

A person wearing a red hat and dark clothing is walking away from the viewer down a path covered in fallen autumn leaves. The path is flanked by tall, thin trees with sparse, golden-brown foliage. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset, with rays of light filtering through the trees. The overall atmosphere is serene and contemplative.

The Comparison

An open way
to the Spirit of Christ
and how silence can be golden

Niklas Smårs

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how silence can be golden*

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A broader perspective on the 7th Day Adventist Bible study,
“The Holy Spirit and Spirituality” – Q1 2017.



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Preface

What is the Holy Spirit? How do we receive it? What is its (His?) relationship to God and His Son? I wrote *The Comparison* because I decided in my second booklet *How the Comforter Changed my Life* to find out how silence can indeed be golden regarding the Holy Spirit. When the SDA 2017 Q1 Sabbath School came out, I saw my opportunity to write and share as there was one side being presented and not any others. The presented side was that the Holy Spirit is a third separate individual who would be next to and equal to the Father and the Son in the Godhead (known as “God the Holy Spirit,” a phrase that doesn’t exist in the Bible or the writings of Ellen White). This view, though not the view of pioneers of the Adventist church, is so ingrained into the modern church’s thinking it can be hard to understand people who see their relationship in a different way.

I hope to reveal the other side of the coin that the 2017 Q1 study guide did not mention. However, it is not the purpose of this booklet to point out what our church is doing wrong, but rather to present an alternate view that I believe will bless many.

Throughout my study I would be excited to share what I learned, but I was often met with the counsel that ‘silence is golden,’ some closeminded attitudes, and then there were those who spread that I didn’t believe in the Holy Spirit at all! ‘Wow,’ I thought to myself. ‘Am I not making sense? Or is there something that is not right here?’ I decided to write down systematically all the information I thought important so that it would be clear. To me, this became a practical theological book. It made me come closer to Christ. If I could choose to write it again, I would do it a thousand times over.

There are areas of the 2017 SDA 1st Qtr. Bible Study regarding the Holy Spirit which I chose not to have within this book. Instead, I focused on the 'silence is golden' topic and other relevant information that help us better understand the Spirit. I strived for more quality over quantity. These are some points about the Holy Spirit I will not discuss here: "The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit at the baptism – Matt 28:19; The Spirit of truth glorifying Jesus – Joh 16:13; Sin against the Holy Spirit – Matt 12:32; The Holy Spirit who gives us different gifts? – 1 Cor 12:11; The question of Nicodemus – Joh 3:3-8; Greetings from the Spirit? – 1 Cor 13:13; Three that bear record in heaven [...] these three are one – 1 John 5:7 (The Bible Study Guide didn't mention the last theme, but it is often mentioned by SDA church members). I went a different direction with this book, trying to show the practical aspects of how the Holy Spirit is understood rather than getting caught up in technicalities which can be studied elsewhere.

The information is relevant because it connects to worship, for most Trinitarians believe that the Holy Spirit is worthy of being praised/worshipped/exalted as a third separate individual deity-being who is equal to the Father and the Son. That's what the 2017 Q1 SDA Bible study is teaching. As I have met both Trinitarians and Non-Trinitarians in discussions, many of them both agree that this is a matter of worship. Earlier it was unheard of in the SDA church to directly address the Holy Spirit in prayer, but as time goes on, it seems this is becoming standard. Is there any significance to this change in worship?

The Bible will be at the centre of this work since it is the foundation of doctrine in the SDA church. Ellen G. White's writings are used to support the Trinity in the 2017 Q1 SDA Bible study guide. Since many believe (including me) that she was a messenger from God; this work

will strive to use EGW's quotes in harmony with the Bible to give a broader context regarding the Holy Spirit.

An honest Adventist Christian member once said that it would be hard to believe that the Adventist world was wrong on this topic since all of this touches on the church's very foundation. He continued that it would be horrible if we were in error, but if there are other arguments and facts about this he hadn't considered, he would listen. The question is, will you, dear reader, read with an open mind also?

People have been fighting and arguing about this topic for centuries, maybe because it is one of the most puzzling ideas brought into the world – but many want to avoid the subject since it can lead to uncomfortable discussions. However, we in the church have to deal with hot topics and not avoid them. Why? Because by avoiding it, there will continue to be more question marks for the youth, disappointments for many who feel there is no freedom to discuss, and an increasing loss of members. If we cannot even deal with differences of opinion among fellow Adventist Sabbath keepers, how can we take the message to those outside our church? Let us remember that God has said, "Come let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18), and that Jesus has died to save all men – we are not each other's enemies, but as this famous verse says:

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

So let's not fight each other, but rather understand our differences and learn how to talk with each other, not demanding that someone agree with us before deciding to discuss with them. It is hard for people to see the other side of the coin when they have already established a

conclusion. But how confident can we be in our position, if we are so sensitive that we don't even want to discuss it with a sincere brother who sees something different?

I grew up a Trinitarian, and I think that I understand the Trinitarian position well. I also understand how hard it is to put yourself in someone else's shoes when that other person's theories seem to be threatening your identity. Therefore, there might be lack of acceptance of someone else's faith. My main goal is not to convince, but to share; to shine a light on another perspective so there may be an increased understanding in our churches regarding the Holy Spirit, and less misunderstanding between believers.

While this issue is controversial, this shouldn't come as a shock so as to cause dismay. There have been 2000 years of controversy over doctrine, yet now we are to believe there is to be no controversy and that we have all the answers so quickly and easily? Sincere questions lead to greater light, and sometimes God needs to allow there to be controversy so we actually study. I hope and pray that this book may bless you while you read it; that you may come closer to our Saviour Jesus Christ who is our Comforter, the light of men, the cornerstone, the begotten Son of God. May you get to know His real character and His relationship with His Holy Spirit.

2Co 13:10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

I was once listening to a professor who was sharing the difficulty of reaching people whose minds were already fixed in their understanding. Imagine an Incan priest who was sacrificing human

hearts, because he and his people believed they were offering to ‘the Sun-god’ and this protected them from evil powers in the universe. Imagine how hard it would be to convince the priest that he was wrong and that this was an unnecessary system of mass murder, because he had practised it his whole life according to his culture and tradition.

Few people in this world have the mental strength to realise and accept that what they have been doing is wrong or what they have believed their whole life is a lie. For example, imagine one teacher who has been teaching evolution most of his life, then he meets another teacher who is sharing ideas that go against his understanding. He had to make a comparison. After careful consideration he realises what he was teaching was wrong, and he thanks the teacher who had raised the opposing ideas that initially had been so controversial. We know this is difficult to expect and rarely happens. Yet this is what we who are Christians and Adventists hope people on the outside do – to realise their worldview is wrong and come into our worldview. If we want them to be open-minded enough to look into things controversial to their preconceptions, shouldn’t we be able to do so ourselves also? If we can’t do it, how can we ever think they will? Could it be our spirit of unwillingness to look into things that go against our assumptions is reflected in those we want to share the gospel with?

I believe it could be that the 2017 Q1 Bible study guide upholds our current position regarding the Holy Spirit through a method called ‘cherry-picking.’ It means that they find and collect sweet arguments that fit their picture of reality. With this method, there is a risk that the Trinity could be a delusion and not be the whole picture. At the same time, while you read *The Comparison*, you might think that there is cherry-picking in this work as well. Indeed it might be so. Therefore, it is up to you, it is your right, to see both sides and judge yourself.

2Corinthians 13:3-4 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

The SDA Q1 Bible study compendium 2017 and possibly my book *The Comparison* can be visualised as a tree with good and bad cherries. Therefore, you should be able to pick good cherries and throw away the bad ones. It will be vital for you to have both a sceptical and an open mind at the same time when searching for the truth that sets us free (John 8:32). This book was not easy for me to write; I wouldn't have put in all the effort if I didn't believe it to be urgent and crucial to these times we live.



1Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

I did my best in searching for and comparing the information. I feel at peace that I didn't go against my own conscience and faith. God will be my judge. I hope you may enjoy this book and that it will become more evident to you regarding the crowning gift God has for us, as it did for me.

1 Silence is golden

The 2017 SDA 1st Qtr. Bible Study, Jan. 20 has this quote:

“Read Ellen G. White, "Misrepresentations of the Godhead," pp. 613-617, in Evangelism.

As we have seen this week, the biblical evidence for the divinity of the Holy Spirit is very convincing. The Holy Spirit

is God. But remember: in thinking about the Holy Spirit, we are dealing with a divine mystery. We reiterate the point: just as we cannot fully explain God and His nature, we have to resist the temptation to make our human comprehension the norm for how God should be. Truth goes far beyond human comprehension, especially when that truth deals with the nature of God Himself.

At the same time, faith in the divinity of the Holy Spirit means more than accepting the bare teaching of the Trinity. It includes reliance on and confidence in the saving work of God as it is commissioned by the Father and accomplished through the Son in the power of the Spirit. **"It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is... The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery.** Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. **Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden."** - Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 51, 52.

This famous quote has stopped many men from going further on this topic. Many times I too have reflected on this text and wondered, am I doing the right thing here? I could be one of these men having "fanciful views," bringing together passages of Scripture and putting a human construction on them in a way that might not strengthen the church. However, later I found out more detailed reasons why she wrote this, which made me sceptical of the way this quote is presented. It seems to me that those who gathered her quotes together could have picked and chosen texts in such a manner as to (consciously or unconsciously) manipulate the church into moving in a particular doctrinal direction,

especially if that direction would make it easier for our church to fit in with other churches and thus avoid confrontation and controversy.

People use EGW quotes to support a theory that neither she nor any of the pioneers ever made, then use “silence is golden” to silence any further investigation – this I find unfair and feel that the people deserve to see a bigger picture. Still, I recognise that I am but a man, so I have added here my prayer for protection if you go further and are worried:

Dear Father, you who are in heaven. Please protect the church from my book if this does not strengthen the church and if it goes against your will. But if it is true, I pray that you will share this book with as many as possible and reveal the truth to them. Help us know how to cope with this in our churches so that we may come closer to you and each other, being patient with one another in these last days. Save us from doing the wrong thing in this topic, so we won't go against you by living in fear. Instead, help us to focus on doing the right thing so we dare to test all things and we may keep what is good of yours because the truth is worthy of being tested. Also, help us understand how silence can be golden as I pray and thank you, in your Son's beloved name Jesus, Amen.

These are the three perspectives I will present regarding ‘Silence is golden’:

- 1) Who is EGW writing this to and why?
- 2) EGW's own definitions about the Holy Spirit and why it is hard to understand.
- 3) When silence is indeed golden and the danger of going further.

1.1 Who is EGW writing this to and why?

In 1891 Brother Chapman wrote a letter to EGW where he had trouble with other people not letting him preach. Here is some of what he said:

“Elder Robinson ... states positively that I cannot be sent out to present the truth to others until some points held by me are changed or modified... He quotes as a sample, *‘My idea in reference to the Holy Ghost’s not being the Spirit of God, which is Christ, but the angel Gabriel...* On all fundamental points I am in perfect harmony with our people; but when I try to show what seems to me to be *new light* on the truth, those in authority... brand me as a fellow with queer ideas of the Bible.”
(Letter: Br. Chapman to E. G. White, June 3, 1891. 14MR 175)

It is interesting to speculate where Br. Chapman might have got the idea that the Holy Spirit is the angel Gabriel. That is what some Muslims teach, through the connection that in one place in the Quran Gabriel is said to bring the word of God to humans; in another place the Holy Spirit is said to have done so. (https://submission.org/Holy_Spirit.html)

Ellen G White answers Brother Chapman like this:

“Your ideas... do not harmonize with the light which God has given me. ... *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 ... *This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.* There are many mysteries which I do not seek to understand or to explain; they are too high for me, and too high for you. On some of these points, **silence is golden**...
... You need to come into harmony with your brethren. ... Now, my brother, it is truth that we want and must have, **but do**

not introduce error as new truth.” (Letter: E. G. White to Br. Chapman, June 11, 1891. 14MR 179, 180)

Here’s where the famous quote ‘Silence is Golden’ comes from, meaning not introducing error as new truth. When Brother Chapman defined **just** what the Holy Spirit was, especially with a wrong conclusion, then there’s no wonder why she reacted that silence is golden.

It seems that it is ok to have definitions of what the Spirit is, as long as it refers to Christ or Christ’s and not someone else (like the angel Gabriel). Because here is an explanation from EGW herself: “***This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter***”. How many more definitions are there from her own writings, and why is it so hard to understand? Let’s have a closer look.

1.2 EGW's own definitions about the Holy Spirit and why it is hard to understand.

As EGW said “*It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is [...]*” We should understand that this means that the Holy Spirit is multifaceted. There are many different definitions of what it is according to the Bible and EGW's writings, and thus you can find the Spirit written about in many different ways. Therefore, we need to consider the method of where ‘the sum of His word is truth’ (Psalm 119:160). Below is a list of EGW's quotes that are connected to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, separated into these categories: **The breath of Christ, The mind and character of Christ, The presence of Christ and God, The life of Christ, The Comforter who is Christ and The Holy Spirit which is Jesus Christ:**

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

Categories ↓	EGW's own defenitions ↓
The breath of Christ:	“Christ gives them <i>the breath of His own spirit</i> , the life of His own life” (DA 827); “Christ <i>breathed His Spirit</i> upon them” (DA 805); “Jesus would <i>breathe</i> upon them the Holy Ghost” {EW 55.1}; “Jesus is waiting to <i>breathe</i> upon all his disciples, and give them the inspiration of his sanctifying spirit, and transfuse the <i>vital influence</i> from himself to His people” (ST October 3, 1892 par.4)

<p>The mind and character of Christ:</p>	<p>“The divine mind will guide those who desire to be led” {This Day with God, p. 188}; Character is influence . Christ’s work was to draw minds into sympathy with his own divine mind ” {RH, September 29, 1891 par. 14}; “They will have the mind which was in Christ Jesus” {RH, May 27, 1890 par. 1}; “They are one in purpose, in mind, in character , but not in person” {The Ministry of Healing, p. 421, 422}; “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” (DA 671.2); “Christians should educate and train their affections and manner according to the pattern of the life, the Spirit, the Character of the divine Teacher” {RH, July 18, 1893 par. 3}; “His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan.” (DA 22)</p>
<p>The presence of Christ and God:</p>	<p>“The divine Spirit that the world’s Redeemer promised to send, is the presence and power of God” (ST November 23, 1891 Par. 1); “And the holy Spirit is the Comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul” (HM November 1, 1893 Par. 28); “This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.” {14MR 179.2} 1891; “A holy, sacred presence [...] I felt that I was in the presence of Jesus [...] A line of action was laid out before me as if the unseen presence was speaking with me”{11MR 326} 1896; “I seemed to be in the presence of Jesus . He was communicating to me” {5 MR 147} 1896; “His energizing presence is still with His church” (DA 166); “He gives them His Holy Spirit, the manifestation of His presence and favour” {9T 230} 1909; “He comforts them with His own presence ”(DA 669); “The Father’s presence encircled Christ [...] Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us [...] who surrounds him with His presence ”{MB 71.2} 1896</p>
<p>The life of Christ:</p>	<p>“The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ ” (DA 805); “This Comforter is the Holy Spirit,--the soul of his life ” {RH, May 19, 1904 par. 1}; “The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul ” {4MR 332.5} 1896; “It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers [...] The words of Christ are spirit and life ” (DA 677)</p>

The Comforter who is Christ:	<p>“and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving us Jesus the Comforter” {19 MR 297-298} 1892; “Christ comes as a Comforter to all who believe” {8 MR 57.3} 1898; “Christ is to be known by the blessed name of Comforter” {Ms7-1902 (January 26, 1902) par. 10} – EGW; “There is no comforter like Christ, so tender and so true” (RH October 26, 1897, Par. 15); “The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be” {8MR 49}; “He [Satan] has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter, as one who reproveth, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it’” (RH, August 26, 1890)</p>
The Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ:	<p>He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent” {14MR 23.3}; “The Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}; “He is coming by His Holy Spirit <i>today</i>. Let us recognize Him now” {RH, April 30, 1901 par. 8}</p>

You should see clearly how the Holy Spirit refers to Christ and not someone else other than Him. At the same time, the Spirit can also refer to His Father (as the Spirit comes from the Father as the source – “of whom” and through the Son as the channel – “by whom” – to all creation. 1 Cor 8:6; Joh 20:21-22; Gal 4:6 as God has put His Son’s Spirit within our hearts crying “Abba Father”). Ellen White definitely wasn’t “silent” regarding the Holy Spirit, and she especially talked of Christ in relation to the Holy Spirit. Could it be possible that ‘silence is golden’ is for those who would go beyond what is stated that the Holy Spirit is Christ or of Christ?

For sure, she has written and confirmed the Holy Spirit to be **the third person of the Godhead**. Let us consider the Trinitarian perspective on why people believe in a third heavenly being.

Third person of the Godhead:	"These three great, <i>infinite powers</i> ." (General Conference Bulletin, April 4, 1901) "These three <i>great powers of heaven</i> ." (General Conference Bulletin, April 14, 1901); "The three <i>highest powers in the universe</i> ." (Pacific Union Recorder, July 2, 1908); "The three <i>powers of the Godhead</i> ." (RH, July 18, 1907); "The <i>third person of the Godhead</i> ." (DA 671); "The three <i>living persons</i> [or personalities] <i>in the heavenly trio</i> ." (Bible training school, March 1, 1906); "The three <i>holiest beings</i> in heaven." (7MR 267)
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The last quote is interesting, "*three holiest beings in heaven*" would make me understand why people believe in a third separate individual being other from the Father and the Son. Clearly, there are three movements in the Godhead. However, does this have to contradict EGW's writings previously about the Holy Spirit being the life of Christ, Christ being the comforter, the character and mind of Christ, the breath of Christ, etc? I don't think so.

I take this to mean that the third power is another form of Christ, coming to us not in His bodily form but in His invisible, omnipresent spirit form. For example:

"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.*" (DA 671.2)

The last sentence of the context is hugely significant and is not considered by many people. According to the 1828 Webster's Dictionary 'person' can mean "character of office," or in the 1913

Dictionary it can mean “a specific kind or manifestation of individual character.”

Therefore, we have to be careful if we only represent one side and not take the whole context if we use ‘Silence is golden.’ Suppose we only use the third person of the Godhead category to prove that there must be a third separate individual being other than the Father and the Son. In that case, we risk shooting ourselves in the foot through forcing ourselves into a position and then not allowing ourselves the means to see anything beyond it, and we therefore miss all the categories that need to be taken into consideration that were mentioned earlier. Those who want to emphasize a particular facet of the Holy Spirit and ignore the other facets can use ‘silence is golden’ to shut down wider discussion. Instead of over emphasizing or excluding certain facets/categories of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead category should be taken into consideration as much as the other categories that have been given under the main heading of THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

The next question that needs answering is: what is the danger of going further with this, and when is silence genuinely golden?

1.3 When silence is indeed golden and the danger of going further

So when is silence golden? Here are some statements from the Bible that give an example of when it is time to speak, and when it is time to be silent:

“A time to be silent and a time to speak” (Ecclesiastes 3:7);

“Don’t answer the foolish arguments of fools, or you will become as foolish as they are. Be sure to answer the foolish arguments of fools, or they will become wise in their own estimation” (Proverbs 26:4-5);

“Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent” (Proverbs 17:28);

“O Lord, set a guard at my mouth. Keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psalms 141:3);

“...but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles the man...” (Matthew 15:11);

“stand in silence in the presence of the sovereign Lord, for the awesome day of the LORD’s judgement is near” (Zephaniah 1:7);

“If I say to the wicked person, ‘you will surely die,’ but you do not warn him – you don’t speak out to warn him about his wicked way in order to save his life – that wicked person will die for his iniquity. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood” (Ezekiel 3:18);

“Speak up, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and oppressed” (Proverbs 31:9).

I love the example of Proverbs 26:4-5 where the Bible is not entirely black or white, but gives the reason to do or not to do depending on the circumstances. This same is true regarding the Holy Spirit: there are times to talk about it and times not to; but we need the Holy Spirit, so not discussing it at all whenever there is controversy is unreasonable.

Still, how can we know when we are in danger of going too far? Here is one example from EGW as she describes how we should search to be able to find God:

“Human beings cannot by searching find out God. Let none seek with presumptuous hand to lift the veil that conceals His glory. ‘Unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.’ Rom 11:33. It is a proof of His mercy that He hides His power, *for to lift the veil that conceals the divine presence is death*. No mortal mind can penetrate the secrecy in which the Mighty One dwells and works. *Only that which He sees fit to reveal can we comprehend of Him*. Reason must acknowledge an authority superior to itself. *Heart and intellect* must bow to the great I AM.” {MHH 253.5}

This can leave us feeling perplexed about how far we should go, considering Jeremiah 29:13 states: “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” Both “heart and intellect” are needed, along with humility. Here Ellen White encourages study with a limit:

“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.” (MH 429)

It explains that if we proceed with this kind of study, we must do it with carefulness, so as not to make God out of something that He is not, something He has not revealed, and therefore there is a risk that it's not true. Attempts to lift the veil on our terms, and not on His, will lead to death. This is what John Harvey Kellogg might have done in his book *The Living Temple*, the very book that introduced the new idea of the Holy Spirit that is now partly officially believed. When it was suggested to Kellogg that the book contained error, Kellogg defended himself using Ellen White's words, and Ellen White in response strongly declared that her words were being misused:

"I am so sorry that Living Temple came out as it did, and was circulated, and the worst of it – that which struck right to my heart – was the assertion made regarding the book: "It contains the very sentiments that Sister White has been teaching." When I heard this, I felt so heartbroken that it seemed as if I could not say anything. Had I said anything, I would have been obliged to speak the truth as it was." (Ellen G. White, Talk given on May 18th 1904, Sermons and talks, Volume one, page 341, Manuscript 46, 1904, 'The Foundation of our Faith')

Kellogg himself "simmered down" the controversy over his book to one question: Is the Holy Ghost a person?

"As far as I can fathom, the difficulty is found in 'The Living Temple,' the whole thing may be simmered down to the question: Is the Holy Ghost a person? You say no. I had supposed the Bible said this for the reason that the personal pronoun 'he' is used in speaking of the Holy Ghost.

Sister White uses the pronoun 'he' and has said in so many words that the Holy Ghost is the third person of the Godhead. How the Holy Ghost can be the third person and not be a person

at all is difficult for me to see.” (Letter: J.H. Kellogg to G.I. Butler. Oct 28. 1903.)

Ellen White admitted that some of her writings may “give apparent support” to the teachings in the book, but that in actuality this was not the case. She makes it clear: “God forbid” that “the sentiments [Is Kellogg’s idea of the Holy Spirit a sentiment of the book?] in the *Living Temple* are in harmony with my writings.”

“I am compelled to speak in denial of the claim that the teachings of *Living Temple* can be sustained by statements from my writings. There may be in this book expressions and sentiments that are in harmony with my writings. And there may be in my writings many statements which, *taken from their connection, and interpreted according to the mind of the writer of Living Temple, would seem to be in harmony with the teachings of this book. This may give apparent support to the assertion that the sentiments in Living Temple are in harmony with my writings. But God forbid that this sentiment should prevail.*” (1SM 203)

Here is a fascinating example of how someone’s message can be twisted, either accidentally or purposely, leading to ‘error as new truth.’ Every and any work could potentially be misusing Ellen White’s words. We need to study for ourselves, know the historical context, and use our God-given freedom of conscience.

When EGW said ‘it is **not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is... the nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery,**’ some may argue that the general category of THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST in this book is precisely a definition of the nature of the Holy Spirit that is not essential. Therefore, it should be kept silent as it is a mystery.

I argue there is a difference. EGW has **many different** definitions that need to be considered—not coming up with just one of how the Holy

Spirit works and its very nature. This is what Kellogg did in *The Living Temple*, focusing only on the things that he needed to form the outcome he wanted – in this case a system similar to pantheism – which would actually be ‘error as new truth.’

In our time, a similar thing is happening with how we understand the Holy Spirit. Only one side of the coin is presented or even considered, which is the Holy Spirit is a third separate God-person distinct from the Father and the Son. This is a rigid and formulaic definition that clouds other aspects of the Holy Spirit, while also potentially leading to a wrong picture of God.

Meanwhile Ellen White did give a suggestion on ***what is essential for us*** when she replied to Brother Chapman (the man who suggested the Holy Spirit was Gabriel):

“There are many mysteries which I do not seek to understand or to explain; they are too high for me, and too high for you. On some of these points, silence is golden. ***Piety, devotion, sanctification of soul, body, and spirit—this is essential for us all. “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent”*** [John 17:3]. “This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life” [John 6:40]. – {14MR 179.3}

If my goal is piety, devotion, and sanctification, it is essential I use the freedom God has given me to search and understand the Spirit according to what He has stated in His Word. We do this humbly, learning from how those before us have gone astray, while trying to build on that which our forefathers have established, particularly Ellen White, and not ignoring definitions that go against our preconceptions and traditions. Notice also that Ellen White quotes John 17:3 that states

that life eternal is to know God the Father, the only true God, and His Son Jesus Christ.

Let's see what the Bible could reveal that it is in harmony with EGW's writings.

2 Understanding the Spirit

This chapter is a more in-depth Bible study of the Spirit. The word 'Spirit' is mentioned many times in the Bible, and it can have many different meanings depending on its context. Do they all fit the Trinitarian belief that the Holy Spirit must be a separate third individual being of God (or God being)? We must look into the Greek and Hebrew word for 'Spirit' to see its meaning and the different contexts it is used in.

The Greek word for "Spirit": G4151 "**Pneuma**" can mean current of air, breath, mind...

The Hebrew word for "Spirit": H7307 "**Ruach**" can mean wind, breath, mind...

I will present four perspectives of understanding the Spirit.

- The Spirit as the breath of the Lord
- The Spirit as the mind of the Lord
- The Spirit as the presence of the Lord
- The Spirit as the Comforter

2.1 The Spirit as the breath of the Lord

The 2017 SDA 1st Qtr. Bible Study, Jan. 9, says:

“The first major work of God on this planet was its Creation. The Bible clearly mentions God (*Gen. 1:1*) and Jesus Christ (*Col. 1:16, 17*) as the Creator of heaven and earth and of all

that, in fact, was made (*John 1:1-3*). Yet, the Bible also mentions the presence of the Holy Spirit in the work of Creation.

Read Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4; Psalm 33:6; 104:29, 30. What is the role of the Holy Spirit at Creation? How is the Spirit of God related to the creation of life?

The Creation story in Genesis 1:2 mentions the presence of God's Spirit at Creation. Job 26:13, 33:4, Psalm 104:29, 30, and Psalm 33:6 support the active role of the Holy Spirit in the supernatural Creation of the earth. While the Bible clearly mentions God the Father and His divine Son, Jesus Christ, as being active in the creation of the world (see *Isa. 64:8; Col. 1:16, 17*), the Holy Spirit is present also, though in a more subtle manner.

He does not appear as the central actor in the Creation story. Instead, He is "hovering" over the void, and through His moving He is present at the genesis of life on this earth."

The SDA Bible study asked the question: "What is the role of the Holy Spirit at creation? How is the Spirit of God related to the creation of life?" Here I will try to go deeper into these questions as I got interested in one of the bible verses that the SDA Bible study mentioned, as it made me realise the topic of God's Spirit as the breath of the Lord.

Psalm 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the **breath (*Ruach*) of his mouth.**

There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit is present in the creation. The Spirit of God was hovering above the waters in Genesis 1:2. The word translated "breath" in Psalm 33:6 is '*Ruach*,' the same Hebrew used for "Spirit". This may remind you of another Bible verse where God formed the man from dust by the breath of His mouth.

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and **breathed** into his nostrils the **breath of life**; and man became a living soul.

Job also understood that he received life by the breath of God. It is a clear example of Hebrew parallelism.

Job 33:4 **The Spirit** of God hath made me, and **the breath** of the Almighty hath given me life.

As humans, we have our own personality, consciousness, and mind; all this is a gift and miracle from God who created us. The Bible and the SDA church teach us that **Spirit + Body = A living Soul**. Therefore, for humans the spirit is referred to by the person it belongs to. My spirit is not a separate being to me.

What about the Holy Spirit? How God created us is very similar to how the Holy Spirit is sent through Jesus.

John 20:21-22 Then said Jesus to them again, “Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” And when he had said this, **he breathed on them**, and saith unto them, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost:”

Is a separate being coming out from Jesus here?

What could EGW say about this?

“Christ gives them *the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life*. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind.” (DA 827)

“Before the disciples could fulfil their official duties in connection with the church, Christ *breathed His Spirit* upon them.” (DA 805)

“*Jesus is waiting to breathe upon all his disciples*, and give them the inspiration of his sanctifying spirit, and transfuse *the vital influence from himself* to his people. He would have them understand that henceforth they cannot serve two masters. Their lives cannot be divided. Christ is to live in his human agents, and work through their faculties, and act through their capabilities. Their will must be submitted to his will, they must act with his spirit, that it may be no more they that live, *but Christ that liveth in them*. Jesus is seeking to impress upon them the thought that in giving his Holy Spirit he is giving to them the glory which the Father has given him, that he and his people may be one in God.” (ST October 3, 1892 par.4)

“There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. On the hem of His garment was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, "My Father, give us Thy Spirit." Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. *In that breath* was light, power, and *much love, joy, and peace.*” - {EW 55.1}

EGW clearly describes the Holy Spirit as “in that breath”. EGW also says that the fruit of the breath of Jesus is not only power and light, but even much love, joy and peace. It is a parallel to the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, so therefore the fruit of the Spirit and the fruit of the breath of Jesus are the same.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace**, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

What is the connection of God’s breath to His words?

Psalm 33:6 connects the Spirit to the word of God:

Psalm 33:6 **By the word of the LORD** were the heavens made;
and all the host of them by the **breath of his mouth**.

God created with His words when He was speaking, at the same time
breath was coming out.

Psalm 33:9 For he spoke, and it was *done*; he commanded, and
it stood fast.

The word Spirit comes into the picture where God created the earth
with His words. He spoke, and it came into existence; when He
commanded, it stood fast. Therefore, you can understand it like this:

Genesis 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and
darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit [**the
breath or the word**] of God **moved** upon the face of the waters.

The Hebrew word for “moved” in Gen 1:2 shows the following in the
Strong’s: H7363 - **shake, move, and flutter**. Compared to other verses
where God created the earth, we can place “**shook**” in its place. Here is
another example that the world shook when God was speaking in His
creation:

Hebrews 12:26 Whose **voice then shook** the earth: but now he
hath promised, saying, Yet once more **I shake** not the earth
only, but also heaven.

More about how God created with His Spirit and shook the earth with
His voice (youtu.be/IONmvLCvcnU - by Bill Pinto, from 6:20-9:48 min)

We know now that the Holy Spirit proceeds out from the mouth of God
and Jesus. We know they share the same Spirit and words (Joh 20:21-
22; Joh 14:10). I will end this section on “The Holy Spirit as the Breath
of the Lord” with some more Bible verses showing that the Holy Spirit
comes out like a sword from the mouth of Jesus because there are no

sharper words than His and His Father's. Indeed, we remember that Jesus is the channel in which God created the world, and that is why He is the word of God, the agent of creation.

“For **the word of God** *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb 4:12); “And he had in his right hand seven stars: and **out of his mouth** went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.” (Rev 1:16); “**The sword of the Spirit**, which is **the word of God**” (Eph 6:17); “And **out of his mouth** goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” (Rev 19:15); “Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with **the sword of my mouth.**” (Rev 2:16); “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with **the spirit of his mouth**, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2Th 2:8).

2.2 *The Spirit as the Mind of the Lord*

The 2017 SDA 1st Qtr. Bible Study, Jan. 2, states:

“Being "carried along by the Holy Spirit" (*2 Pet. 1:21*, NIV) is a strong affirmation of the work of the Holy Spirit in inspiration. In 1 Corinthians 2:9-13, the apostle Paul credits revelation and inspiration to the Holy Spirit. To us, he says, God revealed the hidden things that no eye has seen, which he mentions in verse 9. God revealed them through the Spirit (*1 Cor. 2:10*). The apostles have received this "Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God" (*1 Cor. 2:12*, NASB). Then in verse 13 he moves to the work of inspiration, where he speaks of things "not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*" (NASB). **Paul had no doubt about the source and the authority of what he was proclaiming.**”

The Holy Spirit inspires, no doubt about that. The author of the Bible study guide states that Paul did not doubt his preaching source and authority, meaning that Paul understood that a third separate individual was inspiring him. Did Paul believe that? Let us read 1 Cor 2:9-13, that was quoted above, and continue to verse 16 to understand what Paul might have meant by the Spirit in its whole context. Starting from verse 13-16;

1 Corinthians 2:13-16 “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the **natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God:** for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. **But he that is spiritual**

judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known **the mind of the Lord**, that he may instruct him? But we have **the mind of Christ.**”

How often do we talk about the ‘mind of the Lord?’ The Hebrew/Greek word for “Spirit,” which is *Ruach/Pneuma*, also means ‘**Mind,**’ which could again be referring to Jesus’s thoughts. Notice that when Paul references Isaiah 40:13 in Rom 11:34, he uses the word “mind” in Greek in the place of “*Ruach-Spirit*”. Through this variation, Paul gives us insight into the verse and opens its meaning to us.

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

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

There are other examples of how spirit can mean mind. In Daniel 2:1 Nebuchadnezzar had trouble with dreams in his Spirit (his mind). And in 1 Kings 10:4-5 the Ethiopian queen had no more thoughts (Spirit) to question King Solomon.

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith **his spirit** was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. (Daniel 2:1);

And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was **no more spirit in her** (1 Kings 10:4-5).

Again, I stress that Nebuchadnezzar’s spirit here is much better understood as his mind, rather than a separate third individual being.

What did EGW say on this relation between mind and spirit?

“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 pleasure of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in *Him*.” {SC 28} 1893

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.*” {This Day with God, p. 188}

“*Character is influence*. Christ’s work was to draw minds into sympathy with *his own divine mind*.” {RH, September 29, 1891 par. 14}

How is the divine mind/the Spirit connected to Jesus’s character?

“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.” (DA 671.2).

“Christians should educate and train their affections and manner according to *the pattern of the life, the Spirit, the Character* of the divine Teacher.” {RH, July 18, 1893 par. 3}

“The Lord Jesus, who is the judge of every man, will inquire in reference to many hard-hearted, selfish, scheming transactions, “who hath required this at your hand?” *The Spirit, The Character*, you have manifested has not been at all after *the*

Pattern I have given you in my life and character, when I was upon the earth.” {RH, October 16, 1894 par. 3 }

“To know God is to love Him; *His character* must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known.” (DA 22)

“The personality of the Father and the Son, also the unity that exists between Them, are presented in the seventeenth chapter of John, in the prayer of Christ for His disciples: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” John 17:20, 21. The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. *They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person.* It is thus that God and Christ are one.” {MH 421, 422 }

How does Jesus bind his followers to Him?

“The Lord has a people for whom he prays that they may be one with him as he is one with the Father. If we are, as Christians, doers of the word, we shall practice in our lives that for which Christ prayed; for *by his Holy Spirit Jesus can bind heart to heart.* We are living amid the perils of the last days; evil times are upon us; gross darkness has covered the land. Satan seeks to intercept his hellish shadow between us and God, so as to obscure the light of Heaven by every device at his command; but all who claim to be Christians, if they are *Christ-like*, will follow closely in the footsteps of Jesus. *They will have the mind which was in Christ Jesus.*” {RH, May 27, 1890 par. 1 }

Remember, when Jesus and Stephen gave up their Spirit to God? They gave up their very life, their character, to be preserved by God.

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, **into thy hands I commend my spirit**: and having said thus, he gave up **the ghost**.” (Luke 23:46);

“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, **receive my spirit**” (Acts 7:59).

”Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. *The Spirit, the Character of man*, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character.” {Ellen White, S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 6, p. 1093.2} 1900

Information found in “The Godhead in Black & White – Direct quotes from the Pen of the Messenger of the Lord, Ellen G. White” and “Putting The Pieces Together – ‘Difficult’ statements on the doctrine of the Godhead Harmonized.”

2.3 The Spirit as the Presence of the Lord

The Holy Spirit as the breath and the mind of God can also be simmered down to another word: the “presence” of God. However, the 2017 SDA 1st Qtr. Bible Study, Jan. 16, seems to understand it differently:

“**The presence of the Spirit is the presence of God.** If I cannot flee to a place where the Spirit of God is not, **He** is omnipresent.”

The Spirit’s presence is God’s presence? It is much clearer and simpler to say that the Holy Spirit *is* the presence of God. The word Spirit and the word presence are interchangeable in these verses:

Whither shall I go from *thy spirit*? or whither shall I flee from *thy presence*? (Psalm 139:7)

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from **thy presence**; and take not **thy holy spirit** from me. (Psalm 51:10-11)

And he said, **My presence** shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest. (Exodus 33:14)

What could EGW possibly say about this?

“The divine Spirit that the world’s Redeemer promised to send, *is the presence and power* of God.” (ST Nov. 23, 1891 Par. 1)

“And the holy Spirit is the Comforter, as *the personal presence of Christ* to the soul.” (HM November 1, 1893 Par. 28)

“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 you 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.” {14MR 179.2} 1891

The Comforter refers to the “*presence of God*,” or the “*presence of Christ*,” and “*the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ*.” Yet in John 14:16-

17, it sounds like Jesus is saying someone else would be sent to us, not Jesus. How does this fit when the Holy Spirit is the “*personal presence of Christ?*” Shouldn’t it then be Christ Himself who comforts us, and not “another comforter”?

“That Christ should manifest Himself to them, and yet be invisible to the world, was a mystery to the disciples. They could not understand the words of Christ in their spiritual sense. *They were thinking of the outward, visible manifestation.* They could not take the fact that they could have *the presence of Christ with them, and yet He be unseen by the world.* They did not understand the meaning of *a spiritual manifestation.*”
{The Southern Review, September 13, 1898 par. 2}

This is referring to John 14:18-21 which ends with Jesus saying He would manifest Himself to us by His own personal presence (“**I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you...**I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him”). If we read only John 14:15-17 without the context, then no wonder it sounds like it is someone else other than Jesus.

Instead of simply staying with the text that the Spirit is Christ’s unseen presence, and that Christ dwells within us through His Spirit, we go far beyond and imagine a third being whom naturally people start to wonder about (Does he have a body?), and worship (should I pray to the Spirit?), and give new names to (God the Holy Spirit). Has our official position gone beyond what Ellen White, and the disciples, would be comfortable with?

How does EGW describe her own inspiration?

“Friday, March 20, I arose early, about half past three o’clock in the morning. While writing upon the fifteenth chapter of

John, suddenly a wonderful peace came upon me. The whole room seemed to be filled with the atmosphere of heaven. *A holy, sacred presence* seemed to be in my room. I laid down my pen and was in a waiting attitude to see *what the Spirit would say unto me. I saw no person.* I heard no audible voice, but a heavenly watcher seemed close beside me. I felt that *I was in the presence of Jesus. The sweet peace and light which seemed to be in my room it is impossible for me to explain or describe. A sacred, holy atmosphere surrounded me,* and there were presented to my mind and understanding matters of intense interest and importance. A line of action was laid out before me *as if the unseen presence was speaking with me.*” {11MR 326} 1896

Ellen White is talking about the unseen presence of Jesus, which is His Spirit. Here is more description from her of how Jesus was communicating with her.

I arose early Thursday morning, about two o’clock, and was writing busily upon the True Vine, when *I felt a presence in my room,* as I have many times before, and I lost all recollection of what I was about. *I seemed to be in the presence of Jesus. He was communicating to me* that in which I was to be instructed. Everything was so plain that I could not misunderstand. [...] *Not an audible word was spoken to my ear, but to my mind. I said, “Lord, I will do as Thou hast commanded.”* {5 MR 147} 1896

And who is the minister of the church on earth?

“While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, *He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth.* He is withdrawn from the eye sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, “*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*” Matthew

28:20. While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, *His energizing presence* is still with His church.” (DA 166)

How does Christ comfort us?

“The Lord knows all about His faithful servants who for His sake are lying in prison or who are banished to lonely islands. *He comforts them with His own presence.*” (DA 669)

“The Lord encourages all who seek Him with the whole heart. *He gives them His Holy Spirit, the manifestation of His presence and favour.*” {9T 230} 1909

How did Christ receive comfort while He was on earth?

“*The Father’s presence encircled Christ*, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. *Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us.* He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Savior, *who surrounds him with His presence.* Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defence. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord’s permission, and “all things” that are permitted ‘work together for good to them that love God.’ Romans 8:28” {MB 71.2} 1896

2.4 The Spirit as the Comforter

2017 SDA 1st Qtr. Bible Study, Jan. 2, says this:

“The work of the Holy Spirit in the process of inspiration is the reason we find a fundamental unity in all of Scripture in regard to truth. As the Spirit of Truth (*John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13*), the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.”

There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit does lead us into all truth. But we remember that the backdrop behind this statement is the Holy Spirit as a separate third individual being who is needed to support the theory of the Trinity. Do the verses Joh 14:17; 15:26; 16:13 cited above support this theory of the Holy Spirit? Here we will focus on *'The Holy Spirit as the Comforter'* in Joh 14:17 and Joh 15:26, where it seems that "He" is someone else other than Jesus or His Father. Let us read these verses in context. In my booklet *How the Comforter Changed my Life* I showed how John 14:15-21 is a chiasm:

(A) 15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

(B) 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another ("Allos") Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

(C) 17 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.

(<3) 18 **I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.**

(C) 19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

(B) 20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

(A) 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

As you see, the letters in parentheses reflect each other, A to A, B to B and C with C. The verse in the middle is the key or the heart that opens the context of the passage. It is a standard Hebrew poetic device called a 'chiasm,' written to emphasise the crucial middle verse.

Is it possible that Christ refers to Himself in the third person when He speaks of the Comforter? This isn't unusual; Jesus often speaks of

Himself in the third person. (See also Math 16:27, Mark 9:31, Luke 9:26, 58, Luke 18:8, John 8:28).

Matthew 24:27, 30 “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of **the Son of man** be [...] And then shall appear the sign of **the Son of man** in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see **the Son of man** coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

What could EGW possibly think about this?

“After His ascension *He [Jesus] was to be absent in person; but through the Comforter He would still be with them*, and they were not to spend their time in mourning.” (DA 277)

“And the Saviour promised that *His presence* would be with them always. *Through the Holy Spirit He would be even nearer than when He walked visibly among them.*” {MH 48.5}

In the heart of the chiasm mentioned, Jesus speaks about Himself as comforting us (John 14:18) by His Spirit (John 14:16). Ellen White confirms this (these texts were not included in SDA 2017 Q1 Sabbath School, as it argues that Jesus is not THE comforter, a separate being is):

“As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving us *Jesus the Comforter.*” {19 MR 297-298} 1892

”*Christ comes as a Comforter* to all who believe. He invites your confidence.” {8 MR 57.3} 1898

“Christ is to be known by *the blessed name of Comforter.*” {Ms7-1902 (January 26, 1902) par. 10}

“*There is no comforter like Christ,* so tender and so true.” (RH October 26, 1897, Par. 15)

“*The Saviour is our Comforter.* This I have proved Him to be.” {8MR 49}



But why are the churches weak, sickly and ready to die?

“The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. *He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter,* as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” (RH, August 26, 1890)

So what do we need to know to overcome our weakness?

”Through all our trials *we have a never-failing Helper.* He does not leave us alone to struggle temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying; Fear not; I am with you.” (DA 483)

The word “comforter” in Greek in John 14:16 and John 15:26 is ‘*parakletos.*’ It is used five times in the New Testament, and only by John. In 1 John 2:1 ‘*parakletos*’ is translated into English as “advocate,” rather than comforter. Who is our advocate?

1 John 2:1 “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have **an advocate** [Parakletos: a comforter] with the Father, **Jesus Christ the righteous:**”

In the context of Joh 14:15-21, the disciples had a hard time understanding that Jesus was talking about Himself because it was dealing with the unseen work of Jesus.

What was Jesus’s answer to the disciple who asked for more context about John 14:15-21?

Joh 14:22-23 “Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” Jesus answered and said unto him, “If a man love me, **he will keep my words:** and my Father will love him, and **we** [the Father and the Son] will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

What are the words of Jesus?

Joh 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: **the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.**

What could EGW possibly say about this verse?

“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.*” {9T 135} 1909

“Herein is My Father glorified,” said Jesus, “that ye bear much fruit.” God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him. “If ye abide in Me,” He says, “and My

words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” *It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers.* This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. *The words of Christ are spirit and life.* Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ. – (DA 677)

“The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of *the life of Christ.*” (DA 805)

”Christ declared that after his ascension, he would send to his church, as his crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take his place. *This Comforter is the Holy Spirit,--the soul of his life,* the efficacy of his church, the light and life of the world. *With his Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin.*” {RH, May 19, 1904 par. 1 }

“The influence of the Holy Spirit is *the life of Christ in the soul*” {4MR 332.5} 1896

In John 14:23 Jesus said, “*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.*” If you read it, you should easily understand that He is talking about Himself and His Father as “**We.**” One of EGW’s quotes also confirms it.

“By the Spirit THE FATHER AND THE SON will come and make THEIR ABODE with you.” (BEcho, January 15, 1893)

How does EGW describe what it means to have continual faith in the Father and Son?

”He that believeth in the Son, hath the Father also.” *He who has continual faith in the Father and Son has the Spirit also.* The Holy Spirit is his comforter, and he never departs from the truth. {BTS March 1, 1906 Par. 6}

What about John 15:26 and John 14:26, the coming of the Comforter?

John 15:26 “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:”

1. **Who sends the comforter here?** – “whom I will send unto you from the Father [...]”
2. **Where does it come from?** – “which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me”

What shall we understand when we receive the Comforter?

John 14:20 “At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

Jesus speaks figuratively about himself when He says that the Holy Spirit will bring all things to our remembrance:

John 14:26 “But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost [Christ’s unseen presence], 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.”

Many Trinitarians think it must be someone else other than Christ or the Father, especially when we take the verses literally, and not as an allegory. How do we know that Jesus was not speaking literally and directly in John chapter 14, 15 and 16?

Joh 16:25 “These things **have I spoken unto you in proverbs** [adage, parable, illustration, allegory, figurative saying]:

but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.”

There were many things the disciples were unable to understand due to their refusal to understand Christ’s mission (that Christ would be rejected and the gospel go to the Gentiles). They could not understand how God was to manifest Himself to all men. At the time, Jesus was not yet glorified as He was “cumbered with humanity,” and therefore He could not be in all places personally.

“If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.” (John 13:32-33);

“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” (John 16:7).

(Information from ‘The Parable of the Comforter,’ a presentation by Nader Mansour at 34:00’ min. <https://youtu.be/jAvYcGYQ7Wo>)

How did Ellen White explain Christ being with us after His ascension to heaven?

“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. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall (although unseen by you), [This phrase was added by Ellen White.] teach you all things, and bring all things

to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” [John 14:26]. “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will come not unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you“ [John 16:7]. – {14MR 23.3}”

Many people think differently in the Trinitarian perspective when they read this quote.

“The Holy Spirit is Himself *[SPIRIT] divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He *[SPIRIT] would represent Himself *[SPIRIT] as present in all places BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT, AS THE OMNIPRESENT.”

That is incorrect. How would it be possible to read it like that? Why would THE SPIRIT represent Himself as present in all places BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT? Does the Holy Spirit have a spirit? If the Holy Spirit is another separate being like the Father and the Son, then He too must have a Spirit, and then there would be two Spirits! But we don't need to be consumed about how to interpret this passage, for Ellen White explains it elsewhere:

“WE WANT THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST.” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18} - EGW *(see full quote below)

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.” “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him [the Father] that is true, and we are in him [the Father] that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God [the Father], and eternal life. Little

children keep yourselves from idols.” 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.” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}

Information from: Previously Unpublished Ellen G. White Statements - www.Theos.Institute/heavenly-trio/

It is clearly stated in 2 Corinthians 3:17 also:

2Co 3:14-17 “But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to **the Lord [Jesus]**, the vail shall be taken away. **Now the Lord [Jesus] is that Spirit:** and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.”

1. There is one Spirit – Eph 4:4
2. The Comforter is the Spirit - John 14:26
3. The Spirit is the Lord – 2 Cor 3:14-17
4. The Lord is Jesus – 1 Cor 8:5-6

Is the “Spirit of adoption” in Rom 8:15 to be understood as a third separate being other than Christ or the Father? When we compare the verse to Galatians 4:6, there is more clarity.

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received **the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father**” (Romans 8:15).

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth **the Spirit of his Son** into your hearts, **crying, Abba, Father**” (Galatians 4:6).

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; **the last Adam was made a quickening spirit**” (1 Corinthians 15:45).

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye **put on the new man**, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:23-24).

“But ye are **not in the flesh, but in the Spirit**, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not **the Spirit of Christ**, he is none of his. And **if Christ be in you**, the body *is* dead because of sin; but **the Spirit is life** because of righteousness” (Romans 8:9-10).

“Jesus saith unto him, **I am** the way, the truth, and **the life**: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6).

Who comes into our hearts?

Revelation 3:20-22 “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, **I will come in to him**, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”.

So what does it mean to receive Christ in our hearts?

Galatians 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

“Christ became one flesh with us, in order that ***we might become one spirit with Him***. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave,--not merely as a

manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. *Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life.* It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal.” {DA 388}

”*Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service.*” (DA 676)

What do believers want?

”*We want to have the sweet Spirit of Christ come freely into our midst.* We want waters of salvation to flow here. [...] Get away from the chilling influence, and spirit of earth. Get a little higher. “Upward to God be the heart’s adoration.” *A little nearer to God, to Jesus, and to angels.* Get the heavenly unction; and then you can take it home with you.” {RH, August 17, 1869 par. 10}

”*He is coming by His Holy Spirit today. Let us recognize Him now;* then we shall recognize Him when He comes in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.” {RH, April 30, 1901 par. 8}

Notice this vital point Ellen White makes here. If we don’t recognise Jesus coming by His Spirit today, we won’t recognise Him when He comes again. The blessed name of ‘Comforter’, isn’t it referring to Christ? I believe wholeheartedly that this is another form of Christ, coming to us not in His bodily form but in His invisible, omnipresent spirit form. When understood as I have shared here, the focus becomes Christ’s character, not the substance/nature of the Spirit.

3 A Conclusion and a suggestion

I hope I have shed light on the Holy Spirit to the edification of the reader. Rather than a separate third person from the Father and the Son, a bringing of all the texts shows a picture of Christ Himself in a broader perspective. May this awaken our need for His Holy Spirit in our daily life, remembering always how close Jesus is to us.

Secondly, I hoped I have shown how the quote ‘silence is golden’ is a topic that is not entirely black and white, and it should be used in a careful matter. It can easily be used to support one’s own personal perspective when not read in its full context. It stops further study and ends up enforcing the misunderstanding that exists between those who argue about the Godhead.

Even the name ‘Godhead’ itself can mean something different from the name ‘God.’ Here is the modern view as stated in fundamental belief #2 from the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. Notice how the singular pronoun “He” is used to describe a group of three beings (the triune God) rather than the plural pronoun “they”. This is a strange way of explaining God that never occurs in the Bible nor in Ellen White:

“There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. **He is infinite** and beyond human comprehension, yet known through **His self-revelation.** **God, who** is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; John 3:16 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2.)”

Now let us compare that with principle #1 and #2 from the 1872 Seventh-day Adventist 25 Fundamental Principles:

I. “**That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things**, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal; infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, **and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit.**
Psalm 139:7

II. “**That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom he created all things, and by whom they do consist [...]**

More at: <https://www.asitreads.com/trinity-in-adventist-history>.

The difference is clear. The older one has God, His Son, and His Spirit. The newer one has God as a mysterious 3-being. Through a long process, the Trinity was finally established in 1980. You may ask yourself “why?” The answer is relatively straightforward: could it be we changed from the pioneers’ position to fit in with the other churches, so we would not be outcasts and looked down upon as a cult? This is a normal feeling to have – we have all felt the strong pull to conform when growing up and going to school; it is a terrible feeling to be the only kid who doesn’t fit in.

I actually believe there could be an easy fix that allows for a wider scope of opinion in the church. Instead of ‘there is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit’ etc., change it to ‘*there is **the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the three great powers of heaven... They are infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through God’s self-revelation***’ This would be a compromise that accommodates a greater range of people, and I think would be acceptable to most Trinitarians and Non-Trinitarians.

Personally, I believe it would be golden for the churches if we took away the Trinity doctrine. The Trinity came into Church history around 300-500AD, and has spurred on much unnecessary speculation into the

nature of God, along with being a tool to turn Christianity into a religion of the government (a state religion).

Another thing that would help is to become aware of the difference between the 25 fundamental *principles* of the Seventh Day Adventist church in 1872 and today's Seventh-day Adventist 28 fundamental **beliefs**. The word "principles" discourages turning the document into a creed, whereas "beliefs" encourages creedal rigidity. This has subconsciously affected how we understand doctrine and treat each other in church. It is hard for anyone to share anything new and original, because people are in a mindset of hunting out heresy to uphold our de facto creed. People who are thrown out or leave the churches may feel they can't live up to the 28 fundamental beliefs. If instead it was 28 fundamental principles, I believe this could allow more freedom of conscience and allow for more positive church fellowship.

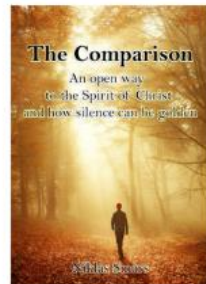
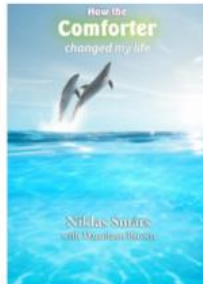
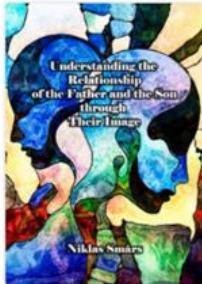
We should remember how Jesus treated everyone He met as an individual, rather than according to the category they placed themselves in. Whatever you call yourself, we should realise that we all belong to Christ as one body, and we should consider how this affects us individually and relationally. When we do, it will increase the love and respect we have for each other, allow for deeper discussion without it being corrupted by pride and distrust, and accept more of each other's differences in how we come to Christ. At the same time, we would increase the understanding of His Spirit, as we are acting more in accord with His character and His word. We would become more like angels and attractive to other people, isn't that what Christ was?

John 17:21 "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Now dear fellow Seventh Day Adventists and all Christians, let's glorify our Lord to the world and be prepared to meet Him. We should learn to be kind to one another, and genuinely understand how to become one.

“Let them be thankful **to God** for His manifold mercies and be kind to one another. They have **one God** and **one saviour**, and **one Spirit--the Spirit of Christ--**is to bring unity into their ranks.” (9T 189) 1909

This third booklet '*The Comparison*' can be simmered down to that **one Spirit--the Spirit of Christ--**. The second booklet '*How the Comforter changed my life*' is a biographic testimony showing that we have **one saviour**, which would link the first and the third theological books together. The first book '*Understanding the relationship of the Father and the Son through their image*' establishes we have **one God**.



For further information about these books and if you want to support, go to thethreegifts.com

The Comparison

Who is the Holy Spirit? What is the Holy Spirit? What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to God and His Son? The word Spirit is so broad that these questions are not easy to answer. Many also feel scared to study these questions, because Ellen White said "Silence is Golden" regarding the Holy Spirit. But she herself speaks often of the Holy Spirit... So when should we be silent, and when should we speak?

In this book, Niklas Smårs tackles these questions with humility and compassion. Knowing more fully how the Spirit of Christ is our comforter has given him great peace, and that blessing he would have the reader share in.

"As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving us ***Jesus the Comforter.***" {19MR 297.3} 1892

"Christ is to be known by ***the blessed name of Comforter.***" {17LtMs, MS 7, 1902}

"***Christ comes as a Comforter*** to all who believe. He invites your confidence." {8MR 57.3} 1898

