

A Mysterious Light



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*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that
keep the commandments of God, and the faith of
Jesus.
Revelation 14:12*

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A Mysterious Light

The Holy Spirit is a mystery. Ellen White says, “regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.” AA p52. (At times a capital letter has been changed)

Because of this statement, many Seventh-day Adventists will not discuss the Holy Spirit. However, the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy have much to say about the Spirit. It is the “**nature** of the Holy Spirit” we cannot understand, and of this aspect we must remain silent. Ibid p52.

Let us begin with two hymns. First, ‘Immortal, Invisible’, a hymn about God the Father.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.”

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to see
“Tis only the splendour of light hideth Thee.”
New Advent hymnal No.21. 1st and 4th verses.

These verses are drawn from Timothy and James, “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” 1 Timothy 1:17. James 1:17.

Another hymn uses similar words,

“O worship the King, all glorious above,
O gratefully sing His wonderful love,
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of days,
Pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise.

O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space...”
New Advent hymnal No.83. 1st and 2nd verses.

Both hymns tell us God the Father is hidden by light inaccessible, a glorious light that completely surrounds Him.

This is taken from the Psalms. “Bless the Lord O my soul. O Lord my God Thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment...” Psalm 104:1.2.

The light surrounding the Father completely obscures Him, so that “No man hath seen God at any time...” John 1:18.

What about Moses, did He not see God’s face? “And the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.” Exodus 33:11. The patriarch was “highly honored.... He was permitted to see the bright light and excellent glory that enshrouded the Father.” EW p162.

But didn’t the seventy elders see God? Exodus 24:10. “They did not behold the Deity, but they saw the glory of His presence.” PP p312.

According to the Bible, God the Father is “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” 1 Timothy 6:16.

We are counselled, “not (to) attempt to lift with presumptuous hand the curtain behind which He veils His majesty.... It is a proof of His mercy that there is the hiding of His power, that He is enshrouded in the awful clouds of mystery and obscurity; for to lift the curtain that conceals the divine presence is death.” 5T p301.

When Sister White was in vision, she saw the throne of God with the Father seated upon it. She was able to look upon Jesus’ lovely countenance, but the Father was covered with a cloud of glorious light through which her eyes could not penetrate.

‘Does the Father have a form like yours?’ she asked Jesus.

‘Yes’, He replied, but added, ‘If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist.’” EW p54.

Of this vision Ellen later wrote, “The Father was enshrouded with a body of light and glory, so that His person could not be seen; yet I knew that it was the Father and that from His person emanated this light and glory. When I saw this body of light and glory rise from the throne, I knew it was because the Father moved, therefore said, I saw the Father rise. The glory, or excellency, of His form I never saw; no one could behold it and live; yet the body of light and glory that enshrouded His person could be seen.” Ibid p92.

Can we understand the light?

After man sinned, Sister White saw Jesus approach the exceeding bright light surrounding the Father, and her angel said to her, “He is in close converse with His Father’. The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father we could see His person. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with a loveliness which words cannot describe. He then made known to the angelic choir that a way of escape had been made for lost man....” EW p126.

The covenant pledge had been made in eternity between the Father and the Son, but after the first sin, it was difficult for the Father to allow His Son to fulfil His promise.

“Said the angel, ‘Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no. It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His beloved Son to die for him’.” SR p45.

While the prophet was admiring the loveliness of Jesus, she saw “a light coming from the glory that encircled the Father, and as it approached near to me” she said, “my body trembled and shook like a leaf. I thought that if it should come near me I would be struck out of existence, but the light passed me.” EW p70.

After this experience, nineteen year-old Ellen said she had some sense of the “great and terrible God with whom we have to do”, and how limited are the views of some people in regard to the holiness of God. Ibid p70.

The Son’s Glory

When Christ was begotten of the Father in eternity, He was born with the same nature as the eternal God. Being born of the Father, He received all the divine attributes of divinity – the omnipresent Spirit, omniscience, omnipotence, and immortality.

“And since He is the only begotten Son of God, He is of the very substance and nature of God and possesses by birth all the attributes of God, for the Father was pleased that His Son should be the express image of His Person, the brightness of His glory, and filled with all the fullness of the Godhead.” Christ and His Righteousness E.J. Waggoner p11. (Book form said to be a transcript from 1888)

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” John 1:4.

“He possesses immortality in His own right and can confer immortality upon others. Life inheres in Him, so that it cannot be taken from Him...” Ibid p11.

This life is not the physical life given to humanity, “but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life.

But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this from Him. ‘I lay it down of myself’ (John 10:18), He said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man.” 1SM p296. (Paragraph made)

God’s Son inherited -- by birth -- this immortal life, an original and underived life. He inherited all His Father’s divine attributes.

Christ “who being the brightness of his (Father’s) glory, and the express image of his person... Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?...” Hebrews 1:3.4.5. (Compare Hebrews 1:4 with 2:9)

The Father could say of His beloved Son, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” Hebrews 1:8.

God’s Son is a divine Being, a distinct and separate person from His Father. There is a personal Father and a personal Son. 1SM p293. “Christ is one with the Father, but Christ and God are two distinct personages.” 5BC p1148.

However, although separate Beings, they are one through the omnipresent Spirit. And Christ, being divine, is able to give the Spirit to repentant human beings.

“The treasures of eternity have been committed to the keeping of Jesus Christ, to give to whomsoever He will... He will impart the heavenly treasures to those who will believe in Him, look to Him, and abide in Him... He will give them the bread of life, and endow them with the water of life, which shall be in them as a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” 1SM p138.

Lucifer, the first of the covering cherubs, did not appreciate the greatness of God. Holy and undefiled, he “stood in the presence of the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God rested upon him.” PP p35.

But he was jealous of God’s Son.

Eventually God the Father, after dealing patiently with this rebellious angel, informed Lucifer “before the assembled inhabitants of heaven (the King declared) that none but Christ, the only begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will.” PP p36.

He alone, as God’s “co-worker” in creation, was “the only being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.” PP p34. GC p493.

“God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” 8T p268.

God’s Son left a world of indescribable glory, and at the Incarnation, He “laid aside His kingly crown, and yielded up His high position as Commander of the angels...” RH Jan 7.1904. He “veiled the dazzling splendour of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator.” 8T p265.

He, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:6-8.

In other words, Christ, as a divine Being like His Father, had the form of God. “He was rich in heaven, crowned with glory and honor, and for our sakes He became poor. What an act of condescension of the Lord of life and glory, that He might lift up fallen man!” RH Mar 7. 1875.

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8:12.

John the Baptist “came... to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” John 1:7-10.

After John had baptised Jesus, Christ knelt on the banks of the Jordan and prayed.

“His form was bathed in the light that ever surrounds the throne of God.... Direct from the throne issue the beams of His glory. The heavens are opened, and upon the Saviour’s head descends a dovelike form of purest light – fit emblem of Him, the meek and lowly One...” DA p112. (Sentences reversed)

Many conclude that the dove is the third person of a Godhead consisting of three co-equal and co-eternal Persons, but let us read another passage of the same event.

“The heavens were opened to His prayer, and the light of God’s glory, brighter than the sun at noonday, came from the throne of the Eternal, and assuming the form of a dove with the appearance of burnished gold, encircled the Son of God, while the clear voice from the excellent glory was heard in terrible majesty, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’.” IHP p39. ST Aug 7. 1879.

Note, it is the beams of glory from the throne that assumed a dove-like form – the anointing of God the Father upon His beloved Son.

“The prayer of Christ in behalf of lost humanity cleaved its way through every shadow that Satan had cast between man and God, and left a clear channel of communication to the very throne of glory. The gates were left ajar, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of

God, in the form of a dove, encircled the head of Christ, and the voice of God was heard, saying, This is My beloved Son..." 5BC p1078.

"...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power..." Acts 10:38. This anointing was the sign to John that Jesus was the Messiah.

Satan too was at Jordan that day. "He heard the majestic voice of Jehovah that resounded through heaven, and echoed through the earth like peals of thunder... He saw the brightness of the Father's glory overshadowing the form of Jesus... (He) well knew the position which Christ had held in heaven as the Son of God, the beloved of the Father... (and it) filled him with apprehension." 5BC p1078.

The Omnipresent Spirit

"The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. 'The Lord's throne is in heaven' (Psalm 11:4); yet by His Spirit He is everywhere present. He has an intimate knowledge of, and a personal interest in, all the works of His hand." Education p132.

The Spirit is the means whereby God can be everywhere in the universe.

The light that surrounds Him does not diminish as it moves through the universe, because God is its *source*. The Spirit is not merely an outward covering, it emanates from God's very being.

It was the same for Adam and Eve.

"The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden... A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence." COL p310.

The light of God's Spirit radiated from within, giving them garments of glory. "So long as they lived in obedience to God, this robe of light continued to enshroud them." PP p45.

When they sinned, the robe of light "disappeared". Ibid p57. And because of sin, "humanity ceased to be a temple for God." IHP p191.

But praise God He has made a way -- through His Son -- for us to again be His temple. The conditions are "confession, humiliation, repentance and earnest prayer, (these) fulfil the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing." 1SM p121.

At present, the Spirit is not shining visibly in His people, but with the infilling of the Spirit in latter rain power, it *may* be visibly displayed. "Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven." GC p612.

Perhaps not, however, it will be displayed just before the coming of Christ. "The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people. Like peals of loudest thunder His words roll through the earth.

The Israel of God stand listening, with their eyes fixed upward. Their countenances are lighted up with His glory, and shine as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai." GC p640. (Paragraph made)

Until then, the promise is given that "the light which fell from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation." DA p113. (Capital letter changed)

After His resurrection, Jesus met with His disciples in the upper room and said to them, “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. .

This giving of the Spirit was in anticipation of the fullness to be poured out on the fiftieth day, for the disciples were instructed to “wait for the promise of the Father.” Acts 1:4. On the day of Pentecost, that precious Spirit was poured out by Christ on the waiting company. Acts 2:1-4.

“The light, the love and power of the indwelling Christ shone out through them, so that men, beholding, ‘marvelled’... that they had been with Jesus.” STC p80. (Hardback)

“The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit’s grace.” AA p38.

“The Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the only-begotten Son of God, binds the human agent, body, soul, and spirit, to the perfect, divine-human nature of Christ.” 1SM p251.



This union is represented by the vine and the branches, and is the unity for which Christ prayed.

“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... And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one...” John 17:20-23.

The Spirit, proceeding from the Father to the Son, is given to all who have surrendered to Christ. “Jesus came to impart to the human soul the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart...” 1SM p386.

“Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the sanctification of the truth, the believer becomes fitted for the courts of heaven; for Christ works within us, and His righteousness is upon us. Without this no soul will be entitled to heaven...”

By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character.

He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect.” 1SM p395.

Jesus told us to let our light shine before men, and to do this we need the “holy unction from on high”. Jesus said, “The beams of the Sun of Righteousness must shine into (your) own heart if (you) would impart light to others.” Ibid p411. (Tense changed)

It is only as we are partakers of the *holy, divine* Spirit of God that we can have communion with God, and by the same Spirit we have fellowship with other Christians. 1 John 1:6.7.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” 2 Corinthians 13:14.

True fellowship is possible only through the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit, for it is the Spirit that brings us close to God, enabling us to receive the blessings of heaven.

John wrote, “that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John 1:3.

The Spirit of Jesus is with His people, for He says, “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20.

But He promises to be even closer than *with* His people, for He says, “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.” Revelation 3:20.

He will be *in* His people, not simply as a power or an influence, but as our beloved Saviour – in Spirit. His own personal presence will be manifested in the life.

“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 have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his. And if Christ be in you...” Romans 8:9.10.11. 2 Cor 6:16. 2 Tim 1:14.

“Your whole nature will then be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ, and even your thoughts will be subject to Him... By yielding up your will to Christ, your life will be hid with Christ in God and allied to the power which is above all principalities and powers.” 5T p514.

This is 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.” Colossians 1:26.27.

Christ in you – the hope of glory!

“By faith in Him as a personal Saviour the union is formed. The sinner unites his weakness to Christ’s strength, his emptiness to Christ’s fullness, his frailty to Christ’s enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ... Thus through the agency of the Holy Spirit man becomes a partaker of the divine nature.” DA p675.

When speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus likened the Spirit to the wind, but the Spirit is not simply a wind. The description represents an invisible, imperceptible influence, as a “still small voice.” 1 Kings 19:12. (The Spirit is also likened to a dove and to tongues of fire, but these are used by God as descriptive means of teaching a lesson. The dove represents peace; the tongues of fire represent the power of the gift of tongues)

Another Comforter

When the Spirit comes to you, it is the personal presence of the Father and the Son -- in Spirit. It was promised to the disciples by Jesus, and to all who follow Him.

“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. 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*.” John 14:16-21.

One of the disciples asked Jesus, ‘Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?’

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

The prophet comments on this manifestation. “By the Spirit, He (Christ) said, He would manifest Himself to them.” DA p670

When Jesus – in Spirit -- is present in our meetings, or with us in our private worship, He can hear what we are saying. He listens to our prayers, our penitent confessions, our singing.

And He will teach us.

He will enlighten our minds with truth.

He will comfort us.

He will convict us of sin.

He will empower us to overcome.

The omnipresent Spirit is not simply an inert power, it is God’s very real presence with us. It is Christ’s very real presence with us. We can say it is Christ’s Spirit or the Father’s Spirit, it does not matter. According to Scripture, both are dwelling within.

Jesus spoke in the third person grammatically when He spoke of the Spirit, as if another Person. This was not unusual, for He often called Himself the ‘Son of man’. People asked, “...*who is this Son of man?*”, but gradually they understood He spoke of Himself. John 12:34. Mat 16:13. (Sister White did many times. See 1SM p35)

The Holy Spirit is called the third person of the Godhead in the Spirit of Prophecy. DA p671

Is this a problem? No.

Although the Holy Spirit is the presence of Christ in Spirit, it is another means whereby God and Christ can communicate with us. The Father can speak from His throne in heaven, as He did to His Son during His earthly ministry. Jesus spoke to men and women in their presence while on earth. Now both Father and Son can speak by their Spirit.

Of Christ the prophet wrote, “The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the person of humanity and independent thereof.” 14MR p24. MR No.1084.

“Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. 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 p669.

When we speak of God or Christ being with us, we can use the personal pronoun ‘He’, but when we say the Spirit is with us, it does not depreciate the Holy Spirit to use the neutral term ‘it’. This is simply grammar. (Note 1 SM p126 – last paragraph, line 1 and 2)

Sister White does the same. “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.” Signs of the Times, Sept. 27, 1899. (In Ye Shall Receive Power p59, this has wrongly been changed to ‘He’, as have many others in the same devotional. In the Bible, the Greek word ‘autos’ can be translated ‘he, himself, myself’, including ‘itself’, as in Romans 8:16.21.26; 1 Cor 11:14; 3 John 12. Some relate to secular items)

Claim the Promises

As you spend time with God in your place of prayer, let the eye of faith see the throne of God with its glorious light surrounding the Father.

Allow your mind to see Jesus bathed in its glory, and watch as the light falls over the edges of the heavenly city, for “the threshold of heaven is flooded with the glory proceeding from the throne of God, that the light may fall directly on those who are seeking the help that Christ alone can give.” UL p107.

How wonderful to know that when we receive an illumination of a passage of Scripture we have received light directly from the throne of God.

Meditate upon these promises.

As we study the Bible, we can experience the infilling of this wonderful Spirit of truth, and “as the heart is opened to the entrance of the Word, light from the throne of God will shine into the soul.” OHC p31.

To the faithful Christian “is granted the joy of gathering rays of eternal light from the throne of glory, and of reflecting these rays not only on his own path, but on the paths of those with whom he associates.” LHU p244.

“Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service... Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ.” DA p676.677.

“It is as we commune with Christ that precious, holy light shines into our souls, until every chamber is lighted up and we become bright lights in the world, reflecting to others the glory of Christ.” IHP p72.

“The more closely you connect yourself with the source of light and power, the greater light will be shed upon you, and the greater power will be yours to work for God. Rejoice that you are one with God, one with Christ, and with the whole family of heaven.” DA p493.

What about eternity?

When Jesus returns, He will come with His own glory, the glory of the Father and of the holy angels, and “will come clad in the robe of light, which He has worn from the days of eternity.” LHU p373. It is the garment of light surrounding the Father, a covering “such as the angels wear”. SR p21.

And you and I – if faithful -- “may rise from the dust, and stand forth arrayed in garments of light.” SD p124.

“From eternal ages, it was God’s purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. IHP p191.

In the kingdom of heaven, God’s Spirit has no throne or temple, except the dwelling place of every sanctified heart and mind of God’s great family.

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