

The Heavenly Trio

There are three living persons of the heavenly trio.

Seeming Objection: "The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be "the express image of His person." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is shown the personality of the Father. "The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers --the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ."-- Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7, pp. 62, 63. (1905)" {Evangelism, pp. 614, 615}

Short Answer: The heavenly "trio" are: God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and their Holy Spirit (not a trio of gods!). There is one God, and one Lord and one Spirit (the Spirit of Christ), not a trio of co-equal divine beings (see Romans 8:9-11).

Detailed Answer: The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is invisible to us mortals. The only way we can know God (His Godhead) is if He is manifested. Christ inherited the Godhead (divinity) of His Father and is therefore "all the fullness of the Godhead manifested" All the fullness that dwells in the Son of God is His birthright and inheritance (Hebrews 1:4). This divine fullness dwells in Christ because it pleased the Father (Colossians 2:9; 1:19). Christ possessed, by divine birth, the glory of His Father (Hebrews 1:3; John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 4:6).

"In Christ is gathered all the glory of the Father. In Him is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. The glory of the attributes of God are expressed in His character." {E. G. White, S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7, p. 907}

“The love of God, manifested toward fallen man in the gift of his beloved Son, amazed the holy angels. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Son was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. He possessed divine excellence and greatness. He was equal with God. It pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell.” {E. G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy* Vol. 2, p. 38}

But, what of the Spirit? From the Bible we learn a very important definition:

“Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?” Isaiah 40:13

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” Romans 11:34

“You have the Bible. Study it for yourself. The teachings of the divine directory are not to be ignored or perverted. The divine mind will guide those who desire to be led.” {E. G. White, *This Day with God*, p. 188}

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...” John 16:13

“The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest--the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him.” {E. G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 28}

“Character is influence. Christ's work was to draw minds into sympathy with his own divine mind.” {E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, September 29, 1891 par. 14}

“Fallen men, in one sense, could not be companions for Christ, for they could not enter into sympathy with his divine nature, and hold communion with the world's Redeemer.” {E. G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, December 11, 1879 par. 3}

Now we are plainly given an explanation of “his divine nature”:

“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}

So when Christ was talking about the Spirit, He was actually referring “to his person, the divinity of his character”! We saw earlier that this is also called “his own divine mind” and “his divine nature”. How easy it is to harmonize the Testimonies when we allow them to be their own key!

Since Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, He has inherited that spirit, that mind, that divine character (nature) from His Father. They both share the one Spirit (Romans 8:9); this spirit is the mind of God and Christ.

““Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” This is close language. Who can stand the test? The word of God is to us a daguerreotype of the mind of God and of Christ, also of man fallen, and man renewed after the image of Christ, possessing the divine mind.” {E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, June 22, 1886 par. 4} (Daguerreotype means: a picture image or exact copy)

Speaking of God’s mind, or God’s thoughts, we read this wonderful description:

“By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,--God's thought made audible.” {E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 19}

“Who is Christ?--He is the only begotten Son of the living God. He is to the Father as a word that expresses the thought,--as a thought made audible. Christ is the word of God.” {E. G. White, *The Youth’s Instructor*, June 28, 1894 par. 9}

Having established this fact now let us read on and see what Mrs. White continues to say (with more context):

“The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio. In the name of these three powers,--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ. ... He who has continual faith in the Father and the Son has the Spirit also. The Holy Spirit is his comforter, and he never departs from the truth.” {E. G. White, *Bible Training School*, March 1, 1906}

The Comforter is sent to us “in all the fullness of the Godhead”. This fullness we have seen to be the Godhead and divinity (the divine mind) of the Father which His Son inherited and manifests to us by sending us His spirit which He inherited from the Father. Since the Spirit is the very life and soul of Christ (John 10:15, 17; Luke 23:46), then when He sends it to us we partake of its fullness.

“The Father gave His Spirit without measure to His Son, and we also may partake of its fullness.” {E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 477}

There is a flow of glory/life from the Father to the Son coming to us through the channel of the Spirit. Two divine beings send us their life and glory by the channel of the Spirit (not by a third divine being), thus she says we are to have faith in those two divine beings, not three “He who has continual faith in the Father and the Son has the Spirit also”. As by faith we trust the Father and the Son they (not someone else) will abide with us by their very own personal presence, which is their holy spirit.

“By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you.” {E. G. White, Bible Echo, January 15, 1893 par. 8}.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John 14:23

“The sinner then stands before God as a just person; he is taken into favor with Heaven, and through the Spirit has fellowship with the Father and the Son.” {E. G. White, Selected Messages Book 3, p. 191} This is the true meaning of the above statement when we allow the Testimonies to explain themselves.

But, what of the expression “There are three living persons of the heavenly trio”?

We should also ask ourselves: What is the time and the place (and the situation) that called forth the above Testimony? From the context (Dated November 1905 and found in Special Testimonies Series B #7, pp. 60-64) we learn that it is regarding the issue of Dr. Kellogg and the teaching he was promoting. For example:

“Letters have come to me with statements made by men who claimed to have asked Dr. Kellogg if he believes the testimonies that Sister White bears. He declares that he does, but he does not.” {Ibid, p. 60}

“The ministers of God are being drawn in and deceived by his science.” {Ibid, p. 61}

“I am so sorry that sensible men do not discern the trail of the serpent. I call it thus; for thus the Lord pronounces it.” {Ibid, p. 61}

In plain words which cannot be mistaken, Sister White declared that Kellogg had joined forces with Satan!

“God does not accept Dr. Kellogg as His laborer, unless he will now break with Satan.” {Ibid, p. 64}

She refers to a doctrine he was teaching as “advanced scientific ideas.” She says that right after quoting the Bible passage speaking of the “depths of Satan” (see Revelation 2:24). What was Kellogg teaching that caused Ellen White to use this strong language? What doctrine was Kellogg trying to teach that originates with Satan?

While most are aware of Kellogg’s pantheistic teachings, many are not aware of Dr. Kellogg’s Trinitarian theology (see appendix I p. 25 for evidence). Sister White was refuting the Trinitarian theology that Kellogg had come to believe and promote, namely, God the Father – God the Son – God the Holy Spirit (Yes, he was teaching a trinity of 3 co-eternal, co-equal god-beings!). From this we immediately know her statement cannot counter and teach the trinity both at the same time! It is in this context that we are to read that statement talking about the heavenly trio. Mrs. White would be contradicting herself if she condemned Kellogg’s doctrine and then went on to teach the very same thing! Therefore, the statement she makes cannot be taken to teach a trinity. She must mean something, the meaning of which does not lie on the immediate surface. We know she and Kellogg did not teach the same thing, so what can she possibly mean?

This statement needs to be set in its correct order. In Ellen White’s original handwritten manuscript, it was corrected to read: “Here are the living three personalities of the heavenly trio...”

So she doesn’t say “three living persons of the heavenly trio” but she actually says “the living three personalities of the heavenly trio”. Some may be inclined to think there is no difference between the two, but the prophet herself saw a difference in that she corrected it. She obviously thought there was enough difference to warrant a correction, lest she be

misunderstood (as is the case today) to be teaching a trinity. If these two words both conveyed the same meaning in her mind, the change would not have been necessary.

Allowing the Testimonies to interpret themselves, here are the “heavenly trio” as defined by her:

“They have one God and one Saviour; and one Spirit--the Spirit of Christ--is to bring unity into their ranks.” {E. G. White, Testimonies Volume 9, p. 189}

“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.” ... This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.” {E. G. White, Manuscript Releases Vol.14, p. 179}

“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 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, Manuscript Releases Vol.14, p. 23}

As can be plainly seen from above, the spirit is “the spirit of Christ”; it is Christ’s very own omnipresence by which He (not someone else) represents Himself “as the Omnipresent”. As in all her other writings, she maintained that God the Father and His Son were the only divine beings. “The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead”, “The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead” {Evangelism, p. 615}. This is her consistent belief in ALL her writings. This was the belief of the entire denomination at that time. Having established this faith of two beings who are the fullness of the Godhead, she then said the “Comforter is the spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead” meaning the comforter brings us the fullness of the Godhead which is the Father and the Son. This Comforter is defined by her: “This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter” which she described as Christ Himself “divested of the personality of humanity”. This is the third “personality” according to

her own definitions; not another separate divine being. There was no “third being” - no third separate divine individual. She sums it all up by affirming:

“The Father and the Son alone are to be exalted.” {E. G. White, The Youth’s Instructor, July 7, 1898 par. 2}

“The divine Spirit that the world's Redeemer promised to send is the presence and power of God.” {E. G. White, Signs of the Times, November 23, 1891}



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