

Greek Grammar and the Personality of the Holy Spirit

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The modern, broadly conservative articulation of the distinct personality and deity of the Holy Spirit has often included in its arsenal a point or two from the realm of philology. The Fourth Gospel has especially been mined for such grammatical nuggets, though Ephesians, 1 John, and sometimes even 2 Thessalonians have been claimed as yielding syntactical evidence in defense of the Spirit's personality. Two kinds of texts have been put forth in support of this supposition: passages involving grammatical gender and passages involving notions of agency. Those involving grammatical gender are used as an apologetic defense of a high pneumatology; those involving agency are simply assumed to prove the point. I believe that this grammatical defense for the Spirit's personality has a poor foundation. If it is indeed invalid, then to use it in defense of a high pneumatology not only damages Trinitarian apologetics but also may well mask an emerging pneumatology within the NT.

Key Words: Holy Spirit, pneumatology, gender, personality, Greek grammar

PASSAGES INVOLVING GRAMMATICAL GENDER

About half a dozen texts in the NT are used in support of the Spirit's personality on the grounds of gender shift due to *constructio ad sensum* ("construction according to sense" or, in this case, according to natural as opposed to grammatical gender). That is to say, these passages seem to refer to the Spirit with the masculine gender in spite of the fact that πνεῦμα is neuter, and grammatical concord would normally require that any reference to the Spirit also be in the neuter gender. Such gender shifts are attributed to the fact that the Spirit is

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a person, and hence the biblical authors naturally speak of him as such, even though this manner of speaking is contrary to normal grammatical convention.¹

A word should be mentioned first about the use of natural grammar in the NT. All exegetes recognize that natural gender is sometimes used in the place of grammatical gender in Greek. Robertson notes that "substantives have two sorts of gender, natural and grammatical. The two do not always agree. The apparent violations of the rules of gender can generally be explained by the conflict in these two points of view."² For example, in Col 2:19 we see the construction τὴν κεφαλὴν . . . ἐξ οὗ ("the head . . . from whom"): the antecedent of the masculine pronoun is a feminine noun. But in the context, κεφαλὴ refers to Christ (see Col 1:18; 2:10). In Matt 28:19 the Lord instructs the eleven to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them" (μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτούς): although "nations" is neuter, the pronoun "them" is masculine because people are in view. In Gal 4:19, Paul speaks of "my children, whom" (τέκνα μου οὓς), using the masculine relative pronoun to refer to the "children."³ In Acts 21:36 we read of "the multitude of the people crying out" (τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ κράζοντες): not only is there a gender shift but a number shift too.⁴ There are even one or two indisputable texts that refer to an evil spirit with the masculine gender. For example, in Mark 9:26 the masculine participles κράξας and σπαράξας refer back to the πνεῦμα of v. 25.⁵ These examples could be multiplied⁶ and are

1. By "normal grammatical convention" we do not mean prescriptive rules that are imposed on the writers by modern researchers but merely the conventions of the language—how it was used by real people. Such grammatical "rules" are thus descriptive of what Koine speakers actually did rather than being prescriptive of what they should have done. When a notable exception to such behavioral patterns is observed, it can be called a violation of a grammatical rule.

2. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (4th ed.; Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 410.

3. See also, regarding τέκνον, Phlm 10 (παρκαλω σε περὶ τοῦ εμοῦ τέκνου, ὃν ἐγέννησα); 2 John 1 (τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς, οὓς [in which the antecedent of the masculine οὓς is both a feminine singular and a neuter plural]). The word παιδίον is similar: cf. Mark 5:41 (κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ παιδίου λέγει αὐτῇ), in which the feminine pronoun is bracketed by παιδίον and τὸ κοράσιον; Mark 9:24-26 (παιδίου . . . αὐτόν . . . νεκρός).

4. The neuter singular noun πλῆθος is followed by the masculine plural participle κράζοντες. It will not do to say that the participle agrees with λαοῦ since that is in the genitive singular. This is *constructio ad sensum*, pure and simple.

5. See also Luke 9:39-40 in P⁴⁵ (πνεῦμα . . . αὐτόν).

6. Cf., e.g., Matt 25:32; Mark 3:8; 5:41; Luke 2:13; 10:13; 19:37; John 1:12; 6:9; 17:2, 24; Acts 5:16; 8:5, 10; 9:15; 13:48; 14:4; 15:17; 25:24; 26:17; Rom 2:14, 26; 4:9-11; 9:23-24; Gal 1:22-23; 4:19; Eph 2:11; 4:17-18; Phil 3:7; Col 2:15; Phlm 10; 1 Pet 2:19; 2 Pet 2:17; 2 John 1; Jude 7, 12. For number shifts, cf. Matt 21:8; Mark 3:32; 5:24; Luke 5:29; 6:19; 8:40; John 6:2, 37; 7:49; 12:18; 17:2; Acts 6:7. Omitted from this list are the numerous examples in Revelation because it is hardly representative of the literary level and style of Greek found in the rest of the NT.

common knowledge to anyone who works in the Greek NT.⁷ For our purposes, the point to make is simply that, because such gender shifts are unremarkable, if the NT authors indeed conceived of the Holy Spirit as a person, we may well expect to see natural gender taking precedent over grammatical gender in various passages that speak of the Spirit.

The passages adduced for this grammatical argument are John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7, 13-14; Eph 1:14; 2 Thess 2:6-7; and 1 John 5:7. These fall into three different groups: the Upper Room Discourse texts all involve a masculine *demonstrative* pronoun, Eph 1:14 employs a masculine *relative* pronoun, 2 Thess 2:6-7 and 1 John 5:7 use a masculine *participle*.

As a preliminary consideration, one of these passages, 2 Thess 2:6-7, can be dismissed from consideration with minimal fuss. There the exchange between τὸ κατέχον and ὁ κατέχων involves a long-standing interpretive conundrum, in spite of the fact that within a certain segment of Protestantism—namely, dispensationalism—some interpreters have insisted that the Holy Spirit is in view and that from this exegetical conclusion they can affirm the personality of the Spirit on the grounds of Greek grammar.⁸ Even if the referent of τὸ κατέχον/ὁ κατέχων is the Spirit, the fact that nowhere in the passage is πνεῦμα ἅγιον even mentioned⁹ renders this passage worthless for the purposes of *explicitly* grammaticizing the Spirit's personality. On similar grounds, John 16:7 can be dismissed, since πνεῦμα is not

7. Turner calls the incongruence of gender or number that is due to *constructio ad sensum* "good Greek" (Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, vol. 3 of J. H. Moulton et al., *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963], 311). BDF, well known as a grammar of exceptions, does not even list the use of masculine for neuter, presumably because it is so common. They do list, however, feminine for neuter, masculine for feminine, and neuter for persons, "if it is not the individuals but a general quality that is to be emphasized" (pp. 76-77 [§138]). This lacuna has not been filled with BDR (p. 115 [§138]). This instance of *constructio ad sensum* is also common enough in Classical Greek (cf. B. L. Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek from Homer to Demosthenes* [New York: American Book, 1900-1911], 2.204-7 [§§499-502] for numerous examples of various kinds of pronominal incongruence).

8. τὸ κατέχον/ὁ κατέχων has/have been variously identified as the Church, the proclamation of the gospel/Paul, Elijah, an angel (especially Michael), the Roman Empire/emperor, the Jewish state/James, God's will/God, the Holy Spirit, the mystery of lawlessness/Satan, a false prophet, etc. Among the more recent treatments, see especially Paul S. Dixon, "The Evil Restraint in 2 Thess 2:6," *JETS* 33 (1990): 445-49 (espousing the interpretation that the mystery of lawlessness/Satan is in view); Charles E. Powell, "The Identity of the 'Restraint' in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7," *BSac* 154 (1997): 320-32 (arguing that the proclamation of the gospel/Holy Spirit are in view); Colin Nicholl, "Michael, the Restraint Removed (2 Thess. 2:6-7)," *JTS* n.s. 51 (2000): 27-53.

9. Although two of the three instances of πνεῦμα in 2 Thessalonians occur in this "little apocalypse" (2:1-12), neither of them refers to the Holy Spirit (2:2 refers to a prophetic utterance, while 2:8 refers to the breath of the vanquishing Messiah as that which destroys the man of lawlessness).

explicitly mentioned in this chapter until v. 13.¹⁰ In any event, the other texts in the Upper Room Discourse have been almost universally regarded as greater demonstrations of the Spirit's personality,¹¹ so no harm is done in removing John 16:7 from consideration. The five remaining passages, however, deserve some attention.

Many theologians treat these passages as a *primary* proof of the Spirit's personality. Long ago, Charles Hodge gave a detailed exposition of this viewpoint when he wrote:

The first argument for the personality of the Holy Spirit is derived from the use of the personal pronouns in relation to Him.... Our Lord says (John xv. 26), "When the Comforter (ὁ παράκλητος) is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας) which (ὁ) proceedeth from the Father, He (ἐκεῖνος) shall testify of me." The use of the masculine pronoun He instead of it, shows that the Spirit is a person. It may indeed he said that as παράκλητος is masculine, the pronoun referring to it

10. In John 16:8, the only explicit antecedent to ἐκεῖνος is ὁ παράκλητος in v. 7. The personal pronoun αὐτόν in v. 7 also refers back to παράκλητος. As Curt Steven Mayes (*Pronominal Referents and the Personality of the Holy Spirit* [Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1980], 33) notes on this passage, "The fact that John often uses ἐκεῖνος as the equivalent of a personal pronoun (= he or they) may be significant for the Spirit's personality. But the question is, how is the masculine form in this passage to be explained? Is it meant to teach theology or agree with παράκλητος? Surely the latter is a grammatically sound conclusion." Mayes's observation leads to a further interesting point: in 1 John, as R. Brown and others have repeatedly noted, the author consistently uses the pronoun ἐκεῖνος, to refer to Jesus (as opposed to God the Father). Now there are significant shifts (albeit subtle ones) in the terminology between the Gospel of John and 1 John, but I wonder if the common thread here is the concept of the ascended Christ as Spirit. If this were the case (and I admit it's an *if*), the author would tend toward the masculine, not because of a view of the Spirit's personality, but because of a view that the Spirit was identified somehow with the ascended, exalted Christ (who would naturally be thought of as masculine).

11. G. B. Stevens (*The Johannine Theology: A Study of the Doctrinal Contents of the Gospel and Epistles of the Apostle John* [New York: Scribner's, 1899]) provides a notable exception to this. He argues that "as soon as πνεῦμα ceases to be the *immediate* antecedent of pronouns designating the Spirit, masculine forms are employed" (pp. 195-96). After discussing John 14:26 and 15:26, he states: "It is obvious that, in John's usage, as soon as the necessity of referring to the Spirit by neuter pronouns which arises from the immediate antecedence of τὸ πνεῦμα, is removed, he instinctively adopts masculine designations. Accordingly in all the passages where the neuter word πνεῦμα is not used, we find the masculine pronouns αὐτός and ἐκεῖνος employed (xvi. 7, 8, 13, 14). . . . It thus appears that John, when not prevented from so doing by the grammatical gender of πνεῦμα, uniformly designates the Spirit by masculine pronouns implying personality" (p. 196). But Stevens's premise is wrong: John is *not* prevented from using the masculine pronoun in close conjunction with πνεῦμα, as we have shown already with routine uses of natural gender replacing grammatical gender. If his premise is wrong, then his conclusion is not valid. But in any event, John 16:13 is the stronger of the two texts, even on Stevens's reasoning, and is therefore discussed below.

must of course be in the same gender. But as the explanatory words τὸ πνεῦμα intervene, to which the neuter ὃ refers, the following pronouns would naturally be in the neuter, if the subject spoken of, the πνεῦμα, were not a person. In the following chapter (John xvi. 13, 14) there is no ground for this objection. It is there said, "When He (ἐκεῖνος), the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me (ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει): for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Here there is no possibility of accounting for the use of the personal pronoun He (ἐκεῖνος) on any other ground than the personality of the Spirit.¹²

Other theologians have followed in Hodge's train, making this a primary argument in their defense of the Spirit's personality. For example, Walvoord writes, "The *only* explanation for the masculine [in John 15:26 and 16:13-14] is that the pronouns refer to a person. Relative pronouns are used in the same way in Ephesians 1:13-14. These indirect evidences confirm that the Holy Spirit is commonly regarded as a person in the Scripture."¹³ Erickson states,

The first evidence of the Spirit's personality is the use of the masculine pronoun in representing him. Since the word πνεῦμα is neuter, and since pronouns are to agree with their antecedents in person, number, and gender, we would expect the neuter pronoun to be used to represent the Holy Spirit. Yet in John 16:13-14 we find an unusual phenomenon. As Jesus describes the Holy Spirit's ministry, he uses a masculine pronoun (ἐκεῖνος) where we would expect a neuter pronoun. The *only possible antecedent* in the immediate context is "Spirit of Truth" (v. 13). . . . [John] deliberately chose to use the masculine to convey to us the fact that Jesus is referring to a person, not a thing. A similar reference is Ephesians 1:14, where, in a relative clause modifying "Holy Spirit," the preferred textual reading is ὃς.¹⁴

12. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner, 1871), 1.524. I am still in the process of tracing the roots of this argument. Calvin does not use it, nor do the ancient Fathers (so far as I have been able to tell). It is also largely an argument found among English-speaking scholars. It did not originate with Charles Hodge, but he was a prime mover in getting the philological argument onto center stage of conservative thinking about pneumatology.

13. John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit: A Comprehensive Study of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, Ill.: Van Kampen, 1954), 7 (italics added). This is part of his third argument for the personality of the Spirit called "Use of Personal Pronouns Affirms Personality" (p. 6).

14. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 3.859-60 (italics added).

Dabney, Smeaton, Kim, Conner, Berkhof, Chafer, Thiessen, Pache, Pentecost, Ryrie, Green, Williams, Packer, Sproul, Grudem, Ferguson, Reymond, and Congar make similar claims.¹⁵ Thus, the argument from natural gender often plays a large role in theologians' defense of the Spirit's personality. An examination of these texts is therefore in order.

Masculine Demonstrative Pronoun

Three passages in the Upper Room Discourse seem to speak of the Spirit in masculine terms. They are as follows (the key terms are in italics):

John 14:26 ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν [ἐγώ]

The Holy Spirit . . . *he* . . .

John 15:26 Ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ.

The Spirit . . . *he* . . .

15. R. L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (originally published in 1878; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 195; George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (2d ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1889), 107; Seung Lak Kim, *Pneumatology, or the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1931), 37; Walter Thomas Conner, *The Work of the Holy Spirit: A Treatment of the Biblical Doctrine of the Divine Spirit* (Nashville: Broadman, 1940), 177; L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (4th rev. and enlarged ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 96; L. S. Chafer, *Major Bible Themes: 52 Vital Doctrines of the Scripture Simplified and Explained* (rev. J. F. Walvoord; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 89; H. C. Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 144; Rene Pache, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody, 1954), 13; J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Divine Comforter: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Westwood, N.J.: Revell, 1963), 12-13; Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 14-15; Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 43 ("John breaks all the rules of Greek by referring to the Spirit [a neuter noun in Greek] by the masculine pronoun"); John Williams, *The Holy Spirit, Lord and Life-Giver: A Biblical Introduction to the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1980), 25; J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, 1984), 61; R. C. Sproul, *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1990), 17-18; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 232; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1996), 31; Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 314; Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, vol. 1: *The Holy Spirit in the 'Economy': Revelation and Experience of the Spirit* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 57.

John 16:13-14 ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὀδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση· οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν. ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

Whenever *he* comes, the Spirit of truth . . . he

Several NT scholars have endorsed the view that the personality of the Spirit is grammaticized in these texts. We have already noted certain theologians. Among commentators on John, Lange, Godet, Mortimer, Westcott, Bernard, Lenski, Hendricksen, Barrett, Behler, Sanders and Mastin, Brown, Morris, Lindars, Newman and Nida, Carson, and Beasley-Murray all use the grammatical argument in one or more of these passages as evidence of the Spirit's personality.¹⁶ Indeed, this line of reasoning seems to be found more frequently and more recently in exegetical literature than in theological literature.¹⁷

16. J. P. Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures—Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical: John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, [1950] [translation of 1871 German work]), 469; L. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1893), 2.287; A. G. Mortimer, *The Last Discourses of Our Lord* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1905), 226; B. E. Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London: John Murray, 1908), 2.183; J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 2.500; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1942), 1013-14, 1090; W. Hendricksen, *Exposition of the Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1954), 2.328; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: SPCK, 1955), 402; G.-M. Behler, *The Last Discourse of Jesus* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1965), 118-19; J. N. Sanders and B. A. Mastin, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 329, 345; R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John XIII—XXI* (AB 29a; New York: Doubleday, 1970), 639, 650, 689; L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 656 n. 70, 683-84 n. 63, 699 n. 26; B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (Greenwood, S.C.: Attic, 1972), 504 ("The pronoun is masculine, agreeing with the implicit *ho Parakletos*, whereas **Spirit** is neuter, placed in apposition to it. Thus the personal character of the Spirit is maintained." Curiously, Lindars makes the correct grammatical observation here, but draws precisely the wrong conclusion from it); B. M. Newman and E. A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of John* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1980), 497; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 510; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (2d ed.; WBC 36; Nashville: Nelson, 1999), 261.

17. The reason for this may be that theologies are increasingly getting away from detailed (or exegetical) interaction with scripture. Among the works that may be characterized as more theological than exegetical, Buswell, Montague, Moltmann, Pannenberg, Rahner, Hanson, Oden, Garrett, and Bloesch make no mention of Greek grammar in support of the Holy Spirit's personality, even though all these authors seem to embrace it. To be fair, it is possible that one or more of these writers disagree with the philological argument and do not use it for that reason.

As well, a few specialized studies make similar claims. George Eldon Ladd's *Theology of the New Testament* is representative: "where pronouns that have *pneuma* for their immediate antecedent are found in the masculine, we can only conclude that the personality of the Spirit is meant to be suggested."¹⁸ After affirming this grammatical phenomenon in John 14:26 and 15:26, Ladd then says, "The language is even more vivid in 16:13: 'When the Spirit of truth comes, he (*ekeinos*) will guide you into all truth.' Here the neuter *pneuma* stands in direct connection with the pronoun, but the masculine form rather than the 'normal' neuter is employed. From this evidence we must conclude that the Spirit is viewed as a personality."¹⁹

It is not only exegetes and theologians who view these texts in this way; one or two grammarians also consider them as evidence of the Spirit's personality. For example, Robertson argued that in John 16:13 the evangelist "is insisting on the personality of the Holy Spirit, when the grammatical gender so easily called for ἐκεῖνο."²⁰ More recently, Young has also affirmed the philological argument in these texts.²¹

There is thus a large company of scholars who view the Upper Room Discourse as affording syntactical evidence for the Spirit's personality. This august body has collectively argued that the masculine pronoun is unusual in these verses, and that it can only be explained by natural gender. Thus, if a masculine noun can be found in these texts that can reasonably be considered as the antecedent to the pronoun, then these verses ought to be excised from the standard Trinitarian arsenal.

The first two passages, John 14:26 and 15:26, can be handled together. In both of them, πνεῦμα is *appositional* to a masculine noun, rather than the subject of the verb. The gender of ἐκεῖνος thus has nothing to do with the natural gender of πνεῦμα. The antecedent of ἐκεῖνος, in each case, is παράκλητος, not πνεῦμα.

18. G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 295. Cf. also Stevens, *Johannine Theology*, 196; H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament: A Study of Primitive Christian Teaching* (London: Macmillan, 1909), 292; K. H. Schelkle, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 2: *Salvation History-Revelation* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1976), 235.

19. Ibid. The edition revised by Donald Hagner 19 years later (G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* [rev. D. A. Hagner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 331) has altered nothing in this paragraph. Later references are to this edition of Ladd.

20. Robertson, *Grammar*, 709.

21. Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 78: "the masculine pronoun ἐκεῖνος is used in John 14:26 and 16:13-14 to refer to the neuter noun πνεῦμα to emphasize the personality of the Holy Spirit." Cf. also Robert Hanna, *A Grammatical Aid to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 178.

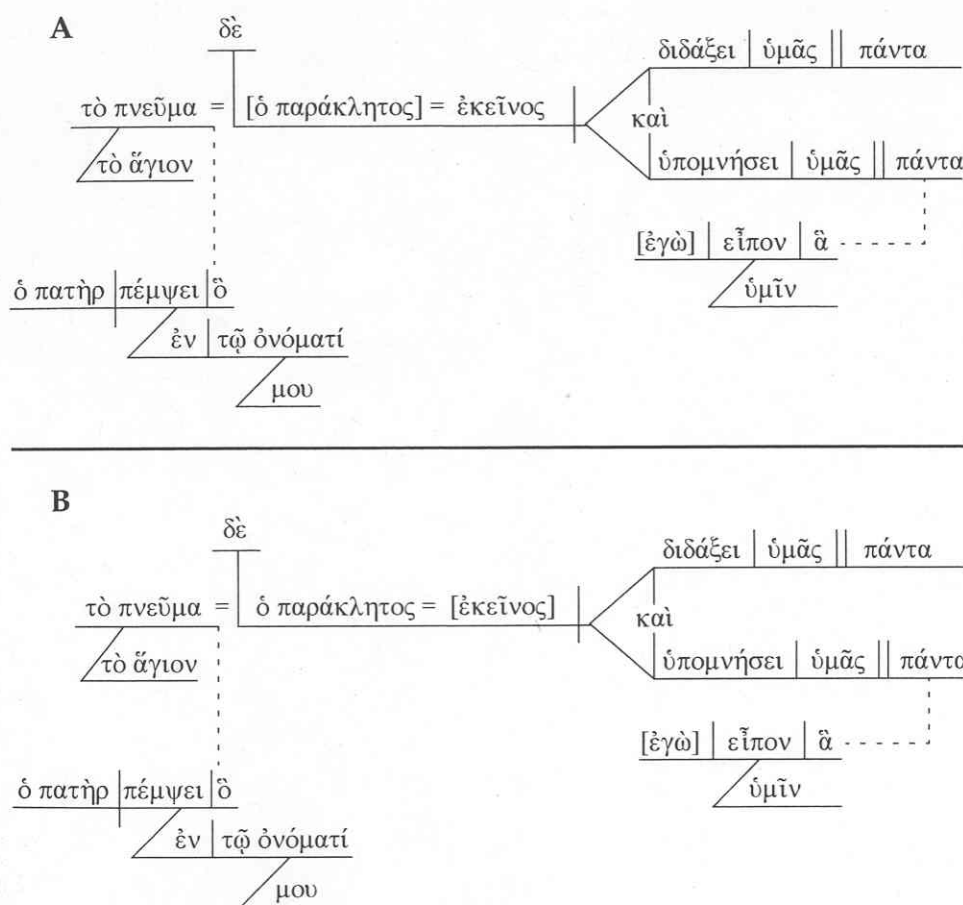


Fig. 1. Alternate diagrams of John 14:26.

This can best be seen if the texts are diagrammed.²² John 14:26 can be diagrammed in one of two ways, depending on whether one regards παράκλητος as a *nominativus pendens* (see fig. 1A) or ἐκεῖνος as a pleonastic pronoun (see fig. 1B).²³ John 15:26 can also be diagrammed

22. The method of diagramming I am using is that of J. D. Grassmick, *Principles and Practice of Greek Exegesis* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary, 1974).

23. Mayes, *Pronominal Referents*, 28, takes the first approach, while the second approach is mine. See D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 329-30 (discussion of pleonastic pronouns), 51-53. There is much overlap between these two classifications; the basic difference I see is that the *nominativus pendens* is the logical but not grammatical subject of the sentence, for it is picked up by a pronoun in an oblique case. Since ἐκεῖνος is also nominative, I would regard the construction to fall under pleonasm. But there is no real objection to seeing *nominativus pendens* followed by a pronoun or participle in the nominative. Either way, the idiom is most likely semitic. Cf. B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 76-77

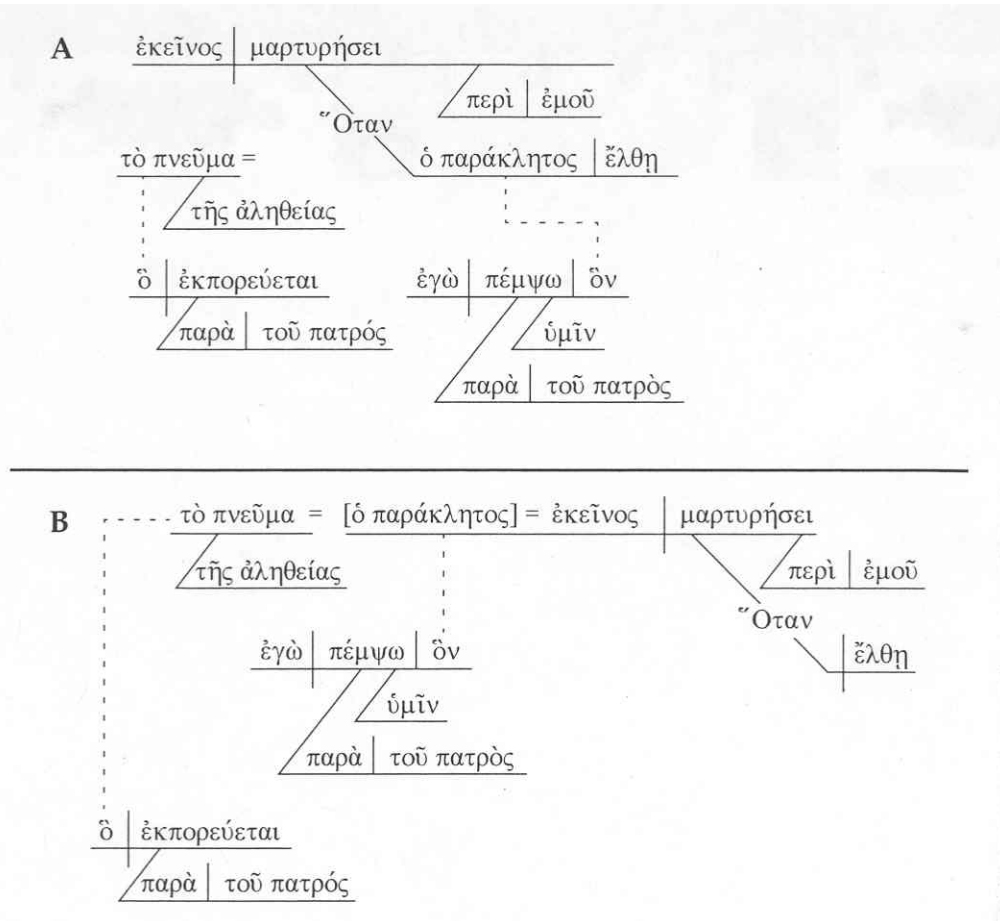


Fig. 2. Alternate diagrams of John 15:26.

in two different ways (see fig. 2).²⁴ With either diagram for these two verses, it should be evident that the masculine demonstrative pronoun, ἐκεῖνος, stands in relation to ὁ παράκλητος, not to τὸ πνεῦμα. In

(§4.7), 128-29 (§8.3a); and Gen 3:12, גַּעַץ מִן־הַיַּד הָיָה וְאֵשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדֵי הוּא נִתְּנָה לִי מִן־הַיַּד. (The Semitic nature of the construction in John 14:26 is disputed by E. C. Colwell, *The Greek of the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Its Aramaisms in the Light of Hellenistic Greek* [Chicago: University Press, 1931], 37-40.) John uses ἐκεῖνος 75 times (more than any other NT book), 52 of which are in the nominative case; 48 of the nominative uses are masculine. Excluding John 14:26 and 15:26 from the discussion, of the 50 remaining verses, the pronoun is pleonastic 11 times (John 1:18, 33; 5:11, 37; 6:57; 9:37; 10:1; 12:48; 14:12, 21; 17:24)—or 22% of the time; in the remaining 39 instances, it is syntactically unnecessary in virtually every instance (with possible exceptions in 7:11; 9:12; 18:15; 21:7, 23). Thus, a known technique of the evangelist's is to employ ἐκεῖνος in a resumptive or redundant fashion.

24. The first diagram of John 15:26 is that of Mayes, *Pronominal Referents*, 31; the second is mine.

14:26, the noun clause—"the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name"—is in apposition to ὁ παράκλητος. How do we know that τὸ πνεῦμα is the appositive rather than ὁ παράκλητος? Because it *follows* ὁ παράκλητος.²⁵ Appositives function routinely in a clarifying capacity and thus naturally follow the substantive they are clarifying. The appositional clause here can therefore be regarded as parenthetical: "The Counselor (the Holy Spirit whom [ὁ] the Father will send in my name) will teach you all things. . . ." Furthermore, appositional clauses can normally be removed from a sentence without destroying the structure of the sentence. In this case, the verse makes good sense as follows: "The Counselor will teach you all things and will remind you all that I told you." The rules of concord actually *expect* ἐκεῖνος rather than ἐκεῖνο, since the true antecedent is παράκλητος. Thus, this verse should be omitted from the roster of philological proofs of the Spirit's personality.²⁶

In 15:26, the situation is similar: the appositional clause headed by τὸ πνεῦμα is parenthetical: "Whenever the Counselor comes (the Spirit of truth who is coming from the Father), he will testify concerning me." This appositional clause could be removed without affecting the structure of the sentence: "Whenever the Counselor comes, he (ἐκεῖνος) will testify concerning me." Although Morris argues that πνεῦμα is the antecedent of ἐκεῖνος, based on proximity,²⁷ this is hardly an adequate basis, both because ὁ παράκλητος agrees in gender with ἐκεῖνος and because πνεῦμα is appositional rather than being the subject of the sentence. As Mayes argues, "That a referent which is not in concord, but a few words nearer in the text, should be chosen over a noun which agrees strictly and gives just as good sense is nearly indefensible. Pronominal referents by no means have to be the nearest noun. . . . It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that theology has unduly influenced (perhaps unconsciously) the grammatical analysis of this verse (as well as the others involved)."²⁸ If we

25. Robertson, *Grammar*, 399: "Sometimes the word in apposition precedes the other, though not usually." E. A. Abbott (*Johannine Grammar* [London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906]) defines *apposition* as "a method of expressing the phrase 'that is to say' without writing it, by 'apposing' a second word with a case-ending to the first word with the same case-ending . . ." (p. 36 [§1928]). What should be noticed in such a standard definition is that the appositive is the second word.

26. It is rightfully so omitted by Robertson, *Grammar*, 709: "In 14:26 . . . the relative ὁ follows the grammatical gender of πνεῦμα. Ἐκεῖνος, however, skips over πνεῦμα and reverts to the gender of παράκλητος."

27. Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 606 n. 64: "The masculine ἐκεῖνος is noteworthy, for τὸ πνεῦμα is nearer than is Παράκλητος." (The wording here is slightly stronger than the first edition; all other references to Morris's commentary on John are to the first edition.)

28. Mayes, *Pronominal Referents*, 27.

applied the proximity principle in John 6:71, the result would be that Jesus, not Judas, was the Lord's betrayer (οὗτος γὰρ ἔμελλεν παραδιδόναι αὐτόν, εἷς ἐκ τῶν δώδεκα ["for he was about to betray *him*, one of the twelve"]!)²⁹ Further, the reason for the *masculine* pleonastic pronoun is that it is resumptive, and as such it is intended to reach back to the *masculine* noun, παράκλητος. Indeed, one of the major uses of *icci.voc* in John is to refer back *past* the immediately preceding word, phrase, or clause to the true antecedent.³⁰

These two verses are similar to Col 3:4: ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ("When Christ, your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him"). Although ζωὴ is closer to the masculine pronoun αὐτῷ), ζωὴ is in apposition to ὁ Χριστός; there is no need to appeal to *constructio ad sensum* here, as the grammatical antecedent of αὐτῷ is obviously ὁ Χριστός.³¹ If this text is unremarkable syntactically yet is parallel to John 14:26 and 15:26, can we legitimately get theological mileage out of the grammar of the Upper Room Discourse?³²

Thus, contrary to the supposition that the proximity of πνεῦμα to ἐκεῖνος in John 14:26 and 15:26 demonstrates the Spirit's personality, because the πνεῦμα is appositional, it becomes irrelevant to the gender of the pronoun. Had the evangelist wanted to show the Spirit's personality, he would in fact have written something like "Ὅταν ἔλθῃ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁ παράκλητος, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ. The fact that πνεῦμα and not παράκλητος is the appositive renders the philological argument in these two texts void."³³

John 16:13-14, on the surface, seems to make out a better case than the other two passages of the Upper Room Discourse. Indeed, it is the major NT proof-text for the grammaticization of the Spirit's

29. Cf. also John 7:45.

30. Cf. John 1:18, 33; 2:21; 3:30; 7:45; 10:1; 13:25, 30.

31. Cf. also Ps 64:6-7 (LXX): ἐπάκουσον ἡμῶν ὁ θεὸς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν, ἡ ἐλπίς πάντων τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς, . . . ἐτοιμάζων ὄρη ἐν τῇ ἰσχύϊ αὐτοῦ ("Heed our God, our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth, who establishes the mountains by his strength"). Even though ἐλπίς is closer to the masculine participle ἐτοιμάζων, it is in an appositional phrase; thus, *constructio ad sensum* does not need to be appealed to, since the grammatical antecedent is obviously ὁ θεός. This is common enough: see Pss 17:3; 27:8; Eph 5:23; Phil 2:15; 4:1.

32. See also 1 Cor 4:17: although τέκνον ἀγαπητὸν καὶ πιστόν is closer to ὅς², Τιμόθεον is the obvious antecedent of the relative pronoun.

33. Mayes (*Pronominal Referents*, 31) comments: "The most obvious fact which presents itself through this diagram is that the chief assertion of the verse consists of two clauses—one independent and one dependent—of which the grammatical subjects are ἐκεῖνος and ὁ παράκλητος. All the rest of the material simply describes or qualifies ὁ παράκλητος, and could be omitted with no damage to the sense"; and (p. 32) "No *constructio ad sensum* exists in this verse. There are three pronouns (ὄν, ὅ, ἐκεῖνος), all of which agree with their referent—two with παράκλητος and one with πνεῦμα."

personality.³⁴ Robertson, for example, argues that this passage is "a more striking example" than John 14:26 because "one has to go back six lines to ἐκεῖνος again and seven lines to παράκλητος."³⁵

In John 16:13-14 the immediate context is deceptive: ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὀδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση· ἐκεῖνος ἔμὲ δοξάσει. ("whenever *he* comes—the Spirit of truth—he will guide you in all truth . . . *he* will glorify me"). This text does not need to be diagrammed, because it reveals essentially the same features as the previous two passages. The difference here is that ἐκεῖνος in v. 13 is the subject, rather than παράκλητος. (τὸ πνεῦμα is, once again, in παράκλητος is so far removed (explicitly mentioned in v. 7), the apposition to the subject.³⁶) The philological argument is that, since ἐκεῖνος is more naturally associated with the nearer noun, πνεῦμα. And since πνεῦμα is neuter, this indicates that the evangelist thought of the Spirit in personal terms. The not-so-subtle assumption is that παράκλητος is simply too far removed to have an impact on the gender of the pronoun, and that therefore the only logical explanation for the masculine gender is the natural gender of πνεῦμα that follows.

Is this really the best way to handle the gender of ἐκεῖνος? Two lacunae in the discussion (for either view) are a tracing of the argument of vv. 7-13, and true grammatical parallels.³⁷ Both of these sup-

34. Mayes notes (*Pronominal Referents*, 34): "These verses contain the primary evidence for the grammatical argument for the personality of the Holy Spirit. Almost all commentators and theologians who discuss the argument cite this passage. It is, in a sense, the *sine qua non* of the argument."

35. Robertson, *Grammar*, 709. For similar arguments, see Morris, *John*, 699 n. 26; Lindars, *John*, 504; Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 331; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3.859-60.

36. Although translations of v. 13 such as that of the NRSV and REB may be misleading as to what the subject of the sentence is ("When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you . . ."), their objective is not to be a handbook for Greek students.

37. An exception of this twofold lacuna is the work of Mayes, *Pronominal Referents*. His treatment of parallels will be discussed below; Mayes's discussion of the flow of argument is worth quoting at length here (p. 35):

It is necessary to begin back in verse seven. There the Spirit is introduced as the παράκλητος and becomes the subject of an extended discussion. Αὐτόν in verse seven refers back to παράκλητος, as does ἐκεῖνος in verse eight. Then verses nine through eleven explain the work of the παράκλητος (with respect to the world) which (work) was introduced in verse eight. Notice the dependency of verses nine through eleven on verse eight, as attested by the incomplete sentences in the former. Verse twelve sets the stage for another statement about the work of the παράκλητος—this time with respect to believers. Ἐκεῖνος is used in both verses thirteen and fourteen, probably with the same reference. On the basis of this sequence, then, it is this writer's contention that ὁ παράκλητος is introduced in 16:7 as the subject of the passage

First, regarding the flow of argument, it should be noted at the outset that, although the παράκλητος is introduced in v. 7 and is not mentioned again by name, this Counselor never really disappears. The intervening material (16:8-11) keeps the παράκλητος ever before the reader in a way that is impossible to miss, since vv. 8-11 constitute *one sentence* in Greek, with ἐκεῖνος (v. 8) as the lone subject. The ministry of the παράκλητος is first described in terms of a threefold περί-phrase ("when he [ἐκεῖνος] comes, he will prove the world wrong concerning [περί] sin, righteousness, and judgment." This programmatic statement is followed by vv. 9-11, each of which is a prepositional phrase linked together by the correlative conjunctions μέν . . . δέ . . . δέ. Yet, as soon as v. 12 disrupts the flow of thought ("I have many more things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now"), the Paraclete is immediately brought back into view by the resumptive ἐκεῖνος, followed by his identification as τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας. Thus, in spite of the distance between παράκλητος in v. 7 and ἐκεῖνος in v. 13, since the παράκλητος never really fades from view throughout the discourse, the masculine gender of ἐκεῖνος can easily be accounted for on grounds other than the Spirit's personality.

Second, are there other parallels to this text—passages in which there is great distance between a pronoun and its antecedent? Mayes notes one such parallel: "An example of a significant separation between pronoun and referent is found in Mark 14, where the pronoun αὐτή is used in verse nine, and its referent is in verse three (γυνή)! True, there are three intervening instances of the demonstrative. But even so, the nearest is in verse six, approximately six lines above αὐτή in verse nine."³⁸ In Mark 14, "just as the woman never leaves the spotlight in that story, so the παράκλητος never fades from view in this discourse."³⁹ In terms of word-count, the distance between the αὐτή of v. 9 and its nearest antecedent is 55 words; by comparison, the distance between the ἐκεῖνος of John 16:13 and its nearest antecedent is 54 words. They are thus comparable.

One might think that such sustained absence of the substantival referent could only occur in the better writers.⁴⁰ But Mark and John hardly belong to the upper echelons of hellenistic literary art! Indeed,

and remains the subject through 16:15. ἐκεῖνος would then refer to παράκλητος in each instance (vv. 8, 13, 14)—simple agreement, the general rule.

38. Mayes, *Pronominal Referents*, 17-18.

39. *ibid.*, 36.

40. The reason one might think this is that hellenistic Greek tended toward greater explicitness and toward removal of subtleties, in comparison with the Attic dialect. Cf. M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), 161-62 (§§480-84); Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, 19-20.

one of the most remarkable examples of an absentee referent is found in Mark 6:31-8:26. In the span of *ninety* verses, "Jesus" is not mentioned once. Nor is any other identifying noun that refers to him. Instead, he is kept in view largely by pronouns. Yet, even here, the pronouns are relatively sparse: they appear in only 29 of the 90 verses,⁴¹ or approximately once every 40 words.⁴² The point is that referential distancing is not out of the ordinary for pronoun usage—even in the less-refined writers.

In sum, in John 16:13 the ἐκεῖνος is best explained as reaching back to v. 7, where παράκλητος is mentioned. Thus, since παράκλητος is masculine, so is the pronoun. Although one might argue that the Spirit's personality is in view in the Upper Room Discourse, the view must be based on the nature of a παράκλητος and the things said about the Counselor, not on any alleged grammatical subtleties. The fact is that, in all of John's Gospel, the only time a masculine pronoun is used concerning the πνεῦμα is in relation to ὁ παράκλητος. This suggests that the philological argument in John 14-16 may be a case of *petitio principii*.

Before we look at the next pronominal proof text, a word should be said about a more subtle argument for the Spirit's personality in the Upper Room Discourse. Although he is somewhat persuaded by the masculine pronouns, Swete also mentions the gender of παράκλητος: "Yet the choice of ὁ παράκλητος, where τὸ παράκλητον (πνεῦμα) might have been written, is significant."⁴³ Cook expands on this line of reasoning:

When used of the Holy Spirit, παράκλητος is used as a substantive rather than as an adjective. As an adjective it would have no intrinsic gender. As a substantive, however, it could be expected to be in the neuter gender to extend the sense of τὸ πνεῦμα (the Spirit) were it indeed true that the Spirit is an impersonal force or influence. However, [Jesus] . . . did express the fact of personality through παράκλητος by putting it in the masculine gender. Thus, when this title (παράκλητος) of the Holy Spirit is the antecedent of τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ

41. In addition, the third-person singular suffixes of finite verbs and the singular participle are found in 46 verses, though in 15 of these verses there is also a pronoun. For similar Gospel texts in which neither Ἰησοῦς nor κύριος is explicitly mentioned, see Mark 3:8-5:5; Luke 14:4-16:2; 20:45-22:32; John 15:21-16:18.

42. There are approximately 42 pronominal referents (including the article *functioning* as a pronoun) to Jesus in 29 verses in this section, out of a total of nearly 1500 words. Some sections are quite lengthy without any pronominal referents to Jesus: 148 words in 7:5b-17a (though with much discourse material); 115 words in 7:17b-25a; 114 words in 7:32b-8:2b; 109 words in 8:12b-19b; 87 words in Mark 8:30b-35a; 67 words in 7:28b-32a; 54 words in Mark 7:2b-5a (with parenthetical material in between, similar to John 16:12).

43. Swete, *Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, 292 n. 1.

ἄγιον, Christ repeatedly used the masculine gender; and when this title is referred to pronominally, He used the masculine form of the demonstrative pronoun, ἐκεῖνος.⁴⁴

In other words, if παράκλητος is considered to be an adjective rather than a noun, its gender is not fixed, and the choice of the masculine form demonstrates the personality of the Spirit.

What are we to make of this argument? First of all, the very subtlety of the argument may speak more for its ingenuity than its veracity. That the vast bulk of scholars who embrace a philological defense of the Spirit's personality do not mention it may be quite telling. Second, although παράκλητος could be *etymologically* described as an adjective, in actual usage the masculine noun form is virtually alone. An examination of all Greek literature from the fourth century BC to the second century AD⁴⁵ reveals 61 instances of the second declension stem παρακλητο-/παρακλητω-.⁴⁶ In all of them, as far as I could tell from a cursory examination, the gender was masculine every time. And if it occurs only as a masculine, one has to wonder whether it was truly functioning as an adjective. If this etymological adjective had thus become virtually fixed as a masculine noun for a few hundred years prior to the writing of the Fourth Gospel, one has to wonder whether the evangelist truly had any real gender option with this term.⁴⁷ Not only this, but as an adjective the word took on a passive nuance (e.g., "summoned"), while as a noun it was active.⁴⁸ Whether it ever occurs as a neuter substantival adjective prior to the fourth century AD is, in fact, doubtful.⁴⁹ The question, thus, is how a hellenistic Greek reader would understand τὸ παράκλητον in John 14-16. Since the passive meaning of the adjective is inappropriate in this context, and since the neuter substantival adjective is apparently un-

44. W. Robert Cook, *The Theology of John* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 62-63.

45. As recorded in the database of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, E disk (the most recent version, released in 2000).

46. The search also uncovered two instances of παρακλήτωρ, but since this involves a different lexeme these two examples were omitted from the count.

47. Cook speaks of "the extensive (and, in the NT, exclusive) use of παράκλητος as a masculine substantive from the fourth century B.C. on" as a potential problem for his view (*Theology of John*, 63 n. 43). LSJ give only two examples in which the word is used as an adjective, once in Dio Cassius 46.20 (2d/3d century AD; as a masculine plural with δούλοι), and once in *BGU* 601.12 (2d century AD papyrus; here it is also masculine).

48. Behm, *TDNT* 5.800-801.

49. Behm notes the *adjectival* sense of "comforting" with reference to the Spirit in Hippolytus, *Haer.* 8.19.1 (τὸ παράκλητον πνεῦμα) and *Mak. Hom.* 6.6 (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ παράκλητον) as "obviously a development of ecclesiastical speech on the basis of Jn. 14:16f.; 15:26" (*TDNT* 5.805 n. 38). The first instance of a substantival neuter adjective is apparently found in Eusebius, *Eccl. theol.* 3.5.11-12 (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας τὸ παράκλητον). Indeed, when this word is used as a true adjective in relation to the Spirit, is it ever masculine?

attested before Eusebius, how could the evangelist have chosen the neuter here?⁵⁰ This etymological argument is thus muted by actual usage of this word.

Masculine Relative Pronoun

In Eph 1:14 the masculine relative pronoun is used in reference to the Spirit. Ephesians 1:13-14 reads as follows, with the relevant terms in italic type:

Ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, 14. ὅς ἐστιν ἄρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

This text does not receive as much ink as the Johannine passages with regard to the Spirit's personality. Nevertheless, a few scholars see the relative pronoun grammaticizing the Spirit's personality here. Among theologians, Berkhof, Dabney, Ryrie, Walvoord, and Erickson may be cited.⁵¹ Among exegetes, one of the most extensive

50. Besides these three texts, one other passage from the Upper Room Discourse could possibly be used to offer grammatical support for the personality of the Spirit. John 14:17 reads τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν ὅτι οὐ θεωρεῖ αὐτὸ οὐδὲ γινώσκει· ὑμεῖς γινώσκετε αὐτό, ὅτι παρ' ὑμῖν μένει καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται in NA²⁷. However, in some witnesses both instances of the personal pronoun are in the masculine instead of the neuter (αὐτός instead of αὐτό). Among these witnesses are P^{66*} D* L 579 (S² W Ψ can be added to the list in that they have the masculine pronoun in the second instance). As well, D L* add a third masculine pronoun after γινώσκει. None of these variants is likely to be original, for they are both lacking in external and internal support. (In particular, although P⁶⁶ is early the scribe was often sloppy in his copying habits; cf. E. C. Colwell, "Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits: A Study of P⁴⁵, P⁶⁶, P⁷⁵," *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament* [NTTS 9; Leiden: Brill, 1969], 106-24.) Nevertheless, even if original, this text would generally approximate John 14:26 and 15:26 in its structure, since the antecedent of such pronouns could easily be construed as the παράκλητον mentioned in v. 16. The sentence structure here, however, is a bit more complicated than in the other two passages (the first personal pronoun is in a causal clause, while the second is in a new sentence), affording a bit more ambiguity in the pronouns' referent. But this most likely is what created confusion for the scribes: those who wrote the masculine pronoun probably took the antecedent to be παράκλητον (and the relative clause to be explanatory of the appositional noun πνεῦμα) while those who wrote the neuter pronoun regarded πνεῦμα to be the antecedent. Further, evidence that these scribes were not thinking of the personality of the Spirit but were simply following normal grammatical conventions can be seen in their transcribing of the relative pronoun that immediately follows πνεῦμα: it is neuter (6).

51. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 96; Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, 125; Ryrie, *Holy Spirit*, 14-15; Walvoord, *Holy Spirit*, 7; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3.860. Mayes (*Nominal Referents*, 38) suggests that it is only the theologians who employ Eph 1:14: "On this the theologians appear to have no support from scholarly commentaries." But even though their language is more guarded than some of these divines, Barth's and Simpson's assessments show that Mayes has overstated the case (see below).

defenses is found in Markus Barth's magnum opus. He opines: "Who is meant by the pronoun 'He' (*hos*)—Jesus Christ or the Spirit? If Ephesians were written according to the rules of classic[al] Greek, the pronoun would refer to Jesus Christ rather than to the Holy Spirit. For the noun 'spirit' (*pneuma*) is in Greek (just as in English) neuter."⁵² He concludes that the pronoun refers to the Spirit, adding that "Eph 1:14 may be a verse that shows in exemplary fashion how the formation of a special grammar for church use began. In church and theological language the Holy Spirit is often and with good reason denoted as a person. The Spirit is respected as 'he' rather than as an 'it.'"⁵³

Among grammarians, Chamberlain argues that the masculine pronoun here "probably indicates that Paul was thinking of the Holy Spirit as a person."⁵⁴

Most scholars who enlist this passage are more guarded in their assessment. Simpson, for example, suggests that, although the ὅς "has been taken as proof of the personality of the Spirit" by some exegetes, "it *might* be explained on grammatical grounds as the result of attraction to the gender of the masculine ἄρραβών."⁵⁵

Best is even more cautious, for he suggests that if the masculine relative pronoun was original, it was "attracted into the masculine through ἄρραβών." On the other hand, "If the neuter was original then the masculine is an idiomatic or stylistic improvement, or an attempt to treat the Spirit as personal."⁵⁶ In other words, if ὅς is original, it does nothing to demonstrate the Spirit's personality; but if it was a scribal corruption, it might have been added by orthodox scribes because of their belief in the Spirit's personality.

Wood puts a different twist on things when he says that, whether the pronoun is ὁ or ὅς, "The personality of the Holy Spirit is not jeopardized by either usage."⁵⁷ That may be so, but the Spirit's personality is also not *supported* by either usage.

52. Markus Barth, *Ephesians 1-3* (AB 34; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), 95.

53. *Ibid.*, 96. Barth nevertheless notes that the reason for the masculine ὅς is its attraction to the gender of the predicate nominative, ἄρραβών. He thus seems to have two bases for the masculine pronoun, though they are not complementary. But if the attraction to ἄρραβών sufficiently explains the gender of the pronoun, how does this help demonstrate the Spirit's personality?

54. W. D. Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), 49.

55. E. K. Simpson, "Ephesians," in E. K. Simpson and E. E. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 35 n. 24 (italics added).

56. Ernest Best, *Ephesians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 151 n. 71.

57. A. Skevington Wood, "Ephesians," *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (ed. F. E. Gaebel; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 11.28. Gordon D. Fee (*God's Empowering Spirit: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994], 668-69 n. 36) makes a similar point.

There are two fundamental problems with the use of this verse for the Spirit's personality. First, there is the textual problem. Instead of ὅς (found in **Σ** D 33 M) several witnesses have ὃ (P⁴⁶ A B F G L P 81 1739 *al*).⁵⁸ Externally, the neuter pronoun is supported by the greater weight of evidence. Internally, although Barth sees no good reason why scribes would change the neuter to the masculine,⁵⁹ the masculine could well have been motivated by attraction to the gender of the ἀρροβῶν following.⁶⁰ The editors of the UBS text have vacillated here between the masculine and neuter, with the neuter pronoun getting the nod since the third edition. Thus, because of the textual uncertainty of the very word in question, any argument for the Spirit's personality on the basis of the grammar of Eph 1:14 is suspect even before the grammatical evidence is examined.

Second, there is a grammatical problem with this argument: *constructio ad sensum* is not the only thing that could account for the masculine ὅς. It can also be accounted for on the basis of attraction to the predicate nominative, "according to a usual idiom."⁶¹ The reason an author sometimes shifts the gender of a relative pronoun forward to the predicate nominative is probably to put greater focus on the predicate noun.⁶²

Typical examples that are cited for this phenomenon include Mark 15:16 (τῆς αὐλῆς, ὃ ἔστιν πραιτώριον ["the palace, that is the Praetorium"]); Gal 3:16 (τῷ σπέρματί σου, ὅς ἔστιν Χριστός ["your seed, that is Christ"]); Eph 6:17 (τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος, ὃ ἔστιν ῥῆμα θεοῦ ["the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"]); and 1 Tim 3:16 (τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον· ὅς . . . ["the mystery of godliness, who . . .]).⁶³

58. Itala MSS b d are also cited on behalf of the neuter reading in Nestle-Aland²⁷ but should probably be omitted from tabulation since the genders are exactly the opposite of the Greek for the two key terms (*spiritus* is masculine, while *pignus* is neuter). Thus, the gender attraction would run in the opposite direction of the Greek. Because of this, the neuter pronoun found in these MSS is just as likely to be a translation of the masculine Greek pronoun—especially since rules of attraction in Latin are generally the same as they are in Greek (cf. B. L. Gildersleeve and G. Lodge, *Gildersleeve's Latin Grammar* [3(1 ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1895), 395 (§6141; 149-50 N211.51).

59. Barth (*Ephesians 1-3*, 96) simply declares: "An original neuter would hardly have been later displaced by the masculine relative pronoun," with no evidence to back up this claim. Ironically, he argues against his own view by his claim that the masculine would have affirmed the Spirit's personality: if so, would not that be motivation enough for some scribes to change the neuter to a masculine pronoun?

60. So Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2d ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 533. Cf. also Fee, *Empowering*, 668 n. 36.

61. T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), 23.

62. So G. B. Winer, *A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Greek* (trans. and rev. by W. F. Moulton; 3d ed., rev.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1882), 207.

63. So Abbott, *Ephesians*, 23; Robertson, *Grammar*, 712-13; et al. Although 1 Tim 3:16 does not involve a predicate nominative, it can nevertheless be lumped in with these

However, these passages might not affirm the point being made. First, relative clauses that have the neuter construction ὃ ἔστιν may be due to a common idiom that is equivalent to the Latin *id est* (= i.e.). Thus, for example, in Heb 7:2 Melchizedek is called "the king of Salem, that is, the king of peace" (βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ὃ ἔστιν βασιλεὺς εἰρήνης)—even though βασιλεύς is masculine. In Mark 3:17, James and John are called "Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder" (βοανηργές, ὃ ἔστιν υἱὸι βροντῆς)—even though the nouns in each clause are masculine plural. Many such constructions with ὃ ἔστιν should probably be deleted from consideration because they may be due to the *id est* idiom rather than the attraction-to-predicate idiom.⁶⁴ Second, Gal 3:16 may involve *constructio ad sensum* due to identification of the σπέρμα as Christ; thus, natural gender rather than attraction to predicate could explain the ὅς.⁶⁵ And third, 1 Tim 3:16 most likely has an entirely different reason for the masculine relative pronoun—namely, because it is probably an embedded hymn fragment, there is no real antecedent.⁶⁶

If these examples are illegitimate, are there better ones that demonstrate the point of attraction to the predicate's gender? There may not be many in the NT, but they occur frequently enough in hellenistic literature as a whole.⁶⁷ But even within the NT note, for ex-

other passages because of certain similarities. For reasons discussed below, it should be excluded from the pool of examples, however.

64. See also Mark 12:42 (λεπτὰ δύο, ὃ ἔστιν κοδράντης); Col 1:27 (τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦτου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὃ ἔστιν Χριστός); and Col 3:14 (τὴν ἀγάπην, ὃ ἔστιν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος). Not all such constructions can be disposed of, however. Rather, only those that use the relative clause to *clarify the sense* or the referent of the previous noun as an appositive can be rejected. However, in 2 Thess 3:17 we read, Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου, ὃ ἔστιν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ ("This greeting is in my own hand, Paul's, which is a sign in every epistle"). The relative clause does not clarify the sense of the greeting but, rather, explains its purpose. As such, it apparently does not follow the *id est* idiom and thus may be included in the predicate attraction examples. See also Matt 13:31-32.

65. Admittedly, there is only a slight difference between these two here: it is precisely at this point in the narrative that the seed is identified as Christ. Thus, the focus of the passage naturally gravitates toward Χριστός. But, since Paul knew where he was going with the argument, the ὅς could be considered anticipatory because of the natural referent he has in mind. Either way, this particular text is of no help in the argument against the grammaticization of the Spirit's personality in Eph 1:14 because it is impossible to tell which of the two reasons Paul had in mind in using ὅς in Gal 3:16, or even if he consciously distinguished between the two.

66. For discussion, see Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, 341-42.

67. In the LXX, note Prov 12:11 (φρένων ὅς ἔστιν ἡδύς). In the papyri, note *POxy* 1485.4, which employs a frequent idiom (σήμερον ἥτις ἔστιν θ ["today, which is the ninth"]) of using a temporal adverb (such as σήμερον or αὔριον) substantivally (frequently such adverbs are arthrous), followed by the feminine pronoun *iinc*, whose gender is due to the implied ἡμέρα in the relative clause. (In the NT, see Matt 27:62. Even though ἐπαύριον takes the feminine article here, it is due to the attraction to the

ample, 1 Tim 3:15 (οἶκω θεοῦ . . . ἣτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος ["the house of God, which is the church of the living God"]) and Rev 4:5 (λαμπάδες . . . ἃ εἰσὶν τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ⁶⁸ [lamps . . . which are the seven spirits of God]). These illustrations could be multiplied.⁶⁹ The attraction-to-predicate idiom is thus common enough that, even if the verse were textually stable, Eph 1:14 should still be removed from the proof-text bin for the Spirit's personality.

To sum up all the passages that involve masculine *pronominal* referents, we can lay out the evidence in table form:⁷⁰

Passage	Pronoun	Referent	Construction
John 14:26	ἐκεῖνος	παράκλητος	simple agreement
John 15:26	ἐκεῖνος	παράκλητος	simple agreement
	ὄν	παράκλητος	simple agreement
John 16:7-8	ἐκεῖνος	παράκλητος	simple agreement
	αὐτόν	παράκλητος	simple agreement
John 16:13-14	ἐκεῖνος (2)	παράκλητος	simple agreement
Eph 1:13-14	ὅς (?)	τῷ πνεύματι	assimilation to predicate

So far, it is evident that no grammatical construction can be unambiguously marshaled in defense of the Spirit's personality. But there is one passage remaining.

Masculine Participle

The final passage that is used in a philological defense of the Spirit's personality is 1 John 5:7-8. The text reads as follows:

implied ἡμέρα in the relative clause, since adverbs obviously do not have a set gender.) In Classical Greek a similar phenomenon occurs with the attraction of the gender of the demonstrative to that of the predicate (see Gildersleeve, *Classical Greek*, 1:58 [§127]). It should be noted that most NT grammars are not very helpful on this issue since they lump in the *id est* relative pronouns with predicate-attraction relative pronouns. But see examples noted below.

68. Some MSS (1006 1841 M^k) have the feminine plural αἱ here.

69. See also Acts 16:12; 1 Cor 3:17; Eph 3:13 (unless here we should read ἢ τίς instead of ἣτις); Eph 6:2; Phil 1:28; Col 3:5; Rev 5:8 (although ⚭ 046 1006 1841 2050 2344 and a few other mss have ἃ here). In Rev 5:6 several witnesses (1854 2050 2329 2344 2351 M^k) have ἃ εἰσὶν instead of οἱ εἰσὶν, in agreement with the predicate nominative (τὰ πνεύματα) against the antecedent (ὄφθαλμούς), but this reading is most likely not authentic.

70. The following table is taken from Mayes, *Pronominal Referents*, 40, with some modifications.

7. ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, 8. τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν

There are three *who testify*—*the Spirit*, the water, and the blood; and these three are in agreement.

In this passage the masculine participle μαρτυροῦντες is followed by three appositives—τὸ πνεῦμα, τὸ ὕδωρ, and τὸ αἷμα—all of which are neuter in gender. The question is thus naturally raised, What is to account for the masculine participle?

Various interpretations have been put forth for the gender shift here. One of the most common, however, is that of *constructio ad sensum*—that the Holy Spirit is obviously a person, and thus the masculine participle is used. Among commentators who embrace this view are Westcott, Plummer, Smith, Hiebert, Burdick, Marshall, and Smalley. I. Howard Marshall, in his NIC commentary, is representative:

It is striking that although Spirit, water, and blood are all neuter nouns in Greek, they are introduced by a clause expressed in the masculine plural: τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες. . . . Here in 1 John he clearly regards the Spirit as personal, and this leads to the personification of the water and the blood.⁷¹

All of these commentators say essentially the same thing: the Spirit is truly regarded as personal and the water and blood are merely personified. Raymond Brown criticizes this view as follows: "Plummer . . . presses the gender too far when he states, 'The masculine points to the personality of the Spirit,' unless one wishes to claim the personality of the water and blood as well. . ." ⁷²

In reality, Brown's critique is probably overdone. Greek gender usage is such that mixed groups—which may include men, women, and children—would employ the masculine gender to address them; hence, the routine use of ἀδελφοί to greet congregations in the NT letters, when both "brothers" and "sisters" is meant.⁷³ If a group had one man and several children, or one man and several women, presumably the masculine would still be employed.⁷⁴ In 1 John 5:7, then,

71. I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 237 n. 20.

72. Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (AB 30; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 581. Brown also notes that A. Greiff ("Die drei Zeugen in 1 Joh 5,7f.," *TQ* 114 [1933]: 465-80, esp. 477-78) does in fact see all three witnesses as personal: "he sees the water as the baptized Christian, and the blood as the martyr!" (Brown, *Epistles of John*, 581).

73. BDAG give several indisputable examples in hellenistic Greek in which ἀδελφοί meant "brother and sister" or "brothers and sisters" (s.v. ἀδελφός, definition 1, p. 18). See also Rom 16:3 where Prisca and Aquila are called collectively συνεργοί.

74. 2 John 1 even goes beyond this: ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς, οὓς ("to the elect lady and her children, whom"), for the feminine singular noun and neuter plural are together picked up by the masculine pronoun! But if "lady" is a metaphor for the church, the reason for the masculine pronoun is due to *constructio ad sensum*.

if the Spirit and only the Spirit is viewed as a person, it would be wholly appropriate to use the masculine τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες to describe the witness of the Spirit, water, and blood.

Nevertheless, is that the real reason for the masculine participle? The fact that the previous verse speaks of the Spirit as a witness using a *neuter* participle (τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ μαρτυροῦν) suggests that it is not the Spirit's personality that is driving the gender shift in v. 7. Further, those who see the Spirit's personality in οἱ μαρτυροῦντες often do so because they *already* saw such in the pronouns in John 14-16. (And many have, naturally, written an earlier commentary on the Gospel of John.) But if, as we have argued, the Gospel of John provides no grammatical precedent for this interpretation, it is doubtful that personality is the reason for the gender shift here.

What then is the catalyst for the change? Several suggestions have been made, one of which will be mentioned here. It is possible that "It is the personal character of the *witnessing* that is underlined by the masculine numeral, as well as by the use of the pres. ptc. ('those who bear witness' rather than 'witnesses'): the three go on witnessing."⁷⁵ Therefore, to clarify that the witnesses were personal and thus valid, the masculine participle was used. Taking this a step farther, it is possible that the masculine was used, almost subconsciously, because the only legitimate witnesses in Jewish courts would be male.⁷⁶ Why, then, was the masculine gender used only with reference to the *three* witnesses and not to the Spirit in v. 6? Perhaps because as soon as the number of witnesses shifted from singular to plural, the *nature* of the witness shifted from impersonal (which was valid in a limited sense)⁷⁷ to personal, and the Deuteronomic law of establishing the truth of a testimony by two or three witnesses⁷⁸ thus came to the

75. Brown, *Epistles of John*, 581.

76. Josephus (*Ant.* 4.8.15 §219) says that women were disqualified because of their inherent "vanity and rashness." See also *m. Ketub.* 1:6-9; *Sipre Deut.* §190; *y. Sotah.* 6.4, 21a (where the testimony of a hundred women was worth no more than the testimony of one man). Tal Ilan (*Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine: An Inquiry into Image and Status* [TSAJ 44; Tübingen: Mohr, 1995], 163-66) summarizes her research on the matter as follows: "We may conclude that the specific law disqualifying women as witnesses was formulated as a general *halakhic* principle, just as in other matters such as punishments, but that many exceptions arose from actual custom and practice. During a normal trial in court, women's testimony was not sought out and was in fact avoided whenever possible because 'no man wants his wife to degrade herself in court' (*b. Ketub.* 74b), but testimony which could not otherwise be obtained was by all means accepted" (p. 165).

77. Brown, *Epistles of John*, 581: "In Jewish tradition personal testimony can be given impersonal witnesses, e.g., by a heap of stones (Gen 31:45-48), by heaven and earth (Deut 31:28), by clouds and rain (*Enoch* 100:11)."

78. Cf. Deut 17:6; 19:15. This multiple testimony to the truth is repeated in the NT (cf. especially John 8:17; note also Matt 18:16; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28).

foreground.⁷⁹ The metaphor, rather than the Spirit's personality, is thus driving the gender shift.

Whatever the reason for the masculine participle in v. 7, it is evident that the grammaticization of the Spirit's personality is not the only, nor even the most plausible, explanation. Since this text also involves serious exegetical problems (i.e., a variety of reasons as to why the masculine participle is used), it cannot be marshaled as unambiguous syntactical proof of the Spirit's personality.

In sum, none of the gender shift passages clearly helps establish the personality of the Holy Spirit. In light of this, I would recommend that an argument that appears to be a modern invention⁸⁰ be excised from our theological textbooks.

PASSAGES INVOLVING AGENCY

As we said at the beginning of this paper, passages involving agency are *assumed* to show the personality of the Spirit, but they are not proof texts at all. These passages are used only because the personality of the Spirit is assumed to be demonstrated on other grounds or in other passages. All of these texts are of one sort: they involve the expression (ἐν) πνεύματι. Frequently in both theological and exegetical literature, this expression is assumed to mean *personal* agency. Two passages especially are of interest here, Gal 5:16 and 1 Cor 12:13. In Gal 5:16 Paul says, "walk by the Spirit (πνεύματι) and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh." In 1 Cor 12:13 he says, "by one Spirit (ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι) we were all baptized into one body."

Because of the already undue length of this paper and the major focus on the masculine gender passages, we will not dwell here too long. We begin with a survey of the grammar. Standard Greek grammars note that the simple dative case is used for personal agency only on rare occasions—and when it is so used, it is found with a perfect passive verb.⁸¹ BDR, for example, cite only one possible instance

79. This would not necessarily mean that the Spirit, by himself, was viewed as impersonal, though this is possible. But it is just as likely that the personal and masculine nature of the testimony was triggered in the author's mind by the plurality of the witnesses that he introduced in v. 8.

80. As far as I can tell, Patristic writers never use this argument either. Of course, the Greeks do not usually comment on grammatical features of their own language, and the Latin Fathers do not comment on the Greek! For what it is worth, Calvin does not use this argument, nor does Gill. I have not yet traced the roots of the grammatical argument, but my suspicion is that it began in the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

81. BDR 154 (§191). Cf. also H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (rev. G. M. Messing; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 343-44 (§1488-94); Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, 163-66. Smyth notes that "the usual restriction of the dative to tenses of completed

(Luke 24:15). But Jas 3:7 is also a likely candidate.⁸² The word ἔν with the dative for personal agency is just as rare, if not more so.⁸³ Suffice it to say that every clear instance of this usage in the NT involves the *simple* dative substantive with a perfect passive verb.⁸⁴ Thus, if one wishes to argue that πνεύματι is used this way, clear examples with other personal nouns must be brought forth to establish the usage. To argue that πνεύματι is so used, even lacking association with a perfect passive verb, is simply to beg the question. Applying this to 1 Cor 12:13, if we were to take the Spirit as the agent of the baptism into the body of Christ this would inadvertently mask the fulfillment motif of the apostle here. Mark 1:8 records John as saying, "I baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ)."⁸⁵ The text of 1 Cor 12:13 repeats this prophecy, except that it uses an aorist (ἐβαπτίσθημεν) instead of the future tense. It is evidently meant to indicate the fulfillment of this prophecy in the life of the church. If so, then Spirit baptism speaks of the divine initiative in salvation, rather than a second blessing later on, since "we all were baptized . . . we *all* were made to drink of one Spirit." Ironically, those who see the Spirit as the *agent* of baptism in 1 Cor 12:13 inadvertently open the door to *two* Spirit baptisms—the initial one in which the Spirit is the agent and a later one in which Christ baptizes by means of the Spirit. But not only is it nearly impossible to read ἐν πνεύματι as indicating personal agency, but there is no linguistic difference between the prophecies about the Lord baptizing with the Spirit and the statement in 1 Cor 12:13. All of the evidence points to Paul consciously linking the Johannine prediction of Spirit baptism with the ecclesiastical reality.

action seems to be due to the fact that the agent is represented as placed in the position of viewing an already completed action in the light of its relation to himself" (ibid., 343-44 [§1489]).

82. This is disputed by BDR 154 (§191.3). See also John 18:15; Rom 14:18; 2 Pet 2:19; and Jude 1 for other possible examples, all of which employ a perfect passive verb. In the LXX, however, I have noticed Neh 13:26 (ἀγαπώμενος τῷ θεῷ ἦν), where an imperfect periphrastic construction is used.

83. Cf. Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, 373-74.

84. The best candidate with the preposition is found in 1 Cor 6:2: ἐν ὑμῖν κρίνεται ὁ κόσμος ("the world is to be judged by you"). But this is by no means certain. A. T. Robertson and A. Plummer (*The First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* [ICC; 2d ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914], 112) suggest that it speaks of sphere/locality: "in your court," "in your jurisdiction." So also BDR 178 (§219.1), noting parallels in profane and Patristic literature.

85. Cf. also Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16, all repeating the same Johannine saying (with βαπτίζω ἐν πνεύματι each time). In each of these texts, the formula involves a futuristic Spirit baptism.

CONCLUSION

Penultimate Conclusions

There is no text in the NT that clearly or even probably affirms the personality of the Holy Spirit through the route of Greek grammar. The basis for this doctrine must be on other grounds. This does not mean that in the NT the Spirit is a thing, any more than in the OT the Spirit (רוח—a feminine noun) is a female! Grammatical gender is just that: grammatical. The conventions of language do not necessarily correspond to reality.⁸⁶

Where Do We Go from Here?

One implication of these considerations is this: There is often a tacit *assumption* by scholars that the Spirit's distinct personality was fully recognized in the early apostolic period. Too often, such a viewpoint is subconsciously filtered through Chalcedonian lenses.

This certainly raises some questions that can be addressed here only in part: We are not arguing that the distinct personality and deity of the Spirit are foreign to the NT, but rather that there is progressive revelation *within* the NT, just as there is between the Testaments.

Evangelical defenses of various doctrines occasionally are poorly founded. We sometimes claim things to be true because we want them to be true, without doing the exhaustive spadework needed to support our conclusions. Regarding the personality of the Holy Spirit, the quick leap to exploit Greek grammar in defense may actually work against a carefully nuanced pneumatology. Taking our cue from christology, we note that several biblical scholars working in that field would argue for progressive development of the *understanding* of the person and work of Christ. Not all would affirm that the apostolic band embraced the deity of Christ shortly after the resurrection. Some would argue that this understanding took years to develop.

At the same time, there is evidence that christology developed more quickly than pneumatology. Take, for example, the epistolary salutations: virtually all of the *corpus Paulinum* offers grace and peace "from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (only Colossians and 1 Thessalonians are excepted). This expression almost implicitly puts Christ on the same level with God, giving evidence that the apostles were going through a binitarian transformation of monotheism.⁸⁷ But

86. Cf. Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, 10-11.

87. Occasionally, the Spirit shows up in benedictions along with the Father and Son (e.g., 2 Cor 13:13; 2 Thess 2:13), but the syntactical structure of such benedictions

where is the Spirit? It is only in the Apocalypse that the salutation is from Father, Son, *and Spirit* (if indeed this is what "seven spirits" means in Rev 1:4⁸⁸).

Further, when we look at Acts we notice that water baptism is apparently never done in the "name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"; it is done in Jesus' name alone (cf. Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16). What is to account for this? Either the Trinitarian formula in the Great Commission (Matt 28:19) was a later accretion added either by the evangelist or, possibly, by some ancient scribe;⁸⁹ or, more likely, there was a lack of understanding on the part of the apostles when Jesus gave the commission.⁹⁰ That baptism was apparently not done in the Father's name either suggests that the apostolic band was wholly consumed with Christ or that the Trinitarian formula made little sense to them. In other words, their initial understanding of the relation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit may well have been rather fuzzy.

If this is how it was with Christ, whom the disciples had seen, how much more would it be this way with the Holy Spirit, whom they had not?

To extend this analogy, the work in Jewish sources in relation to christology shows that a second prong in a high pneumatology is perhaps overstated as well. Specifically, many of the NT passages that are adduced to show the Spirit's personality or deity find parallels in Philo, intertestamental literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, or even the OT.⁹¹ Unless we can distinguish the NT from these other ancient sources more

does not as strongly put the Spirit on the same level with the Father as the salutations do the Son.

88. For a good discussion of the problem of the seven spirits, see Swete, *Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, 272-74. Swete adopts the view that the Holy Spirit is in view.

89. That the original form of Matt 28:19 did not have the Trinitarian baptismal formula was the conclusion of F. C. Conybeare, "The Eusebian Form of the Text of Mt. 28:19," *ZNW* 2 (1901): 275-88, based on a faulty reading of Eusebius's quotations of this text. The shorter reading has also been accepted, on other grounds, by a few other scholars. For discussion (and refutation), see B. J. Hubbard, *The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Commissioning: An Exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20* (SBLDS 19; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1974), 163-64, 167-75; and Jane Schaberg, *The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: The Triadic Phrase in Matthew 28:19b* (SBLDS 61; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), 27-29.

90. I am not arguing for *ipsissima verba* here but simply that the theology of the dominical material often displays a greater sophistication than can be found in the evangelists' narratives. Indeed, when it comes to the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, far and away the most impressive texts are dominical sayings. This may suggest that the evangelists treated the traditional sayings of Jesus relatively conservatively. Thus, ironically, the most advanced theology of the NT might often be found at the most primitive layer—preserved as it was by the evangelists, whether they clearly grasped its meaning or not.

91. See, for example, Judg 16:19-20 (here, Samson's strength "left him" in one verse; then he understands this to mean that the Lord "left him" in the next [סור used

clearly, we would either have to say that Philo was a Trinitarian (!) or that the NT authors were not.⁹² It is not enough to say either that the Spirit is presented as personal⁹³ or that he is sometimes not distinguished from God (as in Acts 5:3-4). What also must be done is (1) a clear demonstration that language about the Spirit's personality cannot be due to figurative rhetoric or circumlocution of the divine name,⁹⁴ and (2) that where he is viewed as personal he is also viewed as deity, yet, (3) in those same texts, is seen as distinct from both Father and Son. That such passages are few and far between may indicate something of an emerging pneumatological understanding within the

each time]; in the least, this kind of text should give us pause about using Acts 5:3-4 for equating the Holy Spirit with God without sufficient nuancing); 2 Sam 23:2; 1 Kgs 22:21-22 (here an evil spirit is referred to with the masculine pronoun αὐτόν in the LXX, the very kind of evidence that is lacking in the NT for the Holy Spirit [but cf. Mark 9:20, 26 for the masculine participle used with an evil spirit; Luke 9:39-40 in P⁴⁵ (πνεῦμα . . . αὐτόν)]; in Patristic literature, note 2 Chan. 20:4 [πνεῦμα μὴ ὄν δίκαιον]); Job 33:14 (this text seems to use synonymous parallelism between "spirit" of YHWH and "breath of God"—certainly offering no comfort for those who see the Trinity in the OT!); Ps 139:7 (equates God's "spirit" with his "presence"); Ps 143:10 (cf. Acts 5:3-4!); Isa 30:1; 40:13; 48:16; 63:10, 14; Ezek 2:2; 3:24; 11:5; Wis 1:5, 7-9; 7:12, 22, 23, 24, 27; 8:8; 9:11; 10:1; *Odes Sol.* 3:10; 36:1; *T. Jud.* 20:5; 1QS 3:13-4:26; Philo, *Mos.* 2:265.

92. After tracing the development of the sense of spirit in the intertestamental literature (including the DSS), John Breck (*Spirit of Truth: The Holy Spirit in Johannine Tradition*, vol. 1: *The Origins of Johannine Pneumatology* [Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991], 160) summarizes: "*Ruach* . . . gradually developed from a capricious inspirational dynamis or charismatic power in primitive Hebrew thought into the indwelling bearer of the divine Word. Thus *ruach* became a virtual synonym for Yahweh in His act of self-disclosure." With reference to Philo, he notes: "In the writings of Philo we find an impressive attempt to draw together the Greek *pneuma* and the Hebrew *ruach*, but the synthesis remains incomplete because the two spirit concepts are basically incompatible" (ibid.).

93. Apart from the grammatical argument that has been addressed in this paper, the NT speaks of the Holy Spirit in personal terms, especially as the subject or object of personal verbs (e.g., teaching, grieving, blaspheming, etc.). Many theologians and exegetes appeal to such texts as though they demonstrated the personality of the Spirit *without showing how similar phenomena in Jewish literature do not demonstrate this*. For example, in Sir 39:28, πνεύματα (which, in this context, means "winds") is personified, with the masculine pronoun αὐτούς, following.

94. On several occasions in Jewish literature, "spirit of" is really a circumlocution for the simple noun in the genitive. Thus, פִּרְוֹ / πνεῦμα takes on the gender of the genitive noun. "The spirit of God/YHWH" in the OT is frequent enough, occasionally even being used as a circumlocution for God himself (cf., e.g., Pss 139:7; 143:10). In Job 33:14 the spirit of YHWH is the same as the breath of God. In Wis 7:7 we read of πνεῦμα σοφίας ("the spirit of wisdom"), but this is immediately picked up by the feminine pronoun in the next verse: "I esteemed *her* more than sceptres and thrones; compared with *her*, I held riches as nothing" (προέκρινα αὐτὴν σκήπτρων καὶ θρόνων καὶ πλοῦτον οὐδὲν ἡγήσαύμην ἐν συγκρίσει αὐτῆς). Verses 8-11 have πνεῦμα (v. 7) as the *grammatical* antecedent, yet the feminine pronoun is used ten times! Does this make the πνεῦμα feminine here?

NT itself.⁹⁵ If we rush to a Chalcedonian view of the NT, simply because we *know* that it's right, perhaps we will overlook some of the theological development and therefore rich tapestry of NT thought.

In sum, I have sought to demonstrate in this paper that the *grammatical* basis for the Holy Spirit's personality is lacking in the NT, yet this is frequently, if not usually, the first line of defense of that doctrine by many evangelical writers. But if grammar cannot legitimately be used to support the Spirit's personality, then perhaps we need to reexamine the rest of our basis for this theological commitment. I am not denying the doctrine of the Trinity, of course, but I am arguing that we need to ground our beliefs on a more solid foundation.

Or is it rather that πνεῦμα functions almost with a genitive of apposition, and the gender of the genitive is picked up in the following discussion?

95. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, it seems to me that a desideratum of evangelical scholarship should be not only to compare NT pneumatology with the OT and Jewish materials, but also to contrast the two bodies of literature. Several works have looked at the Jewish writings as a *source* for the NT teaching on the Holy Spirit, especially focusing in relation to παράκλητος (cf., e.g., E. F. Scott, *The Spirit in the New Testament* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923]; S. Mowinckel, "Die Vorstellung des Spätjudentums vom heiligen Geist als Fürsprecher und der johanneische Paraklet," *ZNW* 52 [1933]: 97-130; idem, "The 'Spirit' and the 'Word' in the Pre-Exilic Reforming Prophets," *JBL* 53 [1934]: 199-227; A. J. MacDonald, *The Interpreter Spirit and Human Life: A Study of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, the Wisdom Books and the New Testament* [London: SPCK, 1944]; O. Betz, *Der Paraklet: Fürsprecher im häretischen Spätjudentum, im Johannes-Evangelium und in neu gefundenen gnostischen Schriften* [AGSU 2; Leiden: Brill, 1963]; G. Bornkamm, "Der Paraklet im Johannesevangelium," in *Geschichte und Glaube: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Part 1/vol. 3 [Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1968], 68-89; G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970]; A. R. C. Leaney, "The Johannine Paraclete and the Qumran Scrolls," in *John and Qumran* [ed. J. H. Charlesworth; London: Chapman, 1972], 38-61; U. B. Müller, "Die Parakletenvorstellung im Johannesevangelium," *ZTK* 71 [1974]: 31-78; G. M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987]; Breck, *Spirit of Truth*; S. Notley, *The Concept of the Holy Spirit in Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period and "Pre-Pauline" Christianity* [Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1991]; C. S. Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997]), but few seem to attempt to analyze orthodox arguments for a high pneumatology in light of such materials along the lines that Hurtado or Bauckham have done with christology.

In general, I would agree with Alister McGrath (*Christian Theology: An Introduction* [2d ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], 294) on how to construct the Trinitarian doctrine: "The doctrine of the Trinity can be regarded as the outcome of a process of sustained and critical reflection on the pattern of divine activity revealed in Scripture, and continued in Christian experience. This is not to say that Scripture contains a doctrine of the Trinity; rather, Scripture bears witness to a God who demands to be understood in a Trinitarian manner." If this is so, then we must engage in careful thinking about what the apostles *consciously* embraced about God, as well as what they were groping to understand and express