

# Studies in the Westminster Confession of Faith

Newtownabbey Free Presbyterian Church Rev Brian McClung 10th October 2012 Chapter 2 Part 10

*John 5:22,23*

## Chapter 2 - God and the Holy Trinity

*Section III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father: the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.*

Proof texts: *1 John 5:7; Matthew 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 1:14,18; John 15:26; Galatians 4:6.*

This section of chapter two deals with the doctrine of God and the Trinity. We are presently considering that **the three persons within the Trinity are each equally part of the Godhead**. The Deity of Christ is proved:

[1] Divine Names are given to the Son of God.

[2] Divine Attributes are ascribed to the Son of God

[3] Divine works are attributed to the Son of God.

[4] Religious worship is rendered to the Son of God. The Scriptures contain an exhortation to worship the Son of God, *Hebrews 1:6: And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.* To get around the strength of this command the Jehovah's Witnesses in 1971 in an edition of the New World Translation changed the word 'worship' to 'do obeisance to' him.

However, in reading through the New Testament it will be clearly observable that Jesus Christ was worshipped by, and readily accepted the worship of, His creatures:

- i. The wise men, *Matthew 2:11: And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother; and fell down, and worshipped him....*
- ii. The leper, *Matthew 8:2: And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*
- iii. Jarius, *Matthew 9:18: While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler; and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her; and she shall live.*
- iv. The disciples, *Matthew 14:33: Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.*
- v. The Syro-phenician woman, *Matthew 15:25: Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*
- vi. The demoniac of Gadara, *Mark 5:6: But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him.*

These examples set Jesus Christ, the Son of God, apart from all others who walked this earth. Contrast this with the conduct of the preeminent of the New Testament apostles who refused to accept the worship offered to them:

- i. Peter refused the worship that Cornelius offered him, *Acts 10:25,26: And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.*
- ii. Paul and Barnabas refused the worship of the people of Lystra when they would have sacrificed unto them for healing the lame man, *Acts 14:11-18.*

[5] The deity of the Son of God is proved by the claims He made:

- i. He claimed equality with His Father, *John 5:17,18: But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father; making himself equal with God.* The Jews recognised, if the Jehovah's Witnesses do not, the significance of these words. Jesus Christ is co-equal with His Father.
- ii. He claimed unity with His Father, *John 10:30: I and my Father are one.* The Jews accused Christ of blasphemy after He uttered these words and took up stones to kill Him, *John 10:33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* These Jews readily knew the significance of these statements.

[6] His work as Mediator demands that He be God, co-equal with His Father.

A true mediator must be the equal of both parties that He represents. *Job 9:33 Neither is there any daysman*

*betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both; Galatians 3:20, Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.* If Christ was merely a man or even a superior created being, or even a lesser God, then He cannot save because He cannot truly represent men with God and suffer the eternal, infinite wrath of God for sin. That awful load of condemnation would be too much for a mere creature or even a superior creature, or lesser God to bear. The work of redemption demands a Saviour who is co-equal with God the Father. The Redeemer must extinguish the infinite wrath of God that burns against sin and the unrepentant sinner. Only an infinite Saviour will do!

To crown all that the Scriptures have to say about the Son of God we can ponder the words of *John 5:22,23: For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.* No other conclusion can be arrived at other than that Jesus Christ is God of very God, co-equal, co-eternal and co-substantial with His Father. To say otherwise, as cults like the Jehovah's Witnesses do, is a denial of the plain revelation of Scripture and the promoting of a lie.

**The personality and deity of the Holy Spirit.** This can be determined from a similar consideration. The personality of the Holy Spirit is very important. It is the basis and foundation of His deity and His place in the Trinity with the other two persons. He is not an influence or a presence. **His personality can be proven from:**

- [1] The Holy Spirit speaks of Himself in the first person, *Acts 10:19: While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.* The Third Person of the Trinity speaks, *Acts 8:29.*
- [2] Personal acts are attributed to Him - (i) Teaching, *John 14:26*; (ii) Witnessing, *John 15:26*; (iii) Sending forth, *Acts 13:2*; (iv) Creating, *Genesis 1:2*; (v) Being quenched, *1 Thessalonians 5:1*; (vi) Being grieved, *Ephesians 4:30.*
- [3] He is described as a personality, distinct from Father and Son as being sent by them, *John 14:16; John 15:26.*
- [4] He must be a person as He co-operates equally with the Father and the Son, *Matthew 28:19.* This text does not permit the view that two of those mentioned are persons while the third is only an influence.
- [5] Because sin is seen to be committed against the Holy Spirit, *Isaiah 63:10; Acts 5:3.* They lied to the Spirit.

**His deity can be proven from similar points as those used to demonstrate the deity of Christ:**

- [1] Divine names are given to Him. *Isaiah 6:9: And he [God] said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not,* is quoted in *Acts 28:25,26 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.* The Holy Ghost and God are the same essence.
- [2] Divine attributes are given to Him. (i) Eternity, *Genesis 1:2*; (ii) Omnipresence, *Psalms 139:7,8*; (iii) Omniscience, *1 Corinthians 2:10*; Omnipotence, *Luke 1:35.*
- [3] Divine works are ascribed to Him. (i) Creation, *Genesis 1:2*; (ii) Preservation, *Psalms 104:30*; (iii) Miracles, *Matthew 12:28*; (iv) Regeneration, *John 3:5*; (v) Sanctification, *2 Thessalonians 2:13*; (vi) Resurrection, *Romans 8:11.*
- [4] Divine worship is given to Him. (i) In Baptism, *Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Baptism is an ordinance and a means of grace and therefore it is worship. In being baptised in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit we are worshipping each of the three persons.  
(ii) In prayer, *2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.* This is a prayer by Paul for the Corinthian believers. In this prayer the Holy Spirit is being worshipped.

We can only worship the Holy Spirit if He is co-equal, co-eternal and co-substantial with the Father and the Son. This we believe to be the teaching of scripture and hence its inclusion in the Westminster Confession.