

WHO IS THE THIRD PERSON OF THE GODHEAD?



Paul Chung · August 29, 2017

In Ministry of Healing p. 429 sister White wrote,

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.’ Deuteronomy 29:29. THE REVELATION OF HIMSELF THAT GOD HAS GIVEN IN HIS WORD IS FOR OUR STUDY. THIS WE MAY SEEK TO UNDERSTAND. BUT BEYOND THIS WE ARE NOT TO PENETRATE. The highest intellect may tax itself until it is wearied out in conjectures regarding the NATURE OF GOD, but the effort will be fruitless. This problem has not been given us to solve. No human mind can comprehend God. None are to indulge in speculation

regarding His NATURE. Here silence is eloquence. The Omniscient One is above discussion.”

In the above statement, Ellen White warns us not to “penetrate” beyond what God has revealed to us, namely, not to indulge in speculating the “nature” of God. But she also said, “THE REVELATION OF HIMSELF THAT GOD HAS GIVEN IN HIS WORD IS FOR OUR STUDY. THIS WE MAY SEEK TO UNDERSTAND.”

Ellen White further stated,

“The Scriptures CLEARLY indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as CLEARLY the personality and individuality of each.” 8T 268.1

Romans 1:20 says, “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and *GODHEAD; SO THAT THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE.”

“The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity.” Romans 1:20, A.R.V.”(Ellen White Ministry of Healing 410).

Note: While some aspects of the personality of God and His nature will always remain a mystery but Inspiration tells us that the relation between God and Christ is “clearly indicated” in Scripture and that “they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each.” Thus when we speak of the personality of God, Christ or the Holy Spirit, we are not left without Inspiration to lead us into error.

Also, note that Ellen White quoted ARV (American Revised Version) of Romans 1:20 where the word, “Godhead” was translated as “divinity.” Some misunderstand the term “Godhead” to mean a god of trinity composed of 3 persons and therefore insert wrong connotations and misconstrue what sister White meant in her writings but the term “godhead” simply means divinity. Click **HERE** to learn more about what “Godhead” means.

It’s also worth mentioning that much of the point of contention regarding the personality of Holy Spirit is NOT about the “*nature*” of the Holy Spirit (which is a mystery and we are counseled not to penetrate) but rather the IDENTITY. WHO is the

Holy Spirit? Surely God would not leave us in ignorance as to Who we ought to worship.

Below is a short study on the identity of the Holy Spirit-responding to often misunderstood statement by Ellen White:

Unfortunately, more often than not, people misquote Ellen White's statements or quote them but out of context. Moreover, most of her books are a compilations of different writings taken from her original manuscripts and therefore we must take into account its original source and also compare them with scores of her other writings which may offer greater context to come to an accurate intent and the meaning of certain expressions she chose to use.

Statement under consideration:

“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead,” — (E.G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 671.2, 1898)

“third person of the Godhead” vs “Third Person of the Godhead”

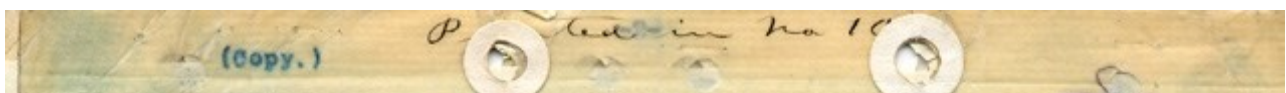
In the book, *The Desire of Ages*, prior to 1940, the phrase, **“third person of the Godhead”** was printed with the lowercase **“t”** and **“p”** but was change to the uppercase, **“Third Person of the Godhead”** when it was republished in 1940. Some (non-trinitarian adventists) have claimed that the changing of the lower case **t** and **p** to uppercase **T** and **P** were intentional to make the title of the Holy Spirit appear more inline with the SDA church's present understanding of the personhood of the Holy Spirit, that is, by making the title in the uppercase, it effectively made the title proper nouns, connoting a title or a name of a personal being, etc . Unfortunately, I have heard some trinitarian Adventists making that very argument. It's worth noting then that the original manuscript source dated, 1896 (two years prior to the first publishing of *Desire of Ages*) shown below indicate the phrase in lower case. In addition, you will also notice a slight modification in the paragraph from the original to the *Desire of Ages* version:

Original manuscript reads, **“Evil had been accumulating for centuries, and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the third**

person of the Godhead..."

Desire of Ages, p. 671 (1940 onwards) reads, **"The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead..."**

As it stands, The Desire of Ages' statement, that is available online, on an official SDA website, appears in the **uppercase**, while the same expression appears in the book, Evangelism, appears in the **lowercase** but with heading inserted by the editor, **"The Power of God in the Third Person,"** (the title headings, by the way, are not part of the Ellen White's original quote) indicating uppercase letters for the "third person." This is interesting, because many non-trinitarians claim that the book Evangelism was compiled by LeRoy Froom to deliberately promote the trinitarian doctrine within Adventism. If the uppercase makes it more trinitarian (as some non-trinitarians claim), then one would think that Froom would have included the actual quote in the uppercase as well rather than the lower.



Manuscript Release # 1300
4 Ed 1193-1501
E. W. Letter

B-8-96

"Sunyside," Cooranbong, February 6, 1896.

All released: Series A#10 pp 25-33

B-8-1896

To my Brethren in America:-

TM 392-400

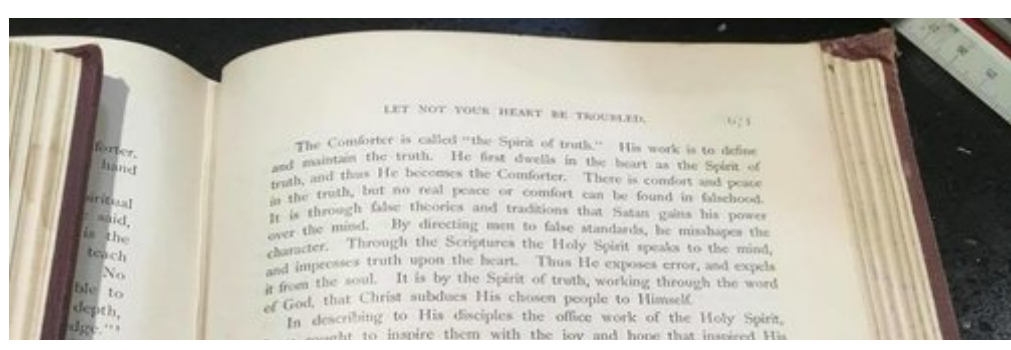
Series A#10, p.25-33
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The Upward Look 57
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p. 25-33

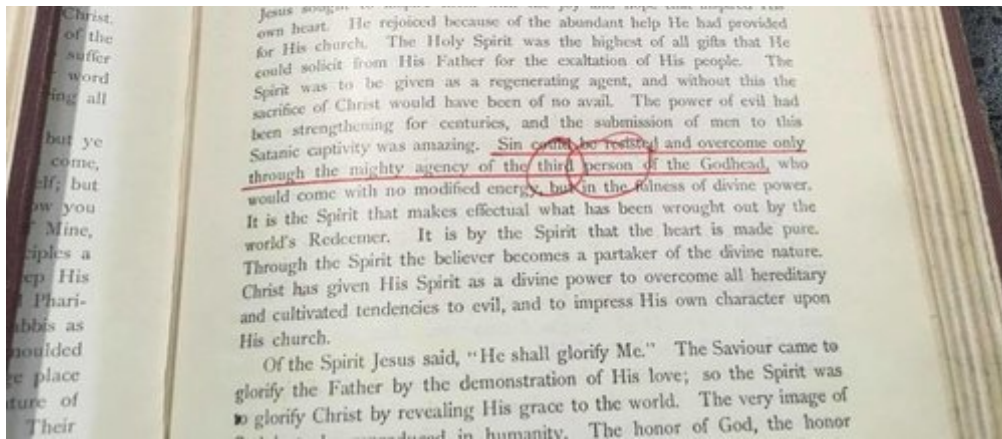
The great office work of the Holy Spirit is thus distinctly specified by our Saviour, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin." [Christ knew that this announcement was a wonderful trust. He was nearing the close of his ministry upon this earth, and was standing in view of the cross, with a full realization of the load of guilt that must be placed upon him as the sin-bearer. Yet his greatest anxiety was for his disciples. He was seeking to find solace for them, and he told them, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

[Evil had been accumulating for centuries, and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power. [Another spirit must be met; for the essence of evil was working in all ways, and the submission of man to this Satanic captivity was amazing.]

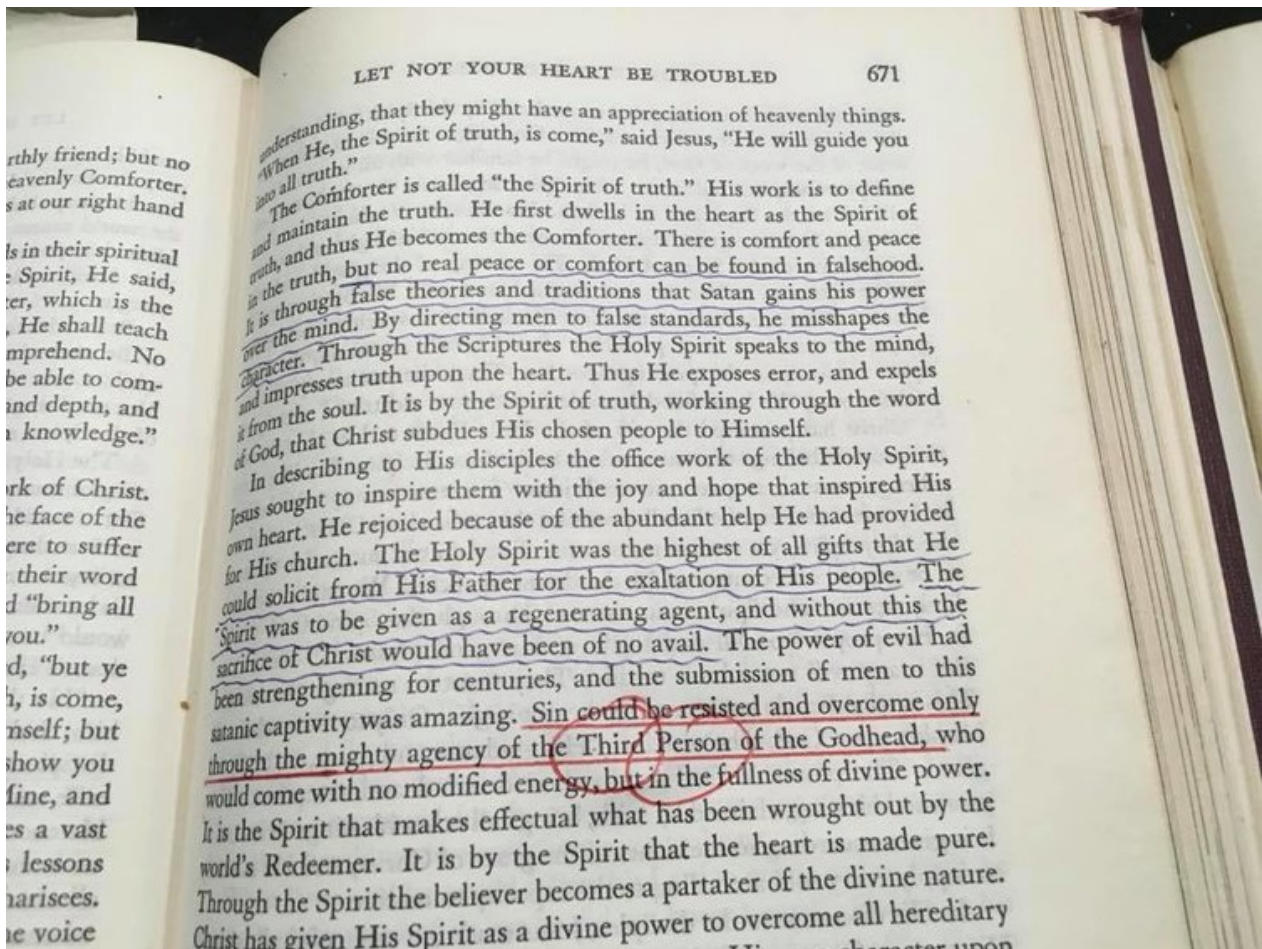
To-day, as in Christ's day, Satan rules the minds of many. O that his terrible, fearful work could be discerned and resisted. Selfishness has perverted principles, selfishness has confused the senses and clouded the judgment. It seems so strange that notwithstanding all the light that is shining from God's blessed word, there should be such strange ideas held, such a departure from the spirit and practice of truth. The desire to grasp large wages, with a determination to deprive others of their God-given rights, has its origin in Satan's mind; and by their obedience to his will and way men please themselves under his banner.

third person of the Godhead-Exhibit-1.-Letter-8-1896-p.1; courtesy of EGW estate.

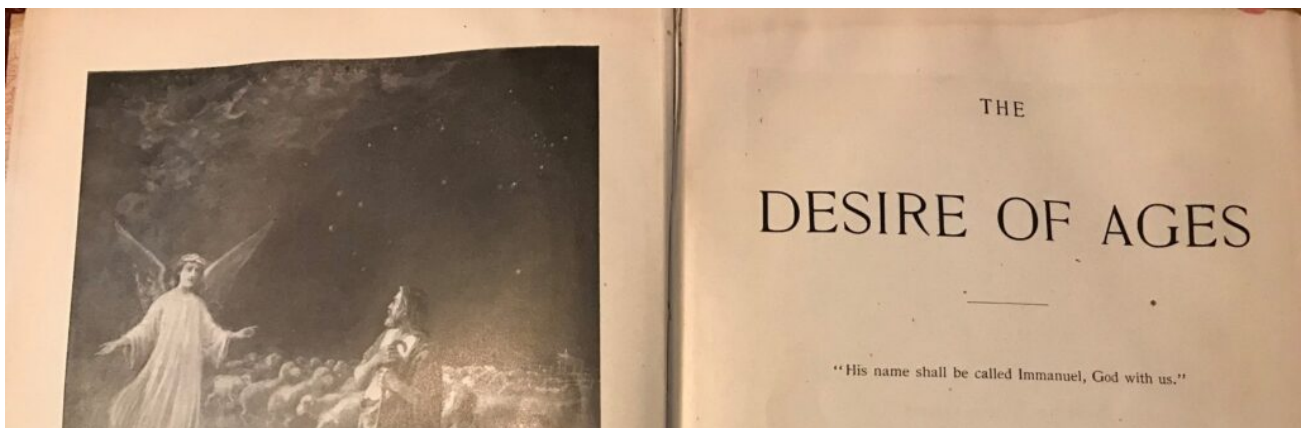




The Desire of Ages 1939, pg. 671



The Desire of Ages 1940, pg. 671





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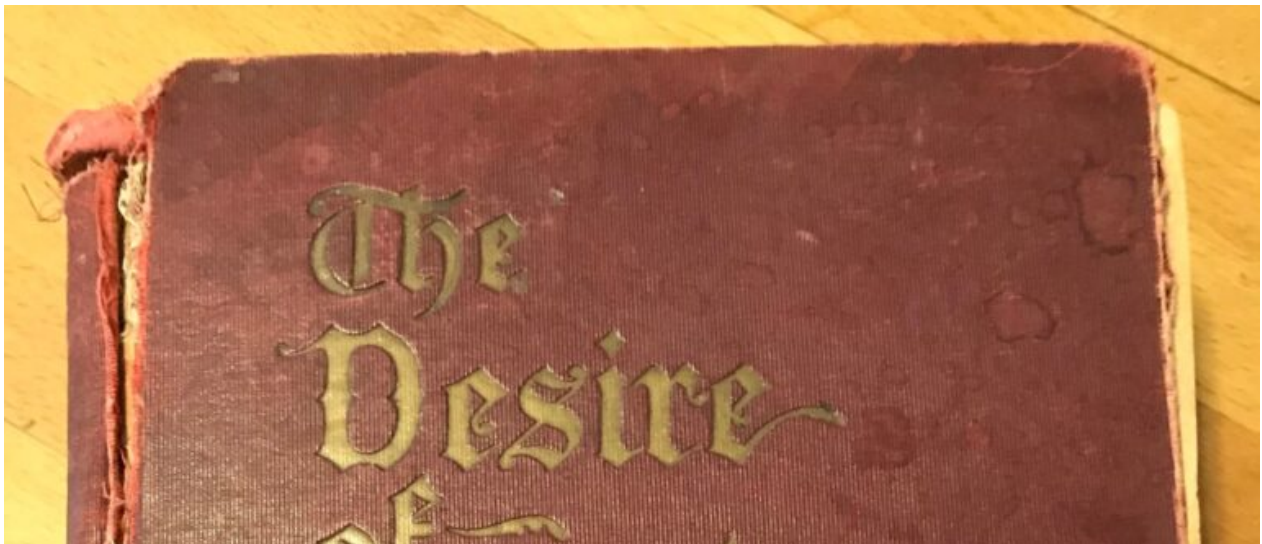
THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SHEPHERDS.

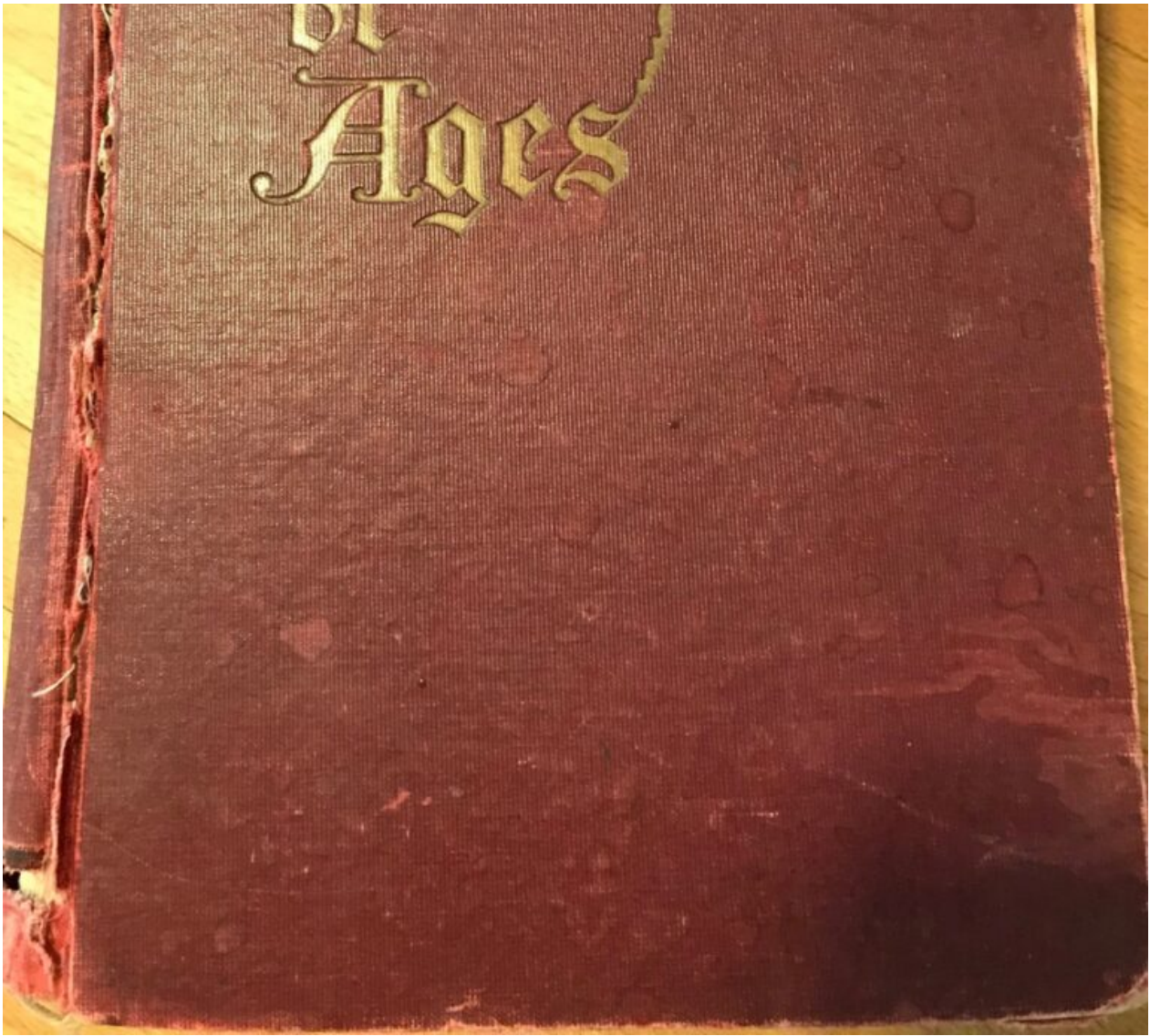
"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

BY
MRS. E. G. WHITE

AUTHOR OF "PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS," "GREAT CONTROVERSY BETWEEN CHRIST AND SATAN," "STEPS TO CHRIST," "THOUGHTS FROM THE MOUNT OF BLESSING," ETC.

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The Desire of Ages, 1898 (personal copy), cover

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this Satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.

Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.

Of the Spirit Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me." The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.

"When He [the Spirit of truth] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit, the great teacher of divine truth.

The Desire of Ages, 1898, pg. 671

seems he would be nearer to them than if he had not ascended on high.

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The preaching of the Word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit, will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. One might be able to present the letter of the Word of God, he might be familiar with all its commands and promises; but unless the Holy Spirit sets before the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken. No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the co-operation of the Spirit of God. The sowing of the gospel seed will not be a success unless the seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven.

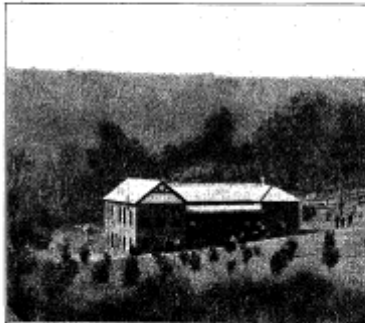
he is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive.

When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the joy of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see, creates a new being in the image of God.

The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church.

The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us a willing obedience to all his requirements. This is true worship. It is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit every sincere prayer is indited, and such prayer is acceptable to God. Wherever a soul reaches out after God, there the Spirit's working is manifest, and God will reveal himself to that soul. For such worshippers he is seeking. He waits to receive them, and to make them his sons and daughters.

God takes men as they are, and educates them for his service, if they will yield themselves to him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God, develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfil the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Costly devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and



THE DARLING RANGE SCHOOL, WEST AUSTRALIA, RECENTLY ESTABLISHED

Before one book of the New Testament was written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying apostles. Then the testimony of their enemies was, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine."

Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to his church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim

pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given his Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to inspire his own character on his church. Of the Spirit, Jesus said, "He shall glorify me." The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of his love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing his grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of his people.

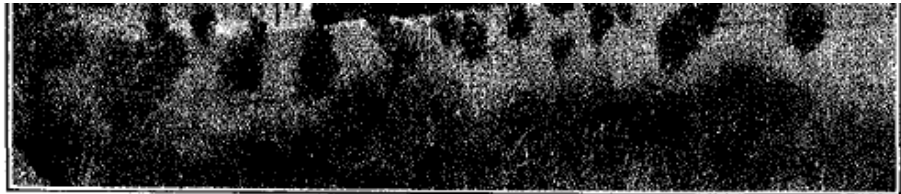
"When he [the Spirit of truth] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

the Lord's promise; they talk about Christ and the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by divine agencies. We can not use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in his people "to will and to do of his good pleasure." But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who walk humbly upon God, who watch for his guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and

his discipline that the Christian becomes like him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Son of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. The first disciples went forth preaching the Word. They revealed Christ in their lives. And the Lord worked with them, "confirming the word with signs following." These disciples prepared themselves for their work. Before the day of Pentecost they met together, and put away all differences. They were of one accord. They believed

ADVENT REVIEW AND SABBATH HERALD NOVEMBER 19, 1908, pg. 16

gifts that he could solicit from his Father for the exaltation of his people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer



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Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to his church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord's promise; they talk about

ADVENT REVIEW AND SABBATH HERALD NOVEMBER 19, 1908, pg. 16 detail

Note: All the published articles containing the expression, "third person of the godhead" prior to 1940 was printed in the lower case.

Just a word of caution to those who doubt the legitimacy of Ellen White's published writings and are more inclined to adhere to some conspiracy theory, keep in mind, Ellen White was alive when the Desire of Ages was first published and she had said that She would always read her articles and books to see that they expressed what she wanted BEFORE they were published. Thus, the author of this article is of the

opinion that Ellen White had the oversight and gave her approval of the published version (at least how it was originally published with the lowercase):

“EVERY ARTICLE I prepare to be edited by my workers, I ALWAYS HAVE TO READ MYSELF BEFORE IT IS SENT FOR PUBLICATION...

“I READ OVER ALL THAT IS COPIED, TO SEE THAT EVERYTHING IS AS IT SHOULD BE. I READ ALL THE BOOK MANUSCRIPT BEFORE IT IS SENT TO THE PRINTER. So you can see that my time must be fully occupied. Besides writing, I am called upon to speak to the different churches, and to attend important meetings. I could not do this work unless the Lord helped me.

“I WISH TO WRITE WORDS THAT SHALL REMOVE FROM THE MINDS OF ANY OF MY BRETHREN THE IMPRESSION THAT I DID NOT, BEFORE THEIR PUBLICATION, READ THE PAGES IN TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH, VOL. 9, relating to Sunday labor.

Below are a few unique variations of statements taken from other writings of Ellen White using the same expression:

“In describing to his disciples the **office work of the Holy Spirit**, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired his own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help he had provided for his church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that he could solicit from his Father for the exaltation of his people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given his Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress his own character on his church.” {RH May 19, 1904, par. 3} {RH November 19, 1908, Art. B, par. 5}

“The striking feature of divine operations is the accomplishment of the greatest work that can be done in our world, by very simple means. It is God’s plan that every part of his government shall depend on every other part, the whole as a wheel within a wheel, working with entire harmony. He moves upon human forces, **causing his Spirit** to touch invisible chords, and the vibration rings to the extremity of the universe. The prince of the power of evil can only be **held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead**, the Holy Spirit.” — E.G. White, Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 10 (SpTA10), p. 36.3 to 37.1

“Christ determined that when He ascended from this earth He would bestow a gift on those who had believed on Him and those who should believe on Him. What gift could He bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. **He determined to give His representative, the third person of the Godhead.** This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, **that converting, enlightening, and sanctifying power, would be his donation....** {ST December 1, 1898, par. 2} {6BC 1052.5}

Note: Here we find that the “third person of the Godhead” is identified as a “MIGHTY AGENCY”, “POWER OF GOD”, or Christ’s “REPRESENTATIVE”, that “CONVERTING, ENLIGHTENING, AND SANCTIFYING POWER”, which would be considered Christ’s “DONATION.”

Many (Seventh-day Adventist) trinitarians argue that the above quotations proves that Ellen White was a Trinitarian for she had said, the Holy Spirit is a “Person”. But what does inspiration mean when it says “third person of the Godhead” or the Holy Spirit? Who or what is this mighty agency that can help us to resist and overcome sin?

When we are confronted with certain Inspired expressions, should we come up with our own human ideas based on our preconceived bias? Or should we continue to search inspiration with humility and an open mind to ALLOW INSPIRATION TO EXPLAIN INSPIRATION?

“Only through the mighty agency of

the Third Person of the Godhead”

We are told that, “**Sin could be resisted and overcome ONLY through the mighty agency of the third person of the godhead.**” (DA 671.2) If that is the case, and if the “third person” is an entirely a different being, then how is it that Christ (or His Spirit) is also describe as one that helps us to resist and overcome sin:

“CHRIST IS PRESENT BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT. **IT IS THIS SPIRIT THAT BRINGS CONVICTION TO HEARTS.**” {Ev 275.1}

“There is **NO POWER IN YOU APART FROM CHRIST**, but it is your privilege to have Christ abiding in your heart by faith, and **HE** can **OVERCOME SIN** in you, when you cooperate with His efforts.” — (E.G. White, OHC, 76.5)

“With **HIS SPIRIT CHRIST** sends a reconciling influence and A **POWER** that **TAKES AWAY SIN.**” — (E.G. White, RH, May 19, 1904)

“**JESUS ALONE** has power **TO SAVE FROM SIN**, to free from the **POWER OF EVIL**; and to doubt him who has laid down his life for us, is to grieve and insult the Father,” — (E.G. White, RH, Feb 10, 1891)

“The **ONLY DEFENCE AGAINST EVIL** is the **INDWELLING OF CHRIST** in the heart through faith in His righteousness.” — (E.G. White, DA, 324.1)

“They have **ONE God** and **ONE Saviour**; and **ONE Spirit—THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST**—is to bring unity into their ranks.” — (E.G. White, 9T 189.3, 1909)

“Christ is the source of every right impulse. **HE IS THE ONLY ONE** that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that **HIS SPIRIT** is moving upon our hearts.” — SC 26.3

“You want that help **THAT COMES FROM CHRIST**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. You are to be a partaker of the divine nature. **THERE IS NOTHING ELSE THAT CAN SAVE US. CHRIST COMES IN HIS DIVINE NATURE**, and here is every soul will be enlightened according to what you study, according to what you give the mind to feed upon.” {Ms138-1906.20}

“Our condition through sin has become preternatural, and the power that

restores us must be supernatural, else it has no value. **THERE IS BUT ONE POWER** that can break the hold of evil from the hearts of men, **AND THAT IS THE POWER OF GOD [Father] IN JESUS CHRIST.** ONLY THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE CRUCIFIED ONE IS THERE CLEANSING FROM SIN. HIS

GRACE ALONE CAN ENABLE US TO RESIST AND SUBDUE THE TENDENCIES OF OUR FALLEN NATURE. This power the spiritualistic theories concerning God make of no effect. If God is an essence pervading all nature, then He dwells in all men; and in order to attain holiness, man has only to develop the power that is within him.” – {CCh 322.8} (bracket supplied)

“It is the **SPIRIT** that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are SPIRIT, and they are life.” **CHRIST IS NOT HERE REFERRING TO HIS DOCTRINE, BUT TO HIS PERSON,** the divinity of his character .” { E. G. White, Review and Herald , April 5, 1906 par. 12}

Question: Again, if “Sin could be resisted and overcome ONLY through the MIGHTY AGENCY of the THIRD PERSON OF THE GODHEAD,” how is it then that “*JESUS ALONE has power to save from sin, to free from the power of evil*” and that “The ONLY defense against evil” is also the “INDWELLING OF CHRIST in the heart through faith in His righteousness?” (E.G. White, DA, 324.1) Could it be that they are one and the same?

Also consider the following statements:

“To all who desire to be recipients of **HIS SPIRIT, THE VIRTUE FLOWS OUT FROM CHRIST.** And it is **IN THIS WAY** that the character of God, the perfection of Christ and the Father, is brought before the world.” (RH, October 14, 1902 par. 11)

“It is the virtue **THAT GOES FORTH FROM CHRIST,** that leads to genuine repentance” — SC 26.2

“**The HOLY SPIRIT, which PROCEEDS FROM THE ONLY BEGOTTEN-SON,** binds the human agent, body, soul, and spirit, to the perfect, divine-human nature of Christ.” (EGW Selected Messages book 1, p250 – 251)

“Then Jesus would **BREATHE UPON THEM THE HOLY GHOST.** In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.” (EW 55)

Note: It is made clear from the above statements that the Holy Spirit (aka Third

Person of the Godhead) is equated with the Spirit of Christ proceeding from Himself. This is not unlike how Satan breathes his unholy influence on people. "Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence." [EW 56] Did Satan breathe another person? Did another person proceed out of him? Likewise, did a "Third Individual God-Being" proceed out of Jesus or jumped out of him? Does Jesus' "breathe" a "Third God"? Or is this Third Person the very breath and spirit of Christ that He himself breathes upon the faithful?

The identity the third person of the godhead becomes obvious if you actually read the entire quotation taken from the same book — see below:

"Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the **THIRD PERSON OF THE GODHEAD**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. **CHRIST HAS GIVEN HIS SPIRIT AS A DIVINE POWER** to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church." The Desire of Ages {DA 671.2}

Thus, the Third Person of the Godhead is non other than Christ's own Spirit given to us as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil....

So why does the Scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy often speak of the Holy Spirit like It/He is "ANOTHER" Person?

The Holy Spirit is indeed a "third person," Who represents Christ. But He is not a person in the same sense that Father and Son are Persons. In other words, the Holy Spirit is really Christ (imbued with the Spirit of His Father) but it is Christ that is divested of his physical/visible human personage. Therefore, when Christ gives Himself through the agency of the Holy Spirit, it has it own distinct personality that is different than Christ's corporeal personality and yet in another sense, it is the very presence of Christ Himself but in an incorporeal personality.

Below are just a handful of statements by Ellen White identifying "WHO" the Holy Spirit (Christ's representative) is. There are much more but this should suffice

holy spirit (Christ's representative) is. There are much more but this should suffice for now to make a point:

“It is not essential for you to know and be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and the Comforter is the Holy Ghost, “the Spirit of truth, which the Father shall send in My name.” “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” [John 14:16, 17]. **This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.** Again Jesus says, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth” [John 16:12, 13]. {Manuscript Releases vol.14 p. 179.2}

“The Holy Spirit is the SPIRIT OF CHRIST; it is HIS REPRESENTATIVE. Here is the divine agency that carries conviction to hearts. When the power of His Spirit is revealed through the servants of God, we behold divinity flashing through humanity.” — (E.G. White, 13MR 313.3, 1895) “Cumbered with humanity, CHRIST could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. The Holy Spirit is [Christ] HIMSELF, divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. **HE would REPRESENT HIMSELF as present in all places by HIS Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.**” — (E.G. White, Lt119, Feb 18, 1895)

“The Lord is soon to come. We want that complete and perfect understanding which the Lord alone can give. It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the **HOLY SPIRIT, which is JESUS CHRIST.** If we commune with God, we shall have strength and grace and efficiency.” — (Letter to Prescott W.W. E.G. White, Lt66, April 10, 1894)

“but it is the leaven of the **SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST,** which is sent down from heaven, called the **HOLY GHOST,** and that Spirit affects the heart and the character.” — (E.G. White, Ms36-1891)

“Let them study the seventeenth of John, and learn how to pray and how

to live the prayer of **CHRIST. HE IS THE COMFORTER.** He will abide in their hearts, making their joy full.” — (E.G. White, RH, Jan 27, 1903)

“**JESUS comes to you as the SPIRIT OF TRUTH;** study the mind of the Spirit, consult your Lord, follow His way.” — (E.G. White, 2MR 337.1)

“As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving **JESUS THE COMFORTER.**” — (E.G. White, 19MR 297.3)

“**CHRIST is to be known by the BLESSED NAME OF COMFORTER.** “The Comforter,” said Christ to His disciples, “which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you, [John 14:26 quoted]” — (E.G. White, Ms7-1902, Jan 26, 1902)

“**The SAVIOUR [CHRIST] IS OUR COMFORTER.** This I have proved Him to be.” — (E.G. White, 8MR 49.3)

“There is **NO COMFORTER LIKE CHRIST,** so tender and so true. He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. His Spirit speaks to the heart. . .” (RH, Oct. 26, 1897)

Manuscript Source Material

The quotation in *The Desire of Ages*: “*Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy but in the fullness of divine power.*” (DA, pg.671, published in 1898) was copied and paraphrased from the book, “**The Great Teacher**” by **John Harris; 1836; p.174.** (See pictures below)

We know that Ellen White had an affinity for literary borrowing from other authors and it has been known by SDA scholars for some time that John Harris’ book was the source material for “*The Desire of Ages.*” Yet, I haven’t found anyone who has quoted the above “third person” statement as originating from Harris.

As you can see from below, it is not too difficult to conclude that the statement from the book, “*The Great Teacher*” by John Harris; 1836; p.174. (See pictures below) was the

source material for the Desire of Ages statement above.

Source: <https://archive.org/details/greatteacherchar00harr/page/n5>

became as angels ; thus fulfilling the prophecy which had said, 'The weak shall be as David, and David as an angel of the Lord.' Every christian saw in every other the face of an angel, looks of benevolence and brotherly love ; one interest prevailed ; one subject of emulation swallowed up every other ; who should approach nearest to the likeness of Christ ; which should do most for the enlargement of his reign. 'The whole multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one mind ;' the Spirit of Christ animated the whole, became the one heart of the whole community, and every particular pulse beat in concert with it. What a gift was this ! The value of a gift depends materially on its suitableness ; what could be more suitable to a world dying, dead in sin, than the Spirit of life and of holiness. The world was a valley of dry bones ; what could be more welcome than that the Spirit should come and breathe upon these slain, that they might live ; that, descending to this moral Golgotha, this place of skulls, he should give a soul to the world, and again replenish it with spiritual life. How munificent was this gift ! It was munificent in itself, in its kind, for it was the best ; and was also munificent in its degree, for he poured it forth in a profusion of gifts and graces. It was owing to no indigence, to no niggardliness on the part of Christ, that his church did not rapidly extend over the world, and that the whole was not filled with the Spirit.' He gave with a liberality which showed that he tasted his own act, enjoyed the godlike act of giving, gratified himself in the exercise of his benignity. How godlike was this gift ! Had man been consulted on the occasion, he would have asked some inferior good ; but Jesus, taking the affair entirely into his own hands, poured out his Holy Spirit—a blessing intended to make us holy like himself, happy like himself, and even one with himself ; for, by giving us his Spirit, he

may be said to have given us himself, to have turned himself into Spirit, into a fountain of divine influence that he may be one with our spirits.

II. The great object of the advent of the Holy Spirit is thus distinctly specified by Christ: 'When he is come, he shall convince the world of sin;' an announcement which Jesus himself must have felt as a wonderful truth. Standing as he did at that moment near to the cross, in the shadow of that awful monument of human guilt, he could not have glanced around on the scene of enormous and complicated guilt he was about to leave, and forward to the triumph and agency of the descending spirit, without feeling, as he uttered this grand prediction, that he was unburthening his mind of a weighty and glorious communication.

An obvious and striking feature of all the divine operations, is the accomplishment of the most comprehensive and important ends, by few and simple means. Such is the nice dependence of every part of his government on every other part, and such the entire harmony of the whole, that he only touches an almost invisible chord, and the vibration is felt to the extremities of the universe: **how tremendous then must that principle of evil be, which can only be subdued by the mighty power of the Spirit; by the advent and accession of the third person in the awful Godhead; by no modified energy, but by the full almightiness of divine power.** And tremendous it was! The world had become the grave of piety: if the principle of piety showed itself vigorous and active, it became the mark for every shaft and weapon of hell; if it was impotent, it soon sickened and sunk under the pestilential atmosphere which sin had universally diffused; angelic piety itself would have found a sepulchre here. Not only was the

The author, John Harris was an English Congregational minister who wrote (62 years

before *The Desire of Ages* was published); He wrote:

*“...how tremendous then must that **principle of evil be, which can only be subdued by the mighty power of the Spirit**; by the advent and accession of the **third person** in the awful **Godhead**; by **no modified energy**, but by the full almightiness of divine power.”* (“The Great Teacher” by John Harris; 1836, p.182)

The Harris’ Congregational churches used a slightly modified Westminster Confession (dealing with church government) called the Savoy Declaration. The belief about the Trinity was the same as Presbyterians (i.e. [Samuel Spear](#), John Cumming).

Was Harris really trying to say that the Holy Spirit, the “third person” of the Godhead, is a separate and distinct “person” from Father and Son? Turning to the previous page in

“The Great Teacher” we read this:

*“**but Jesus, taking the affair entirely into his own hands, poured out his Holy Spirit**—a blessing intended to make us holy like himself, happy like himself, and even one with himself; for, **by giving us his Spirit, he may be said to have given us himself**, to have turned himself into Spirit, into a fountain of divine influence that he may be one with our spirits.”* (“The Great Teacher” by John Harris; 1836, p.181)

This quotation sounds a lot like the following, penned by Ellen White:

“In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” EGW, 7T-273.

It’s worth noting here that Harris was a trinitarian and his book does contain trinitarian sentiments. And not unlike Ellen White, He specifically affirms the Holy Spirit as a distinct and divine person, and as having a “distinct subsistence,” (*The Great Teacher*” by John Harris; 1836, pg. 175, 213). And yet He also indicated that the Holy Spirit comes from the Father and the Son but considers the subject “ineffable.” Harris wrote:

*“*On the ineffable promanation or procession of the Holy Spirit **from** the Father and the Son, though it is a truth which seems necessarily involved in certain parts of that discourse, I presume not to speak.”* (ibid pg. 176)

power which gives it a place among the realities of our being.

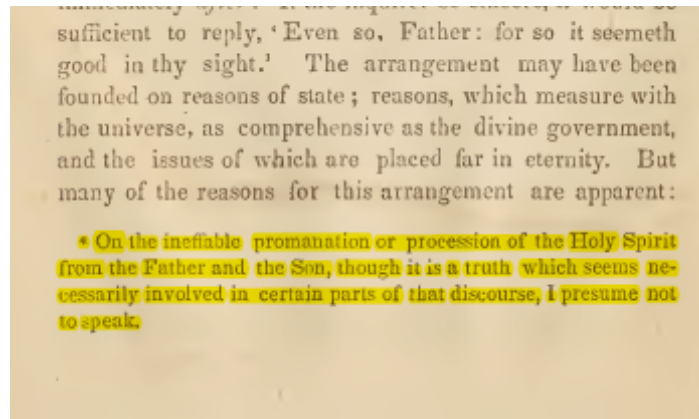
By what process then shall we ascertain how much of the gospel is an absolute origination; or how much is a mere adoption and authorization of pre-existing opinions? Taking many other tests for granted, it may be suggested, that the amount of new truth contained in the gospel, or the degree of newness belonging to any one of its doctrines, may be conjectured from the number of errors which have sprung up around it. Truth is antecedent to error and the measure of it; as is the originality of a doctrine or system, in the same proportion will be the multiplicity of errors following. The whole tribe of error is parasitical, and can only grow by hanging its envenomed weight on the plants of truth. Let the doctrines of Christ be judged of in this way; the plants of the Lord's right-hand planting, and the originality of his teaching will be apparent to all.

The doctrine of the agency of the Holy Spirit, is one of the most original which came from the lips of Christ; and one whose precise degree of originality is most marked and ascertainable. Referring to the records of the Old Testament, we learn the *distinction* of the Spirit in the unity of the Godhead; **his personality and his divinity**. We read of the same **divine subsistence** as daily replenishing the earth with life and beauty; as visiting and actuating the moral world at pleasure; and as promised to the church, with a frequency, particularity, and magnificence of language, which showed that the divine Promiser himself regarded the gift as identical with a state of distinguished prosperity; and which led believers to mark it with supreme distinction, by calling it the *the promise*.

Concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit, **as a distinct**

and divine person, the teaching of Christ is clear and conclusive: nor can we conceive any thing more unwelcome, to those who shrink from applying the personal pronouns to the Divine Spirit than the valedictory discourse of Christ to his disciples.* If I do not enlarge on this part of the subject, then, let it be understood, that I refrain not because Christ was silent on it; for he, I repeat, was copious and explicit; but because he had been greatly anticipated by the revelations of the Old Testament.

I. It is worthy of our earliest consideration, both from its native importance, and from the peculiar solemnity of the affirmation, that our Lord described the mission of the Holy Spirit as absolutely dependent on his own return to heaven. 'Nevertheless, *I tell you the truth*, it is expedient for you that I go away; for, if I go not away, the Spirit will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you.' Now, admitting the impropriety of any arrangement which should have combined together the presence of the Spirit and the personal residence of Christ in permanent conjunction on earth, it may yet be inquired why the mission of the Spirit could not have taken place immediately *before* the ascension of Christ, as well as immediately *after*? If the inquirer be sincere, it would be



Difference between Harris and what is now purported as Ellen White's trinitarian statements is that Ellen White was careful to refrain from using any overtly trinitarian (3-in-one) expressions, while Harris, not unlike other trinitarian authors, clearly endorsed it. In the book, we find Harris using such expressions as, **“triune God”** or **“triplicity of the divine nature,”** etc. (see pic below) among other expressions to describe the combination of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit as being “one God.” Thus one would have to concede that Harris' words which Ellen White borrowed would have to be construed through the lens of someone who is a trinitarian.

writings of Plato; but had they maintained instead a duality, or a quaternity, the same writings would have equally befriended them. The humble pretensions of the Jewish system were satisfied with proclaiming the existence and unity or oneness of God, in opposition to 'the lords many and gods many,' of the heathens; the allusions which the system contained to the **triplicity of the divine nature**, awaited, like so many dormant seeds of truth, the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, to quicken and draw them forth from their obscurity.

But though the solemn mystery is sufficiently developed in the gospel to demand our faith; though the Great Teacher held in his hand the entire map of truth, he disclosed only so much of the part in question as related to our path to heaven. **In adverting to the abysmal subject of the Divine Essence, he maintained a wise reserve; and he did this, both that he might not entangle us in a labyrinth, when we ought to be advancing in the open path of life; and because of our natural incapacity to comprehend him on a theme on which there are no analogies to assist us.** 'How shall ye believe or understand me,' said he, 'if I tell you of heavenly things?' Instead, therefore, of theorizing on the subject, he taught it dogmatically and practically.

The doctrine in the general opinion of the christian church, is necessarily involved in various parts of our Lord's teaching. I shall content myself, however, with adverting to his great command, 'Go, then, and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them unto the NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.** Whether he intended these words to be a formulary of the rite or not, is immaterial to determine. Their obvious import is to describe baptism to be a religious dedication to God, who is known by the manifestation of his NAME,

the display of his glorious perfections. **Now as this name is attributed equally to the Father to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, it seems inevitably to follow, that the Son and the Spirit are, with the Father, the One God.**

Our Lord instituted but two ordinances—baptism and the Lord's supper; he erected but two monumental pillars: one without, and the other within the church: on the first of these, that which fronts the world, **he inscribed the great name of the triune God;** and, as if to render the inscription more impressive, he made it his last act. Baptism is the vestibule, or entrance, to his spiritual temple, the church; so that before his disciples can pass the threshold, he requires them to receive the print of the Sacred Name: and by making that one ceremony final, he reminds them that the holy signature is indelible. **By baptizing us into the threefold name of God, he would impress us at the very outset of our Christian life with the fact, that the work of our salvation is so vast that it brings into action every distinction and attribute of the divine nature; that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the entire Godhead, find ample scope for the exercise of all their perfections, and employment for all the affluence of their grace.** And thus would he put every part and property of our nature, in return, into active requisition in his service; causing us to feel the penury of our utmost love, and constraining us cheerfully to own, that, could we multiply our powers three, or a thousand fold, they should all be his. If, before, we considered our obligations infinite, what shall we think of them now, on beholding the **Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three distinct subsistences** actually confederating and concurring together, and embarking all their infinite treasures in the cause of our happiness; what but that our obligations, which we before considered infinite, are thus multiplied threefold! a mul-

While she borrowed certain expressions from the book, she carefully avoided using any overt trinitarian expressions. This is consistent with her usage of the "Heavenly trio" expression which she also borrowed from another trinitarian author, Boardman's book, 'The Higher Christian Life' 1858 . Please take a look at the article, [Heavenly Trio in a Nutshell](#) for further reading.

Moreover, while both Ellen White and John Harris spoke of the Holy Spirit as the "third person," they also spoke of the Holy Spirit as coming forth from the Father and Son and that the Holy Spirit is equated with the Spirit of Christ being poured out.

For further study, Check out the links below:

Spirit that Represents Christ is His Own Spirit: Click [HERE](#)

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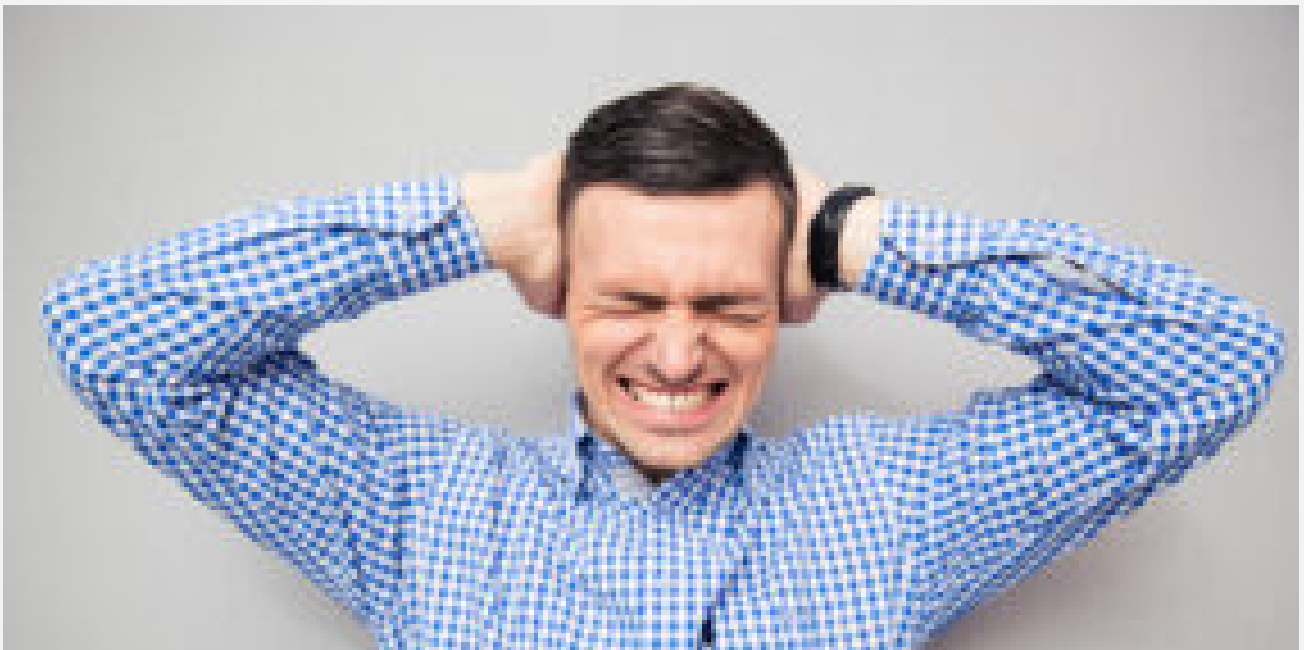


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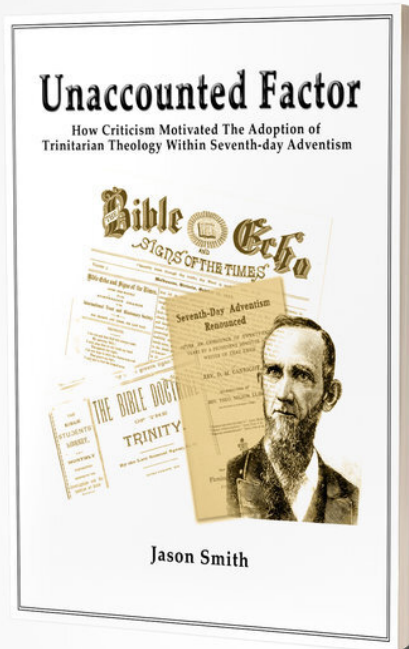


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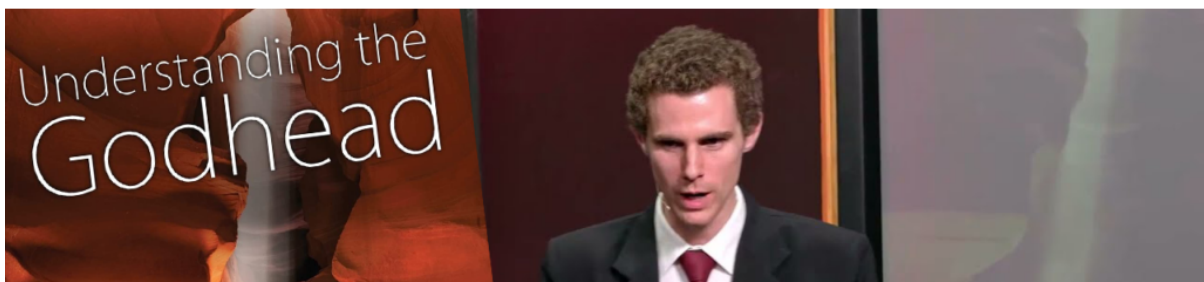


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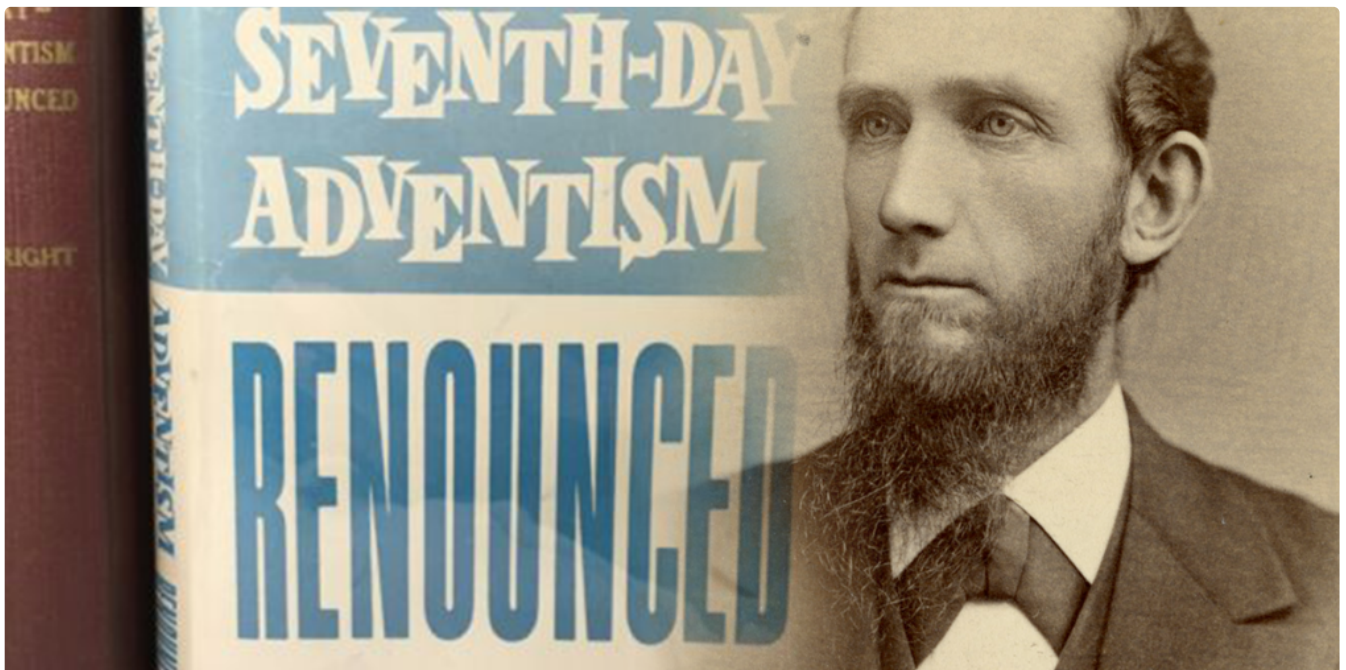
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