



2 Cor. 3:18

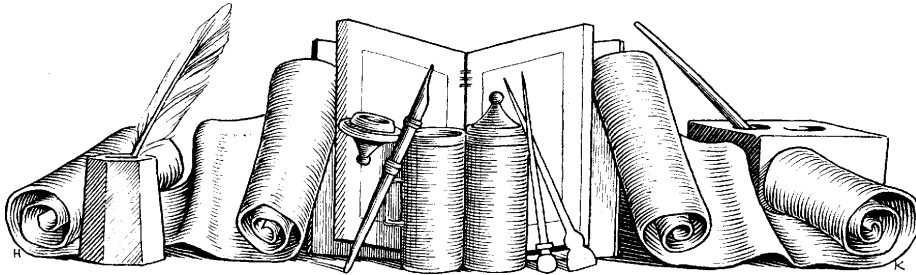
# Open Face

No. 32

JULY 2003

## Ellen White and The Godhead (part 2)

David Clayton



**I**t was reading the writings of Ellen White which caused me to have my first doubts concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. I was reading from the book, "The Story of Redemption," the first chapter, and I recognized that according to Ellen White, there was a clear difference in the perception of the angels between God and Jesus in terms of authority. In fact, Lucifer's rebellion began because God called Jesus into a council to plan the creation of planet earth, while Lucifer was excluded. He felt that if Jesus was called, then he also should have been called. He felt that he had a right to be given the same privileges as Jesus.

It struck me as I read that Lucifer was not covetous of the Father's position (which he evidently recognized was absolutely supreme and out of his reach) but he was envious of the position which the Father had given to Christ. Ellen White goes on to say that the Father assembled all the inhabitants of heaven and let them know that it was ordained by Himself that Christ's authority should be equal with His own, His word to be as readily obeyed as the Father's. Again I could see that Jesus' authority was equal with the Father's, but that it was the Father who had ordained that it should be so.

*"The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that He might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon His Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. **The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself; so that wherever was the presence of His Son, it was as His own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son He had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was His Son to work in union with Himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out His will and His purposes but would do nothing of Himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in Him.***

*Lucifer was envious and jealous of Jesus Christ. Yet when all the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge His supremacy*

*and high authority and rightful rule, he bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred. Christ had been taken into the special counsel of God in regard to His plans, while Lucifer was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was he permitted to know, the purposes of God. But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of heaven, His power and authority to be the same as that of God Himself....*

*....He left the immediate presence of the Father, dissatisfied and filled with envy against Jesus Christ. .... They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into His unsearchable wisdom and ascertain His purposes in exalting His Son, and endowing Him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son."*

*The Story of Redemption - p. 15*

### Conflicting Statements

The majority of Ellen White's visions occurred during the early part of her ministry. As the years passed and the

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*Open Face* is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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advent movement became more well established, these visions grew less frequent. In fact the last public vision of Ellen White was in 1875 (*See Ellen G. White and Her Critics* by F.D. Nichol, p. 70). It is worth noting that during these earlier years as she wrote, counseled and preached her teachings reflected strongly the things she was seeing and hearing in her visions. One fact which should not be overlooked is that her non-Trinitarian statements are most abundant during this period of her ministry.

Firstly, there are these early statements which appeared during the first fifty years of Ellen White's ministry, published by herself and which are clearly non-trinitarian.

Secondly, there are some later statements, many of them published after Ellen white died, which seem to teach a Trinity. These statements seem to be completely the opposite of the earlier statements and must lead to the conclusion that either,

1. As Walter Martin said, Ellen White changed her mind later in life, or ,
2. There is some other meaning to

these passages than what they appear to say in the surface, or,

3. Ellen White's editors "edited" her writings to make them fall in line with what was by then acceptable doctrine to the church leaders.

If we accept the fact that Ellen White was a true messenger of God who received her teachings by divine inspiration, then the first option is not acceptable. God does not change His mind. This leaves us with the other two possibilities. Either these statements mean something other than they appear to say on the surface, or there has been some tampering with the writings of Ellen White.

Many of these seeming discrepancies can be cleared up. In part one of this article we gave some examples of some ways in which some of these statements could be harmonized and we could give several more examples. However, an attempt to harmonize *all* the passages in question is a task which would take a great deal more time and space than we have available. It would require perhaps, exhaustive study of the large volume of published E.G. White writings, and in addition, would involve the daunting task of visiting the White Estate (if such a thing were allowed) and scrutinizing thousands of pages of her writings. This is something which is possible only for the select few, and I am certain, is not something which God requires of all of us. This is the reason for my continued insistence that we need to accept Ellen White's counsel to defend our doctrines on the basis of the Bible, and the Bible alone.

What about tampering? Is there some justifiable basis for saying that there has been tampering with Ellen White's writings?

### Tampering

We should not brush aside this suggestion of tampering with Ellen White's writings. During the 1919 Bible conference W.W. Prescott admitted to editing Ellen White's book *The Great*

*Controversy* (see 1919 Bible Conference transcript - August 1, 1919) and changing certain statements to bring them in line with what was "orthodox." Notable among these editorial "corrections" was the simple addition of a single word, the word "alone" to a sentence which significantly changed the meaning of the passage.

Originally Ellen White had written with reference to the Scriptures which speak of the fall of Babylon,

*"it cannot refer to the Romish Church, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries." {GC 383} - 1888 edition*

Prescott however, edited the book and reworded the sentence. Today, in the latest edition of the Great Controversy (the 1911 edition), the same sentence reads,

*"it cannot refer to the Roman Church **alone**, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries." {GC 383} - 1911 edition.*

Both statements are not saying the same thing. Was Prescott correct, or was Ellen White correct? This is not really the issue. The point is, Prescott made Ellen White say something she had never said, and he did it by simply adding a small word. He did this because he felt that the original, as she wrote it was "unorthodox." The only reason that we know about this is because Prescott acknowledged it at the 1919 Bible Conference. How much more has been done in the name of "orthodoxy" will perhaps never be fully known.

Here is another example:

*Let the son of deceit and false witness be entertained by a church that has had great light, great evidence, and that church will discard the message the Lord has sent, and receive the most unreasonable assertions and false suppositions and false theories. Satan laughs at*

*their folly, for he knows what truth is. {Testimonies to Ministers, p.409 – 1923 edition*

This statement was published in Testimonies to Ministers when it first appeared in 1923. It was taken from Special Testimonies for Ministers and workers, No.11, published in 1898. Notice that it says that if Satan, the **Son** of deceit, is entertained by the SDA Church, then it will discard God's message and receive false theories. This same statement was reprinted in later editions of Testimonies to Ministers with a significant change. Here is how it reads in present day editions:

*Let the sin of deceit and false witness be entertained by a church that has had great light, great evidence, and that church will discard the message the Lord has sent, and receive the most unreasonable assertions and false suppositions and false theories. Satan laughs at their folly, for he knows what truth is. {{Testimonies to Ministers, p.409 – 1944 & 1962 editions}}*

Was it just an accident that the phrase "son of deceit," was changed to "sin of deceit," or did somebody think that Ellen White had said too much in suggesting that Satan could possibly be entertained by the SDA Church? In order to appreciate the point I am making you need to put yourself in the position of the person who did the change. Somebody deliberately changed the letter "o" to the letter "i". Did this person just feel like fooling around or did he or she have some definite reason for doing this? Obviously if it would have made no difference either way, then this person would not have bothered to make the change.

The examples given may not be major or highly significant changes, however, they do demonstrate that those who were in charge of her writings were not above making changes to her writings which would subtly change the meaning of some statements.

## Editing Ellen White's Writings

Virtually everything which has been published under the name of Ellen White was edited at some time or the other. Some of her articles have probably been edited several times over.

It is an undeniable fact that Ellen White often made grammatical mistakes in her original handwritten documents. This was only to be expected of someone who had no formal education beyond grade three. Anybody who has ever seen one of her original documents will not deny this.

There is nothing inherently wrong with this. Most people who write for publication will often ask another person to read over or proof read his articles and to correct spelling, grammatical and other mistakes, as well as to suggest ways in which something could be phrased differently or said in a more effective way. Ellen White also had her editors. When she wrote any document, the first step would be that that document would be typed, and the original document would, in most cases be destroyed. This was a most unfortunate thing, but the fact is, this is what happened. Even today, in the vaults of the Ellen White Estate the manuscripts are for the most part not true originals, but rather, are typed transcripts of originals which no longer exist. This typed document would then be edited, before it was published.

While Ellen White was alive, this editing of her writings was probably not an issue. Perhaps she even supervised some of this editorial work, and at any rate, she was alive and still able to confirm whether or not the changes made were in harmony with her original meanings. However, this editorial work did not stop when Ellen White died. There were hundreds, perhaps thousands of unpublished manuscripts which had never been seen by the public at the time of Ellen White's death. Many of these have been gradually released over the decades in new compilations, but not before they were ed-

ited!!!

What does an editor do when he comes across a statement which seems to contradict what he believes to be true? Does he have the right to rephrase a word? To leave out or add a word? To change the structure of a sentence etc? All of this certainly comes under the heading of "editing."

Several of the more Trinitarian statements attributed to Ellen White have appeared long after she was dead, in previously "unpublished manuscripts." There is even one which claims that there are three "Beings" in the godhead, which was taken from a transcript of a speech (*Sermons and Talks*, Vol. 1, published 1990). Were these statements "adjusted" by careful editing? Maybe we will never know for sure. However, here are some examples of undeniable editorial work done with the clear intent to change the meaning of statements made by Ellen White, in order to bring them into harmony with the doctrine of the Trinity. With this kind of evidence before me, I am more than ever thankful for the counsel to get our doctrines from the Bible, and the Bible only.

## Examples of Changes

"It" changed to "He"

*Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers. — No. 7 pp. 38, 39.2 (Published 1897)*

*"I would that all my brethren and sisters would remember that it is a serious thing to grieve the Holy Spirit; and it is grieved when the human agent seeks to work himself, and refuses to enter the service of the Lord because the cross is too heavy, or the self-denial too great. The Holy Spirit seeks to abide in each soul. If it is welcomed as an honored guest, those who receive it will be made complete in Christ. The good work begun will be fin-*



ished; the holy thoughts, heavenly affections, and Christlike actions will take the place of impure thoughts, perverse sentiments, and rebellious acts.”

The same statement reprinted in *Counsels on Health* 561 (First published 1923)

“I would that all my brethren and sisters would remember that it is a serious thing to grieve the Holy Spirit, and **He** is grieved when the human agent seeks to work himself and refuses to enter the service of the Lord because the cross is too heavy or the self-denial too great. The Holy Spirit seeks to abide in each soul. If **He** is welcomed as an honored guest, those who receive Him will be made complete in Christ. The good work begun will be finished; the holy thoughts, heavenly affections, and Christlike actions will take the place of impure thoughts, perverse sentiments, and rebellious acts.” (Re-published with the same changes. See example just below)

**Original statement** – *Signs of The Times*, September 27, 1899

....Why should we not prostrate ourselves at the throne of divine grace, praying that God’s Spirit may be poured out upon us as **it** was upon the disciples? **Its** presence will soften our hard hearts, and fill us with joy and rejoicing, transforming us into channels of blessing.

The Lord would have every one of His children rich in faith, and this faith is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit upon the mind. **It** dwells with each soul who will receive **it**, speaking to the impenitent in words of warning, and pointing them to Jesus, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. **It**

causes light to shine into the minds of those who are seeking to co-operate with God, giving them efficiency and wisdom to do His work.

**Reprinted statement** – *Ye Shall Receive Power* (published 1996) P.59

.... Why should we not prostrate ourselves at the throne of divine grace, praying that God’s Spirit may be poured out upon us as **He** was upon the disciples? **His** presence will soften our hard hearts, and fill us with joy and rejoicing, transforming us into channels of blessing.

The Lord would have every one of His children rich in faith, and this faith is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit upon the mind. **He** dwells with each soul who will receive **Him**, speaking to the impenitent in words of warning, and pointing them to Jesus, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. **He** causes light to shine into the minds of those who are seeking to cooperate with God, giving them efficiency and wisdom to do His work.

third person -  
small letters capitalized

Desire of Ages (1898 edition)

“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the **third person** of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.”(DA, 671)

(This was published several times in Sr. White’s lifetime, and every time it was in lower case. Eg: RH 5/19/1904, RH 11/19/1908)

Desire of Ages (all recent publications)

“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the **Third Person** of the Godhead, who

would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.”(DA, 671)

(Republished many times and many places after Sr. White died in upper case.)

Meaning changed by adding a word

Spalding and Magan Collection, p.52 (Published in 1915-1916)

“The teachers are to educate the youth to realize that if they receive Christ and believe in Him, they will be brought into close relationship with God. He gives them power to become the sons of God, to associate with the **highest dignitaries in the kingdom of heaven, to unite with Gabriel, with cherubim and seraphim, with angels and the archangel.**” – *The Essential Education “Sunnyside”*, Cooranbong, N. S. W., Dec. 20, 1896.

(Note: In this rendering, the highest dignitaries include Gabriel, cherubim and seraphim as well as the archangel.)

1 Sermons And Talks, p.285 (Published in 1990)

“The teachers are to educate the youth to realize that if they receive Christ and believe on Him, they will be brought into close relationship with God. He gives them power to become the sons of God, to associate with the **highest dignitaries in the kingdom of heaven, and to unite with Gabriel, with cherubim and seraphim, with angels and the archangel.** – (MS 41a 1896 - MR 900.24)

(The “and” has been added. – Reading it this way, the archangel - Michael, would not be among the highest dignitaries.)

The word “Trinity” added

The word Trinity never appears in Sister White’s writings. The compilers of

the book Evangelism however, inserted it in the sub-title in the statement below. In the Korean translation, not only did they use the word Trinity in the sub-title, but **they also used the word “Trinity” in place of the word “dignitaries,” in the text itself!!**. The Korean translation also fails to include the ellipses which shows that a portion of the original statement has been left out.

*Evangelism, p. 616 (Published in 1946)*

**“The Eternal Dignitaries of the Trinity.”** (This Title was inserted by the compilers)

“The eternal heavenly **dignitaries**—God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit—arming them [the disciples] with more than mortal energy, . . . would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin.” - (Manuscript 145, 1901)”

### Three living persons

One quotation which is widely used by Trinitarian or Tritheist Seventh-day Adventists is the following:

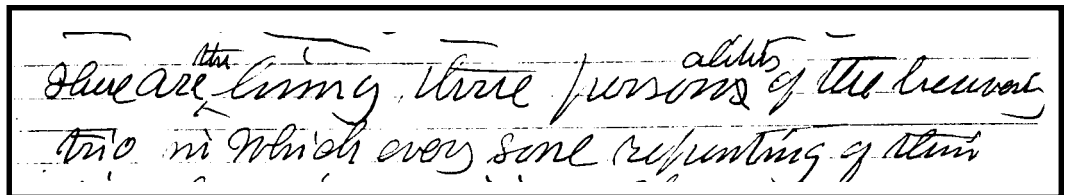
*The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.— Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7, pp. 62, 63. (1905) {Ev 615.1}*

This is one of the few statements made by Ellen White where the manuscript

is still available in its original form. A comparison of the manuscript with the statement as it presently appears in her published writings is very instructive. The original manuscript reads as follows: (see photocopy below):

*“There are the three living persons<sup>alities</sup> in the heavenly trio”*

Notice that Ellen White first wrote the word “persons,” then thought better of it, struck out the letter “S” and added the letters “alities,” thus changing the word from “persons” to “personalities.” Now why would she do this? We may say, “oh there is really no difference between a person and a personality,” but is this true? If there is no difference, then why change the word?



The fact is that the word “person” refers to an individual, a distinct, separate being, while the word “personality” refers to a particular aspect of a person – his characteristics, mannerisms etc. In fact, one person may be said to have more than one personality (a split personality), when he displays different kinds of behaviour on different occasions.

It seems clear that Ellen White was not satisfied with the idea that there are three persons in the godhead. Her concept was better explained by the word “personalities.” The mystery is that today, in every place where this quotation appears in the published writings, it reads as “three living persons.” Did the publishers do right in re-correcting Ellen White’s correction?

Some have contended that since Ellen White was God’s messenger, then it is not possible that there should have been any tampering with her writings or that the purity of her teachings should have been in any way tarnished. However, this conclusion does not match the facts. God has permitted the introduc-

tion of error even in a source of truth as fundamental as the Bible. Not only have there been problems with mistranslation of biblical passages, but there also have been clear instances of words or even several words being inadvertently added to the text. Two examples which come readily to mind are Luke 23:43 and 1 John 5:7. For reasons which He knows best, God has not entirely protected His word against the intrusion of impurities. Ellen White had this to say on the matter:

*I saw that God had especially guarded the Bible; yet when copies of it were few, learned men had in some instances*

*changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition. But I saw that the Word of God, as a whole, is a perfect chain, one portion linking into and explaining another. True seekers for truth need not err; for not only is the Word of God plain and simple in declaring the way of life, but the Holy Spirit is given as a guide in understanding the way to life therein revealed. {EW 220-221}*

I have no reason to believe that God dealt differently with the writings of Ellen White in this respect, than He did with the Bible.

When we encounter clear discrepancies in the biblical text we seek to harmonize the seeming contradictions, we examine context and circumstances, we look at the historical background,

we compare passage with passage, we look at the doctrine in question in the light of truth which has already been clearly revealed, and for the most part, we find that careful, honest and unbiased examination reveals a harmony which the minor errors cannot obscure. This does not mean that we will be able to clearly explain every disputed text, or to trace the origin of every questionable word, but we go with the weight of evidence.

I believe that this is the only fair and rational way to examine Ellen White's published statements on the issue of the godhead. First we should see if there is some way that we can harmonize all her statements. We should carefully examine to ensure that as far as possible we understand the point she was really trying to make in each of the passages. But what do we do if and when we come across some statements which we just cannot harmonize? What then? Do we pretend that the discrepancies do not exist? No. I

think this is why God has so often insisted through Ellen White that the Bible is to be our final appeal in doctrinal matters. When it comes to the Bible, no one person has an advantage over another, because here, all the available writings are in print with no one looking to see whether anything new will be revealed in the next unpublished manuscript. When we speak on the basis of the Bible, then we know that we are speaking on the authority of a source where all the evidence is in.

Finally, as we stated in part one of this article, all our attempts to discover what Ellen White taught on the subject of the godhead, are simply attempts to demonstrate that Ellen White was in harmony with the Bible. She could not have contradicted the Bible if she was a true messenger of God and on the subject of the godhead, the Bible is very clear.

*Thou believest that there is one*

*God; thou doest well...* (James 2:19)

*...there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.* (1 Cor 8:6)

*... God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him....he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* (1 John 4:9-10)

*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* (1 John 4:15)

*For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.* (1 Cor 2:11)



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## Dare To Be Different

*by Kayann Smith*

**Too** often, our lives reflect the same pattern as that of processional caterpillars. It has been said that if these insects are placed head to tail on the lid of a flower pot with a plant, each would allow the one ahead to be its leader in an aimless procession. Since each is following the other on a circular flower pot, the march would go on and on and on, possibly for days, until all the energy had been drained from them and they finally die. Not even one would break the cycle and devour the delicious plant that had been in its reach for so long.

Are you a processional caterpillar? The three Hebrew boys certainly were not. (Daniel 3:8-30). They were bold enough to stand at any cost — even

that of losing their lives. They would have been totally unnoticed if they had bowed with everyone else, but they chose not to. They could have even bowed with rebellion and resentment in their hearts. At least the king wouldn't have known. Instead, they chose to stand. They preferred to be loyal to God rather than to conform with the majority. Many times we have proven to be like Nicodemus who came to Christ by night. We desire to be faithful, but deny Christ in simple ways in our daily lives in order to be accepted by others. Our actions at times suggest that we would rather gain the recognition of poor feeble mortal beings than to be the friends of the King of the universe.

Regardless of our circumstances, great or small, there can never be a justifiable reason for us to refuse to boldly let the light of Christ be seen through us. We are frequently plagued with the desire to protect our self image, but God wants us to be self denying. You may ask, how can we attain this when we are daily bombarded with the cares of this world? Unless we seek the Lord with all our hearts, surrender all and be totally dependent on Him, there will be little or no transformation in our lives. We should daily forsake all and live for Christ and Him alone. But first, we must realize and appreciate the value that God has placed on us.

**Continued on page 10**



## A Note concerning the following article

From time to time we receive requests to publish articles with which we may not agree 100 %. It is not our general policy to promote what we believe to be error. However we are willing at times to publish some articles with which we may not agree, under the following conditions:

1. The article will be immediately followed by an article of our own which will point out and comment on the errors which we perceive to be in the article.
2. The article must not exceed 1000

words. We reserve the right to reject or edit any articles which exceed the stated limit.

3. There is no guarantee that any particular article will be published.
4. The name of the author must accompany the article and will also be published.
5. There will be no guarantee that follow-up articles by the same author will be published.

This may not seem like a very favorable policy to those who may disagree

with us. However, it is the only basis on which we will agree to publish articles which may contradict what we believe to be the truth.

The following letter was written by Brother Keith Coombs. We do not agree with much of what he has written and our reply follows immediately after his letter.

We have numbered the paragraphs of his letter for easy reference and in our response will make reference to these paragraphs by number.

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## A Believer in A Third Being

*Keith Coombs*

1. I am truly happy to have had letters printed in your newsletter in the past even though my understanding of the matter differed from that of the editors. This is another one of those letters.
2. Is the Holy Spirit a person or an extension of God the Father/Son?
3. The discussion continues as to whether the godhead consists of three persons, namely the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, or, of two persons, the Father and the Son only with the Holy Spirit being an extension of the Father and the Son. In both understandings, Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father. However, there are two different Trinities. That is, the Trinity as presented by the Catholic Church, as opposed to the Trinity as taught by the Adventist Church.
4. The Catholic Church teaches that there is one God who manifests Himself in three different forms, sometimes as the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit. We as Adventists teach that there are three different divine persons in the godhead, or that the godhead is a trio. Because the Catholics were the first to coin the

name, "Trinity," I think it would be expedient for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to desist from using the word "Trinity" to describe its understanding of the godhead. Indeed the phrase "godhead" or "Heavenly Trio" could be used to replace the phrase "Trinity" and then there would be Bible consistency, for there is no Adventist who believes that the godhead is one person having three different forms or manifestations. Indeed the Spirit of Prophecy does not mention the word Trinity, but the godhead is described as the "Three Dignitaries of Heaven," or "heavenly Trio." We would do well to follow this example.

5. Thus having set the framework for this discussion of the godhead, the question to be answered is, who is the Holy Spirit? Is He a distinct person, separate from the Father or Son, or is He an extension of the Father and Son? Let us consider the following texts:
6. Romans 8:26,27. Here Paul is saying that the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered and that Christ who searcheth the heart reads the mind of the Spirit and makes intercession

for us. Thus there are two separate intercessions between God and man; one made by the Spirit and the other made by Christ. Now an intercessor is one who goes between two parties and just as Christ acts between the Father and the saints, similarly the Holy Spirit intercedes between us and the Father causing us to also groan in our spirits for the adoption and redemption of the body (See Rom. 8:23).

7. Furthermore, Paul states in Romans 8:16 that the Spirit (of) itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God. Here we see the Spirit on his own accord doing a work on our behalf. These interpretations are not private interpretations of Scripture for the Spirit of Prophecy commenting on Romans 8:26 and 34 has this to say: "Christ our Mediator and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding on man's behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit striking

the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart.” (Page 218, New Study Bible.)

8. Indeed when one commits the unpardonable sin it is found that the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from that person and he no more has any holy desires; he becomes a reprobate.
9. The Bible shows many more instances where the spirit acts as an independent person. Consider 1 Cor 2:10-11: “for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (the Father).... even so the things

of God (the Father) knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” Here we see the Spirit acting independently searching out the mind of God the Father. The spirit of Prophecy commenting on this text has this to say, “The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things

of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” Page 69, MS 20, 1906.

10. In closing I believe it can be seen that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead should be considered as a divine person differing from the Father and His Son. Viz Desire of Ages, page 671, “sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person(ality) of the godhead who would come with no modified energy, but the fullness of divine power.”

## Our Response To The Previous Article

I would just like to first of all correct some misconceptions that brother Coombs has. Clearly his understanding of the catholic Trinity is not quite accurate. He says that the catholic church teaches that there is one God who manifests himself in three different forms, sometimes as the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit, this is more in keeping with what the “Jesus only” people believe and teach. In actual fact, Catholicism or orthodox Trinitarianism teaches that there is one God who is always manifested in three different forms, not sometimes but is simultaneously manifested as each of these three so-called persons.

Secondly, it is true that many Adventists believe and teach that God is a trio, really making a committee of gods, and really supporting polytheism. However, it is not true to say that there is no Adventist who believes that the Godhead is one person having three different forms or manifestations. The following quotations from two recently published Adventist books make this very clear.

“....When we think of the three persons of the Trinity we are likely to think of them as we would three human persons. That is three persons of the same sort of substance (es-

*sence*). But because there is only One God, the three persons must be of the same substance (essence). Three human persons would be exclusive – independent of one another. The three persons of the Trinity, however, must be inclusive and not independent of one another. Because there is but one true God, by nature we have to conclude that He is plural as to persons but single as to substance.” – Understanding The Trinity – Max Hatton, p. 19-20

“....At times “oneness” can involve the meaning of unity (i.e., John 10:30; 17:21,23). However, if the “oneness” expressed in these texts is conceived only as a gathering of independent “onenesses” that come together in order to form a unity, the specific singleness characteristic of the one Godhead to which they testify is dissolved into a plurality of gods....In other words, since the God of the Bible is one and not many, all the various revelations about Him presented throughout the Bible refer to the same, one divine reality and not to a plurality of divine beings.” - Handbook of SDA Theology - p.121

Brother Coombs is anxious that the seventh-day Adventist church should desist from using the word ‘Trinity’ to describe its understanding of the Godhead simply because the Catholics were the first to coin the name Trinity (par. 4). But I ask, what difference does it make? If you call a duck a chicken, would it make him a different bird? Would he not walk the same, quack the same, look the same, fly the same? What does it matter what name we call it? Basically, since the official Adventist concept and the Catholic concept are similar or are the same, what difference would it make if Adventists gave their concept a different label. However, it is true that many Adventists do believe in three gods and as such perhaps the term ‘trio’ would better express what many Adventists believe but the main stream church really is beginning to advocate a Trinity. That is, three Persons who are a manifestation of one Being.

I find it amazing that brother Coombs states, ‘thus there are two separate intercessions between God and man, one made by the spirit and the other made by Christ.’ I find this amazing because 1 Timothy 2:5 states very clearly that there is ‘one God and one mediator between God and men.’ A mediator is one who goes between. Now brother Coombs says that there



are two intercessions and here he suggests that there are two mediators. Here he directly contradicts a plain statement of scripture and this he finds it necessary to do because he believes that the Holy Spirit is a separate person from Jesus Christ and the Father. However, if an attempt was made to harmonize the two truths, that the holy spirit intercedes and that Jesus is our one mediator, then we would not have this difficulty that brother Coombs obviously is experiencing. The obvious resolution is that the holy spirit represents the intercessory work of Jesus on another level.

Now Ellen White does state in this passage which brother Coombs quotes (par. 7), that the holy spirit intercedes by working on our hearts while Christ intercedes by pleading before the Father. It is the preconceived idea that the holy spirit is a Being or a Person that makes this so difficult for brother Coombs to understand. All that Ellen White is saying really, and all that the Bible is saying when it says the holy spirit makes intercession, is simply that, as the spirit, of God stirs my conscience, it awakens within me deep feelings which cause me to groan in my desire for God and righteousness. Sometimes I cannot even find the words to speak but in this groaning God reads my feelings and He responds to these groanings which are awakened by the holy spirit. This is what it means. This holy spirit coming from the Father through Christ awakens these feelings and stirs this response and so in this way the holy spirit intercedes through my own prayers and feelings. But since it is Christ who ministers the holy spirit, and Christ who literally pleads before the Father, He is the only mediator between God and man.

Again brother Coombs quotes Romans 8:16 where it says that 'the spirit *itself* bears witness with our spirit.' And here he emphasizes what he sees as the interpretation of this verse, that the spirit is doing this of his own accord (par. 7). When it says 'itself', that this indicates that it is the spirit on its own. But is this what the passage is really say-

ing? What is the point of the passage? What it is really saying is that we are the sons of God, we have the conviction that we are the sons of God. If we are led by the spirit of God we are the sons of God and in addition to this conviction, in addition to this certainty the spirit itself, the same spirit that we have been given, the same spirit of the Father *itself* that has adopted us also creates a conviction within us that we are the sons of God.

I don't really find a suggestion here that the holy spirit is working on its own accord, it is God who uses the spirit to awaken this conviction in our hearts. Again, and I must say amazingly, brother Coombs quotes 1 Corinthians 2:10-11. It reads as follows:

*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (1 Cor 2:10-11)*

I say, "amazingly," because Brother Coombs quotes only a part of it (par. 9). It is interesting to see that brother Coombs has left out a significant portion of the verse and the part he has left out is quite enlightening. Brother Coombs quotes, "for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And he adds (the Father), "even so the things of God" (the Father) "knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Here he says the spirit is acting independently, searching out the mind of God the Father, but he has ignored the part of the quote where it says, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save" (or excepting) "the spirit of man which is in him?" Now if according to brother Coombs this passage teaches that the spirit acts independently in searching out the mind of God the Father, then by his reasoning I must also conclude that my spirit acts independently in searching out my mind, in knowing the things that are in

me and so I would also conclude that my spirit is a separate independent being!!

It is interesting that Ellen White quotes this passage in making the point that the holy spirit "has a personality else he could not bear witness with our spirits and he must also be a divine person else he could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God." Now this is very interesting because according to the passage, my spirit does the same work as the holy spirit does. I mean the holy spirit does this with respect to God and my spirit does this with respect to me, this is what it says in 1 Corinthians 2:11. Therefore, when Ellen White says the holy spirit has a personality, we must apply the same concept to humanity. The holy spirit has a personality which enables it to search out the things of God. In the same way, my spirit has a personality which enables it to search out the things that are hidden in me. This makes it clear that just as my spirit is not an independent person, so God's spirit is not an independent person but has a personality just as my spirit has a personality.

The emphasis here is that the spirit is not merely a force but is actually a personality containing the elements of love, feelings, pity, sympathy, all of these qualities which we associate with personality for just as the feelings in my spirit are my feelings, even so, these feelings in the spirit of God are God's feelings.

I'm sorry that I cannot agree with brother Coombs' conclusion that it can be seen that the holy spirit is the third person of the Godhead and should be considered as a separate divine person. Furthermore, I cannot agree on the basis of these misinterpreted texts. It is my hope and prayer that as we search for a better understanding of God's truth we will take all the facts into consideration and seek to harmonize all the information and not allow tradition and preconceived ideas to influence our conclusions.



## Seeing the light

*Below is part of a letter by one who has made his choice. It took a lot of personal in-depth study, but here is his final decision.*

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Hi Margaretha, Regarding my study...

The Bible doesn't have a single verse that identifies the holy Spirit as a Being/Person. Now I know that is not news to you, but sure is to me. If we take the Bible alone we would never come up with the idea of a third Being. And God would not wait almost 6000 years to suddenly spring it upon the world through EGW. So those controversial (Third Person) statements HAVE to mean something else.

Also, the Bible uses words like, "poured out", "came upon", "breathed upon", "fell upon" to describe the Spirit's method of operation. But to the best of my knowledge, it never says the Father or Son "fell upon" someone, or the Father was "poured out upon" someone etc. Surely the Bible uses these verbs for the Spirit, but not for the Father or Son, because the Spirit is different from the Father and Son. The Father and Son have a physical body, but the Spirit does not. That is why the Father cannot be poured out upon someone. That is why the Spirit cannot sit on a throne, or stand next to God etc.

What sheds the most light on those statements, is when you understand the Spirit is not EXACTLY like man's spirit. Eg. If I wanted to convince someone, or create something, or speak to someone, or influence someone, then I could not just use my spirit to do it. My hands or actions or mouth would have to accomplish any of the above. It is just that my spirit would be working through my hands to create something, or through my mouth to talk to someone, or through my facial expression, or my tears etc. to convict someone. So in that way, I could not say my spirit created anything, or spoke to anyone, or convicted someone. It was my hands that created and my mouth that spoke: albeit my spirit worked through my mouth or my hands.

But with God's Spirit, it can speak, create, convict etc. without God's mouth

or hands etc. The Spirit has "power" of its own to get things done. So that is why it is the "third" power. That is why it has a personality/character of its own.

My spirit cannot do anything without my body to accomplish it, but God's spirit can accomplish things without His body. Thus it is the third dignitary, power, character etc. There is a trio as the Spirit can "operate" as a separate entity to the Father and Son, but it is still within their spirit/mind/will. So apparently the Spirit does not have a mind of its own, although it can move around the universe and operate independently of the Father. ie. the Father can sit in heaven while His Spirit can move about the Universe. Therefore there are three entities, influences etc. but it is not a third Being.

I can see why we are told not to contemplate it too deeply and that the nature of the holy Spirit is a mystery; because it has some characteristics like man's spirit, and some like an independent being. Thus it is not possible to fully understand its nature. Perhaps that is why sometimes the Spirit is called He, and sometimes it.

The Spirit does not have a body, so it does not have a throne in heaven and is never seen in the heavenly temple as are the Father and Son. It is never mentioned taking part in the heavenly councils, either at the fall of Lucifer, or the fall of man, or the heavenly sanctuary service.

I never realized that before, and when I used to read your writings on the Spirit, I equated what you were saying to my spirit and that didn't match up to EGW's statements. Eg. I could never call my wife, me and my spirit a trio. My spirit is not the third character, personality etc. of our marriage, because my spirit is confined to my body, but God's is not. The understanding of that concept puts almost every EGW statement into perspective, and then the Bible and SoP fit!

Aaron Sen.

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## Dare To Be Different

**Continued from p. 5**

*"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).*

God wants a peculiar people. People who have rejected the ways and customs of this world and have clung to His. It can never be possible to dress, speak, eat and be entertained in the same manner as people of the world and at the same time be peculiar. There must be a difference between the peculiar and the ordinary, that which is secular and that which is holy. What is it about the child of a king that makes him special? He is the 'child of a king' — he is royalty. There can be no mistaking the difference between a prince and a commoner. Similarly, there must be peculiar characteristics which distinguish God's people from those who are of the world. God has redeemed

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## PENFRIENDS

From time to time we have been encouraged to include a penfriend section in the newsletter. Many believers are concerned that with us being so small numerically, there are many of us in different parts of the world who have little or no regular fellowship and not much opportunity of interacting with others who share the same precious faith.

With this in mind, we are encouraging all those of you who are interested in corresponding with others of our faith to send in your particulars such as name, address, phone number, age, sex, interests and hobbies, marital status etc. We will publish these names along with your particulars. Hopefully this will provide some avenue for those who are isolated and lonely to have some kind of fellowship.



# Letters

I have just read the latest "Open Face", which I received this week, and I would like the two books (booklets) you speak about, "The Mystery Demystified" and the "Landmarks Abandoned".

I don't know how much this money will cover when you change it, but I don't like sending too much in one letter.

I love getting "Open Face" and "Old Paths," it seems to bring each one closer together.

God bless your work in 2003 what time we have left. (*Australia*)

Christian greetings to you all. I always read your Open Face monthly when I visit my grandparents in Kingston. I find them very interesting and I would love to read more and know what your ministries is doing worldwide.

People are in need of knowledge of the words. May God continue blessing your ministry. Thanks again. (*Jamaica*)

God Bless. I have received the small packet and the most wonderful encouraging words. The lord will make a way. The tape is excellent (Origins of the Trinity) and the book (The Church) marvelous. Remember me in your prayers the going is getting tough.

Can you help me with the following:

1. some History and Definitions (tape/audio)
2. from Babylon to Jerusalem (A.T. Jones)
3. The Higher Purpose

Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ. (*Zambia*)

You may not remember me, but I am one of the set of people who got your tapes about the Mark of the Beast, and Religious Deception in the year 1999.

I am deeply blessed by the truth you have uttered on those two tapes. I am wondering if you have more tapes that have topics on cults and the danger of tapping in the occult realm and other serious topics on what is going on in our society today. If so can you please send me some, here is \$100 as my offering to the building of the Lord's temple you have in Manchester. (*Jamaica*)

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I wish you and all the saints down there in Jamaica God's blessings. I am also a Jamaican from the parish of St. Catherine, but am now Living in Ontario Canada.

I came across your website, while I was searching for some information on the TRINITY, and I was really inspired by your articles on the nature of God and Christ and just the whole thing about the Trinity. I don't believe in the Trinity because from a Biblical point of view, it is not scriptural, but HISTORICALLY I don't know much about it I need some more information on what happened at Nicea, and how it crossed over into Christianity. So I saw your article and it was very informative on the subject. I have written you this letter to request some tapes on it so I can get more information. I prefer to listen or watch the sermons, rather than doing a lot of reading.

I am requesting about 6 audio tapes and 1 video tape. I would prefer everything on video but it would cost more and I can't afford that right now. This is all for now may God bless you all. Thanks for your time, and attention. (*Canada*)

We received your letter dated 20.1.03 and we thank you for it also for the tape "God's Favoritism."

We are always happy to hear something from your Ministry because we are living isolated and have to serve ourselves with spiritual "food". We do this by reading the newspaper "Open Face" and "Old Paths". We also are studying the books of Sis. White.

We are trying to convince our 4 children and their families that "The Good News About God" is the most important message of today. My wife and I never believed in the doctrine of the Third Person and this is why we were very happy to become acquainted with you and with Allen Stump here in Australia.

We pray that God and His Son may bless you and your Ministry and all the brothers and sisters in Jamaica. (*Australia*)

I have been a Seventh-day Adventist for almost 23 years. Recently I have heard one of your audio tapes of the Trinity.

Please forward further information on your ministry. (*England*)

I always believed that the Heavenly Father blessed Jamaica and Jamaicans but we are too blind to see it. Here is one way in which He has proven it to me. This web site is unique in that it endeavors to explain who Jah is and differentiate between Him and His Son. The truth is in the scriptures but few can see it because most people are blinded by the evil one.

Your discourse on who Heloheim is, is really good and I would like to continue to learn more from you. Please send me a copy of your tape - *The Sanctuary in Hebrews 9* - by David Clayton.

Thank you, and I look forward to continued correspondence with you in the future. (*Canada*)

Some how my husband went on the street and got one of your tracts. I have read it and found it very interesting. So I decided I am going to write to get one of your "Godhead Packages." I am a new follower of Christ, I got saved a couple of months ago, please pray for my strength because I've decided to go all the way with him. God bless you is my prayer. (*Jamaica*)

Thanks a lot for the newsletters and the little book you sent in Nov. of 02, The Mystery Demystified. It is wonderful to understand by God's grace, the truth about Him. And to believe what Jesus said in John 17:3 : eternal life is to know Him (who is one) and Jesus Christ His only begotten Son whom He gave to die for us.

Now that I understand this truth, the Bible becomes clearer as I read it more and more. Praise God!

Brother, the messages you print and also Brother Howard Williams are very enlightening, encouraging and strengthening. I thank God for them and pray His blessings on you both and your families.

Enclosed is a gift for the ministry. Thanks again for the newsletters. God bless. (*Florida*)





# Dare To Be Different

*Continued from p. 9*

His people from a state of wretchedness and misery and has clothed them with His righteousness and glory.

In Matthew 5:13-16 God's people are represented by two outstanding elements: light and salt. Based on their properties, the presence of light and salt are always highlighted and their absence can never be overlooked. A unique feature of light is that whenever present, it dispels all darkness as far as its beams extend. The intensity of some lights are greater than others, however, every light shines. Likewise, an important purpose of salt is to enhance the taste of food with its unique savour. In essence, if the salt has lost its savour, it is absolutely pointless in using it. Can you imagine preparing two meals of the same ingredients, except that one has salt and the other doesn't

and yet they both taste insipid alike? Are you like salt without savour in a meal or are you a light bulb that does not ever shine in the dark? If Christians refuse to be different from those around, then we are merely salt without savour and like a light bulb without a source of energy.

The world is in darkness, but Christ has entrusted us with His glory. As long as we abide in Him, we are light bearers for the world. Therefore, let us shine so those in the dark see Christ through us and glorify Him.

*“You can't do a kindness  
Without a reward  
Not in silver or gold  
But in joy from the Lord—  
You can't light a candle  
To show others the way  
Without feeling the warmth*

*Of that bright ray —  
And you can't pluck a rose  
All fragrant with dew,  
Without part of its fragrance  
Remaining with you...”*

There is great joy and unnumbered blessings in being different from the world and it is God's desire that every individual should attain to this experience. This higher experience that God is calling us into is the greatest that we can ever attain while in this life on earth. What misery and hopelessness if we reject it, but what unfailing joy and peace if we accept.



## ***Open Face***

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