributed on a DVD album. With the help of 200 powerpoint slides, I could help people to see the major “cracks” in *The Da Vinci Code*. More important still, I could help people understand that eternal salvation is offered to us, not by the blood flowing from Mary Magdalene womb, but by “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet 1:19).

In your opinion, which of the two projects should have priority? Should I focus on researching and writing a lengthy book, forgetting for the time being a video-recording? Or should I plan for a video-recording of an informative two-hours lecture, shelving the book project for the time being? Thank you for helping me to make an informed decision.

Initially I thought that a thorough analysis of *The Da Vinci Code* in a book form, is preferable because it provides a more compelling refutation of the multitude of errors found in the book. But, upon further reflection, I feel inclined toward spending a couple of months preparing myself for a video-recording of a powerpoint lecture on *The Da Vinci Cracks*.

Let me know what would you prefer: reading a book or viewing a DVD exposing the cracks of *The Da Vinci Code*? Your answers will help me to make a more informed decision.

Incidentally, feel free to share with me also your reactions to the latest DVD recording on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*. I like to read your comments, especially in view of a possible new recordings on *The Da Vinci Code*. If you forgot to order your DVD, note that you have few more days until May 31, to order your album at 75% discount. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

Before proceeding with our study of the Trinity, there are a few important announcements that need to be made:

SUBSCRIBE/UNSUBSCRIBE Information:

You can subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter in a simple way:

To subscribe send an email or click on this address: endtimeissues-subscribe@lists.biblicalperspectives.com

To unsubscribe send an email or click on this address: endtimeissues-unsubscribe@lists.biblicalperspectives.com

FRIENDS OF THE SABBATH CONFERENCE

A special *Friends of the Sabbath Conference* is planned for Sunday, May 28 and Monday, May 29, 2006, in Gloucester, England. The conference is sponsored by non-SDA Sabbatarian groups, most of whom were former members of the Worldwide Church of God. They have invited me several times to speak at similar conferences held with great success in the USA and Australia.

If you live within driving distance from Gloucester (near Bristol), I would strongly encourage you to attend this Sabbath Conference. You will receive fresh information about the Sabbath and enjoy fellowship with other Sabbatharians.

You will learn new things about the Sabbath which usually I do not present at Sabbath Seminars in Adventist churches, because I try to avoid academic lectures on the Sabbath. For example, I will deliver at the conference the powerpoint lecture is entitled FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY: HOW IT CAME ABOUT? In this lecture I show significant documents found in the Vatican archives and discuss the theological, social, and liturgical methods used by the papacy to lead Christians away from Sabbathkeeping into Sundaykeeping.

In another lecture I will also discuss the New Covenant theology that led the leaders of the Worldwide Church of God to give up the Sabbath on January 1995. The same New Covenant theology has influenced over 50 Adventist pastors and professors to leave our Adventist church and

write books and articles against the Sabbath. These former Adventists have influenced thousand of Adventists in the USA to leave the church. In my lecture I will deal with the fundamental flaws of the New Covenant theology.

Detailed information about the location and the time of *The Friends of the Sabbath Conference* is posted at the following website: <http://www.friendsofsabbath.org.uk/information.htm> In case you have difficulty to surf the web, the location of the conference is: Quedgeley Community Centre, School Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 4PJ. For information, feel free to call Robert Taylor at 01452 417116. I look forward to a blessed time together.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTERS

A detailed description of the special offers on goods and services is provided at the end of this newsletter. Here is a brief listing of the announcements that are expanded at the end of this newsletter.

1. CALENDAR OF FORTHCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS for the months of May and June 2006. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

2. NEWLY RELEASED (MAY 1, 2006) CD-ROM WITH ALL OF PROF. JON PAULIEN PUBLICATIONS. It contains more than a dozen of books and scores of articles written during the past 20 years of research. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

3. SPECIAL OFFER ON THE NEW DVD ALBUM on *The Number and Mark of the Beast*. Note that you have few more days until the end of May to order this timely DVD recording at 75% discount. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

4. TAGNET SPECIAL NEW WEB HOSTING OFFER for Adventist churches and members. TAGnet provides an incredible number of services to our churches and members. For detail information, visit their website at <http://www.netadventist.org> or <http://home.tagnet.org/> You may also call their office 800 - 9TAGNET

5. SPECIAL OFFER ON THE PACKAGE OF ALL MY RECORDINGS CONSISTING OF 5 ALBUMS, including the newly released DVD album on *The Mark and the Number of the Beast*. The special offer is only \$100.00 for the 5 albums, instead of the regular price of \$500.00. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

6. SPECIAL OFFER ON PROF. JON PAULIEN'S 5 ALBUMS with 60 CD DISKS, containing 120 lectures that explain verse by verse the book of Revelation. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

7. HITACHI PROJECTORS: Few days ago HITACHI offered an additional discount to help especially our churches and schools in developing countries. For examples, the special offer for the new **2000 LUMENS PROJECTOR CP-X250 IS ONLY \$1095.00**, instead of the previous SDA price of \$1995.00. See the details at the end of this newsletter or call me at 269-471-2915

8. REMOTE PRESENTER: Special offer on the smallest and most powerful REMOTE powerpoint presenter by Honeywell. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

INTRODUCTION OF DR. WOODROW WHIDDEN

The author of our study on "The Personalidty and Divinity of the Holy Spirit, is Dr. Woodrow W. Whidden. He was born in Orlando, Florida, where he grew up in an Adventist home. He graduated at Forest Lake Academy (1963), Southern Adventist University (BA in 1967), Andrews University (Master of Divinity in 1969), and Drew University (Master of Philosophy in 1987 and Ph.D in 1989).

Prof. Whidden has served as a pastor-evangelist in various Seventh-day Adventist local conferences in the Eastern United States from 1969 to 1985. From 1985 to 1988 he took a three year study leave to work on his doctorate at Drew University in Madison, NJ. From 1988 to 1990 he pastored in the Michigan Conference. He has been teaching for the past sixteen years in the Religion Department of the College of Arts and Sciences at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, MI.. Late this sum-

mer he will transfer to the Adventist International Institute for Advanced Studies (AIAS) in Silang, Cavite province, Philippines where he will teach Historical and Systematic Theology..

“The Personality and Deity of the Spirit”

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Many sincere people understand the Holy Spirit to be some sort of electrical current hooked up to the throne of God or a celestial internet seeking to provide some impersonal phone line for God to communicate with us. Yes, the Holy Spirit is certainly a great “channel” of communication! The overwhelming Bible evidence, however, suggests that this channel is a Person who is a Personal member of the One true Godhead.

For those of us who are not very mechanically inclined, written directions have not proven to be as helpful as the personal guidance and encouragement of another person who really knows mechanics.

I recall the days of my childhood and the passion that my brother Ivan and I had for model planes and ships. Every chance we had, we would haunt hobby shops looking for the latest scale-model replicas of the great military aircraft and naval vessels of the day. I dearly loved putting them together. There was, however, one problem: I had a very shaky hand and not a lot of mechanical skill. My brother, however, was blessed with a very steady hand and wonderful mechanical insight.

When I simply went by the printed directions alone, I did not make much progress. To be perfectly honest with you, I usually botched up the job quite badly. When, however, Ivan was with me giving guidance, encouragement and an occasional steady hand on the trickiest jobs, I was able to produce some rather lovely models.

The biblical evidence strongly suggests that the Holy Spirit is a profoundly, sensitive, helpful and powerful personal Presence to guide and direct. Only His business is molding us into wonderful models of transforming grace.

THE PERSONHOOD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The testimony of the Scripture on the nature of the Holy Spirit, is not as rich as it is for the full deity of Christ. The evidence, however, is nonetheless quite suggestive (at the very least), if not downright persuasive. Let us examine a few significant Bible texts.

Acts 5

In Acts 5 we find the most arresting evidence of the personhood of the Holy Spirit. The first part of this chapter deals with the tragic case of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. These early Christians had made a vow to God to donate the full proceeds from a sale of their property to the needs of the struggling church. The story turns on the fact that they secretly “kept back part of the proceeds” for themselves. When they came in to lay the reduced offering at the feet of the apostles, they were summarily struck dead.

Carefully note Peter’s telling explanation for their summary execution by the signal power of God: “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? . . . Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God’” (vs. 3 and 4).

Let’s reflect a moment on the implications of this rather straightforward report.

First of all, Peter is saying that the Holy Spirit could be lied to. It is quite apparent that only a “person” can be lied to. One cannot lie to an inanimate thing, only to self-conscious beings with the ability to personally communicate and relate responsively to other persons. I can lie to my computer all day and it will not affect the computer one whit in the way that it would the reader if I proceeded to tell you a proverbial “pack of lies.” Only personal, relational beings who are capable of meaningful communication can be lied to in ways that have moral consequences.

Second, Peter not only reports to Ananias that he had lied to the “Holy Spirit,” but then goes on to give the further explanation that he

had “not lied to men but to God” (v.4). The evident implication is that the Holy Spirit is God! I ask the reader, is there any other conclusion that we can come to?

Ephesians 4:30

A very similar type of evidence for the personality of the Holy Spirit is found in Ephesians 4:30: Paul admonishes his readers to “not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” I simply ask the reader, can you grieve an “it” or a “thing?” Of course not!! Only persons can be grieved. Grieving here means to bring to the point of deep regret or disappointment. This is a sensation that can only be experienced by personal beings with senses, feelings and caring propensities. Inanimate or impersonal things do not have the ability to be “grieved.”

Matthew 12:31, 32

These well-known verses clearly speak of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Now it is very clear that only God can be blasphemed. Any Bible-believing Christian is very clear that if blasphemy is directed either at the Father or the Son it is directed at a divine person. Why then should it be any different with the Holy Spirit? Clearly blasphemy is a very personal sort of insult---directed at God. Not only are these verses pointed evidence for the personhood of the Spirit, they also provide compelling evidence for the deity of the Spirit. As noted above, only God can be blasphemed and thus it is easy to conclude that the Spirit is a personal God, not some impersonal force.

I Corinthians 12

One of the truly striking aspects of the New Testament’s description of the workings of the Holy Spirit is the way that the Spirit of God is described as having a “will,” or the ability to make choices. This is quite apparent in Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts found in 1 Cor. 12:11. In this verse the apostle declares that “the Spirit works all these things (His gifts), distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

Now I do believe that all will readily recognize that machines (such as computers and calculators) do not have wills. They are simply imper-

sonal, passive instruments under the control of rational, self-conscious personal beings. The spiritual gifts are the ministering talents which the Holy Spirit distributes to each person in the body of Christ. He, however, carries out this distribution through the exercise of a will---as He chooses! The ability to will is one of the most profound traits of personal beings.

Romans 8

A further, closely related description of the Holy Spirit is given by Paul in Romans 8:14-16 and 26. First of all, in verses 14--16 the Spirit is described as leading (vs.14) the sons of God and bearing “witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (vs.16). Both leading and bearing “witness” are actions with intensely personal overtones. Verse 26, however, is possibly the most powerful evidence of the personality of the Spirit in the Letter to the Romans: “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

The whole phenomenon of “intercession” implies willing, active intervention between two personal beings. Furthermore, the fact that the “intercession” is accompanied with “groanings” which cannot be “uttered” strongly suggests an emotional element in the intercessions of the Spirit which is also typical of personal beings, not impersonal electronic technology.

I Corinthians 2: 10, 11

This passage presents one of the most important evidences of the personal deity of the Spirit. Note carefully its language: Following the well-known verse which says “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (vs.9), Paul assures his readers that they may have a knowledge of the “things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (v.9). And how is such knowledge possible? “God has revealed them to us through His Spirit” (vs.10).

And how is it that the Spirit is privy to such much sought after knowledge of God? Answer: “the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep

things of God (vs.10). For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (vs.11).

What is it that Paul is saying in these verses? First of all it must be pointed out that the Spirit is here described as having the ability to “search” out “the deep things of God” and to “know the things of God.” While it is true that our personal computers have “search” capabilities, this is not some sort of a “word search” that Paul is describing; it is rather an intensely personal searching out of “the deep things of God.” This strongly suggests an intimate, personal communion between the Spirit and God the Father. And what is the result of such a deep search into the things of God? It is most certainly a deep knowledge of “the things of God.”

Furthermore, what this passage seems to be saying is this: if you want to know the “things of a man,” you cannot gain such knowledge unless (“except”) you possess in you “the spirit of the man.” To put it quite simply: to really know a man, you must be a man---”it takes one to know one!!”

This, however, is not only true on the human to human level, but it is also true on the God level: “Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (vs.11). Once more, it takes a divine person to truly know what is in the mind and heart of another divine being. As on the human level, so it is on the Divine--it takes One to know One!!!

Paul appropriately concludes by saying that what we have received from the Spirit is “not the spirit of the world” (man, the creature), “but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God” (vs.12). If you really want to know the things of God, you must connect with a personal God (the Spirit) who only can know the “things” of God.

I know that it is hard for me to comprehend what goes on in the minds of many of my students who come from cultural and language backgrounds which differ from my own. It has, however, often proven helpful to get insights from persons who have bridged these cultural chasms and can help me know the “mind” of those I long to better understand. Thus it is

with the work of the Spirit---He knows the mind of God because He is a personal and divine being capable of communicating to us the mind of God.

Ellen White has given us some very straight-forward, concise explanatory comments on 1 Cor. 2:11 and Romans 8:16: “The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God (comment on Romans 8:16). He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God” (and then 1 Cor. 2:11 is cited; *Evangelism* 617).

When these Bible verses are placed along-side of Acts 5 and Eph. 4:30, they form a powerful testimony to both the personality and deity of the Spirit.

John 14-16

These chapters, which usher in John’s narration of the final scenes of our Lord’s earthly ministry, are filled with wonderful and comforting words of counsel. One of the great themes of Jesus’ counsels to His disciples is the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is saying to them that the time of trial and departure is near at hand, but please do not let “your heart be troubled” (14:1). And One of the great consolations which would issue forth out of the trying scenes ahead would be the sending of the Holy Spirit: “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper (“Comforter” in KJV), that He may abide with you forever (vs.16)---the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you (v.17). I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (v.18).

As Jesus continues His wonderful words of counsel, the gift of the Holy Spirit continues to be a theme which permeates not only chapter 14, but also chapters 15 and 16: In 14: 26 Jesus says “But the Helper (Comforter), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He (Gk. ekeinos, literally “that one,” or He in the masculine gender) will teach you

all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” In 15:26 are found very similar words: “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He (again the Gk. *ekeinos* in the masculine gender) will testify of Me.”

It is, however, in Chapter 16 that this wonderful discourse, so filled with the promises of the coming of the Spirit and His work, comes to its climax. In verses seven through seventeen come some of the most hopeful and helpful words which Jesus would ever speak:

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you (vs.7). And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (vs.8): of sin, because they do not believe in Me (vs.9); of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more (vs.10); of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged (vs.11). I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now (vs.12). However, when He (Gk. *ekeinos*, masculine gender) the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come (vs.13). He (Gk. *ekeinos*, again in the masculine gender) will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you (vs.14). All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you (vs.15).”

What is truly remarkable about these great verses are the many straight-forward evidences for the personality of the Spirit.

First of all it should be observed that while the word “Spirit” (Gk. *pneuma*) is in the neuter gender in Greek, the personal pronoun *ekeinos* (“that one,” or “He,” clearly used to refer to the neuter Spirit) is in the masculine gender. It is this grammatical fact which has led the majority of translators to translate the other personal pronouns called for in these passages as “He” rather than “it” or “that one” (as the anti-trinitarian New World Translation of the Jehovah’s Witnesses has done).

Personal, Masculine Pronouns Used to Describe the Holy Spirit

What follows is a detailed listing of the personal, masculine pronouns used in John 14-16, once more high-lighting the masculine pronoun *ekeinos*:

“He may abide” (14:16), “whom” (14:17), “sees Him,” “knows Him,” “know Him,” “He dwells” (14:18), “whom the Father will send,” “He (*ekeinos*) will teach” (14:26), “the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you,” “He (*ekeinos*) will testify” (15:26), “I will send Him to you” (16:7), “when He has come He will convict” (16:8), “when He (*ekeinos*), the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you . . . He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell” (16:13), “He (*ekeinos*) will glorify Me, for He will take” (16:14).

The neuter Spirit (*pneuma*) can certainly be interpreted to be impersonal, but the fact that the personal pronouns are masculine (especially *ekeinos*) and are used repeatedly, strongly indicates the personhood of the Spirit.

While the fact of the masculine gender of the Greek *ekeinos* is strong evidence for the personality of the Spirit, it is by no means the only evidence. There are other appealing evidences for the personality of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit as Helper

The term “Helper” (also translated as counselor or comforter) “is a term commonly used to speak of a person who helps or gives comfort or counsel to another person or persons, but is used of the Holy Spirit in John’s Gospel (14:16, 26; 15: 26; 16:7)” (Grudem 232).

There are other activities which are ascribed to the Spirit which are highly personal or inter-personal: teaching (John 14:26), bearing witness (John 15:26; cf. Romans 8:16), convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8), guiding into truth, speaking, hearing, and telling (John 16:13), glorifying God, taking and telling (John 16:14). All such activities strongly suggest the evident personal and interactive nature of a divine Person, not a celestial thing.

The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles

Furthermore, not only do we have such personally interactive actions ascribed to the Spirit in the Gospel of John, but such activity is also quite evident in the Acts of the Apostles: forbidding or not allowing certain activities (Acts 16:6, 7), speaking (Acts 8:29; 13:2), evaluating and approving a particular course of action (Acts. 15:28).

The Use of the Words “Power” and “Spirit”

Wayne Grudem has raised an interesting point about the manner in which a number of Bible verses employ the impersonal term “power” in association with the Holy Spirit. Carefully follow his argument: “If the Holy Spirit is understood simply to be the power of God, rather than a distinct person, then a number of passages would simply not make sense, because in them the Holy Spirit and his power or the power of God are both mentioned. For example, Luke 4:14, ‘And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee,’ would have to mean, ‘Jesus returned in the power of the power of God into Galilee.’ In Acts 10:38, ‘God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power,’ would mean, ‘God anointed Jesus with the power of God and with power’ (see also Romans. 15:13; 1 Cor. 2:4).” (Grudem 232, 233).

2 Corinthians 13:14

One final piece of evidence for the Spirit’s personality comes from 2 Cor. 13:14: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”

The first thing to note about this verse is that the Holy Spirit is here described as the third named being headed up by the God the Father and the Son. The vast majority of Bible-believing Christians agree that the Father and the Son are personal divine beings. Most certainly the “grace” which comes from Jesus Christ is only something that can have a personal origin. The “love of God” is obviously suggestive of the personality of the Father since love is the essence of any experience which is inter-personal and expressive of caring sentiments. The Holy Spirit is then mentioned in a most straight-forward way, strongly suggestive that He is a personal, coordinate divine being---the Third Person of the tri-personal Godhead.

A Coordinate Relationship

Wayne Grudem has expressed it this way: “When ‘the Holy Spirit’ is put in the same expression and on the same level as the other two persons, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is also viewed as a person and of equal standing with the Father and the Son” (Grudem 230).

The way Paul here describes the Holy Spirit’s relationship to the Father and the Son is referred to by Grudem as “a coordinate relationship;” he goes on to explain that “since the Father and the Son are both persons, the coordinate expression strongly intimates that the Holy Spirit is a person also” (232).

2 Cor. 13:14 is not the only verse “where the Holy Spirit is put in a coordinate relationship with the Father and the Son” (232). Matt. 28:19, 1 Cor. 12:4--6, Eph. 4:4--6 and 1 Peter 1:2 all give evidence of this same type of “coordinate relationship with the Father and the Son.” These verses present very appealing evidence that the Spirit is not “just the ‘power’ or ‘force’ of God at work in the world” (232), but rather a distinct person of the Godhead.

The second thing to notice about the “coordinate relationship” of the Spirit with the Father and the Son (in 2 Cor. 13:14) is that the Holy Spirit is described as one who is associated with “communion” (NKJV), or “fellowship” (NIV). This word, which is directly descriptive of the workings of the Spirit, strongly suggests inter-personal communications between relational beings---that is, personal beings, whether they be human, angelic or divine.

Not only does this passage evidence the personality of the Spirit, but it also suggests the profound unity or oneness that is inherent in the doctrine of the Trinity. Here are three divine beings lined up together in such a way as to point to their oneness of purpose in the impartation of grace and love to the people of God through their deep fellowship with one another and the redeemed.

Furthermore, it seems to be an almost unconscious expression of the Spirit’s personality for Paul to conclude his second letter to the Corinthi-

ans with a farewell greeting which simply links the work of the Father, the Son and the Spirit together as a fully united personal “force” for the redemption of lost humanity. This verse is a very appropriate transitional passage to further Biblical evidence for the full deity of the Spirit and profound unity found within the Godhead.

THE FULL DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Earlier we suggested that Acts 5 provides persuasive evidence for the deity of the Spirit. Peter said to Ananias that he had lied to the Holy Spirit (vs.3) and then proceeds to say that “You have not lied to men but to God” (vs.4), strongly implying that Ananias had more directly lied to God the Holy Spirit, not to God the Father or God the Son.

Furthermore, the passages that speak of a strong coordinate relationship between the Father, the Son and the Spirit not only suggest the personality of the Spirit, but also the deity of the Spirit (Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13, 14, 1 Cor. 12:4--6, Eph. 4:4--6 and so forth). In other words, these passages “assume significance for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, because they show that the Holy Spirit is classified on an equal level with the Father and the Son” as a divine person (Grudem 237). To suggest that the Holy Spirit is a created being or impersonal force would appear entirely inappropriate when the Holy Spirit is repeatedly placed in such an equally coordinate position with the Father and the Son. There is, however, further Bible evidence for the full deity of the Spirit.

Psalms 139:7,8 says “Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence (vs.7)? If I ascend into heaven, you are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there” (vs.8). Once again, this is a passage addressed to the LORD (YHWH) and the Psalmist attributes to God’s Spirit the uniquely divine characteristic of omnipresence--something not characteristic of created powers or beings.

Once again, Grudem is very helpful: “It seems that David is equating God’s Spirit with God’s presence. To go from God’s Spirit is to go from his presence, but if there is nowhere that David can flee from God’s Spirit, then he knows that wherever he goes he will say, ‘You (LORD) are there’” (Grudem 237).

Along the same lines, 1 Cor. 2:10, 11 attributes another unique characteristic of deity to the Holy Spirit--omniscience: "For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God (vs.10). For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (vs.11). Does not the ability to search "the deep things of God" and to "know . . . the things of God" strongly imply omniscience?

Another striking evidence of the Spirit's deity is the way the Spirit is described as the Author of the "New Birth." Yet the work of giving new spiritual life is an act that is unique to God: 1 John 3:9 speaks of being "born of God." Thus the New Birth, authored by the Spirit, is also described as being wrought out by God---strongly implying the work of the New Birth is the work of a divine being.

The Oneness or Personal Tri-Unity of the Godhead

In chapter one, we have already suggested some important evidence for the profound Oneness of the Tri-personal Godhead. The use of the inherently plural word *echad* used by Moses in Deut. 6:4, the singular "name" which is used to describe the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in Matthew 28:19, and the plural "Let us make man in our image" of Genesis 1:26 are all powerfully suggestive of the deep unity manifest among the divine Persons of the Godhead. This language unmistakably has God speaking of Himself with plural references. What is interesting is the way this kind of evidence is found in other places in the Old Testament.

In addition to the "let us make man in our image" terminology of Genesis 1:26, there is similar, plural God language found in the following passages:

(1) Referring to the sin of Adam and Eve, "the LORD God said, 'Behold the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil'" (Gen. 3:22). (2) In the story of the great sin of the people at the tower of Babel, God said, "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language" (Gen. 11:7). (3) Isaiah 6 records a remarkable vision in which the prophet saw "the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up" (vs.1). During this spectacular

vision Isaiah reports hearing “the voice of the Lord saying: `Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’” (vs. 8). While none of these instances is coercive, their cumulative force provides interesting evidence from the Old Testament for the plurality of persons within the Godhead.

The God of Love

One last type of evidence arises from the following line of reasoning. In fact, I would suggest that it provides some of the most powerful evidence of the plural oneness within the Godhead.

The Biblical testimony given in chapters 1 to 3 strongly suggests that the God revealed in the Scriptures is manifest in three divine persons. Thus if they are all divine persons, there is the very real implication that they all must be profoundly one in their divine character, nature or substance. There is simply a deep sense of identity and oneness between persons (human and divine) when they share the same nature and character. The question is this: what is it about their divine nature which makes them “One”?

I John 4:8

“God is love.” Do we truly comprehend the depths of this inspired statement which is so disarming in its seeming simplicity? I would suggest that these three words have a profound contribution to make to our understanding of a God who has eternally pre-existed in something like trinitarian “Oneness.”

In the early stages of my more mature Christian experience I must confess that I was quite indifferent to the issues which have swirled around the subject of the Godhead. It was, however, when I began to more carefully reflect on the evidence presented in the first three chapters of this book that I began to sense that something deep and heavy is going on when the Bible defines ultimate reality.

The issue began to focus around the question of a God who shines forth from the pages of Scripture as one who is intensely personal and loving in nature. Then one day it began to penetrate my rather rationalistic

attitude towards religion and Biblical theology that the God of heaven is primarily the God of loving grace, not abstract rationality.

That expression “God of loving grace” began to raise “amazing” thoughts in my mind about love as the essence of human existence. I clearly remember the day when my brother Phillip shared with me the gist of the following line of thought:

If God is truly, in His very essence the God of “love” (John 3:16 and I John 4:8), then the following implications need to be considered.

Could One who has existed from all eternity past and who made us in His loving image---could this God truly be called love if He ever existed as a solitary Being? Is not love, especially divine love, only possible if the One who made this universe was a plural Being who was exercising “love” within His divine plurality from all eternity past? Is not real, selfless love possible only if it proceeds from the kind of God who was and is and shall be a God of Love eternally? Is the Creator God, who is called love, in any way finally dependent upon His created beings to reveal and demonstrate His love? I think the answer is quite evident!!

Carefully note the articulate ways that both Bruce Metzger and Otto H. Christensen make this crucial point:

“The Unitarian professes to agree with the statement that ‘God is love.’ But these words, ‘God is love,’ have no real meaning unless God is at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God were a single person, then before the universe was made, he was not love. For, if love be of the essence of God, he must always love, and, being eternal, he must have possessed an eternal object of love. Furthermore, perfect love is possible only between equals. Just as a man cannot satisfy or realize his powers of love by loving the lower animals, so God cannot satisfy or realize his love by loving man or any creature. Being infinite, he must have eternally possessed an infinite object of his love, some alter ego, or, to use the language of traditional Christian theology, a consubstantial, co-eternal, and co-equal Son” (Metzger 83).

“(God’s) self-communion and association within Himself, wholly independent of the created universe, is impossible to an essence destitute

of personality. Only the plural unity of the Trinity explains this, for there must be someone to be known. Likewise there must be someone to be loved. There was a time when the universe was not, and if God's blessedness and perfection depended upon the universe, then there would have been a time when God was neither self-conscious [nor] blessed. Inspiration and reason both demand a triune God composed of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (Christensen 70).

Have we not discovered that the most profound of human unities are those of selfless love? Could we experience such profound loving unions if there was not a deeply united, plural God of infinite love who has defined the very essence of the universe and the existence of those creatures made more especially in His image? I think not. The very essence of living in love flows from the great Triune Godhead of loving grace!!!

Summation

We are not finished presenting the Bible evidence. But let me ask you this, dear reader: Is the evidence that has been presented in these first four chapters sufficient enough to make even the most noble of the Bereans inclined to some sort of tri-personal understanding of the Godhead?

Maybe you are still not convinced. If so, I beg you to stay with me for at least a couple of more chapters. The next chapter will address the trinitarian evidences found in the Book of Revelation; then the final two chapters of this first section of the book will deal with the passages that the anti-trinitarians have traditionally brought forward as evidence for their position. Let's now turn to the great visions of John the Revelator.

If you wish to have access to his study immediately, to help you in studying or teaching the Sabbath School, you can order through your ABC the book *The Trinity: Its Implications for Life and Thought* (Review and Herald, 2002). The nationwide toll free number of the ABC is 800-876-9222.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

UPCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS

As a service to our subscribers, I am listing the date and the location of the upcoming seminars for the months of May and June 2006. I wish to extend my personal, warm invitation to all who are able to attend one of the followings rallies.

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Location: 298 st. Agnes Highway, Cohoes, New York 12047.
For information call Pastor Don Bozarth at (607) 397-1848.

MAY 12-13: CHICAGO: HINSDALE SDA CHURCH

Location: 201 N. Oak Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521.
For information call Pastor Ante Geroncic at (630) 730-3075 or (630) 323-0182.

MAY 19-20: LONDON - HOLCOMBE ROAD SDA CHURCH

Location: John Loughborough School, Holcombe Road, Tottenham, London, England. For information call Pastor Augustus Lawrence at 01923 894355.

MAY 26-27: LONDON -PLAISTOW SDA CHURCH

Location: 97 St. Anthonys Road, Forest Gate, London E7 9QB, England
For information call Pastor Felix McPherson at 020 8524 9402

MAY 28-29: GLOUCESTER - FRIENDS OF THE SABBATH

Location: The Conference will take place at the Quedgeley Community Centre, School Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 4PJ, England.
For directions, registration, and general information visit the website: <http://www.friendsofsabbath.org.uk/taylor.pdf> or call Robert Taylor at 01452 417116

JUNE 2-3: LONDON- BRIXTON SDA CHURCH

Location: Santley Street, Clapham, London SW4 7QG, England
For information call Pastor Hamilton Williams at 020 8670 5255

JUNE 9-10: NEW YORK CITY - PATCHOGUE SDA CHURCH

Location: 184 North Ocean Avenue, Patchogue, NY 11772
For information call Pastor Daniel Zabaleta at (914) 681 1842.

JUNE 16-17: LOS ANGELES - TEMPLE CITY SDA CHURCH

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Prof. Jon Paulien is one of the most respected Adventist scholars. Besides serving as the chairman of the New Testament at Andrews University Theological Seminary, he writes and lectures extensively in many parts of the world.

Until now Prof. Paulien books and articles were available only in a printed form, often unavailable at local ABC stores. In view of my indebtedness to Prof. Paulien's scholarship, I have offered to help him to place all of his books and articles on a CD disk. This makes it possible with the ACROBAT global search, to locate immediately what he has written on biblical texts or current topics.

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