

The Promised Comforter In Us

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Jesus was about to ascend to His Father. He promised His disciples,

“Let not your heart be troubled.... And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but **ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.** I will not leave you comfortless: **I will come** to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and **I in you.**” John 14:1, 16-18.

Three times in those verses He let it be known that the anticipated “another Comforter” would be Himself. He could give no greater gift to His followers. Ellen White’s writings affirm His words:

“Christ is to be known by the blessed name of Comforter. ‘The Comforter,’ said Christ to His disciples, ‘which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you....’” Ms 7 (Jan. 26, 1902), par. 10.ⁱ

“...Christ is everything to those who receive Him. *He is their Comforter*, their safety, their healthfulness....” LHU 221.

“...We adore God for His wondrous love in giving *Jesus the Comforter.*” 19MR 297.3

“There is no comforter like Christ, so tender and so true. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. His Spirit speaks to the heart.” AG 187.2

Jesus had explained to His disciples, “I am the way, *the truth*, and the life.” John 14:6. Judas’ question to Jesus reveals to us that the apostles understood Jesus to be saying that the Comforter, the *Spirit of truth* (meaning the Spirit of Jesus) to abide forever in them, would be their beloved “Son of man,” the true Son of God:

“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.** Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that **thou wilt manifest thyself unto us**, and not unto the world? (verses 21-22)

Judas' question to Jesus was not "Who?" but "How?" He knew the "Who," but not the "How." The Spirit of prophecy provides this insight for us:

"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 in 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." *Southern Watchman*, Sept. 9, 1898.

"The disciples still failed to understand Christ's words in their spiritual sense, and again He explained His meaning. *By the Spirit, He said, He would manifest Himself to them.*" DA 670.

Jesus did not answer the "how" of Judas' question. It was not necessary that they understand the *nature* of His Spirit, but He wanted them to be comforted and encouraged by the knowledge that He would be with them still. Jesus' reply in the next verse confirms His previous words regarding the identity of the anticipated Comforter.

"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." (vs. 23)

In John 14:28-29, Jesus summarized His discussion with them:

"You have heard how I said unto you, ***I go away, and come again unto you***.... And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe."

Jesus was not referring to His future second coming in visible, physical form. He spoke of something that would soon occur to the apostles, i.e., Pentecost. Jesus would go away physically, but He would be with them via His omnipresent Spirit. Had He not earlier given them of His Spirit soon after His resurrection?

"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." John 20:21-22.

Ellen White wrote,

"Christ breathed on his disciples, and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' This is the great gift of heaven. *Christ imparted to them through the Spirit his own sanctification.* He

imbued them with his power, that they might win souls to the gospel. **Henceforth Christ would live through their faculties, and speak through their words.** They were privileged to know that *hereafter he and they were to be one.* They must cherish his principles and be **controlled by his Spirit.** They were no longer to follow their own way, to speak their own words. The words they spoke were to proceed from a sanctified heart, and fall from sanctified lips. No longer were they to live their own selfish life; **Christ was to live in them** and speak through them. *He would give to them the glory that he had with the Father, that he and they might be one in God.*: GCB Oct. 1, 1899, par. 12. (Note that “the Spirit” and “His Spirit” are used interchangeably.)

Just as He had pledged to His disciples,

“...On the day of Pentecost the *promised Comforter* descended, and the power from on high was given, and the souls of the believers thrilled with the *conscious presence of their ascended Lord....*” GC88 351.

“Henceforth through the Spirit, *Christ was to abide continually* in the hearts of the children.... All that Christ was to the disciples, He desires to be to His children today.

“When He should come forth from the tomb, their sorrow would be turned to joy. After His ascension He 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.

“...Christ is present by his Holy Spirit....” RH 11.4.02

“...In giving us His Spirit, *God gives us Himself,* making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” 7T 273.1

How exactly Jesus’ Spirit manifests, we are not told. It does not matter; it is enough that we are promised the spiritual presence and power of Christ.

Ephesians 3:16-17: “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be *strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts* by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love...”

Col 1:26-7: “Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the *riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*”

Remember that the body is the *temple of the Holy Spirit*, and that it is to be kept pure and undefiled, fit for a *dwelling place for Christ*." 20MR 329.5.

"*By the Spirit* the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you." BEcho, Jan 15, 1893, par. 8. (One can rightly read that, "By Their Spirit....")

Jesus had told His believers,

"For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.... ***Ye shall receive power***, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:5, 8.

Notice the triple usage of the word "power" in this explanatory quotation from Ellen White:

"...Receiving Christ, we are clothed with power. An *indwelling Saviour* makes His power our property.... ***Christ's presence in the heart is a vitalizing power***, strengthening the entire being." FLB 62.4-7.

"God calls upon His people, many of whom are but half awake, to arouse, and engage in earnest labor, praying for strength for service. Workers are needed. *Receive the Holy Spirit*, and your efforts will be successful. ***Christ's presence is what gives power***." *The Central Advance*, Feb 25, 1903, "Power for service."

Jesus is nearer to us than He was when physically with the apostles, for now He dwells in the hearts of all believers.

"...By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense *He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high*." DA 669.

"In giving His commission to His followers, Christ did not tell them they would be left alone. He assured them that He would be near them. He spoke of ***His Omnipresence*** in a special way. Go to all nations, He said. Go, to the farthest portion of the habitable globe, but know that *My presence* will be there. Labor in faith and confidence, for the time will never come when I shall forsake you." Ms 138, December 2, 1897, par. 21.ⁱⁱ

Omnipresence is an attribute or quality unique to divine Father and Son; they can "send" or "give" their Holy Spirit as a separate working Agency or Person—their representative personal

presence and power and life—whereas man cannot give or send his spirit anywhere outside of himself. Romans 8:9 makes it plain Father and Son have the same Holy Spirit:

“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.” Rom 8:9.

“For by *one Spirit* are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into *one Spirit*.” 1 Cor 12:13.

“For through him we both have access by *one Spirit* unto the Father.” Eph 2:1

How can we rightly estimate what has been given us? We have been given the life of Christ, to be lived out in us. And that life is eternal life!

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. **And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.**” 1 John 5:9-12.

Brothers and sisters, these words are most serious. If we do not believe God’s own testimony—“the witness of God”—that eternal life comes *from Him to us through His Son*, through His/Their omnipresent, indwelling Spirit—then we do not have eternal life! If we believe the Holy Spirit is some other Being/Person dwelling in us, someone other than Christ, then we are among those that “hath not the Son of God, [and] hath not life.” John 1:5 continues:

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” 1 John 5:13.

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. Rom 5:10.

“The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ...”

DA 805

“When *Christ, who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Col 3:4

“...Without the *life of Christ in us*, we cannot withstand the storms of temptation.” DA 599.

“...It is our privilege to have the joy of *Christ in us*, that our joy may be full....” *Ye Shall Receive Power*, 305.

Why have we not known this before?

“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....’” RC 21.3

What is the danger in not understanding who the Holy Spirit is?

“...Thousands have a ***false conception of God*** and His attributes. They are as verily ***serv***
ing a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshipping the *true God* as He is revealed in His Word, *in Christ*, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place?...” LHU 43.

“Every loyal child of God will seek to know the truth. John stated the truth so plainly that a child may understand it, ‘If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him.’ Do we choose to be numbered with those who cannot discern the truth, who are so blinded by the deceptive power of the enemy that they see not Him who is the express image of the Father's person?” TM 137.2.

The writings of Ellen White emphatically state that the understandings about the third person of the Godhead held by our pioneers were established by the Holy Spirit, and had not been changed by 1905—nor would they ever need to be. She affirmed the Holy Spirit’s “so remarkable” leading in the establishment of Adventist understandings. The following comes from a *Review and Herald* article written seven years after *Desire of Ages*:

“Sunday afternoon I spoke again in the Tabernacle.... At this meeting I assured my hearers that *we held the same principles of truth that we had so many times set before them in past years. I assured them that no phase of our message had been changed to meet scientific or spiritualistic philosophy*, but that we hold as firmly as ever to the strongholds of our faith, which have made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are. We

have built our house upon the eternal Rock, the Rock of Ages... ***That which I have written is what the Lord has bidden me write. I have not been instructed to change that which I have sent out. I stand firm in the Adventist faith; for I have been warned in regard to the seducing sophistries that will seek for entrance among us as a people.*** The Scripture says, 'Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.' I present before our people the danger of being led astray as were the angels in the heavenly courts. ***The straight line of truth presented to me when I was but a girl is just as clearly presented to me now.***" RH, January 26, 1905 par. 17-19.

"...Those who diligently search the Scriptures will not accept *Satan's delusions* as the truth of God. No one need be overcome by the *speculations* presented by the enemy of God and Christ." ST Aug 8, 1905.

"The truths given us after the passing of the time in 1844 are just as *certain and unchangeable* as when the ***Lord gave*** them to us in answer to our urgent prayers. ***The visions that the Lord has given me are so remarkable that we know that what we have accepted is the truth. This was demonstrated by the Holy Spirit.*** Light, precious light from God, established the main points of our faith *as we hold them today.* Letter 50, **1906**, 1-2.

Is knowing who the Holy Spirit is a salvational issue?" The answer is a definite "Yes!" Paul worried that the Corinthians might be deceived into believing in "another Jesus" and "another spirit" other than whom He had taught them:

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted..." 2 Cor 11:3-4.

Since "through the Spirit [*His Spirit*], Christ was to abide continually in the hearts of the children" (SC 75), and since "**the impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ...**" (DA 805)—then for anyone to believe that a *different* Holy Spirit/Comforter comes to abide in him—a third, different God unknown to Paul or the other writers of Scripture—means that person DOES NOT RECEIVE "*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" That "hope of glory" is the promise of eternal life, if we "hold fast our confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Heb 3:6. The person trusting in "another Spirit" that Paul mentioned DOES NOT RECEIVE *the*

eternal life that the indwelling Christ gives us, for he has been deceived into believing someone else comes to abide in him. Satan will have tricked him into losing his life, just as he tricked Eve, as Paul pointed out in comparison. The Scriptures are specific that our eternal life comes from the Father, through Christ alone—not Someone else.

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; *that ye may know that ye have eternal life...*” 1 John 5:11-13.

If we believe that the third person of the Godhead is someone other than the omnipresent agency of the Spirit of God the Father and His Christ, then it can be taught, and is taught, that we may pray to **and worship** this unbiblical concept of a third god called “God the Holy Spirit.” This means we no longer need to pray only to the Father through the Son, since all three are equally and therefore interchangeably God.ⁱⁱⁱ Yet if we pray to “God the Holy Spirit” for our spiritual and temporal needs, prayer being a form of trust and worship, we are in conflict with the Spirit of prophecy, which states unequivocally,

“The Father and Son alone are to be exalted.” SD 58.

The Spirit of prophecy enjoins us, “...Take the Bible as it reads.” GC 599. Churches departing from God’s Word have accepted Satan’s counterfeit Holy Spirit, and Satan ensures continued worship of his counterfeit spirit by means of the exciting “gifts” he bestows upon deluded believers: speaking in unintelligible tongues, “holy” laughter, being “slain in the Spirit,” dancing in the pews and aisles, and other “ecstatic” experiences. When the false spirit thus manifests, the deceived believe it is evidence of their acceptance with God and, as a result, they have little concern for sanctified lives. Is that not a fatal deception?

Some would ask, “Don’t Jesus’ words to the apostles in the ‘baptismal formula’ of Matthew 28:19 indicate a triune God?” The answer must be, “No.” If it were true, then why, after having been so instructed, did the apostles baptize only in Jesus’ name? Acts 2:37, 8:12; Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 1:13; Gal 3:27, etc. Were they disobedient? No. First of all, three Persons simply indicate a “heavenly trio;” nothing more is implied. Secondly, the apostles understood correctly what Jesus meant. “Name” means “authority” (John 5:43) or character, and those who are baptized submit to the authority of Father, Son and Their Holy Spirit. The Father gave Jesus all authority. Jesus said,

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Mat 28:18.

Jesus had the authority of His Father, of His own divine Self, and of His Spirit. Thus being baptized “in the name of” those three Persons of the Godhead was the same as being baptized in the name of Jesus, which encompasses all three. And indeed, Jesus’ disciples, baptizing only in Jesus’ name, actually *disprove* the concept of a three-part God by rightly presenting Jesus alone as our hope of eternal life.

What is our present work in regard to this topic?

“We may have had a measure of the *Spirit of God*, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the *Spirit*. It will never do to cease our efforts.” TM 508

May Paul’s joyous, earnest prayer be answered in us:

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by **his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith**; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Eph 3:14-19.

ⁱ This quote comes from the newly-released, formerly-unpublished writings of Ellen White writings, which can be found at <https://egwwritings.org>.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.