

HUMAN SPIRIT DIVINE SPIRIT

Edward I Edstrom

Extracts

The original work was written as a study paper. It was printed at the request of the Board of Walla Walla Valley Academy in 1975.

Printed as a book, it is 71 pages.

Rather than printing the whole book, the main portions have been selected and printed in this form, showing clearly our brother's confusion, his concern, and his findings.

May it be a blessing to all who read.

*Prepared by:
Remnant Messages
P. O. Box 378
Ararat, VIC 3377
Australia*

*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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Introduction

Twenty years ago (in 1954), at a monthly workers meeting on Lulengele Mission in Central Africa, our pastors and teachers were very distressed. Islam, the religion of Mohammed, was spreading faster than Christianity. The disciples of the Prophet of 'No God but Allah', the promoters of belief in only ONE God, were 'winning' against the missionaries of what really appeared to be THREE separate, distinct Gods that were 'called' ONE!

My men needed help! The explanations I gave of the nature of God and man didn't satisfy! How was a *committee of three*, though eternal, though in complete agreement, though described as ONE, really one? Wasn't the being called the Father, God? Wasn't the man called Jesus, God? And what of the Holy Spirit? In what way can *three individual, personal entities* honestly be ONE?

I went home for lunch, heavy, burdened in spirit. I, the one who should help didn't know the answers! For thousands of Africans in 'my' territories, eternal life was at stake! To fail to know or to learn the real truth in these matters would, as I believed, keep them from the genuine hope of the life to come.

In my pain, I opened the book 'The Great Controversy', at page 493 and read these words, "Christ, the Word.... One with the eternal Father.... The ONLY BEING in all the UNIVERSE that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God'. I read on, ".... And to Christ, equally with the Father, all heaven gave allegiance." Hadn't I just told my leaders that three sat on the creation committee?

At that moment began a search for all the revealed truth available on this problem. It is hard to describe the longing that blossomed that day for a truer, a clearer human understanding of the nature and reality of my God whom I had been sent to represent in the villages of Africa!

Confusion

The problem I faced was serious! God had taught His ancient people clearly that God is ONE. “I AM THE Lord your God.... You shall have no other Gods before ME.” (Ex 20:2.3) “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord....” (Deut 6:4) “... knowledge of the Holy One.... What is His name, and what is His Son’s Name? Surely you know!” (Prov 30:1-4.) When Jesus was asked the question, “Which commandment is the first of all?” He answered, “The first of all is, ‘Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, The Lord is one...’” (Mark 12:29-32)

Now I had *just read* of the only Being who was one with the Father, the only begotten of this Eternal Father, the Son, who was one with Him in “nature, in character, and in purpose”, the only one “in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God”. (GC 493)

And to these truths these thoughts so often repeated, “... three living persons of the heavenly trio....” (EV 615) “The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption.” (CH 222) Then my reason, given by God Himself, spoke out, ‘But, three aren’t one! Three are three, one is one! Truth must first make sense’

How could I keep faith in the Bible as the Word of Truth, in the answers of Jesus who is Truth, in the inspiration of Ellen White as God’s messenger, and in my own God-created reason, my ability to read and make sense out of what I read --- if I tried to accept all these apparently conflicting ‘truths’ all together, at the same moment?

Is faith the science of unseen realities (5 RH 86) or is it believing what doesn’t make understandable meaning? Would a loving Creator leave me in this confusion after giving me a mind created in the likeness of his own creative mind? Would He expect me to suffer on through the years ignorant of His nature, His reality, or wouldn’t He rather at least try to give me a knowledge of Himself and His Son whom to know is life eternal? (John 17)

I set out for a solution. I saw also that, should I find one, I would then have a better way to bring Jesus, the “only mediator between God and man” (1 Tim 2:5) to all the people of the world, especially to the Arabic and Hebrew thinkers who have misunderstood true Christianity’s teaching about the oneness of God, having for centuries recognized the same problem with which I had just been so clearly faced.

Solution

In the years that have followed, I have come to an understanding that has helped me to grasp better the whole plan of redemption: God’s relationship to man, and man’s to God; what God must do for man, and what man must do for himself; how man, though fallen, can again connect with the Eternal One and find the only possible way of human happiness (AG 99); how man, created to have dominion, glory, and dignity, can again find these in ‘submitting’ to Jesus!

Extracts

Who is God? What is His Nature?

The most basic truth of God’s Word is that there is only ONE God! Jesus Himself said that this is the first commandment of all. (Mark 12:29) In the realization of this belief, the unity of God’s creation finds its base, its source. With all ‘eyes’ on the ONE Lord, His creatures are brought together in Him! It is tragic that Christians so often give the impression that there are Three Gods, not ONE! This misconception has, in large areas of the world, made it almost impossible for the gospel of Jesus to make converts. People are left to die in their sins, in their loneliness, without knowing their Mediator, their only Way to God! Who would doubt Satan’s interest in keeping this ignorance current, up to date, orthodox! Would not the above heart-rending fact of history, past and contemporary, be enough to drive One who loved all men or brothers to do all He could to clear up the fog, to remove the roadblocks, to make the light shine in the dark places?

It is true that Jesus did tell His disciples to make converts, baptizing them in the ‘three-fold name’ of God – Father, Son and Spirit. (Matt 28:19.20. 6T 91) The apostle Paul did write of the “grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.” RSV 2 Cor 13:14) And still we must not forget the great truth taught so well -- “... the Lord our God is one Lord...” (Deut 6:4)

In several places Ellen White has spoken of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit as “three living persons”. (Ev 614-616) In another place she has explained herself more fully, saying that the Father “is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”, while the Son “is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested”, and that the Comforter “is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace” to all who accept Jesus. (Ev 614-616) In a multitude of places, this writer refers only to the Father and the Son. Here is one example, “In the Bible every duty is made plain. Every lesson given is comprehensible. *Every lesson reveals the Father and the Son.*” (8T 157) Then again in many references we find that the Divine Son was the ONLY BEING who was ONE with God, the ONLY One who could enter into all HIS counsels and plans! (DA 22. GC 393. PP 34-36. KH363)

How should these apparently contradictory statements be understood? Is it important that we be concerned? “And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” (RSV John 17:3)

I believe that I must know.

“God is Spirit” Jesus said. (John 4:24) Ellen White, commenting says, “God is a spirit; yet he is a personal being, for man was made in His image”. She continues, “As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son...”, and then, “The Lord’s throne is in heaven; *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.” (Ed 131-133) The expression, *a personal being*, as used here, means to me that God, the Father, is a real being in the fullest sense of the word – a personal

spirit made visible to His unfallen creatures through His divine form, whose 'physical' presence brings them the greatest joy and comfort.

Who then, is this God, who is loved if known? (DA22)

He is the Divine Father existing from eternity on two levels of reality. (1) the all-knowing, the everywhere-present, the all-powerful Spirit of the Creator. (2) made visible through His divine form and features. In His image we were created. From the wholeness of His being flows the life of the universe, original, genuine LOVE! (MB 34) He is the God whom we worship. He is the God whom we love because He first loved us. To Him every knee must bow! As our King, *His own Spirit* 'fills' the *universe* while holy angels veil their faces before Him as He 'sits' on His throne in Heaven. *His ultimate reality is His own Holy Spirit*. His form gives the comfort and joy of His visible features. "We shall see His face and be glad". He is the Eternal Presence known through His 'physical presence' in the place called Heaven. Because He is a person, His spirit, reaching out beyond the limits of 'material' form, comes to His creatures as a person, as REAL a person as He is, enthroned at the centre of the universe! Made in His likeness, we have some idea of the nature of our Creator.

In the beyond-human-comprehension-ages of eternity, this Father had a divine Son, begotten of Himself. Since there is no mother involved, this Son could be no other than a second form of Himself, having, sharing the ONE Eternal, Personal Divine Spirit. Yet since He, as a Son, had His own form and 'brain', He would have his own personality while being ONE with His Father in Spirit, in NATURE, having the same purposes, goals, CHARACTER. With this Son the Father planned and carried out the creation of the universe making beings in Their own image who had created 'copies' of Their creative Mind, Spirit, Soul. *This Son was the ONE BEING who was ONE with God!* (GC 363) To Him equally with the Father all the universe gave allegiance. By the power of Their creative Spirit, the Son spoke the worlds into existence. By the love inherent in that Spirit, They woo the hearts of fallen humans today, as They always have since the origin of evil on our planet.

To explain the nature of God's Spirit is impossible for any of His creatures! How could a man who cannot even understand his own spirit with its own intellect, affections, and will, *comprehend* the Soul of his Maker? What foolishness it would be even to try! *But the things He has revealed* "belong to us and our children forever". (Deut 29:29) All that we can know we should know! Notice His promise, "If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally." (DA 668) Our God by His own divine Spirit enlightens the understanding and opens to the mind the deep things of His Holy Word.

How can I neglect His offer!

"By His Spirit He (God) is everywhere present." (MH 417) Through a PART of Himself, His inner being, His inner SELF, His ultimate inner REALITY, the source or seat of His VITALITY, His inner PERSON, the CENTER of His FULL person, His SOUL, His MIND, His breath of LIFE, God reaches to the actual 'ends' of His infinite universe 'touching' everything and everyone with His own REAL PRESENCE! This ONE master Spirit of the universe, this ONE SPIRIT of the Living God is the ONE Spirit that 'animates' the TWO visible REAL forms of the ONE God – the Eternal FATHER and His SON. (2RH 23. DA22) This ETERNAL Spirit is then the 'life-link' of infinite WISDOM, of Eternal LOVE, the LIGHT and the LIFE of God's creation that is the PERSONAL ONENESS of the Father and Son,. "The world's Redeemer was equal with God,.... He declared that He had no existence separate from the Father...." (5BC 1142)

Thus, by this SPIRITUAL presence, God has ever been at work throughout the whole of His dominion, and by this PERSONAL presence, He has been taking knowledge of, giving life to, and guiding all! Moses wrote of His "moving upon the face of the waters" in the making of our earth. (Gen 1:2) He also wrote of His work at the time of the great flood. (Gen 6:3) David sang so beautifully of the ever-with-us Spirit of God (Ps 139) The hearts of angels and men were designed by our God to be tabernacles for the indwelling of His own HEART, SOUL, SPIRIT!

And so we see ONE God known to His universe through THREE PERSONAL MANIFESTATIONS of Himself: first, the Father – the Eternal Personal Spirit in union and operating through the original divine FORM of the same God; second, the SAME Eternal Personal Spirit interacting through the BEGOTTEN FORM OF THE same God; and third, the SAME ONE Eternal Personal SPIRIT at work in, and upholding, all the works of creation above and beyond the ‘material’ visible presence of this Father and Son. Here we have NOT three Gods, but ONE! Here also we have ONE God, NOT two, yet, however, two visible, ‘tangible’, real FORMS which bring to a senses’ experience, the same ONE Divine Spirit!

An Intruder

The first of all God’s angels, Lucifer, after ages of joy, obedience and loyalty, began to misuse the *marvelous creative mind* that he had been given. He was the highest of the angels. He had a throne given him by God. In appearance he resembled the Son, for God had created him as much like Himself as possible! Questions of his own origin, questions of the Son’s relation to the Father as compared with his, were entertained until he doubted the truths he had known and believed. Perhaps he was a ‘twin son’ of God! How did he know? Could it be that THEY were keeping him from his rights to share in Their councils and plans?

These subtle doubts he began to spread among the angels. The King of the universe saw it necessary to call all the hosts of Heaven before Him to make plain to all, the true position of His Son.

As they came together, “the Son of God shared the Father’s throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled them both.” PP 34-36. The King explained the true situation; none but He who has life in Himself, unborrowed, can give life. No other than His only begotten Son was uncreated, therefore, no one but He could be worshipped, no angel could enter into all His plans and activities!

The heart-rending story of the events that followed this meeting is well known; the revolt in Heaven; the expulsion of the incorrigible angels; and the fall of Adam and Eve, causing the disappointments, loneliness, slavery, shame, pain, and death of the following thousands of years!

Humans, deceived and overcome, needed a way back to purity, back to communion and fellowship with their Creator-Father. Before the Earth was brought into existence, God and His Son had planned a way should men fall to the tempter: the Son, the second form of the Father, would give up His divine body forever; be born of a woman into the human race, living on Earth the life of Heaven; die as a human that the Father might extend a period of probation to these who had lost a right to life (having broken the law of life), become the divine-human LINK that brings the recreating, restoring, rebeautifying Spirit of the Creator into the spirits of men, making them again as pure, as whole, as perfect, as if they had never sinned! (TM 40. 508)

Only one Being in all the universe could do this service for man – the Divine Son! “Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known” and reveal the contrast between God’s character and the character of Satan. (DA 22) “The only Being who was one with God lived the law in humanity”; was born into the life of a common laborer, and worked with His earthly guardian at the carpenter’s bench. (KH 363) Born of Mary while still partaking of the divine Nature, “He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God”. (1 SM 226-227. 5BC 1114. 1146)

Into His nature had flowed two streams – the Life of God and the life of humanity. Still ONE with God, He had become also one with man! By His divine-human Spirit He shared the Spirit of the infinite God, while by the same divine-human Spirit, He could enter the human soul and cleanse it, and finally unite it in an eternal, mystical union with His own soul, making man a joint heir with Himself to the throne of the universe. (MYP 110)

Even now, Jesus sets man free – free from the bondage of trying to be wise above the wisdom of His creator, free from the slavery of

perverved appetites, free from the cruelty of the spirits of demons that torture his mind, free from the hunger and thirst of the human heart!....

This understanding of the ONENESS of God and of the reality of the human and the divine spirit, with the possibility of their union, has been very helpful and gratifying to me in my attempts to bring the message of Jesus to people of Jewish, Islamic and Unitarian faiths. I have gone to Rabbis of the great synagogues of Montreal and explained to them these concepts of God and Jesus. They have marvelled, finding no way of denying the possibility of Jesus being the Son of God. To everyone I can go fearlessly believing and teaching that God is truly ONE!

The only question that remains for all is, ‘**Will I accept Him?**’

If you have enjoyed this booklet and would like to read more material on the subject, please write to the address below.

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Australia

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