

Pantheism - LAUDATO SI' - Dr. Kellogg & Ellen White

WHAT IS PANTHEISM?

Pantheism - Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantheism>

Pantheism is the belief that reality is identical with divinity, or that all-things compose an all-encompassing, immanent god.

Question: "What is pantheism?"

<https://www.gotquestions.org/pantheism.html>

Answer: Pantheism is the view that God is everything and everyone and that everyone and everything is God. Pantheism is similar to polytheism (the belief in many gods), but goes beyond polytheism to teach that everything is God. A tree is God, a rock is God, an animal is God, the sky is God, the sun is God, you are God, etc. Pantheism is the supposition behind many cults and false religions (e.g., Hinduism and Buddhism to an extent, the various unity and unification cults, and "mother nature" worshippers).

Pantheism and Religion

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pantheism>

Pantheistic ideas—and most importantly the belief that God is equal to the universe, its physical matter, and the forces that govern it—are found in the ancient books of Hinduism, in the works of many Greek philosophers, and in later works of philosophy and religion over the centuries. Much modern New Age spirituality is pantheistic. But most Christian thinkers reject pantheism because it makes God too impersonal, doesn't allow for any difference between the creation and the creator, and doesn't seem to allow for humans to make meaningful moral choices.

NEXT - LAUDATO SI' & Pantheism

LAUDATO SI' & Pantheism

ENCYCLICAL LETTER LAUDATO SI' OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

CHAPTER TWO THE GOSPEL OF CREATION

87. When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them. This sentiment finds magnificent expression in the hymn of Saint Francis of Assisi:

Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
who is the day and through whom you give us light.

And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour;
and bears a likeness of you, Most High.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather
through whom you give sustenance to your creatures.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water,
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you light the night,
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong".[64]

(http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

NEXT - Dr. John H. Kellogg, Pantheism & Ellen White

Dr. John H. Kellogg, Pantheism & Ellen White

<http://www.ourprophetsaid.com/kellogg-s-belief.html>

Battle Creek Sanitarium, Michigan



Dr. John H. Kellogg had begun to teach clients at the Battle Creek Sanitarium a view of God that was not in harmony with Adventist understanding.

He learned his false understanding in 1895 from Dr A.H. Lewis, a Seventh-day Baptist, when this gentleman visited Battle Creek and the Kellogg home. (Mrs Kellogg was a Seventh-day Baptist)

The doctor kept his views to himself until 1897, when he gave a series of talks at the Ministerial Institute, preceding the General Conference session, in the College View Church, Lincoln Nebraska. They were published in the General Conference Bulletin and distributed world-wide. Sister White said he was presenting “spiritualistic theories regarding the personality of God.” 1 Selected Messages p204.

When Brother Palmer and his wife read an article of Kellogg’s in the ‘Good Health’ magazine, Sister Palmer said, “That seems like another god.” 1919 Bible Conference transcript. Jul 13.1919.

Lectures by Kellogg and others were also given at the 1899 and 1901 General Conference sessions saying, "There is an intelligence that is present in the plants, in all vegetation... Wherever God's life is, God Himself is. You cannot separate God and His life. That is the reason why God is everywhere... God is in me, and everything I do is God's power; every single act is a creative act." General Conference Bulletin. Second quarter. 1901.

Ellen White also spoke at these two sessions, where she said, "Nature is not God, and never was God. The voice of nature testifies of God... but nature is not God." General Conference Bulletin. March 6. 1899.

In a short time, Battle Creek College and the Sanitarium were rampant with these pantheistic, philosophical teachings. 'Keepers of the Flame' No.6 'The Lesser Light'. Adventist Media Centre.

Many letters of warning were written by the prophet to Dr Kellogg and other brethren, telling them that the ideas being put forward did not harmonise with light God had given her.

But the major challenge came in 1903.

After the Battle Creek Sanitarium burned to the ground, Kellogg printed a 568-page book entitled 'The Living Temple' in which he had placed his theories. Ellen White said they were "spiritualistic" and "akin to pantheism". Special Testimonies B. No.6. p41. Not only that, but these teachings were the "alpha of deadly heresies." 1 Selected Messages p200.

In the first edition of 'Living Temple', Kellogg said, "There is present in the tree a power which creates and maintains it, a tree-maker in the tree, a flower-maker in the flower -- a divine architect who understands every law of proportion, an infinite artist who possesses a limitless power of expression in color and form; there is, in all the world about us, an infinite, divine, though invisible, Presence..." The Living Temple p29. 3000 copies were printed by an outside printer after the Review and Herald burned to the ground, including the plates for the book.

Sister White received a copy of 'The Living Temple', but knowing it did not bear the "endorsement of God", placed it on her bookshelf unread. Ibid p202.

One day her son said, "Mother, you ought to read at least some parts of the book that you may see whether they are in harmony with the light that God has given you." He sat down beside me, and we read the paragraphs to which he referred.

When we had finished I turned to him and said, 'These are the very sentiments against which I was bidden to speak in warning at the very beginning of my public work... 'Living Temple' contains the alpha of these theories. The omega would follow in a little while. I tremble for our people.

These beautiful representations are similar to the temptation that the enemy brought to Adam and Eve in Eden... In 'Living Temple' the assertion is made that God is in the flower, in the leaf, in the sinner.

But God does not live in the sinner. The Word declares that He abides only in the hearts of those who love Him and do righteousness. God does not abide in the heart of the sinner; it is the enemy who abides there." Sermons and Talks . Vol. 1. p341.343.

Sister White asked Dr Kellogg to revise the book, and prior to hearing that the revision had been done, she stated, "It will be said that 'Living Temple' has been revised, but the Lord has shown me that the writer has not changed..." 1 Selected Messages p199. Some were in favour of giving the book a wide circulation. "It contains the very sentiments that Sister White has been teaching", they said. Upon hearing this, the prophet was "struck right to the heart". She lamented, "I felt heartbroken; for I knew that this representation of the matter was not true." Ibid p203.

It was a very stressful time for Ellen White. "The battle nearly killed me." she said. "I saw what was coming in, and I saw that our brethren were blind. They did not realize the danger. Our young people, especially, were in danger. They delighted in the beautiful representation--God in the flower, God in the leaf, God in the tree. But if God be in these things, why not worship them? 1 Sermons and Talks p344.

'The Living Temple' began to circulate among Adventists, and many saw its sentiments as 'new light' on the personality of God and the Holy Spirit.

It is clear that Dr Kellogg had changed his belief on the doctrine of God, and was now a Trinitarian. He had been influenced by non-Adventist Trinitarians who were expressing their belief in God with beautiful words. One such sentiment was written by W.E. Boardman in his book 'The Higher Christian Life'.

"The Father is as the light invisible; the Son is as the light embodied; the Spirit is the light shed abroad."

"The Father is like the dew, invisible vapor; the Son is like the dew gathered in beautiful form; the Spirit is like the dew fallen to the seat of life."

“The Father is like the invisible vapor; the Son is like the leaden cloud; the Spirit is rain fallen and working in refreshing power”. Special Testimonies Series B No.7 p62.

Again the prophet gave a warning. “Those who have been feeding their minds on the supposedly excellent, but spiritualistic theories of ‘Living Temple’, are in a very dangerous place. For the past fifty years I have been receiving intelligence regarding heavenly things. But the instruction given me has now been used by others to justify and endorse theories in ‘Living Temple’ that are of a character to mislead.” Manuscript Release Vol 4. p248.

Kellogg described the power of God in creation like “a living boot, with little boots coming out of the seams.” His conclusion was that “there must be a Bootmaker in the boot. So there is present in the tree a power which creates and maintains it, a Treemaker in the tree.” The Living Temple p29.

Sister White called these philosophical concepts “spiritualistic representations” and “deadly heresy”, not only because they were akin Kellogg stated in a letter to W.W. Prescott that people understood the meaning of the Godhead as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, but this was not true. It was only the understanding of those who had accepted the Trinity, not brethren with the pioneer belief.

Kellogg felt the problem had been solved and said, “The whole thing is now clear to my mind. I confess it was not quite clear before....” Ibid.
The prophet was grieved.

At the 1903 Autumn Council, Arthur G. Daniells was concerned that the supporters of ‘Living Temple’ would cause a confrontation, and he dared not call for a vote. The very understanding of the character and personality of God were under threat. Near the end of the council, a letter arrived from Ellen White.

“Be careful how you sustain the sentiments of this book regarding the personality of God.... it has been represented to me that the writer of this book is on a false track. He has lost sight of the distinguishing truths for this time.” Keepers of the Flame. No.6. Dr Alan Lindsay.

Praising God for her letter, Daniells wrote back to Ellen White saying, “This communication, calling our brethren to take their stand, brought great relief to me, and the terrible load that had at times almost crushed me, has, in a measure, rolled off from me.” A.G. Daniells to Ellen White. October 20. 1903.

Immediately after the council, Kellogg wrote a number of letters explaining his position. The first was to W.W. Prescott.

“You, Elder Daniells, and others have spoken about a fine line of distinction, but I could not quite see what it was, but this statement by Sister White makes it clear to me.

The difference is this: When we say God is in the tree, the word ‘God’ is understood in that the Godhead is in the tree, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, whereas the proper understanding in order that wholesome conceptions should be preserved in our minds, is that God the Father sits upon his throne in heaven where God the Son is also; while God’s life, or Spirit or presence is the all-pervading power which is carrying out the will of God in all the universe.” Letter: J H Kellogg to W W Prescott. Oct 25. 1903.

Three days later Dr Kellogg wrote a letter to George Butler, summing up his feelings. “As far as I can fathom, the difficulty which is found in ‘The Living Temple’, the whole thing may be simmered down to the question: Is the Holy Ghost a person? You say no. I had supposed the Bible said this for the reason that the personal pronoun ‘he’ is used in speaking of the Holy Ghost.

Sister White uses the pronoun ‘he’ and has said in so many words that the Holy Ghost is the third person of the Godhead. How the Holy Ghost can be the third person and not be a person at all is difficult for me to see.” Letter: J H Kellogg to G I Butler. Oct 28. 1903.

The following day, Brother Daniells wrote to W C White regarding changes to the book. “Ever since the council closed I have felt that I should write you confidentially regarding Dr Kellogg’s plans for revising and republishing ‘The Living Temple’.... He (Kellogg) said that some days before coming to the council, he had been thinking the matter over, and began to see that he had made a slight mistake in expressing his views. He said that all the way along he had been troubled to know how to state the character of God and his relation to his creation works...

He then stated that his former views regarding the trinity had stood in his way of making a clear and absolutely correct statement; but that within a short time he had come to believe in the trinity and could now see pretty clearly where all the difficulty was, and believed that he could clear the matter up satisfactorily.

He told me that he now believed in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and his view was that it was God the Holy Ghost, and not God the Father, that filled all space, and every living thing. He said if he had believed this before writing the book, he could have expressed his views without giving the wrong impression the book now gives.

I placed before him the objections I found in the teaching, and tried to show him that the teaching was so utterly contrary to the gospel that I did not see how it could be revised by changing a few expressions.

We argued the matter at some length in a friendly way; but I felt sure that when we parted, the doctor did not understand himself, nor the character of his teaching. And I could not see how it would be possible for him to flop over, and in the course of a few days fix the books up so that it would be all right.” Letter: A G Daniells to W C White. Oct 29. 1903 p1.2. (Emphasis added)

In another letter to Brother Butler four months later, Kellogg said, “I believe this Spirit of God to be a personality you don’t. But this is purely a question of definition. I believe the Spirit of God is a personality; you say, No, it is not a personality. Now the only reason why we differ is because we differ in our ideas as to what a personality is. Your idea of personality is perhaps that of semblance to a person or a human being.” Letter: J H Kellogg to G I Butler. Feb 21. 1904.

Obviously the words ‘person’ and ‘personality’ were (and still are) difficult to define. Dr Kellogg had come to believe the Holy Spirit was a separate God-Being (as taught in the Trinitarian doctrine, although he uses the word ‘personality’), whereas the church believed it was the divine omnipresence of God and Christ. The difficulty lay in both calling the Spirit a person or personality, as both meant something different. The pioneer teaching was that the Spirit is the person of God and Christ in their omnipresence.

Six weeks after Dr Kellogg wrote to Brother Butler, he received a response, “So far as Sister White and you being in perfect agreement, I shall have to leave that entirely between you and Sister White. Sister White says there is not perfect agreement; you claim there is.

I know some of her remarks seem to give you strong ground for claiming that she does. I am candid enough to say that, but I must give her the credit until she disowns it of saying there is a difference too, and I do not believe you can fully tell just what she means.

God dwells in us by His Holy Spirit, as a Comforter, as a Reprover, especially the former. When we come to Him we partake of Him in that sense, because the Spirit comes forth from Him; it comes forth from the Father and the Son. It is not a person walking around on foot, or flying as a literal being, in any such sense as Christ and the Father are – at least, if it is, it is utterly beyond my comprehension of the meaning of language or words.” Letter: G I Butler to J H Kellogg. April 5. 1904. (Emphasis added)

Sister White gave the author of 'The Living Temple' warning after warning. In one letter she said, "Had God desired to be represented as dwelling personally in the things of nature – in the flower, the tree, the spear of grass – would not Christ have spoken of this to His disciples? To take the works of God, and represent them to be God, is a fearful misrepresentation..."

I tell you, my brother, that the most spiritual-minded Christians are liable to be deceived by these beautiful, seducing, flattering theories. But in the place of honoring God, these theories, in the minds of those who receive them, bring Him down to a low level, where He is nothingness." Manuscript Release Vol 21 p171.

To church members she wrote, "I must warn our brethren and sisters not to enter into controversy over the presence and personality of God. The statements made in 'Living Temple' in regard to this point are incorrect. The Scripture used to substantiate the doctrine there set forth, is Scripture misapplied. I am compelled to speak in denial of the claim that the teachings in 'Living Temple' can be sustained by statements from my writings. There may be in this book expressions and sentiments that are in harmony with my writings. And there may be in my writings many statements which, taken from their connection, and interpreted according to the mind of the writer of 'Living Temple', would seem to be in harmony with the teachings of this book. This may give apparent support to the assertion that the sentiments in 'Living Temple' are in harmony with my writings. But God forbid that this sentiment should prevail." 1 Selected Messages p203.

In 1904 another vision was given, in which the doctor was speaking before his associate physicians and ministers of the gospel.

"The subject upon which he was speaking was life, and the relation of God to all living things. In his presentations he cloaked the matter somewhat, but in reality he was presenting, as of the highest value, scientific theories which are akin to pantheism... I was astonished to see with what enthusiasm the sophistries and deceptive theories were received. The influence of this talk gave the speaker encouragement to call for a council of our brethren at Battle Creek, for a further examination of these seducing sentiments." Series B. No.6. p210.

Some of the brethren spoke to Sister White about investigating the doctor's beliefs, but the prophet said, "We have no such investigation to make..." 1 Selected Messages p200.

Why would she not look into the subject?

Simply because it contradicted the truth God had given at the beginning. "We are to hold to the sure pillars of our faith. The principles of truth that God revealed to us are

our only true foundation. They have made us what we are. The lapse of time has not lessened their value.” Ibid p201.

What do you think the prophet would say today if she could see the writings of many of our leading brethren quoting her words to prove she was a Trinitarian?

I will leave it to you to decide.

Much of the material in this page is taken from the book 'Removing the Pillar' and 'Nothing to Fear' Book 2. by Margaretha Tierney. See www.removingthepillar.com