

# The Foundation of Our Faith

160 Years of Christology in Adventism



Allen Stump

# The Foundation of Our Faith

*Over 160 years of  
Seventh-day Adventist Christology*

**Allen Stump**

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**Acknowledgment:** I wish I to thank all the wonderful people who have worked so hard to make this book possible. This is not simply a reprint of *The Foundation of Our Faith*, but it is a major upgrade. Many pages of new material have been included, and the proof-reading process has been continued which has resulted in fewer typographical errors and a clearer content of material. We ask that you forgive us for any imperfections that remain.

I wish to express a heart-felt thanks to all the brothers and sisters at Smyrna who have worked so tirelessly over the years to see this book move from its original publication in 1997 to this sixth edition. May it prove to be a rich blessing to you, the reader, is the earnest prayer of us all.

*Allen Stump*

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**All emphasis in this book is supplied unless otherwise noted.**

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## How Firm a Foundation

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
Who unto the Saviour for refuge have fled?*

*“Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed;  
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;  
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.*

*“When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

*“When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.*

*“The soul that on Jesus doth lean for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to His foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I’ll never, no, never, no, never forsake.”*

## Introduction

Paul admonishes us to “look unto Jesus (Hebrews 12:2).” The importance of looking to Jesus and knowing God, both intellectually and experimentally, can never be overestimated. Our Saviour said: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).”

The true knowledge of God and his character was, to a large degree, covered up during the Dark Ages when the papacy was at its height. God raised up the Reformation to dispel this darkness. At first, the love of the truth permeated the hearts of the reformers; however, gradually the flame of love began to grow dim. Instead of continuing the Reformation which would have resulted in the purification of the church, the Protestants quit protesting and quit reforming! Friendship with the Roman Church, responsible for the blood of martyrs, became acceptable. Compromises were made by the successors of the reformers and the Reformation was checked.

The Advent movement was raised up by God to finish the Reformation that great leaders, like John Huss and Martin Luther, had begun. Huss, Luther, and others were given great light to share with the world. However, the brightness of all of God’s truths for the last days was too blinding for the darkness of the world during the 15th and 16th century. God’s plan was to continue shedding more light as the spiritual eyes of the people became opened and acclimated. From approximately 1844 to shortly after 1888, God granted special light to his people. However, the light which God in his mercy gave to the Advent people is today accounted as error by the spiritual successors of that movement! Yet, we were counseled, “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history (Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of James and Ellen White*, p. 196).” The purpose of this book is to review the leading of the Lord in our past history and to biblically examine the foundation of our faith as delivered to the saints.

Without question, the Advent movement is at a crisis point in its history. Let us remember what the servant of the Lord has written: “If God abhors

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one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 281).”

God is restoring to Adventists the truths that founded the movement. Only as we accept this firm foundation can the increased light that God’s Word promises (Proverbs 4:18) be given. This light will never contradict old truths, but will make them shine with greater brilliance! Jesus said, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself (John 7:17).” Beloved, “God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 224, 225).”

In 1888, the *beginning* of the “loud cry” went forth. Now, over one hundred years later, God is rekindling the flame of that “most precious message.” We can have a part in giving this message only as we accept it into our hearts. May the sweet Spirit of the Father and his only begotten Son continue to lead and comfort you is my prayer.

*Allen Stump*

# Chapter 1

## A Deep-Laid Foundation

The disciple Jude writes: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that *ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints* (Jude 3).” “The faith” which Jude refers to is the body of truths we hold concerning our Christian belief. Peter says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: *Whom resist stedfast in the faith*, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world (1 Peter 5:8, 9).” Both these writers encourage the believer to hold onto the faith.

“The faith” is to be distinguished from the phrase “your faith.” “Your faith” refers to the believer’s personal experience, “the trial of *your faith* (1 Peter 1:7).” “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to *your faith* virtue; and to virtue knowledge (2 Peter 1:5).”

Revelation 14:12 states: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” While much attention has been given to the phrase “they that keep the commandments of God,” it should be noted that those who receive the seal of God and avoid the mark of the beast also “keep . . . the faith of Jesus.” The phrase “the faith of Jesus” serves as an object of the verb “keep.” Thus, the remnant will be those who “earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3).”

Within Adventism “the faith” includes not only the body of truths that were established early in the apostolic age, but also those special truths the Bible indicates would be revealed in the last days.<sup>1</sup> These special truths are known within Adventism as the “three angels’ messages.” The first part of this study will cover the method by which these truths were established and give evidence for the following points concerning the three angels’ messages:

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1. See Daniel and Revelation.

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- Their development came from Bible study and revelation.
- The foundational points were established early in our experience.
- These points are not to be moved or changed.
- Any deviation from these truths would be apostasy.

We will briefly note each point. The main doctrines and foundational points of our faith were established through much Bible study and with the aid of divine revelations given to Sister Ellen G. White. Secondly, these main foundational points were established early, by 1850. Thirdly, the Scriptures state: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do (Psalm 11:3)?” The Scriptures also teach that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day (Proverbs 4:18).” However, the “shining light” that grows brighter will not darken that which has been established as truth! Fourthly, deviation from these truths brings apostasy which, if continued, results in a city that was once faithful becoming a “harlot.” (See Isaiah 1:21.)

Let us begin first by noting the method with which the apostolic faith was developed. The apostle Peter states:

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Peter tells us that “the faith” was revealed through the prophets as they were moved by “the Holy Ghost” or, as he says in his first epistle, “the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11).” Moses prophesied concerning Christ: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him (Deuteronomy 18:18).” The book of Revelation begins: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John (Revelation 1:1).” Here we see that God communicates his will through the prophets. “The faith” is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone ( Ephesians 2:20).” “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11, 12).”

### **Doctrinal Development From Bible Study and Revelation**

The beliefs of Christianity were delivered by the prophets, and the special aspects of our faith occurred in a similar manner. Sister White, writing of the development of our faith, states:

Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, "We can do nothing more," the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, pp. 56, 57).<sup>2</sup>

Here we see the dual aspect of Bible study and revelation. The brethren would come together for study and prayer and would sometimes continue "through the entire night." "Sometimes the sun would rise before they would give up (*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 345)." When they could go no further in their study, Sister White "would be taken off in vision, and instruction would be given (*Ibid.*)." Note that it was not new scripture but "a clear explanation of the [Scriptural] passages" they had been studying that was given by revelation. Simply, she was given understanding on how to "rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15)." As she could write later, "In the word of God we have found the truth that substantiates our faith (*The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters*, p. 257)."

Yet, as Ellen White's grandson, Arthur White, wrote, ". . . this is not the full story. The Lord manifested Himself in a manner that made it forever clear that what took place was beyond human manipulation (*Ellen G. White: The Early Years*, p. 145)." Sister White wrote:

During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. *My mind was locked*, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God. *The brethren knew that*

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2. See also *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 206, 207.

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*when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given (Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 207; 1904).*

In the early days of the message, when our numbers were few, we studied diligently to understand the meaning of many scriptures. At times it seemed as if no explanation could be given. *My mind seemed to be locked to an understanding of the Word*; but when our brethren who had assembled for study, came to a point where they could go no farther, and had recourse to earnest prayer, the Spirit of God would rest upon me, and I would be taken off in vision, and be instructed in regard to the relation of scripture to scripture (*The Review and Herald*, June 14, 1906).

Sister White states that during the time that our doctrines were being formulated she could not understand the Scriptures and be of help to the brethren in a normal manner. Her expression was that her “mind was locked.” However, when the brethren could do no more, she would be given an explanation of the meaning of the passages and this was done under such circumstances that it was beyond “human manipulation.” Thus, by both Bible study and revelation, “the faith” was established. Writing also in the *Review* article, she noted:

These experiences were repeated over and over and over again. Thus many truths of the third angel’s message were established, point by point (*Ibid.*).

The following statements point out the Divine help that was given in the establishing of “the faith”:

*The principles of truth that God has revealed to us are our only true foundation (Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 201).*

*This foundation was built by the Master Worker, and will stand storm and tempest (Ibid., p. 204).*

*We have our Bibles. We have our experience, attested to by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. We have a truth that admits of no compromise. Shall we not repudiate everything that is not in harmony with this truth (Ibid., p. 205)?*

*The principles for which we fought in the early days . . . were brought out in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ibid., p. 206).*

Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study, and *testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord*. But the waymarks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as *God has signified through His Word and the testimony of His Spirit*. He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority (*Ibid.*, p. 208).

*The truths given us after the passing of the time in 1844 are just as certain and unchangeable as when the Lord gave them to us in answer to our urgent prayers. The visions that the Lord has given me are so remarkable that we know that what we have accepted is the truth. This was demonstrated by the Holy Spirit.*

*Light, precious light from God, established the main points of our faith as we hold them today (Manuscript Releases, vol. 1, p. 53; Letter 50, 1906).*

We can confidently say, *The truth that has come to us through the Holy Spirit's working is not a lie. The evidences given for the last half century bear the evidence of the Spirit's power (The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters, p. 257).*

Ever we are to keep *the faith that has been substantiated by the Holy Spirit of God from the earlier events of our experience until the present time (The Upward Look, p. 352; December 4, 1905).*

The precious light revealed to Sister White makes it clear that God was directly involved in helping the early pioneers to have a correct understanding of the major points of our faith. The result of this combination of Bible study and revelation is spoken of in the following language: "The leading points of our faith as we hold them today were firmly established. Point after point was clearly defined, and all the brethren came into harmony (*Manuscript Releases, vol. 3, p. 413; MS 135, 1903*)."

### **Major Points Established Early**

The weight of evidence bears heavily that the main points of our faith were established early.

*In the early days of the message, when our numbers were few, we studied diligently to understand the meaning of many scriptures. At times it seemed as if no explanation could be given. My mind seemed to be locked to an understanding of the Word; but when our brethren who had assembled for study, came to a point where they could go no farther, and had recourse to earnest prayer, the Spirit of God would rest upon me, and I would be taken off in vision, and be instructed in regard to the relation of scripture to scripture (*The Review and Herald, June 14, 1906*).*

Writing in 1903 of her early experience, she spoke of her mind being opened so that she could understand the Scriptures as an "open book":

For two or three years my mind continued to be locked to the Scriptures. . . . It was some time after my second son was born [July 1849] that we were in great perplexity regarding certain points of doctrine. I was asking the Lord to unlock my mind, that I might understand His Word. Suddenly I seemed to be enshrouded in clear, beautiful light, and ever since, the Scriptures have been an open book to me (*Manuscript Releases, vol. 3, pp. 413, 414; MS 135, 1903*).

For two or three years my mind continued to be locked to an understanding of the Scriptures. In the course of our labors, my husband and I visited Father Andrews, [December 1850] who was suffering intensely with inflammatory rheumatism. We prayed for him. I laid my hands on his head, and said, "Father Andrews, the Lord Jesus maketh thee whole." He was healed instantly. He got up, and walked about the room, praising God, and saying, "I never saw it on this wise before. Angels of God are in this room." The glory of the Lord was revealed. Light seemed to shine all through the house, and an angel's hand was laid upon my head. From that time to this I have been able to understand the Word of God (*Special Testimonies, Series B, no. 2, pp. 57, 58; 1904*).

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*I know and understand that we are to be established in the faith, in the light of the truth given us in our early experience. At that time one error after another pressed in upon us; ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures, and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of devoted men and women assembled for this purpose. The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error (Manuscript Releases, vol. 8, p. 319; Letter 50, 1906).*

All these differently-dated testimonies portray the same picture. The establishment of the main points of our faith occurred while Sister White's mind was "locked." Sister White says she was in this condition "until all the principal points of our faith were made clear (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 207)." She testifies that her mind was unlocked *after* her visit with Brother Andrews in December 1850; therefore, the main points of our faith were established by December 1850. Thus, we received as a people "a line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 57)."

### The Leading of the Lord

This line of truth was light which helped the pioneers "to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood (*Ibid.*)." Furthermore, we have been counseled:

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. *We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history (Life Sketches of James and Ellen G. White, p. 196).*

This statement, first penned in 1892, was sent to the General Conference Sessions of 1893 and 1899.<sup>3</sup> Later, the statement was published in *The Review and Herald* of October 12, 1905, and in books such as *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* and *Selected Messages*, bk. 3. The latter part of this statement deserves emphasis. It has two important points. We must remember first the way "the Lord has led us" and, secondly, "*His teaching in our past history.*"

The statement, "His teaching in our past history" would refer especially to that time period before December 1850 when the brethren came together for study and prayer. While we have nothing to fear for the future if we remember our past history, the contraposition would be equally true that *if we*

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3. See Letter 32, 1892, and *General Conference Daily Bulletins* for January 29, 1893, and February 20, 1899.

*do not remember the past we would indeed have much to fear!* This is much more than just historical knowledge, but it is also a putting into action that system of beliefs.

### **Foundational Points Not to be Moved**

The foundation of a building is the most important feature of its construction. If the foundation is not set levelly and on a firm surface, the structure will have problems. God knew that in the establishment of the Advent movement, the foundation was of the utmost importance. If the foundation was correct, then the light would be able to shine “more and more unto the perfect day (Proverbs 4:18).”

New light will ever be revealed on the word of God to him who is in living connection with the Sun of Righteousness. Let no one come to the conclusion that there is no more truth to be revealed. The diligent, prayerful seeker for truth will find precious rays of light yet to shine forth from the word of God. Many gems are yet scattered that are to be gathered together to become the property of the remnant people of God (*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 34; original source *The Sabbath School Worker*, March 1892).

Old truths will grow brighter and new truths will be discovered in God’s Word. Yet, those new truths will *never* contradict the established truths already set.

When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 161; 1905).

Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study, and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. *But the waymarks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His word and the testimony of His Spirit.* He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 59; 1904).

As a people we are to stand firm on the platform of eternal truth that has withstood test and trial. We are to hold to the sure pillars of our faith. The principles of truth that God has revealed to us are our only true foundation. They have made us what we are. The lapse of time had not lessened their value (*Ibid.*, p. 51).

We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God’s word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake (*Ibid.*).

No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they

are is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defense of our principles, in full view of the world (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 17).

### **Is the Sabbath a pillar?**

There are the main pillars of our faith, subjects which are of vital interest, the Sabbath, the keeping of the commandments of God.

I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps,—the first, second, and third angels' messages. Said my accompanying angel, "*Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.*" I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform (*Early Writings*, pp. 258, 259; 1858).

The *Early Writings* statement of 1858 carries quotation marks! Sister White is not writing down her impressions or her thoughts alone, though they be inspired, but words straight from heaven!

New light is to come without contradicting established light! New light will simply build upon the foundation as a carpenter builds upon the foundation that the mason has prepared. The foundation is not changed or altered, yet a more complete building arises. This very principle is explained by Sister White:

The Lord has made his people the depositaries of sacred truth. He has set them on an elevated position, above the world. He declares of them: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." And again he says: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."

Upon every individual who has had the light of present truth devolves the duty of developing that truth on a higher scale than it has hitherto been developed (*The Review and Herald*, September 21, 1897).

This statement tells us that it is not some "new truth" in the sense of something totally different that we are to search for, but more precisely we have the "duty" to develop "that truth" which the Lord has already entrusted to us "on a higher scale than it has hitherto been developed."

God designs that the light from his throne is to shine with purity and clarity. He illustrated this with an object lesson to the children of Israel. God instructed Moses: "And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always (Exodus 27:20)." Not any oil would be sufficient in the services of God. This pure olive oil "was prepared from unripe fruit, 'beaten,' or

pounded in a mortar rather than crushed in a mill. As a result, it was clear and colorless and burned brightly, with little smoke (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 644).” God desires that his truths shine “more and more unto the perfect day (Proverbs 4:18),” not a flame such as the “hellish torch of Satan (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 409, 410).”

New light will come from a study of the Scriptures. “When a doctrine is presented that does not meet our minds, we should go to the word of God, seek the Lord in prayer, and give no place for the enemy to come in with suspicion and prejudice (*Gospel Workers*, p. 301).” We are counseled that when discussing differences with the brethren, “The only right way would be to sit down as Christians, and investigate the position presented, in the light of God’s word, which will reveal truth and unmask error (*The Review and Herald*, June 18, 1889).” New light is not to be shunned, for there are areas of study that need clarifying today. There are many topics that are not foundational points such as Daniel chapters 11 and 12 that should be finely-tuned; however, the foundation which was delivered by study, prayer, and revelation stands sure.

### **Stepping Away From the Foundation Results in Apostasy**

Apostasy is defined as “an abandonment of one’s religious faith (*American Heritage Dictionary*).” The English word “apostasy” is from the Greek *apostasia* (ἀποστασία). *Apostasia*’s literal meaning is “to stand away from.” James told Paul that he had been accused of apostasy. Acts 21:2 states: “And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake (*apostasia*) Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.” Paul himself wrote about apostasy in 2 Thessalonians 2:3: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away (*apostasia*) first.” To leave established truth is to step off the sure platform into the sinking sand of apostasy.

The Lord has declared that the history of the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every truth that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened. *We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. We cannot now enter into any new organization; for this would mean apostasy from the truth* (*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 390; MS 129, 1905).

To “step off the foundation that God has established” is equated to entering into a “new organization.” This is defined as “apostasy from the truth.” In other words, as we move away or defect from the truth we form a “new organization.” Those who stand with the platform of truth that God established stand with the true organization that God established.

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During the early part of this century the Adventist Church experienced the “alpha of deadly heresies (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 50).” This apostasy concerning the nature of God was led by Dr. Kellogg, and many of the leading physicians and ministers stood with Kellogg (Jones, Waggoner, Sutherland, Magan, Paulson, etc.). Sister White had been instructed that she must “meet it,” referring to the teachings of this false movement. *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2 was written to physicians and ministers to help deal with this crisis. In meeting this apostasy she wrote:

Who has authority to begin such a movement? We have our Bibles. We have our experience, attested to by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. We have a truth that admits of no compromise. Shall we not repudiate everything that is not in harmony with this truth (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 55)?

Here we see what our response to apostasy should be: We are to “repudiate everything that is not in harmony” with the truth! We are to reject that which would try to destroy the foundation of our faith!

The next chapter will begin to examine the line of truth God has given us as it “regards Christ, His mission, and His priesthood (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 57).” This study will highlight the following: The nature of Christ before the incarnation, the nature of Christ in the incarnation, and the nature of the final atonement in heaven that Jesus ministers for us.

## Chapter 2

# The Incarnation: The Pioneer Understanding

As we approach the study of these sacred topics, it would be well to remember the words of Jesus:

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me (Matthew 18:1-5).

If we expect to be instructed in spiritual things by God's Spirit, we must be *willing* to be taught. How true it is that "[t]he sin that is most nearly hopeless and incurable is pride of opinion, self-conceit. This stands in the way of all growth (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 199, 200)." If we wish to understand God's truth, we must come with an open mind, willing to learn. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, *with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit*, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isaiah 57:15)."

During the last half of this century, the topic of the incarnation of Jesus Christ has been extremely controversial within Adventism. We do not venture upon this examination to inflame these differences, but rather we desire to bring unity for those who really desire truth.

The pioneers of this movement were very *united and clear* concerning the teaching of the incarnation. They believed that Jesus accepted the working of the law of heredity and took upon himself the fallen nature of man defiled and degraded after 4,000 years of sin. Their understanding was published in the first Statement of Beliefs the church issued in 1872 as follows:

That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist; that he took on him

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the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that he dwelt among men full of grace and truth, lived our example, died our sacrifice (*A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by Seventh-day Adventists*, Steam Press, Battle Creek, Michigan, 1872, statement no. II).

The history of the doctrine of the incarnation in the Adventist Church has been well-documented. Two works stand out as being of special importance: *An Interpretive History of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, written by Elder William Grotheer, and Dr. Ralph Larson's book, *The Word Was Made Flesh*. Grotheer's work of 105 pages gives an accurate and logical picture of the development of the doctrine of the incarnation from the beginning of our experience as a people to the publication date of 1972. Larson's larger (365 pages) and more current work (1986) chronicles "one hundred years of Seventh-day Adventist Christology (p. iii)." Our goal will not be to reproduce all their work or the works of others but to give a *small sampling* of the beliefs of the church on this subject.

### **James White**

Let us begin with noting first the thoughts of Elder James White, who served the church in many capacities including General Conference president and editor of both *The Review and Herald* and *The Signs of the Times*. Elder White wrote: "Christ, enfeebled with our nature . . . enfeebled by the seed of Abraham . . . takes upon Himself the weakness of the seed of Abraham, that He might reach those who are enfeebled by transgression (*The Review and Herald*, November 29, 1877)."

### **Uriah Smith**

"He humbled Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, by consenting to take the fashion of puny, mortal, sinful man. In the likeness of sinful flesh, He reached down to the very depths of man's fallen condition, and became obedient unto death, even the ignominious death of the cross (*Looking Unto Jesus*, p. 23)."

### **J. H. Waggoner**

"And he left that throne of glory and of power and took upon him the nature of fallen man. In him were blended 'the brightness of the Father's glory' and the weakness of the 'seed of Abraham (*The Atonement*, p. 161)."

### **Stephen N. Haskell**

"Christ came the first time, clothed with humanity, taking not upon Himself the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, that He might be made, like ourselves, subject to temptation, pain, and death, that by His connection with humanity He might sympathize with His fallen creatures (*The Bible Echo*, March 15, 1889)."

While these four men just cited are “first generation” Adventists, two “second generation” Adventists deserve notice due to the special calling they received. Elders A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner were two men that Inspiration states were called of God:

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 91).<sup>1</sup>

### **E. J. Waggoner**

Waggoner wrote with clear logic and reasoning. In his most famous work, he noted: “A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man, in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it is sinful man that He came to redeem (*Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 26).”

Another typical statement of Waggoner comes from his study of Galatians: “So I say that his being born under the law was a necessary consequence of his being born in the likeness of sinful flesh, of taking upon himself the nature of Abraham (*The Gospel in the Book of Galatians*, pp. 61, 62).”

### **A. T. Jones**

Perhaps no Seventh-day Adventist minister spoke more on the subject of the incarnation than A. T. Jones. Elder Jones considered this subject of such importance that in his book, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, he devoted six of the seventeen chapters to this subject. On page 25 we read:

But to be the Redeemer He must be not only able, He must be a blood-relative. And He must also be not only *near* of kin, but the *nearest* of kin; and the nearest of kin by blood-relationship. Therefore, “as the children” of man—as the children of the one who lost our inheritance — “are partakers of *flesh and blood*, He also Himself likewise took part of the *same*”—took part of flesh and blood in very substance *like* ours, and so became our nearest of kin. And therefore it is written that He and we “are all *of one*: for which cause He is not ashamed to call us *brethren*.” (Emphasis supplied by Jones.)

Further in his book, after discussing the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, Jones writes:

From this theory [the Immaculate Conception] it therefore follows as certainly as that two and two make four, that in His human nature the Lord Jesus

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1. While some of Jones’ and Waggoner’s teachings differed in their later years from that which the prophet had endorsed, the message of the incarnation stayed consistent in their teachings and was of great importance to their theology. One reading their works cannot help but be impressed with the importance they gave the subject.

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is “very different” from the rest of mankind: indeed, His nature is not human nature at all.

Such is the Roman Catholic doctrine concerning the human nature of Christ. The Catholic doctrine of the human nature of Christ is simply that that nature is not human nature at all, but divine: “more sublime and glorious than all natures.” It is that in His human nature Christ was so far separated from mankind as to be utterly unlike that of mankind: that His was a nature in which He could have no sort of fellow-feeling with mankind.

But such is not the faith of Jesus.

The faith of Jesus is that God sent “His own Son in the *likeness of sinful flesh*.”

The faith of Jesus is that “in all things it behooved Him to be *made like unto His brethren*.”

The faith of Jesus is that He “Himself took our infirmities,” and was touched “with the feeling of our infirmities,” being tempted in *all points like as* we are. If He was not as we are, He could not possibly be tempted “like as we are.” But He *was* “in all points tempted like as we are.” Therefore He was “in all points” “like as we are (*Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39).” (Emphasis supplied by Jones.)

Perhaps A. T. Jones is best known today for the sermons he delivered at the 1893 and 1895 General Conference sessions. One such message stated:

In Jesus Christ alone is the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; and in Jesus Christ we find the brotherhood of man only when we find Christ the Brother of every man.

It is written, “For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Not ashamed to call who brethren? Every one that is of flesh and blood, - . . .

It has been Satan’s work always to get men to think that God is as far away as possible. But it is the Lord’s everlasting effort to get men to find out that he is as near to every one as possible.

The great trouble with heathenism was to think that God was so far away, - . . .

Then the papacy came in, the very incarnation of that enmity between man and God.

Therefore [under Catholic theology] Mary must be born immaculate, perfect, sinless, . . . then Christ must be so born of her to take his human nature in absolute sinlessness from her.

But if he comes no nearer to us than in a sinless nature, that is a long way off; because I need somebody that is nearer to me than that. I need some one to help me who knows something about sinful nature; for that is the nature that I have; and such the Lord did take. He became one of us. Thus, you see, this is present truth in every respect, now that the papacy is taking possession of the world, and the image of it is going on in the wrong way, forgetting all that God is in Jesus Christ, and all that Christ is in the world—having the form of godliness without the reality, without the power (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, pp. 310, 311).

Some other influential Adventists who have held the post-fall view include: W. W. Prescott, M. C. Wilcox, G. B. Starr, Meade MacGuire, Dallas

Young, W. B. Ochs, Carlye B. Haynes, W. H. Branson, and M. L. Andreasen. (See *Ministry*, June 1985, p. 21.)

### **Ellen G. White**

The writings of Ellen G. White carry several references to the doctrine of the incarnation. She, unlike some today, encouraged study on the humanity of Christ. She wrote:

*When we want a deep problem to study, let us fix our minds on the most marvelous thing that ever took place in earth or heaven—the incarnation of the Son of God. God gave His Son to die for sinful human beings a death of ignominy and shame. He who was Commander in the heavenly courts laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and clothing His divinity with humanity, came to this world to stand at the head of the human race as the pattern-man. He humbled Himself to suffer with the race, to be afflicted in all their afflictions (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 904; MS 76, 1903).*

Within recent times, few doctrines within the Seventh-day Adventist church have been as hotly-debated as the doctrine of the incarnation. Various views are presented with each group using the Bible, as well as the writings of Ellen White, to defend its position. In fact, while he was editor of the *Adventist Review*, William Johnsson wrote a series of editorials on the incarnation plainly stating that within Ellen White's writings the two main theological groups find "their main ammunition (*Adventist Review*, August 12, 1993)." While there are various Bible texts that seem to deal with some doctrines from multifaceted angles, it is generally agreed that because the Bible is the inspired Word of God it will not contradict itself and the passages that do *seem* to differ are acknowledged to be parallel passages and that harmony can be found with proper study and research.<sup>2</sup> However, the same acknowledgment was and is not afforded to the writings of Sister White by Johnsson and others. Johnsson frankly states:

Some Adventists have striven mightily to bring these apparently contradictory statements [on the incarnation] together under the post-Fall view. I do not think this can be done (*Adventist Review*, August 19, 1993, p. 4).

Johnsson and others say, in effect, that she spoke out of both sides of her mouth. While there are published statements that *seem* difficult to harmonize with some of her other writings and with the Bible, it has been this writer's experience that the more her writings are studied, the more harmonious they become. The release of the E. G. White compact disc has been a tremendous help for those researching her writings and learning to understand the phraseology and meaning of various passages.

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2. For example, Paul's and James' treatment of righteousness by faith.

While we do not take the route of Johnsson that there cannot be harmony on the incarnation, we acknowledge that there are references that do *seem* hard to understand and harmonize with other statements. Some have suggested possible reasons for this include secretarial errors, as well as deliberate changes made from within. We cannot say that these are the answers in any or every case. Our history is clear that there have been revisions and compilations made of Sister White's works that have used her writings out of context so as to imply the opposite of the original intent.<sup>3</sup> How would Ellen White respond to the situation of today? Only God knows, but she did leave the following counsel: "He [God] requires of His people faith that rests upon the weight of evidence, not upon perfect knowledge (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 258)." We also read:

Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue, a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving and to question and quibble. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence (*Ibid.*, p. 255).

While some writings from the pen of Ellen White such as the "Baker Letter" *seem* out of harmony with the view of the pioneers, the great majority of the writings of Ellen White speak very plainly to the postlapsarian (post-fall) view. Rather than to try and defend a small handful of statements which *seem* to speak counter to the mainstream of early Adventism, as this has been done well by Elders Larson and Grotheer, this paper will allow the weight of the evidence to make clear what she believed. Looking at it in very practical terms, if you or I had spoken on a subject over a thousand times and there were ten to twelve statements that seemed to be out of harmony with the great majority of statements, what would you wish for the people to do? I would, as Ellen White, ask them to look at the weight of the evidence!

From the weight of the evidence, it is clear that Ellen White's view of the incarnation was the postlapsarian view. We will now present just a very small portion of her writings which represent the great "weight of evidence" concerning this doctrine. From one of her earlier works we read:

Jesus also told them [the angels] that they should have a part to act, to be with him, and at different times strengthen him. That he should take *man's*

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3. See *Questions on Doctrine*, etc.

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*fallen nature*, and his strength would not be even equal with theirs (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, p. 25; 1858).

Satan again rejoiced with his angels that he could, by causing man's fall, pull down the Son of God from his exalted position. He told his angels that when *Jesus should take fallen man's nature*, he could overpower him, and hinder the accomplishment of the plan of salvation (*Ibid.*, p. 27; 1858).

It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon himself *the form and nature of fallen man*, that he might be made perfect through suffering, and endure himself the strength of Satan's temptations, that he might the better know how to succor those who should be tempted (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4, p. 115; 1864).

In the last statement we see that Ellen White does not equate form with nature, for she speaks of them each as something that Christ took upon himself. In these early, chronological statements, Sister White used the term *fallen nature* to describe the *nature* that our Lord took upon himself. She used this same expression in her later writings, proving consistency in this doctrine throughout her lifetime.

Through his humiliation and poverty *Christ would identify himself with the weaknesses of the fallen race*, and by firm obedience show man how to redeem Adam's disgraceful failure, that man by humble obedience might regain lost Eden (*The Review and Herald*, February 24, 1874).

What love! What amazing condescension! The King of glory proposed to humble himself to fallen humanity! He would place his feet in Adam's steps. *He would take man's fallen nature* and engage to cope with the strong foe who triumphed over Adam. He would overcome Satan, and in thus doing he would open the way for the redemption of those who would believe on him from the disgrace of Adam's failure and fall (*Ibid.*).

The holy angels were horror-stricken that one who had been of their number could fall so far as to be capable of such cruelty. Every sentiment of sympathy or pity which they had ever felt for Satan in his exile, was quenched in their hearts. That his envy should be exercised in such a revenge upon an innocent person was enough to strip him of his assumed robe of celestial light, and to reveal the hideous deformity beneath; but to manifest such malignity toward the divine Son of God, who had, with unprecedented self-denial, and love for the creatures formed in his image, come from Heaven and *assumed their fallen nature*, was such a heinous crime against Heaven that it caused the angels to shudder with horror, and severed forever the last tie of sympathy existing between Satan and the heavenly world (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 183, 184; 1878).

*Jesus took upon Himself man's nature*, that He might leave a pattern for humanity, complete, perfect. He proposes to make us like Himself, true in every purpose, feeling, and thought—true in heart, soul, and life. This is Christianity. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 235; 1882).

Though He had no taint of sin upon His character, yet He condescended to connect our fallen human nature with His divinity. By thus taking humanity, He honored humanity. *Having taken our fallen nature, he showed what it might*

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*become*, by accepting the ample provision He has made for it, and by becoming partaker of the divine nature (*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 134; Letter 81, 1896).

These words of confirmation [“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”] were given to inspire faith in those who witnessed the scene, and to strengthen the Saviour for His mission. Notwithstanding that the sins of a guilty world were laid upon Christ, notwithstanding the humiliation of *taking upon Himself our fallen nature*, the voice from heaven declared Him to be the *Son of the Eternal* (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 112; 1898).

Christ assumed our fallen nature, and was subject to every temptation to which man is subject (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 17, p. 29; MS 80, 1903).

There are over 300 references where Ellen White stated that Jesus “clothed His divinity with humanity.” (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 434; *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 126; etc.) She also stated the truth concerning the incarnation in the following manner:

*He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature*, that He might know how to succor those that are tempted (*Medical Ministry*, p. 181; Letter 67, 1902).

A search through her writings finds other usages of the term *sinful nature* to describe what Jesus *accepted and took upon his sinless nature*. For example:

Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those he wished to save. In him was no guile or sinfulness; he was ever pure and undefiled; *yet he took upon him our sinful nature*. Clothing his divinity with humanity, that he might associate with fallen humanity, he sought to regain for man that which, by disobedience, Adam had lost for himself and for the world (*The Review and Herald*, December 15, 1896).<sup>4</sup>

There are hundreds of other statements that are just as clear and direct concerning the doctrine of the incarnation, both from Ellen White and from the early Adventist pioneers. However, the most important question is: What does the Bible say about the incarnation of Christ?

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4. Also see *The Review and Herald*, August 22, 1907 and *The Signs of the Times*, July 30, 1902.

## Chapter 3

# The Incarnation: A Scriptural Basis

The Bible text that was used most often by early Seventh-day Adventists in the study of the incarnation is Romans 8:3: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” The phrase *in the likeness* ( — *en homoiomati*) means to make like, to be like, or to resemble. We find the identical expression, *en homoiomati*, used in Philippians 2:7 where we read that Jesus was “made in the likeness [*en homoiomati*] of men.” Our pioneers understood this to be a literal description of the incarnation of our Saviour. They understood this *likeness* to be more than a veneer coating and instead to be the very nature of Christ.

### The “New Theology” on the Incarnation

William Johnsson, former editor of the *Adventist Review*, uses the same text to defend a position exactly opposite that of the pioneers. Johnsson writes:

We find the identical expression used in Romans 8:3, *en homoiomati*, earlier in this letter. Speaking of the pagans of his day, Paul says they “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images *made to look like* mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles” (Rom. 1:23 NIV). Obviously, here the Greek term cannot signify exact likeness (*Adventist Review*, August 12, 1993, p. 4; emphasis in the original).

Johnsson also states: “The silence of the New Testament on this specific point of debate is deafening (*Ibid.*)” Recently, the same view was given by Calvin Rock in the pages of the *Adventist Review*. Rock, a vice president of the General Conference, writes: “My research leads me to believe that Christ was born with the purity of Adam before he fell. . . .” (*Ibid.*, March 31, 1994, p. 15). This conclusion is the exact opposite of the research of the pioneers of this movement, as well as the research of this author.

The fact is the Scriptures trumpet the incarnation of Christ with clear notes of reassurance for the believer that he has a Saviour that is touched with the feelings of humanity. The scope of this book prevents an

exhaustive study of this subject; however, we will examine the doctrine with an emphasis placed on the purpose and necessity of the incarnation.

### **The Scriptural View**

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: *God was manifest in the flesh* (1 Timothy 3:16).” His name would be “Immanuel”—*God with us*. (See Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23.) When God delivered the Ten Commandments to Israel, he said, “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (Exodus 20:2).” The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was a type of the deliverance from sin. Before that emancipation, Christ said to Moses, “And *I am come down* to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians (Exodus 3:8).” Christ was not to bring deliverance from a throne in heaven, but Christ would “come down” to where man was to give him freedom.

Like the word *millennium*, the word *incarnation* is not used in the Scriptures. It is derived from two Latin words, *in carnis*, which translate “in flesh” or “in the flesh.” Did Jesus come in the flesh and was it sinful flesh that he partook of? While some today differ with the pioneers’ understanding of Romans 8:3, the seeker of truth finds in the Scriptures many precious gems relating to the nature of Christ. In the epistle to the Hebrews, Paul begins by stating Christ’s likeness to God. This is then followed by Paul setting forth Christ’s likeness to men:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. *For it became him*, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren (Hebrews 2:9-11).

The Greek word for *became* is (*prepo*). It is defined as “suitable,” “proper,” or “it is fit or right.” Matthew uses this word in describing the dialog between Christ and John at his baptism. “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh [*prepo*] us to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15).” Paul also uses it in Hebrews: “For such an high priest was what we needed for [*prepo*] us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (Hebrews 7:26, margin).” What, then, is Paul trying to tell us in Hebrews 2:10? Simply that it is suitable, proper, fit, and right for God to make Christ “perfect through sufferings (Hebrews 2:10).” Paul continues:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on

him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:14-16).

Christ partook of the seed of Abraham. Abraham was not immaculate with sinless flesh. While some claim the translation of verse 16 is not the best, those who decry the King James Version do not mention that Paul, in Romans 1:3, says that “. . . Jesus Christ our Lord, . . . was made of the seed of David [not immaculate or sinless] according to the flesh.” Yet, Paul goes further so as to leave the reader with no doubt that he has a Saviour that comes close to us in our humanity:

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:17, 18).

The word translated *behooved* in the Greek is *opheilo*) which means “to be bound to,” “under obligation,” “indebted,” or “owe.” Commenting on this Elder M. L. Andreasen wrote:

If Christ is to be a merciful and faithful high priest, Paul says it behooves Him “in all things” to be like His brethren. This is obligatory. It is a duty He owes and must not avoid. He cannot make reconciliation for men unless He takes His place with them and in all things becomes like them. It is not a question of choice. He *should*, He *must*, He *ought* to, He is *under obligation* to, He *owes* it. Unless He has to struggle with the same temptations men do, He cannot sympathize with them. One who has never been hungry, who has never been weak and sick, who has never struggled with temptations, is unable fully to sympathize with those who are thus afflicted (*Letters to the Churches*, Series A, no. 1, p. 6; emphasis in original).

One may ask, “Is not God omniscient? Did God have to send his Son to our level to find out what we experience? Why would Christ have to take “upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor those that are tempted (*Medical Ministry*, p. 181)?” Firstly, the Bible states that Christ “emptied himself” at the incarnation. (See Philippians 2:7, Greek.) In order to die for the sins of man, Christ must first empty himself and give up his immortality. “But he humbled himself, and took mortality upon him (*The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1887).” Also, he “emptied himself” of his omniscience because the Scripture states that “. . . Jesus increased in wisdom (Luke 2:52).” This could not have been if, in his humanity, he was omniscient.

This truth is vital. Unless we struggle with the same temptations, problems, or trials of those we seek to help, we are hampered in understanding their trials. Also, the one in need must know that the sympathizer *can relate by experience* to his or her situation! How difficult it is to help those that look at you with a tear-filled face, saying: “You don’t understand; you’ve never been in my situation!” The sinner who understands that Jesus has

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taken upon himself his own sinful nature can gain courage by the fact that his Saviour does know, *by experience*, the trial he is under and that he can relate, *by experience*, to the sinner's need. Therefore, Jesus can provide the help we must have when we are tempted because he "condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3)." The Scriptures further state that Jesus was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and was "compassed with infirmity (Hebrews 4:15; 5:2)." "The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting (Isaiah 50:5, 6)." He "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses (Matthew 8:17)." God did not exempt Jesus nor did Jesus ask to be exempted. *All* of Christ's experiences were necessary if he is to help his brethren. Thus the Scriptures state: "Wherefore in *all things* it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren (Hebrews 2:17)." Christ, the Son of the eternal God, became Jesus, the Son of man, that we might become the "sons of God (1 John 3:1)." Christ became man, so that he might redeem man. Jesus was *made* what *man* is:

- "Man . . . is flesh. . . . (Genesis 6:3)." The Bible says "the Word was *made* flesh (John 1:14)."
- Man is "under the law (Romans 3:19)." "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, *made* under the law (Galatians 4:4)."
- Man is "under the curse (Galatians 3:10)." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, *being made* a curse for us (Galatians 3:13)."
- Man is "sold under sin (Romans 7:14)." ". . . and the LORD hath *laid on him* the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6)."
- Man is a "body of sin (Romans 6:6)." Christ has been *made* "sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21)."

We see that "in *all things* it behoved him to be made *like* unto his brethren (Hebrews 2:17)." A. T. Jones noted:

Yet it must never be forgotten, it must be borne in mind and heart constantly and forever, that in none of this as to man, the flesh, sin, and the curse was Christ ever of *Himself* or of His own original nature or fault. All this He "*was made*." "He *took upon Him* the form of a servant, and *was made* in the likeness of men." [Philippians 2:7]

And in all this Christ was "*made*" what, before, He *was not* in order that *the man* might be made *now* and *forever* what he is *not* (*The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 47; emphasis in the original).

Three of the gospel writers have references to the incarnation early in their accounts. Matthew and Luke both give genealogies, with Luke adding greater detail concerning the conception of Jesus. Luke, a physician,

records the words of Gabriel to Mary: “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).” Furthermore, John writes: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:1, 2, 14).” The One who was with the Father from the beginning, “emptied himself” and became flesh, flesh such as Mary had. Yet, Jesus was not degraded by this assumption of flesh, for as Luke records, he was “that holy thing.”

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman (Galatians 4:4).” Christ must be born of a woman, for being made of a man would not bring him close enough to mankind to be the complete Saviour. Christ must come all the way down to us or he fails to reach us. In Jacob’s vision, the ladder reached all the way from heaven to earth. It did not stop one or two rungs short. That ladder represented Christ. (See Genesis 32:10-16.) For Christ to be able to reach all the way to the bottom, he must be “made of a woman.” “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (1 Timothy 2:14).” Had Christ been only of a man, he would have fallen short for the woman had sinned first, thus sin was already in the world before Adam sinned.

Mary could share no other nature with the divine embryo than that which she possessed, a fallen nature. Most Protestants would say they do not believe in the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception, yet few know what the teaching is about. Most people think it has to do with the conception of Jesus; instead, it has to do with the conception of Mary. The dogma teaches:

By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore is to be firmly and steadfastly believed by all the faithful (*Catholic Belief*, p. 214).

Thus, this teaching states that Mary was born without sin and was preserved sinless so as to be able to be the mother of Christ without transmitting to him a sinful, fallen nature. While most Protestants today reject this version of an immaculate conception, at the same time they believe another version of an immaculate conception which is the conception of Jesus was in such a manner that Mary was nothing more than a surrogate

mother. She passed on nothing to Christ. If this is so, then Jesus falls far short of being the Saviour we need to help us.

### ***Bible Readings for the Home Circle***

The earlier editions of *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, a standard reference book among Seventh-day Adventists, reflected the views of the Adventist pioneers and correctly commented on the Bible teaching of the incarnation:

The idea that Christ was born of an immaculate or sinless mother, inherited no tendencies to sin, and for this reason did not sin, removes Him from the realm of a fallen world, and from the very place where help is needed. On His human side, Christ inherited just what every child of Adam inherits, – a sinful nature. On the divine side, from His very conception He was begotten and born of the Spirit. And all this was done to place mankind on vantage-ground, and to demonstrate that *in the very same way* every one who is ‘born of the Spirit’ may gain like victories over sin in his own sinful flesh (*Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, p. 174, 1935 ed.; also p. 115, 1915 ed.; emphasis in the original).

This statement was altered by Professor D. E. Rebock when he was asked to revise the book in 1949, and today it reads:

Jesus Christ is both the Son of God and the Son of man. As a member of the human family “it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren”—“in the likeness of sinful flesh.” Just how far that “likeness” goes is a mystery of the incarnation which men have never been able to solve. The Bible clearly teaches that Christ was tempted just as other men are tempted—“in all points. . . like as we are.” Such temptation must necessarily include the possibility of sinning; but Christ was without sin. There is no Bible support for the teaching that the mother of Christ, by an immaculate conception, was cut off from the sinful inheritance of the race, and therefore her divine Son was incapable of sinning (*Bible Readings for the Home*, 1962 ed., p. 117).

This watered-down statement takes no clear position on the nature of Christ, either pre-fall or post-fall.

### **The Reformation Continues**

The Reformation is not ended. Papal teaching abounds not only within the confines of Catholicism but in much of Protestantism today. The Catholic dogma on the incarnation is that Jesus is not really human at all but, instead, has a divine nature far separated from sinners. He is not in a place where he can feel the needs of men. Such is not the true Christ but a false christ, a Tammuz we might weep for yet receive no help from. *This is not “the faith of Jesus.”* Elder A. T. Jones, in 1905, said powerfully:

The faith of Jesus is that God sent “His own Son in the *likeness of sinful flesh.*”

The faith of Jesus is that “in *all things* it behooved Him to be *made like unto his brethren.*”

The faith of Jesus is that He “Himself took our infirmities” and was touched

“with the feeling of our infirmities,” being tempted in *all* points *like as* we are. If He was not as we are, He could not possibly be tempted “like *as* we are.” But He *was* “in all points tempted like as we are.” Therefore He was “in all points” “like as we are.”

The faith of Rome as to the human nature of Christ and Mary and of ourselves springs from that idea of the natural mind that God is too pure and too holy to dwell with us and in us in our sinful human nature; that sinful as we are, we are too far off for Him in His purity and holiness to come to us just as we are.

The true faith—the faith of Jesus—is that, far off from God as we are in our sinfulness, in our human nature which He took, He *has come* to us just where we are; that, infinitely pure and holy as He is, and sinful, degraded, and lost as we are, He in Christ by His Holy Spirit will willingly dwell with us and in us to save us, to purify us, and to make us holy.

The faith of Rome is that we must be pure and holy in order that God shall dwell with us at all.

The faith of Jesus is that God must dwell with us and in us in order that we shall be holy or pure at all (*The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, pp. 38, 39; emphasis in original).

Why would all men not want such a Saviour? Some read the implications very clearly. If Jesus overcame with the same liabilities that we have, then it is possible for man, in fallen flesh, to have total victory. If Jesus had come in some other nature, then how could he expect from us that which he was not able to do himself? The same victory that Jesus obtained in fallen, sinful flesh, he desires to reproduce in our sinful flesh by his indwelling presence! Jesus said, “I can of Mine own self do nothing (John 5:30).” “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works (John 14:10).” We may overcome as Christ overcame by totally depending upon divine help and guidance. Christ has promised us: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne (Revelation 3:21).”

**B**ut 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 2:7, 8).

## Chapter 4

### The History of the Sanctuary Message

The most basic foundational teaching of the Christian religion is the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. When Jesus asked the disciples, “But whom say ye that I am?” Peter replied, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:15, 16).” Sister White, in *The Desire of Ages*, writes: “The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer’s faith. It is that which Christ himself has declared to be eternal life. . . . Peter had expressed the truth which is the foundation of the Church’s faith (pp. 412, 413).” While the truth about Jesus is the foundation of the Christian faith in general, the Advent movement was specifically based and founded on the message of the sanctuary.

The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Daniel 8:14 (*The Great Controversy*, p. 409).

The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith (Ellen G. White, Letter 208, 1906).

Uriah Smith, a pioneer, writer, and editor among the Advent brethren, wrote what could be considered a representative statement which virtually all the early believers would have endorsed:

As is perhaps natural, the enemy of truth seems most persistent in trying to trouble and unsettle minds in reference to *the sanctuary; for that is the citadel of our strength* (*The Review and Herald*, August 5, 1875).

The uniqueness of Seventh-day Adventism is neither the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath nor the belief of the imminent return of Jesus. There are other Sabbath-keeping churches and other churches that believe in the pre-millennial, post-tribulation view of the soon return of Christ. The uniqueness of the Advent movement is the understanding of the sanctuary message in type and antitype. LeRoy Froom, church historian and apologist, wrote that the sanctuary truth was “the one distinctive, separative, structural truth—the sole doctrinal teaching that identifies and sets” the

Seventh-day Adventists “apart from all other Christians (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 541).”

The roots of the Advent movement go back to William Miller and other Advent preachers such as Joseph Wolff who taught that the second coming of Jesus Christ was imminent. Miller based his belief on the now-famous passage found in Daniel 8:14, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”<sup>1</sup> Miller believed the 2,300 days to be prophetic years that began in the year 457 B.C. and would terminate in 1843. The calculations were later revised to October 22, 1844. Miller believed the *sanctuary* spoken of in Daniel to be the earth and that it would be cleansed by fire when Jesus returned for his people. When Christ did not return in 1844, the believers went through what became known as “The Great Disappointment.” Ellen White described it as follows:

When the time passed at which the Lord’s coming was first expected,—in the spring of 1844,—those who had looked in faith for His appearing were for a season involved in doubt and uncertainty. While the world regarded them as having been utterly defeated and proved to have been cherishing a delusion, their source of consolation was still the word of God. Many continued to search the Scriptures, examining anew the evidences of their faith and carefully studying the prophecies to obtain further light. The Bible testimony in support of their position seemed clear and conclusive. Signs which could not be mistaken pointed to the coming of Christ as near. The special blessing of the Lord, both in the conversion of sinners and the revival of spiritual life among Christians, had testified that the message was of Heaven. And though the believers could not explain their disappointment, they felt assured that God had led them in their past experience (*The Great Controversy*, p. 391).

### **Truth Received After the Disappointment**

The first Advent believer to gain an understanding of what had transpired during this disappointment was Hiram Edson, a “farmer preacher, leader of a group of early Adventists in western New York. He wrote out the experience some years later, and the story was preserved by his daughter, Mrs. O. V. Cross, of Florida (*Heavenly Visions*, p. 111).”

“Our expectations were raised high, and thus we looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled twelve at midnight. The day had then passed, and our disappointment had become a certainty. Our fondest hopes and expectations

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1. In a letter to the *Review*, Joseph Bates commented on visiting William Miller’s grave: “His white marble monument stands but a short distance from the highway, about five feet high, presenting to the traveler a front nearly two feet wide, in the center of which, about four feet from the ground, is an open book very neatly chiseled out of the marble block. On the right leaf, in large black letters, is engraven the following scripture: ‘And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed.’ Dan.viii,14 (*The Review and Herald*, February 3, 1853).”

were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept and wept, till the day dawned. . . .

“I mused in my heart, saying: ‘My advent experience has been the brightest of all my Christian experience. Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God in heaven, no golden city, no Paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hopes and expectations?’ . . .

“I began to feel there might be light and help for us in our distress. I said to some of the brethren: ‘Let us go to the barn.’ We entered the granary, shut the doors about us, and bowed before the Lord. We prayed earnestly, for we felt our necessity. We continued in earnest prayer until the witness of the Spirit was given that our prayers were accepted, and that light should be given – our disappointment explained, made clear and satisfactory.

“After breakfast I said to one of my brethren, ‘Let us go to see and encourage some of our brethren.’ We started, and while passing through a large field, I was stopped about midway in the field. Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, He, for the first time, entered on that day into the second apartment of that sanctuary, and that he had a work to perform in the most holy place before coming to the earth; that He came to the marriage, or in other words, to the Ancient of days, to receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory; and that we must wait for His return from the wedding (*The Review and Herald*, June 23, 1921; quoting from *Heavenly Visions*, p. 111).”

Hiram Edson, Dr. F. B. Hahn, and a young preacher and teacher named O. R. L. Crosier, studied the Scriptures further and came to the conclusion that “the 2300 years was to reach to the opening of the ministry of our High Priest in the most holy of the sanctuary in heaven, foreshadowed by the last phase of the Levitical service in the typical earthly sanctuary. The service of the last day of the earthly sanctuary was called the cleansing of the sanctuary. That was exactly what the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 described as beginning in 1844. The whole matter was plain. Christ had come to that service in the most holy above, as the time came in 1844. Their mistake was explained. The prophecy had been fulfilled. They had looked to this earth instead of to the most holy place above. There in heaven above, the judgment hour had come, the time of cleansing the sanctuary records, as described in Daniel 7:10, 13. This was light. It must be published to the believers (*Ibid.*, p. 112).”

Edson and Hahn asked Crosier to continue to study the sanctuary message from the Levitical type and write out their joint findings. Edson and Hahn agreed to publish the results. The matter was prepared in 1845 and early the next year they arranged for it to be printed in a Cincinnati second

advent paper called the *Day Star*. Crosier's article entitled, "The Sanctuary" was published in the *Day-Star Extra*, February 7, 1846.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the first to read and accept the light as presented in Crosier's article were James White and Joseph Bates. When Ellen White read the article, she immediately recommended it to the brethren as "true light." In a letter to brother Eli Curtis, dated April 21, 1847, she wrote:

I believe the Sanctuary, to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days, is the New Jerusalem Temple, of which Christ is a minister. The Lord shew me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, c; and that it was his will, that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in the *Day-Star, Extra*, February 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that Extra, to every saint (*A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 12).

Crosier's article began with a discussion as to what constituted the sanctuary. After defining the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 to be the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus ministers for the believer, he related the type from the Old Testament to the antitype, or true sanctuary, as revealed in the New Testament, especially through the book of Hebrews. Crosier did not deal, at length, with the calculation of the 2,300 years of Daniel 8:14, as this had already been done by the Advent preachers. Crosier did, however, discuss in detail the meaning of what had begun to transpire on October 22, 1844 and concluded his article by discussing the ending of the Day of Atonement with the banishment of the scapegoat.

The early Adventists made Christ's high-priestly ministry the center of their message. Pioneers such as James White, James M. Stephenson, Joseph H. Waggoner (E. J. Waggoner's father), Uriah Smith, and Stephen Haskell wrote extensively on the subject of the final atonement in heaven.<sup>3</sup>

The church published its first Statement of Beliefs in 1872. The opening paragraph noted that it was not put forth to be an authority among the brethren or for the purpose of securing uniformity among them. It was noted, however, that the statement contained "what is, and has [had] been, with great unanimity held by them (*A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists*, 1872)." Two of the twenty-one beliefs dealt directly with the high-priestly ministry of Christ:

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2. Crosier's unabridged article entitled "The Sanctuary" is available from the publishers of this book.
  3. See White's book, *Life Incidents*; Stephenson's *Review* articles, "The Atonement"; Waggoner's book, *The Atonement in the Light of Nature and Revelation*; Smith's book, *The Sanctuary and its Cleansing and the 2300 Days*; Haskell's book, *The Cross and Its Shadow*; etc.

That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, . . . that he . . . lived our example, died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in Heaven, where, with his own blood he makes atonement for our sins; which atonement so far from being made on the cross, which was but the sacrifice, is the very last portion of his work as priest according to the example of the Levitical priesthood, which foreshadowed and prefigured the ministry of our Lord in heaven. See Lev. 16; Heb. 8:4, 5; 9:6, 7; c (*Ibid.*, belief #2).

That the sanctuary of the new covenant is the tabernacle of God in Heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8, and onward, of which our Lord, as great High Priest, is minister; that this sanctuary is the antitype of the Mosaic tabernacle, and that the priestly work of our Lord, connected therewith, is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation. Heb. 8:1-5, c.; that this is the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days, what is termed its cleansing being in this case, as in the type, simply the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place, to finish the round of service connected therewith, by blotting out and removing from the sanctuary the sins which had been transferred to it by means of the ministration in the first apartment, Heb. 9:22, 23; and that this work, in the antitype, commencing in 1844, occupies a brief but indefinite space, at the conclusion of which the work of mercy for the world is finished (*Ibid.*, belief #10).

The unanimity with which this belief was held was also expressed in the *Yearbook* of 1889 as follows: “The following propositions may be taken as a summary of the principal features of their religious faith, upon which there is, so far as we know, *entire unanimity throughout the body.*” Fifteen years after the 1872 statement in 1887, Uriah Smith wrote a five-point statement of the pioneers’ understanding of the sanctuary which was published in *The Review and Herald*:

1. That the sanctuary and priesthood of the Mosaic dispensation represented in shadow the sanctuary and priesthood of the present or Christian dispensation (Heb 8:5).

2. That this Sanctuary and priesthood are in heaven, resembling the former as nearly as heavenly things may resemble the earthly (Heb 9:23, 24).

3. That the ministry of Christ, our great high priest, in the heavenly Sanctuary is composed of two great divisions, as in the type; first, in the first apartment, or holy place, and secondly, in the second apartment, or most holy place.

4. That the beginning of his ministry in the second apartment is marked by the great prophetic period of 2,300 days (Dan 8:14), and began when those days ended in 1844.

5. That the ministry he is now performing in the second apartment of the heavenly temple, is “the atonement” (Lev 16:17), the “cleansing of the Sanctuary” (Dan 8:14), the “investigative judgment” (Dan 7:10), the “finishing of the mystery of God” (Rev 10:7; 11:15, 19), which will complete Christ’s work as priest, consummate the plan of salvation, terminate human probation, decide every case for eternity, and bring Christ to his throne of eternal

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domination (Uriah Smith, “Questions on the Sanctuary”, *The Review and Herald*, June 14, 1887; quoted from *The Sanctuary Doctrine*, pp. 1, 2).

The early Adventists saw in the fourteenth chapter of Revelation an announcement to be given to the world that this work of cleansing the sanctuary (the beginning of the judgment) had begun. “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; *for the hour of his judgment is come*: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Revelation 14:6, 7).” Within this announcement was the call to worship God as the great Creator through the seventh-day Sabbath. This was the time Paul referred to when he spoke to Felix and his wife, Drusilla, and “reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and *judgment to come* [future tense] (Acts 24:25).”

The understanding the early Adventists received concerning the 2,300 day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 molded and shaped the Advent movement. The belief that Christ was to perform a work of ministry in the heavenly sanctuary was not, of itself, a new idea. The book of Hebrews clearly speaks of a ministry of Jesus in heaven. The idea was new, however, that this ministry was a work of atonement and essential to man’s salvation.

### **A New Sanctuary Doctrine Introduced**

In 1955 and 1956, some of our leading ministers such as Roy Allan Anderson and LeRoy Froom met with Walter Martin and other evangelicals to discuss the Adventist faith. Martin submitted questions concerning Adventism and the Christian faith to the Adventists, who responded with statements they claimed were “truly representative of the faith and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (*Questions on Doctrine*, p.9).”<sup>4</sup> While the statements, published as *Questions on Doctrine*, claimed that it was “*not* to be a new statement of faith (*Ibid.* p. 8),” it took a 180 degree turn from the position of the pioneers. One of the questions that Walter Martin submitted was, “Since Adventists hold that complete sacrificial atonement was made on the cross, what do you teach concerning the ministry of our Lord as High Priest in heaven (*Questions on Doctrine*, p. 369)?” To this question, Froom answered in part, “*Adventists do not hold any theory of a dual atonement (Ibid., p. 390; emphasis in the original).*” Froom had stated to the evangelicals that the church believed the atonement was completed

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4. The final draft of the questions and answers was published under the full title, “*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine.*” L. E. Froom was the principal author of the answers in the book.

and final on the cross and that the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary was not, of itself, a work of atonement.<sup>5</sup> In fact, he wrote:

When, therefore, one hears an Adventist say, or reads in Adventist literature – even in the writings of Ellen G. White – that Christ is making atonement now, it should be understood that we mean simply that Christ is now *making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross*; that He is making it efficacious for us individually, according to our needs and requests (*Ibid.*, pp. 354, 355; emphasis in the original).”

To this statement, Elder M. L. Andreasen wrote:

If Sister White were now living and should read this, she would most certainly deal with presumptuous writers and in words that could be understood. She would not concede the right of anyone, whoever he might be, to change what she has written or interpret it so as to vitiate its clear meaning. The claim which *Questions on Doctrine* makes that she means what she does not say, effectively destroys the force of all she has ever written. If we have to consult an inspired interpreter from Washington before knowing what she means, we might better discard the Testimonies altogether. May God save His people (*Letters to the Churches*, Series A, no. 2).

Not only did Andreasen take issue with Froom trying to interpret the statements of Ellen White, but he also took issue with him implying that all Adventist writers, including himself, shared these views.

Few would argue today that Anderson and Froom were bringing about a shift in the church’s theology. A few years ago this author had the opportunity of talking to a retired doctor who was a personal friend of both. He stated that Anderson and Froom each knew that they were charting a new course for the church, but it was a course they felt she needed to follow. While we cannot judge the motives of these men, the last forty years have produced not only a very different theology, but a very different church as well. Understanding the ministry of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is of the utmost importance. We have been told:

The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill (*The Great Controversy*, p. 488).

5. Before the final draft was finished, an earlier draft was submitted to church leaders for their consideration. In answer to question 50 which dealt with Ellen G. White and the atonement, the author of *Questions of Doctrine* wrote, “Neither Mrs. White, nor do Adventists generally, teach either an incomplete atonement on the cross, or a dual atonement—one on earth and the other in heaven. In fact, such is the precise opposite of our belief.”

### **Pioneers Understood the Scope of the Atonement**

The pioneers of Adventism did not just see Christ's ministry as one that made *an* atonement but made *the* atonement. The more contemporary leaders of the church today see *the* atonement being made at the cross. Andreasen suggested the following solution:

Much confusion in regard to the atonement arises from a neglect to recognize the two divisions of the atonement. Note what is said of John the Baptist, "He did not distinguish clearly the two phases of Christ's work – as a suffering sacrifice, and a conquering king." *Desire of Ages*, pp. 136, 137. The book *Questions on Doctrine* makes the same mistake. It does not distinguish clearly; in fact it does not distinguish at all; it does not seem to *know* of the two phases; hence the confusion (*Letters to the Churches*, Series A, no. 6; emphasis in original).

Was there an atonement made at the cross and, if so, did that preclude an atonement that would be made in heaven? Did the early Adventists have an understanding of two different phases of the atonement or a "dual atonement"? The evidence is that the pioneers did have such an understanding. However, in their zeal to lift the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary to the proper level which the Bible elevates it to, the early pioneers of the church at times failed to emphasize the work of Christ on the cross as a work of atonement. The 1872 Statement of Belief places the emphasis in heaven.<sup>6</sup>

While the statement does not specifically state that no atonement was made at Calvary, it does say that *the* atonement that Christ is making in heaven now was not made on the cross. This does not mean that the pioneers did not understand the significance of Calvary but reflects a desire on their part to proclaim the work of Christ in heaven. Statements follow from several early works of the pioneers which clearly express their belief of *an* atonement at the cross.

One of the first writings to deal with the subject was O. R. L. Crosier's work, "The Sanctuary," first printed in the *Day-Star Extra*, February 7, 1846.<sup>7</sup> Crosier wrote:

The atonement which the priest made for the people in connection with their daily ministrations was different from that made on the tenth day of the seventh month. In making the former, they went no further than in the Holy; but to make the latter they entered the Holy of Holies – the former was made for individual cases, the latter for the whole nation of Israel collectively – the former was made

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6. See p. 31, 32.

7. It was later reprinted in the *Advent Review* of September 1850, an *Advent Review Special* containing testimonies from August 1849–November 1850, and *The Review and Herald* of September 16, 1852.

for the *forgiveness of sins*, the latter for *blotting them out* – the former could be made at any time, the latter only on the tenth day of the seventh month. Hence the former may be called the daily atonement and the latter the yearly, or the former the individual, and the latter the national atonement (*Day-Star Extra*, February 7, 1846; emphasis in original).

It should be distinctly remembered that the priest did not begin his duties till he obtained the *blood* of the victim, and that they were all performed in the court (the enclosure of the Sanctuary), and that the atonement thus made was only for the *forgiveness* of sins. These points are expressly taught in this chapter and the following one on the trespass-offering. Here is *an* atonement, to make which, the priests only entered the Holy, and to make it they could enter that apartment “always” or “daily” (*Ibid.*; emphasis in original).

J. N. Andrews, our first missionary, wrote:

If the law that condemned man could have been abolished, it would not have been necessary *that the blood of Christ should be shed, that atonement might be made for its transgressors*. But the Son of God died because the law which man had broken could not be taken back (*The Perpetuity of the Royal Law*, p. 24).

Is it asked, How then could Israel hope for salvation, while the law of God stood out before them? We answer, that beside “the royal law,” [James ii,8-12,] another law was given to Israel, viz. “the law of commandments contained in ordinances.” - Eph.ii,15; Col.ii,14-17. In all its sacrifices and offerings, this law pointed them forward to *the one offering of Jesus Christ, as the great atonement for their transgressions* (*Thoughts on the Sabbath and the Perpetuity of the Royal Law*. pp. 16, 17).

Elder James White, the first publisher of the 1872 Statement of Beliefs, followed the lead of Crosier in calling the daily sin offering “the daily atonement.” He wrote: “The *daily atonement* was continued only 364 days before the services of the earthly Sanctuary changed, and the tenth day atonement for the cleansing of the Sanctuary was introduced (*The Parable*, p. 15).” Writing in *The Review and Herald*, he stated:

How is he treated, whom the Jews expected as their king? For a throne, he receives the cross; for a diadem of glory and honor, he has prepared for him a crown of thorns; instead of acknowledging him as the King who sways the sceptre over all worlds, he has given into his hand the mock emblem of empire; instead of yielding that homage that was due to him, as Lord and Christ, they mockingly bend the knee before him, *while he hangs, in agony, making atonement for transgression*. Thus, was the Son of the Highest delivered, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, to make atonement for transgression, put an end to sin-offering, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. Dan.ix,24 (*The Review and Herald*, June 20, 1854; article entitled, “Vision on the Holy Mount”).

David Arnold, the first president of the New York Conference, in an article in the *Review* entitled, “The Oneness of the Church and the Means of God’s Appointment for its Purification and Unity,” wrote:

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He [Satan] has not only contrived “to change times and laws,” by causing men to change the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, thus causing them to “transgress the laws, change the ordinance, break the everlasting covenant,” [Isa.xxiv,5; Ex.xxxi,16,] but he has also struck at the ordinances specially designed for the Christian church *to keep in memory the atonement wrought out by the death and sufferings of Christ*. The appropriate emblem designed to keep in memory the burial and resurrection of Christ, he has also caused to be changed to sprinkling, thus wholly perverting its use (*The Review and Herald*, June 26, 1855).

Uriah Smith quoted from *William Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible* in his book, *Looking unto Jesus*:

“Accordingly we find (see quotation from the Mishna in *Outr. De Sacr.* i.c.XV., 10) that, in all cases, it was the custom for the offerer to lay his hand on the head of the sin-offering, to confess generally or specially his sins, and to say, ‘Let *this* be my expiation.’ Beyond all doubt, the sin-offering distinctly witnessed that sin existed in man, that ‘the wages of that sin was death.’ and that God had provided an atonement by the vicarious suffering of an appointed victim (*Looking unto Jesus*, p. 141; emphasis in original).”

James M. Stephenson wrote a series of articles that appeared in *The Review and Herald* from August 22, 1854, to December 5, 1854. This nine-part series was called “The Atonement.” Stephenson’s work was highly recommended by Elder James White. He noted: “THE ATONEMENT. – This important work is now completed. The subject on which it treats is second to no other in importance; and no one who hopes for salvation through Jesus Christ should neglect to study the great plan of salvation as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. This work opens a wide field of Bible truth and will be found a valuable assistant in the study of the great theme on which it treats. We commend it to the notice of the friends of truth (*The Review and Herald*, December 19, 1854).” Even though Stephenson left the Seventh-day Adventists late in 1855 to join the *Messenger Party* (*The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, p. 870), we still find Elder White continuing to advertise Stephenson’s work, “The Atonement,” in *The Review and Herald*. In fact, it was advertised over sixty times in the church paper between 1856 and 1857! Apparently Elder White did not feel that Stephenson’s defection from the message devalued his earlier work. Stephenson wrote:

He [man] has violated a law which requires perfect obedience; hence he cannot, in any way, make satisfaction for such violation, from the fact that it was all he could possibly do in the first instance to render perfect obedience; and to suffer the penalty (death) due for his transgression would ruin him; hence the atonement made by Christ is justly termed a *vicarious atonement* (*The Review and Herald*, August 22, 1854; emphasis in original).

We are prepared at this point of the investigation, to understand the relation the *sacrifice* of Christ, or the *atonement*, sustains to the law of God. In

presenting this part of the subject, I shall compare what I understand to be the Bible view (*Ibid.*, November 21, 1854; emphasis in original).

Of special interest are some statements from A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, whom Sister White called “Christ’s delegated messengers (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 97).”

Before the lamb was offered in sacrifice the individual who had brought it laid his hands upon its head and confessed his sins and it was “accepted for him to make atonement for him (*The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 63).”

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. He died to make an atonement, and to be a pattern for every one who would be his disciple (*The General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, p. 332).

This act of mercy on the part of God is eminently just, because in the first place the sin is against God, and he has a right to pass by offenses against him; and, further, it is just, because he gives his own life as an atonement for the sin, so that the majesty of the law is not only maintained, but is magnified. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Ps. 85:10. God is just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. All righteousness is from him alone (*Waggoner on Romans*, p. 74). (This book was compiled from *The Signs of the Times* articles published from October 1895 through September 1896.)

Ellen White clearly saw the death of Christ upon the cross and his ministry in the heavenly sanctuary as being essential for the salvation of man. She referred to both of these works in the typical service as an atonement. With heart-moving words, she wrote:

As you near the cross of Calvary there is seen love that is without a parallel. As you by faith grasp the meaning of the sacrifice, you see yourself a sinner, condemned by a broken law. This is repentance. As you come with humble heart, you find pardon, for Christ Jesus is represented as continually standing at the altar, momentarily offering up the sacrifice for the sins of the world. He is a minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. The typical shadows of the Jewish tabernacle no longer possess any virtue. *A daily and yearly typical atonement* is no longer to be made, but the atoning sacrifice through a mediator is essential because of the constant commission of sin. Jesus is officiating in the presence of God, offering up His shed blood, as it had been a lamb slain. Jesus presents the oblation offered for every offense and every shortcoming of the sinner (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 343, 344; MS 50, 1900).

Referring to the death of Jesus as an atonement for sin, she wrote:

The salvation of men depends upon a continual application to their hearts of the cleansing blood of Christ. Therefore, the LORD’s supper was not to be observed only occasionally or yearly, but more frequently than the annual passover. This solemn ordinance commemorates a far greater event than the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. That deliverance was typical of

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the great atonement which Christ made by the sacrifice of his own life for the final deliverance of his people (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 228).

Christ, our Mediator, is the one who gives the Holy Spirit; and by the office work of the Holy Spirit, *the atonement made on Calvary* is brought in contact with the soul of man to transform his character, and change his nature, until it can be said in heaven, “Ye are laborers together with God, wearing Christ’s yoke, bearing his burden (*The Youth’s Instructor*, July 5, 1894).”

Christ’s glory did not appear when he was upon this earth. He was then a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Men hid their faces from him. But he was following the path God had marked out for him. Still bearing humanity, he ascended to heaven, triumphant and victorious. *He has taken the blood of his atonement into the holiest of all*, sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat and his own garments, and blessed the people (*Ibid.*, July 25, 1901).

Christ applied himself diligently to a study of the Scriptures; for he knew them to be full of precious instruction to all who will make it the man of their counsel. He was faithful in the discharge of his home duties, and the early morning hours, instead of being wasted in bed, often found him in a retired place, meditating and searching the Scriptures, and in prayer. Every prophecy concerning his work and mediation was familiar to him, *especially those having reference to his humiliation, atonement, and intercession* (*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 177). (See also *The Youth’s Instructor*, May 25, 1909.)

## Chapter 5

### Ellen G. White and the Atonement

The previous chapter documented the understanding our pioneers had concerning a dual atonement. The believers referred to the work of Christ upon the cross as *an* atonement, while the high-priestly ministry in heaven was considered *the* atonement. References were given to demonstrate that Sister White also referred to the death of Jesus as an atonement. For example:

Following right principle means the faithful doing of the first four and the last six commandments. In obedience to these divine commands, we eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, appropriating all that is embraced in *the atonement made on Calvary*. Christ will stand by the side of all who receive Him as their Saviour (*The Upward Look*, p. 196; MS 161, July 1, 1903).

#### **“White-isms” and the Atonement**

The previous chapter noted the late M. L. Andreasen’s concern that one reading Sister White’s writings on the atonement could become confused if he or she did not “recognize the two divisions of the atonement (*Letters to the Churches*, Series A, no. 6).” While the lack of understanding the “two divisions” has led some to misunderstand Sister White’s writings on the atonement, some have further failed to understand her usage of terms or expressions. Dr. Ralph Larson, writing about Sister White’s usage of words, states:

It is a well established principle of research that a writer’s use of terms and/or expressions (groups of words) is to be understood in the light of the writer’s other uses of the same terms or expressions. If an author’s writings are not very extensive, comparisons may be difficult to make and word meanings difficult to establish.

This is emphatically not the case with Ellen White. She wrote twenty-five million words, and used terms and expressions with a remarkable uniformity of meaning. The student will note, however, that her usages, though clear, uniform and consistent in her own writings, are sometimes different from ours. In such

cases we must let Ellen White speak to us in her own way, and take care that we do not force an alien interpretation, or our own interpretation, on to her words (*The Word Was Made Flesh*, p. 15).

Dr. Larson documents the way Sister White was consistent in her usage of different terms and phrases in relationship to the humanity of Christ. It can also be well-documented that she was consistent in her word choice while writing on the atonement. We have used the power of the Ellen G. White compact disc to search for all the references to the word “atonement” in her published writings. After reading and studying over 1,000 statements on the atonement, we have used the computer to narrow down the references to a select group of exact phrases which will give the reader a clearer understanding of Sister White’s perspective.

### “Perfect atonement”

The first phrase we shall examine is “perfect atonement.” *The Published Ellen G. White Writings on Compact Disc*, version 3.0, reveals that this phrase is found ten times in her published writings. Once it is used by the publishers as a supplied title and it is found that the nine remaining references all come from two original sources. For this phrase, as well as the other phrases, we will give the original references and with each reference document if and where it was later reprinted. Some of the extras were reprinted during Ellen White’s lifetime, and some, of course, after her death. The first statement is from Manuscript 128, 1897, first published in *The Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*:

Type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb slain for the sins of the world. Our great High Priest has made the only sacrifice that is of any value in our salvation. *When he offered Himself on the cross, a perfect atonement was made for the sins of the people* (*The Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, May 1, 1899). (Also published in *The Signs of the Times*, June 28, 1899; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 913, year 1957; vol. 7A, p. 459, year 1957; *That I May Know Him*, p. 73, year 1964; *Lift Him Up*, p. 319, year 1988.)

Christ as the great high priest, *making a perfect atonement for sin*, stands alone in divine majesty and glory. Other high priests were only types, and when he appeared, the need of their services vanished. “But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself (*The Review and Herald*, March 17, 1903).” (Also published in *That I May Know Him*, p. 74, year 1964)

The first statement clearly describes the work of Christ on the cross as “a perfect atonement.” The second statement is not as clear without further

context. The article's title is, "The Worth of Souls." It begins, "God's servants need a realization of the value of souls. Christ died for human beings. His sacrifice on the cross is the measure of their value in God's sight." Reading through the article both the work of the cross and the high-priestly ministry of Christ are noted. Neither liberal nor conservative need argue the fact that both the sacrifice of Christ and his high-priestly ministry in heaven are "perfect" works for man. The death of Christ was perfect. The ministry of Christ in heaven is perfect also. Thus, of the ten references to the phrase "perfect atonement," there are only two original sources.

#### **"Complete . . . atonement"**

It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in the redemption of the world to save sinners by the blood of the Lamb. *The great sacrifice* of the Son of God was neither too great nor too small to accomplish the work. In the wisdom of God *it was complete; and the atonement made testifies to every son and daughter of Adam the immutability of God's law*. The value of the law of Jehovah is to be estimated by the immense price that was paid in the death of the Son of God to maintain its sacredness (*The Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1889).

#### **"Complete atonement"**

Do you realize your sinfulness? Do you despise sin? Then remember that the righteousness of Christ is yours if you will grasp it. Can you not see what a strong foundation is placed beneath your feet when you accept Christ? God has accepted the *offering of his Son as a complete atonement for the sins of the world* (*The Youth's Instructor*, September 20, 1900). (Also published in *The Faith I Live By*, p. 91, year 1958.)

After Adam fell, Jesus entered upon the work of redeeming man. *In every part his sacrifice was perfect; for he could make a complete atonement for sin*. Though he was one with God, yet he made himself of no reputation. He took upon him our nature. "Lo, I come," was his cheerful announcement of the clothing of his divinity with humanity, "to do thy will, O God!" He loved his church, and gave himself for it. "Therefore doth my Father love me," he said to the Pharisees, "because I lay down my life, that I might take it again (*The Youth's Instructor*, June 14, 1900)."

The statement from the June 14, 1900 *Youth's Instructor* helps to shed light upon references to a "perfect atonement." In this statement, she equates Christ's sacrifice as being "perfect" and "a complete atonement for sin."

#### **"Atonement was complete"**

Let us study God's law in connection with the work of Christ. Man broke the law. Christ came to this earth to make an atonement for transgression. *His atonement was complete in every part*. As He hung on the cross, He could say, "It is finished." The demands of justice were satisfied. The way to the throne of grace was opened for every sinner (*The Signs of the Times*, July 31, 1901).

This reference clearly speaks of Christ's death on the cross and not his high-priestly ministry. *This atonement*, she says, was "complete in every part."

**"Atonement is complete"**

We are not merely to see a way by which to cross the gulf of sin, but we are to appreciate the value of the ransom paid for our souls; we are to realize something of what has been suffered that we might be forgiven, and rescued from destruction. *We are to rejoice that the atonement is complete*; and believing in Christ as our complete Saviour, we may know that the Father loves us, even as he loves his Son (*The Review and Herald*, November 11, 1890).

Christ came as a man, that He might meet men where they are. Had He come in all His glory, human beings could not have endured the sight. "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." He planted the cross between heaven and earth, and when the Father beheld the sacrifice of His Son, He bowed before it in recognition of its perfection. "It is enough," He said. "*The atonement is complete* (*The Review and Herald*, September 24, 1901)." (The last three sentences of this statement are also published in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7A, p. 459, year 1957.)

The September 24, 1901, statement is of special significance because of the direct quotation of God himself is used. Both of these statements refer to the death of Christ bringing about a completion to the atonement.

**"Completion of the atonement"**

The time had come for the universe of heaven to accept their King. Angels, cherubim and seraphim, would now stand in view of the cross. The Father bows His head in recognition of the One of whom the priests and rulers had said, "He trusted in God let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him." The Father accepts His Son. No words could convey the rejoicing of heaven or God's expression of satisfaction and delight in His only begotten Son, as *He saw the completion of the atonement* (*The Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, May 22, 1899).<sup>1</sup>

This reference, like those that state the "atonement is complete," refers to the death of Jesus on the cross.

**"Atonement . . . truths cluster"**

A search on the compact disc gives eight references for the phrase "atonement for sin . . . truths cluster." Of these eight references, there are only two original sources. The first is from the diary entry of July 30, 1901, which later became known as Manuscript 70, 1901. It was not published until the

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1. The article this reference was taken from was also published in *The Signs of the Times*, August 16, 1899, with an expansion of two paragraphs. A portion of the above reference was also printed in the *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7A, p. 460 and referenced to *The Signs of the Times* article.

year of Sister White's death, 1915, in the expanded version of *Gospel Workers*:

*The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster.* In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary (Diary entry for July 30, 1901; *Gospel Workers*, p. 315, 1915 ed.). (Later published in *Evangelism*, p. 190, year 1946; *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 221, year 1955; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1137, year 1956; and twice in vol. 7A, p. 457, year 1957; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 336, year 1993.)

Christ is the foundation of every true church. All who are brought to a new faith are to be established on Him. The plain, simple truths of the gospel are to be kept before minds. *Christ crucified as the atonement for sin is the great central truth of the gospel, round which all truths cluster.* To this great truth all other truths are tributary (*The Upward Look*, p. 85, year 1982; Letter of March 12, 1902, to Elder E. F. Franke, an evangelist).<sup>2</sup>

#### “Final atonement”

These last statements in this section, “Final atonement,” from the pen of Sister White speak clearly of an atonement finished in heaven. They show that she did not define “atonement” as meaning a finishing of the plan of salvation or she could not have written: “The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ’s work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. . . . The intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 488, 489).” Thus, when we read before of a “perfect” or “complete” atonement, she was referring to the death of Christ as being a complete and perfect sacrifice. That complete and perfect sacrifice made *an* atonement between God and the sinner so that there could be an at-one-ment between a holy God and sinful man!

At the crucifixion, as Jesus died on Calvary, he cried, It is finished, and the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. This was to show that the services of the earthly Sanctuary were forever finished, and that God would no more meet with them in their earthly temple, to accept their sacrifices. The blood of Jesus was then shed, which was to be ministered by himself in the heavenly Sanctuary. *As the priests in the earthly Sanctuary entered the Most Holy once a year to cleanse the Sanctuary, Jesus entered the Most Holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 days of Dan, viii, in 1844, to make a final atonement for all who could be benefited by his mediation, and to cleanse the*

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2. This letter was not printed until the book, *The Upward Look*, was published in 1982. The reference is not currently published anywhere else in Ellen White’s writings.

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*Sanctuary* (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, pp. 161, 162; 1858). (This statement was reprinted in *Early Writings*, p. 253 in 1882, with minor editing.)

In the typical service, only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin-offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the day of atonement. *So in the great day of **final atonement** and investigative Judgment, the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God* (*The Great Controversy*, 1888 ed., p. 480). (Also published in *The Great Controversy*, 1911 ed., p. 480; and the last sentence in *The Faith I Live By*, p. 210; 1958.)

The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; *it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the **final atonement***; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 357; 1890).

*As in the **final atonement** the sins of the truly penitent are to be blotted from the records of heaven*, no more to be remembered or come into mind, so in the type they were borne away into the wilderness, forever separated from the congregation (*Ibid.*, p. 358).

When Christ, the Mediator, burst the bands of the tomb, and ascended on high to minister for man, He first entered the holy place, where, by virtue of His own sacrifice, He made an offering for the sins of men. With intercession and pleadings He presented before God the prayers and repentance and faith of His people, purified by the incense of His own merits. *He next entered the Most Holy Place, to make an atonement for the sins of the people, and cleanse the sanctuary.* His work as high priest completes the divine plan of redemption by making the **final atonement** for sin (MS 69, 1912, p. 13, “The Sin and Death of Moses,” copied September 10, 1912). (Published in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 157 and vol. 11, p. 54; 1990.)

All five original statements for the phrase “final atonement” refer to Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Of significance is the last reference where she specifically states that “His work as high priest completes the divine plan of redemption by making the final atonement for sin.” Thus, while the atonement of the cross was complete of itself, it is the sanctuary ministry of Christ in the final atonement that completes the plan of salvation.

Of the eight sets of exact phrases we have printed for the reader, we found thirty-eight references on the computer of which only sixteen were original statements. In other words, twenty-two of the thirty-eight (58%) were reprints of original statements. These statistics help us to understand that while Sister White might have given minimal emphasis to a concept such as calling Christ’s work at Calvary a “perfect work,” (two original statements with one reprint in her lifetime) some of the publishers of her writings have given it greater emphasis, reprinting it seven additional times, all printed after the Seventh-day Adventist–Evangelical Conferences of the middle 1950’s!

## Chapter 6

### The Day of Atonement

Paul, writing to Timothy, his “own son in the faith (1 Timothy 1:2),” gave counsel that is especially pertinent to Seventh-day Adventist Christians:

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called (1 Timothy 6:20).

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them (2 Timothy 3:14).

The uniqueness of the Advent movement and the truth which has been *committed to our trust* is the understanding of the sanctuary message in type and antitype. LeRoy Froom, church historian and apologist, wrote that the sanctuary truth was “the one distinctive, separative, structural truth—the sole doctrinal teaching that identifies and sets” the Seventh-day Adventists “apart from all other Christians (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 541).”

To understand this uniqueness and trust, we must understand the basic lessons of the sanctuary services. While the book of Leviticus outlines several offerings and services, Paul, in the book of Hebrews, places the emphasis on two services. These are the sin offering as recorded in Leviticus chapter 4 and the Day of Atonement as recorded in Leviticus chapter 16. Paul sums these up in the beginning of the ninth chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews:

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went *always* (margin: daily) into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone *once every year*, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that

the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience (Hebrews 9:1-9).

Here Paul writes about a daily and a yearly service. The efficacy of these two ministrations had but one common source in reality. In the type, there were sacrifices for each service. In the antitype, one sacrifice is sufficient for both ministrations. "So Christ was *once offered* to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Hebrews 9:28)." "For Christ also hath *once suffered for sins*, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18)." Notice the emphasis Paul places on the perfect sacrifice of Christ as he continues writing in Hebrews:

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained ["thus securing" RSV] eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:11-14)?

The blood of Christ provided the means for the ministration in the sanctuary which would purge the conscience or the mind. Let us ever remember that the battle is for the mind. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5)."

### **The Sin Offering**

The fourth chapter of Leviticus catalogs four different sin offerings, which are for "the priest that is anointed [the high priest]," "the whole congregation of Israel," "a ruler," and "the common people." These four offerings were administered through two different procedures.

In the case of the high priest or of the assembly of Israel, a young bullock was the offering (Leviticus 4:3, 14). The procedures, as found in Leviticus 4:1-21, for the high priest and for corporate sin are outlined as follows:

- The bullock was brought to the door of the tabernacle where either the high priest or the elders (if the offering was for the congregation) would lay his or their hands upon the animal and confess his or their sins.
- The bullock was slain and the blood was sprinkled before the veil in the holy place with some blood being placed on the horns of the golden altar.
- The remaining blood was poured out at the foot of the altar of burnt offering.

- The kidneys and the fat that surrounded the kidneys and liver were burnt on the brazen altar.
- The rest of the bullock was carried out of the camp into a clean place, laid upon wood, and burnt.

The last two sin offerings included all the individuals of Israel except for the high priest. Even the common priests were included. The Hebrew word for “ruler” in Leviticus 4:22 is נָשִׂיא (*nasi*) which means prince, king, or leader. While *nasi* is used to describe the head of each of the twelve tribes as a “captain (Numbers 2:3-29),” it is also used to describe Eleazar who was to be “chief (*nasi*) over the chief (*nasi*) of the Levities (Numbers 3:32).”

Whether it was a ruler or a common person, the procedure for the service was the same. The main difference was that the ruler was to bring a male “kid of the goats,” while the common person could bring a female kid or lamb. Perhaps the most striking feature of this sacrifice is that the blood was never taken inside the holy place and it was ministered by the common priests. The procedure, as found in Leviticus 4:22-35, could be outlined as follows:

- The goat or lamb was brought to the sanctuary and the hands of the offender were placed upon the head of the animal and confession of the sin was made.
- The animal was slain and its blood placed on the horns of the altar of burnt offering.
- The remainder of the blood was poured out at the foot of the altar of burnt offering.
- The fat that surrounded the kidneys and liver was burnt on the brazen altar.
- The priest would eat a portion of the flesh of the animal “in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation (Leviticus 6:26).”

The result of these services was clearly spelled out. For the ruler it is stated: “The priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be *forgiven* him (Leviticus 4:26).” The services for the common person brought about the same result: “The priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be *forgiven* him (Leviticus 4:31).” (See also v. 35.)

This atonement made at the altar of burnt offering, representing the cross, resulted in forgiveness. This forgiveness secured at Calvary was so sufficient that man can be at-one with God. The New Testament gives a beautiful illustration in Luke 23:39-43. The repentant thief hanging on a cross beside Jesus asked the Master to remember him in his kingdom. The thief received assurance of full forgiveness! This is an atonement that we dare not deny!

### **The Atonement of Atonements**

Besides the sin offerings of Leviticus chapter 4, we find another offering that was referred to as a sin offering. This service was performed once each year on the tenth day of the seventh month.<sup>1</sup> This day, now known as Yom Kippur (Day of Atonements), is the most holy day of the Jewish year. It was understood to represent judgment and final cleansing of sin.<sup>2</sup> The Day of Atonement services, as found in Leviticus 16, can be outlined as follows:

- After officiating at the regular morning service in his high-priestly robes, the high priest bathes and changes into the holy linen garments of a common priest.
- The high priest presents the bullock before the Lord, laying his hands on its head.
- He presents the two goats and casts lots to determine which shall be for Jehovah and which shall be for Azazel.
- The high priest kills the bullock and preserves its blood.
- He takes the censer and incense into the most holy place and arranges incense on the burning coals in the censer that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat.
- He returns to the court for the blood of the bullock which he takes into the most holy place and sprinkles it on and before the mercy seat seven times.
- The high priest returns to the court, kills the Lord's goat, and enters the most holy place, sprinkling its blood as he did the bullock's blood.
- After sprinkling the blood, he returns to the holy place and makes atonement for the holy things.
- The high priest then returns to the court and makes atonement for the altar, sprinkling it with the blood of both the bullock and the goat seven times, placing the blood on the horns of the altar.
- The high priest confesses the sins of Israel over head of the live goat and sends it into the wilderness by the hand of a fit man.
- After these services, the high priest washes himself, puts his high-priestly robes back on, and offers the fat of the sin offering, the burnt offering for himself and the people, the burnt offering for the day, and the kid of the sin

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1. See Leviticus 16:1-34.

2. See *The Seventh-day Adventist Source Book*, pp. 61-63.

offering for the day. (See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 706.)

The result of this service was one of cleansing. “For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to *cleanse* you, that ye may be *clean* from all your sins before the LORD (Leviticus 16:30).” The blood of Jesus provided the means for both the atonement of the cross and the ministry in heaven. This gives new meaning to 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

The Hebrew word for atonement, **כַּפַּר** (*kaphar*), literally means to cover. While our sins are *covered* by the blood, they must also be removed from not only the record books of heaven but from our lives as well! The atonement of forgiveness made at the cross, as important as it is, is not the full and final atonement that must be made for the total restoration of man so that he can be in the presence of a holy God. A simple illustration will make this clear. A mother tells her daughter she may go play but must not get muddy. After a few minutes the daughter appears at the door crying. A fall has resulted in her white dress becoming brown. The mother looks on with pity. Quick to notice the repentant attitude of the child, she assures her of her love and forgiveness for getting muddy. *However, even though she is forgiven, she is still dirty and must be cleansed!* The atonement at Calvary provides *forgiveness*, but we must yet receive *cleansing* by the blood of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14)?”

The book of Leviticus records several different types of offerings which resulted in an “atonement” being made. (See Leviticus 1:4; 4:26; 5:6; 12:7.) However, the atonement made on the tenth day of the seventh month stood out above all the rest. Chapter 23 of Leviticus reviews the major ceremonial Sabbaths and there Inspiration, referring to the Day of Atonement, employs the majestic use of the Hebrew plural to show the superior nature of this atonement over any other provided. We read: “The LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of *atonements*: [*kippur*: plural in the Hebrew] it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of *atonements*, [plural in the Hebrew] to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God (Leviticus 23:26-28).”

God has promised to “make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir (Isaiah 13:12).” Through *the final atonement* in heaven God will prepare 144,000 to give a special revelation of his character to the universe.

## The Foundation of Our Faith

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These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God (Revelation 14:4, 5).

The Psalmist stated, “Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile (Psalm 32:2).” No wonder we have been counseled to “. . . strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand (*The Review and Herald*, March 9, 1905).”

We have no doubt, neither have we had a doubt for years, that the doctrines we hold today [1863] are present truth, and that we are nearing the judgment (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, page 355).

## Chapter 7

# The Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Atonement

The belief that the plan of salvation was not completed with the atonement on the cross, coupled with the understanding of the humanity of Jesus, separated Seventh-day Adventists from most Evangelical bodies until the middle 1950's.<sup>1</sup> Prior to this time, most Evangelicals considered Seventh-day Adventism to be a cult. It was the work of Donald Barnhouse and Walter Martin that opened the way for the church to have the stigma of being a cult removed. With the blessing of the then General Conference President R. R. Figuhr, Martin, Barnhouse, and George Cannon met with T. E. Unruh, Roy A. Anderson, LeRoy Froom, and W. E. Read to try to dissolve supposed misunderstandings between Adventists and Evangelicals. Unruh, writing in *The Adventist Heritage*, stated:

A series of conferences between Seventh-day Adventist and Evangelical leaders, begun in the spring in 1955 and running into the summer of 1956, led to the publication of two books: the first, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*; the second, *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism*. The first is a definitive statement of contemporary Adventist belief, . . . The second work, by Walter R. Martin, a leading expert on American cults, defines and examines Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, using the first work as source and authority. In his book Martin removed the Seventh-day Adventist church from his list of non-Christian cults and acknowledged that all whose beliefs followed the *Questions on Doctrine* should be counted members of the Body of Christ (the Christian church in the Evangelical definition) and therefore his brethren (*The Adventist Heritage*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1977).

These conferences and the resulting book, *Questions on Doctrine*, compromised the position we *had held* on the atonement. Specifically, we denied our understanding of the dual atonement and relegated Christ's

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1. As we will see in Chapter 22, concessions made years earlier prepared the way for the aforementioned compromises.

high-priestly ministry to nothing more than a series of meaningless motions. This chapter will document the denial that occurred at the time of *Questions on Doctrine*, the continual denial, and God's response to that denial.

### **The Questions on Doctrine Denial**

On page 390 of *Questions on Doctrine*, we read: “*Adventists do not hold any theory of a dual atonement.*” (Emphasis is in the original.) Dr. Barnhouse, writing in reference to the great disappointment, called the doctrine of the investigative judgment “a human face-saving idea” and “that any effort to establish it is *stale, flat, and unprofitable (Eternity, September 1956; emphasis in original)!*” Later, he called it “unimportant and almost naive (*Ibid.*)” He also wrote of the impressions our leaders conveyed to him of their understanding of the investigative judgment:

It should also be realized that some uninformed Seventh-day Adventists took this idea and carried it to fantastic literalistic extremes. **Mr. Martin and I heard the Adventist leaders say, flatly, that they repudiate all such extremes. This they have said in no uncertain terms.** *Further, they do not believe, as some of their earlier teachers taught, that Jesus' atoning work was not completed on Calvary but instead that He was still carrying on a second ministering work since 1844. This idea is also totally repudiated (Ibid.).*

Our leaders repudiated the Biblical teachings of James and Ellen White, Uriah Smith, etc. They also provided an answer to satisfy the Evangelicals about the atonement Christ is now making in heaven. Unfortunately, it was not a biblical answer. The brethren in *Questions on Doctrine* stated:

When, therefore, one hears an Adventist say, or reads in Adventist literature—even in the writings of Ellen G. White—that Christ is making atonement now, it should be understood that we mean simply that Christ is now *making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross*; that He is making it efficacious for us individually, according to our needs and requests (*Questions on Doctrine*, pp. 354, 355; emphasis in original).

This agrees with the position that Barnhouse understood our brethren to have taken, for he wrote: “They believe that since His ascension Christ has been ministering the benefits of the atonement which was completed on Calvary (*Eternity, September 1956.*)” But what is meant when we read that Jesus is “making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross”? *Questions on Doctrine* gives the answer.

How glorious is the thought that the King, who occupies the throne, is also our representative at the court of heaven! This becomes all the more meaningful when we realize that Jesus our surety entered the “holy places,” and appeared in the presence of God for us. But it was not with the *hope* of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! *He had already obtained it for us on the cross (Questions on Doctrine, p. 381; emphasis in the original).*

### **The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Present Position**

*Questions on Doctrine* was published fifty years ago. Upon what basis can we say that the views it contains are still be valid and representative? Walter Martin documented the position the church leadership held in 1983. He wrote:

Since I have always stressed the importance of doctrinal integrity in my evaluations of religious movements, the doctrinal upheaval in Adventism is of special concern. Consequently, on February 16, 1983, I wrote the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Washington, D.C.), calling for the Conference's public and official statement reaffirming or denying the authority of the Adventist book, *Questions on Doctrine*, which was the representative Adventist publication on which I based my earlier evaluation and book. On April 29, 1983, W. Richard Leshar, vice-president of the General Conference, responded in a personal letter. His reply read, in part:

"You ask first if Seventh-day Adventists still stand behind the answers given to your questions in *Questions on Doctrine* as they did in 1957. The answer is yes. You have noted in your letter that some opposed the answers given then, and, to some extent, the same situation exists today. **But certainly the great majority of Seventh-day Adventists are in harmony with the views expressed in Questions on Doctrine** (Letter of W. Richard Leshar to Walter Martin, April 29, 1983)."

On the basis of the above letter, dialog with several Adventist leaders, and the continuing state of flux within Adventism itself, I must for the time being, stand behind my original evaluation of Seventh-day Adventism as presented comprehensively in my first book on the subject and later in this volume (*The Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 410).

In 1983 the church was still supporting the views held in *Questions on Doctrine*. That view was that Jesus obtains nothing for us in heaven, for it had all been secured on the cross. No final atonement! The most current publication that claims to be representative of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine is the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* This book claims to be "*A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (subtitle)." *It was prepared in a manner similar to Questions on Doctrine*; in other words, a single writer preparing the initial draft with a large group of ministers and scholars then giving input. Originally, the initial draft for *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* was prepared by Norman Gulley. This draft was too far to the left for the then ministerial leader Bob Spangler. Spangler then requested P. G. Damsteegt to rewrite the initial draft of each chapter. On page v of the book we learn more of the input process:

The church's ten world divisions selected a committee of 194 persons who went over each chapter, suggesting corrections, additions, and deletions. A smaller committee of 27 church leaders, theologians, and pastors met regularly with Damsteegt to give additional supervision to the preparation of this work (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. v).

Among those who are credited as “sharing their counsel, checking sources, researching materials, rewriting, and editing” are Roy Adams, Duncan Eva, Samuele Bacchiocchi, B. B. Beach, Norman Gulley, William Johnsson, and a host of other “new theology” proponents. While Damsteegt himself may be “historic” in his understanding of the atonement, the above named rewriters and editors are not. Anyone familiar with the publishing process knows that on many occasions the finished product is very different from what is submitted. While some sincere brethren have seen *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* as “a courageous realignment with the historic faith of our pioneers and our church,” the truth is that it teaches the same doctrine of the atonement as does *Questions on Doctrine*. The Evangelicals clearly understand *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* as setting forth the teachings of *Questions on Doctrine*. I believe this difference of opinion does not lie with insincerity as much as with ignorance. Most of our brethren have not really examined this book closely. Notice how closely the language of *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* follows that of *Questions on Doctrine*:

The once-for-all sacrifice has been offered (Heb. 9:28); now He makes available to all the benefits of this atoning sacrifice (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. 313).

Similarly, Christ, in the heavenly sanctuary, has been ministering the benefits of His completed atonement to His people; at His return He will redeem them and give them eternal life (*Ibid.*, p. 365).

This is the very language of *Questions on Doctrine*. In Chapter 9 of *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, entitled “The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ,” we read: “There, as High Priest, He [Christ] applies the benefits of His complete and perfect atoning sacrifice to achieve the reconciliation of humans to God<sup>3</sup> (*Ibid.*, p. 110).”<sup>2</sup>

Both *Questions on Doctrine* and *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* carry statements which claim that they are representative but not authoritative. First we read in *Questions on Doctrine*:

But because of the very nature of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization no statement of Seventh-day Adventist belief can be considered official unless it is adopted by the General Conference in quadrennial session, when accredited delegates from the whole world field are present. The answers in this volume are an expansion of our doctrinal positions contained in the official statement of Fundamental Beliefs already referred to. Hence this

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2. The footnote #3 within the quotation is of special interest for it refers the reader to another source for a full discussion of the subject. That source is *Questions on Doctrine!* The footnote reads: “3. For a full discussion of this Biblical concept, see *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1957), pp. 341-355 (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. 117).”

volume can be viewed as truly representative of the faith and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (*Questions on Doctrine*, p. 9).

*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* holds to the same position that *Questions on Doctrine* does. It claims to be a representative Statement of Beliefs, not an official Statement of Beliefs, because it was not voted on by a General Conference in session:

While this volume is not an officially voted statement—only a General Conference in world session could provide that—it may be viewed as representative of “the truth . . . in Jesus” (Eph. 4:21) that Seventh-day Adventists around the globe cherish and proclaim (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. iv.).

Therefore, in both *Questions on Doctrine* and *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* we find what is claimed to be a true and representative, but not official, statement. To be official, a statement must be voted on by the General Conference. Such a statement does exist! When the church met in 1980 at Dallas for the General Conference Session, a Statement of Beliefs was voted on. That statement can be found in any church manual printed after 1980 or in the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . Belief #23 states, in part:*

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. 312).<sup>3</sup>

From 1872, when the first Statement of Beliefs was published, until 1980, no statement like this was presented. Where did this language come from? It came from *Questions on Doctrine*, page 355. There we read that “Christ is now *making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross.*” What does this language mean? “. . . it was not with the *hope* of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! *He had already obtained it for us on the cross* (*Ibid.*, p. 381; emphasis in original).” This is an official denial of the final atonement!

### **God’s Reaction to the Betrayal**

Before we notice God’s reaction to such treason, let us first review the purpose of the Advent movement. We have been told:

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been *entrusted* the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—*the proclamation of*

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3. This statement is also in every *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* published since 1980.

## The Foundation of Our Faith

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*the first, second, and third angels' messages.* There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.

*The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world.* The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and *God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them* (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 19).

The most solemn message ever given was to be that of the sanctuary judgment hour message. As Elder Stephen Haskell wrote: "The judgment is spoken of by every Bible writer. It is mentioned over a thousand times in the Sacred Writings. It is more solemn than death; for death separates friends only until the resurrection, but the judgment separates them forever (*The Cross and Its Shadow*, p. 230)." This is the message of the first angel and, to a great degree, the second and third angels as well. How appropriate are the inspired words of Paul to his son in the faith: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust (1 Timothy 6:20)." God has clearly *entrusted* the Seventh-day Adventist Church with a special message. Some believe that no matter how unfaithful she is to that trust she will still sail into the heavenly Canaan. This is a deadly error. Notice clearly the words God's servant wrote which destroy that cherished idea, as well as noting God's reaction to the betrayal of sacred trusts:

In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, *if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work entrusted to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence: "Found wanting."* By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 247).

Notice the language employed. The "church is to be weighed. She [the corporate body] will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had." No people have ever had the light that God has been pleased to give this people. Yet we are told that "if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work *entrusted* to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence, 'Found wanting.'" Concerning such treason we have also been told:

The history of Judas presents the sad ending of a life that might have been honored of God. Had Judas died before his last journey to Jerusalem he would have been regarded as a man worthy of a place among the twelve, and one who would be greatly missed. The abhorrence which has followed him through the centuries would not have existed but for the attributes revealed at the close of his history. *But it was for a purpose that his character was laid open to the world. It was to be a warning to all who, like him, should betray sacred trusts* (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 716).

What we have seen is a betrayal of sacred trusts by leaders in whom the brethren had confidence. "The ancient men, those to whom God had given

great light and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 211).” Is it any wonder that brethren of understanding and discernment have arisen, under the power of the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the message through what is termed “Independent Ministries”? May God help those of understanding to be faithful and to give the three angels’ messages in a clear distinct manner. How sad the judgment will be for the “dumb dogs (Isaiah 56:10)” that could not bark; those who knew the weight of the hour, but refused to give the judgment hour message.

Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come. The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains (Ezekiel 7:5-7).

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18, NKJ).

The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 19).

## Chapter 8

### The Paradox of “Historic Adventism”<sup>9</sup>

The first chapter of *The Foundation of Our Faith* deals with a short history of the manner in which our doctrines were formed. We established the following four points concerning our doctrines:

- Their development came from Bible study and revelation.
- The foundation points were established early in our experience (by December of 1850).
- These points are not to be moved or changed.
- Any deviation from these truths would be apostasy.

We also learned that during the development of our doctrines “light was given that helped us [the early workers] to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 57).” His mission as revealed in the incarnation and his priesthood in the sanctuary atonement were covered in chapters 2 through 7. Concerning these doctrines, we saw that the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the pioneers all were in agreement. Truly these doctrines are “historic” or “historical” in reference to the framework of the founding of the church. The truth about the nature of Christ before the incarnation is yet to be covered. Our understanding of the doctrine of Christ will directly affect our understanding of the doctrine of God and here is where the paradox of “historic Adventism” begins.

The dictionary defines the word “paradox” as “a tenet contrary to received opinion,” or as “a self-contradictory statement that at first seems true (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed.).” While at one time there appeared to be a cover-up to try to hide the church’s past teachings in this area such as is found in *Questions on Doctrine* and *Movement of Destiny* the current trend is to use the record of our past history as ammunition against those who claim to be “historic Adventists.” Notice the challenge of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as published in *Issues*:

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For those who would wish to define “historic Adventism” in terms of specific doctrinal content, the 1872 date presents a real dilemma. To accept what Adventists considered binding at that time would exclude any reference to the nature of Christ or to a particular type of obedience. If one wishes, however, to claim additional content from that era and make that content binding in our day (even though Adventists from that earlier era refused to be bound by additional content), the question is: *Would one be willing to accept all the content from that earlier era? Are the modern defenders of so-called historic Adventism really prepared to return to a non-Trinitarian position (Issues, p. 39)?*

The church and almost all independent ministries claim to believe the Trinitarian doctrine. *Issues* claims that the early Adventists did not. The church, through *Issues*, asks quite logically how the independents can claim to be “historic” when they fail to accept the doctrine of God as taught by the pioneers, thus the paradox of “historic Adventism.” This issue was side-stepped by one of the leading thinkers of the independent movement. In an otherwise finely-written and well-considered pamphlet, Ralph Larson wrote:

As our published writings have made quite clear, we understand and use the term “historic” to refer to the truths that were held by virtually all Adventists before the book *Questions on Doctrine* appeared in 1957.

We are not ignorant of our church’s history. We are well aware that the formation of our doctrines was a gradual process, with major principles being established in the early years and further refinements coming later. We are also well aware of the difference between “landmarks” and “pillars” of our faith and the less important items.

But these matters had been sorted out and our theology well refined before 1957, and it is to the common faith of the pre-1957 era that we have reference when we describe ourselves as “historic Adventists.” Again, this is clearly stated in our writings.

We, therefore, look in wonder at the 18 page search for historic Adventism in the *Issues* book, pages 35-53. The chapter requires us to look back to the earliest years of SDA experience for definitions of the term “historic Adventism.” Insofar as the present discussion is concerned, this has little or no relevance. We are talking about pre-1957, not pre-1857 (*Issues: The Real Issue the Side Issues and the Pseudo Issue, pp. 39, 40*).

The two main doctrinal points discussed in this pamphlet are the incarnation and the atonement. We freely grant that these doctrines *appear* to have had little change from 1857 to 1957. Thus, to claim to have the pre-1957 or the 1857 church’s theology for these doctrines would be stating almost one and the same thing *from the angles they were approached*. The same could not be said concerning the doctrine of God. The writer of this pamphlet states that the “major principles” of our faith were established in our early years. In fact, the pamphlet writer has produced a fine study documenting that the major points were established early. Ellen G. White’s writings date the period they were established to be 1850; therefore, we should not be

surprised to find the challenge of the church that is published in *Issues*. There is no way that the doctrine of the Godhead can be considered a small, or side, issue. Both the church and independent ministries have made it clear through recent publications and tapes that they consider the doctrine of God to be a major issue. In fact, most are extremely quick to defend their position and attack anything that does not match their cherished thinking.

The facts are clear and undeniable that the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church believed a very distinctly-different doctrine than today’s Trinitarian doctrine. To try to treat early Adventist thought on this study “like an encapsulated cancer, gross but confined (*The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, p. 530),” as Froom did, would be severely dishonest. The testimony of history is unambiguous. Early Seventh-day Adventists were all anti-Trinitarian. What does this mean to us today? Sister White states that God gave us the truth early in our experience. How, then, do we account for the change? What do the writings of Ellen G. White say concerning this teaching? Above all, what do the Scriptures say concerning this all-important doctrine? While some seem in despair that a controversy is blowing concerning the doctrine of God, we should rejoice that God is giving us each an opportunity to study for ourselves on this matter so that we can have truth, pure and unadulterated. We have been counseled:

There is absolutely no safeguard against evil but truth.

There are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. . . .

This light should lead us to a diligent study of the Scriptures and a most critical examination of the positions which we hold. . . . Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God so that when the testing time shall come and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. . . . (*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 30).

Those who sincerely desire truth will not be reluctant to lay open their positions for investigation and criticism, and will not be annoyed if their opinions and ideas are crossed.

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed (*The Review and Herald*, July 26, 1892). (See also *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 37.)

We will begin with an examination of the beliefs of our pioneers. The early denominational position can be understood by looking at the views of its leading minds on the subject of the Godhead.

### **Joseph Bates**

Few early Adventists were held in as high esteem as was Joseph Bates. Beginning at age fifteen, he spent the next twenty-one years of his life as a sailor and sea captain. He was affectionately known as “Captain Bates.” In his autobiography he reveals, not only some of his early Christian experience, but also his view of the Trinitarian doctrine as well:<sup>1</sup>

DURING the spring of the year 1827 we were blessed with a revival of religion in Fairhaven, especially in the Christian church. At this season my own mind was more or less exercised in regard to uniting with some denomination of Christians. My companion had been a member of the Christian church several years previous to our marriage. By attending with her, after our marriage, when I was at home, I had become acquainted somewhat with their views of the Bible. They took the Scriptures for their only rule of faith and practice, renouncing all creeds.

My parents were members of long standing in the Congregational church, with all of their converted children thus far, and anxiously hoped that we would also unite with them. But they embraced some points in their faith which I could not understand. I will name two only: their mode of baptism, and doctrine of the trinity. . . . Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was an impossibility for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same being. I said to my father, “If you can convince me that we are one in this sense, that you are my father, and I your son; and also that I am your father, and you my son, then I can believe in the trinity (*The Autobiography of Joseph Bates*, pp. 204, 205).”

Bates joined the Christian Connection and later helped to build the Washington Street Christian Connection Meetinghouse in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, where he grew up. Bates wrote his autobiography in 1868 just four years before his death in 1872. There is no hint that his views changed in the 45 years since 1827. Joseph Bates did not believe in the Trinity.

### **The Christian Connection**

Before continuing further with individual pioneers of the early Seventh-day Adventist Church, a survey of the Christian Connection, of which Bates was a member, will be helpful.

Many of the early Advent preachers came from the Christian Connection. Of special interest is Joshua Himes, one of William Miller’s strongest supporters. Erwin Gane, in a master’s thesis, gives the following history concerning the Christian Connection:

The beginning of the Christian Connection is dated about 1800. No individual is recognized as the leader or founder of the sect. The members had

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1. Ellen White highly recommended this as good reading for our young people, calling it a “treasure.” (See *The Review and Herald*, December 11, 1879.)

come from a number of the more conservative religious denominations such as the Calvinistic Baptists, the Free-will and Six-principle Baptists, the Methodists and Presbyterians. Coming as they did from such a diversity of backgrounds, the members retained their variant opinions on doctrinal matters. Himes points out that the early distinguishing characteristic of the group was “universal toleration.” In regard to their attitude to the doctrine of the Trinity, Himes wrote, “At first, they were generally Trinitarians; subsequently they have, almost unanimously, rejected the Trinitarian doctrine as unscriptural (Erwin Gane, *The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer*, p. 7, June 1963).”

Himes’ quote above was taken from an article he wrote on the Christian Connection for Rev. T. Newton Brown’s *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, thus he spoke authoritatively not only for himself but for others. Gane comments: “It is very significant that Himes, one of the spiritual fathers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, should hold these doctrines. It is of further significance that others of the pioneers of this Church had been members of the Christian Connection, prior to accepting the tenets of Seventh-day Adventism (*Ibid.*, p. 8).” Perhaps most significant is that one of those pioneers is James White.

### **James White**

No man had as great an influence upon the early Advent movement as Elder James White, a prolific writer, dynamic preacher, and able administrator. Baptized at the age of fifteen, James White, like Joshua Himes and Joseph Bates, was a member of the Christian Connection. After hearing William Miller preach in 1842, he became an enthusiastic adherent of the Advent doctrine. He was ordained the following year and later married Ellen G. Harmon. Although he died at the early age of sixty, he was a driving force among the Advent people for over thirty-five years. His views carried weight in the church and were representative of early Adventism. One of the first pronouncements on the subject of the Trinity from Elder White came in an early issue of *The Day-Star*. In an exposition on Jude 3 and 4, he wrote:

The way spiritualizers this way have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural trinitarian creed, viz. that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain scripture testimony in abundance that he is the Son of the eternal God (*The Day Star*, January 24, 1846).

Six years later, in a *Review* article, Elder White refuted the charge that the “commandments of God” and “the faith of Jesus” are the same. He stated:

To assert that the sayings of the Son and his apostles are the commandments of the Father, is as wide from the truth as the old trinitarian absurdity that Jesus Christ is the very and Eternal God (*The Review and Herald*, August 5, 1852).

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The following year, Elder White, in sharing with the readers of the *Review* the cause in the west, described meeting with “Bro. Cottrell” (the father of Roswell F. Cottrell) and stated the following concerning him:

Bro. Cottrell is nearly eighty years of age, remembers the dark day of 1780, and has been a Sabbath-keeper more than thirty years. He was formerly united with the Seventh-Day Baptists, but on some points of doctrine has differed from that body. He rejected the doctrine of the trinity, also the doctrine of man’s consciousness between death and the resurrection, and the punishment of the wicked in eternal consciousness (*The Review and Herald*, June 9, 1853).<sup>2</sup>

During his editorship of the *Review*, Elder White published the following quotations from the Catholic *Doctrinal Catechism* which showed that Protestants were not guided by Scripture alone:

“Q. Have you any other proofs that they are not guided by the Scriptures?

“A. Yes; so many that we cannot admit more than a mere specimen into this small work. They reject much that is clearly contained in Scripture, and profess more that is nowhere discoverable in that Divine Book.

“Q. Give some examples of both?

“A. They should, if the Scripture were their only rule, wash the feet of one another, according to the command of Christ, in the 13th chap. of St. John; – they should keep, not the Sunday, but the Saturday, according to the commandment, ‘Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath-day;’ for this commandment has not, in Scripture, been changed or abrogated.

“Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

“A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; – she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.

“Q. Do you observe other necessary truths as taught by the Church, not clearly laid down in Scripture?

“A. The doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine the knowledge of which is certainly necessary to salvation, is not explicitly and evidently laid down in Scripture, in the Protestant sense of private interpretation (*The Review and Herald*, August 22, 1854).”<sup>3</sup>

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2. Russell Holt in a term paper commented: “In listing the trinity among doctrines which were not held by Seventh-day Adventists, James White implies, at least, approval of ‘Bro. Cottrell’s’ rejection of the doctrine. Particularly is this true in light of his own recent statement against the trinity (Russell Holt, *The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance*, p. 5).”

3. This was also published by Uriah Smith in *The Review and Herald* of September 24, 1859.

In 1856, Elder White wrote the following statement in reply to a “communication . . . from an esteemed friend”:<sup>4</sup>

The “mystery of iniquity” began to work in the church in Paul’s day. It finally crowded out the simplicity of the gospel, and corrupted the doctrine of Christ, and the church went into the wilderness. Martin Luther, and other reformers, arose in the strength of God, and with the Word and Spirit, made mighty strides in the Reformation. The greatest fault we can find in the Reformation is, the Reformers stopped reforming. Had they gone on, and onward, till they had left the last vestige of Papacy behind, such as natural immortality, sprinkling, the trinity, and Sunday-keeping, the church would now be free from her unscriptural errors (*The Review and Herald*, February 7, 1856).

As we have seen, during his editorship of the *Review*, Elder White wrote and published articles that expressed non-Trinitarian positions. He also published the 1872 Statement of Beliefs in the first issue of *The Signs of the Times* in 1874. That non-Trinitarian statement reads in part:

I. That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the Creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal; infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth and mercy; unchangeable and every-where present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps. 139:7

II. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist (*A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists*).<sup>5</sup>

Elder D. E. Robinson, who married James White’s eldest granddaughter and who “was closely associated with the White family, stated in an interview that James White never accepted the doctrine of the Trinity (Christy Matthewson Taylor, *The Doctrine of the Personality of the Holy Spirit as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church up to 1900*, pp. 7, 8).” Russell Holt writes insightfully:

The evidence from his pen seems to indicate that from his first spiritual affiliations with the Christian Connection, until his death at the age of 60, James White opposed the trinity, both on the basis of logic and scripture, while holding a definite concept of the exalted position and divinity of Jesus Christ.

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4. Only the initials H. M. were given.

5. These “fundamental principles” were declared to be “a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them (*Preface to beliefs*).” The same statement was published in the 1889, 1905, and 1907-1914 *Yearbooks*. It was prefaced in part: “The following propositions may be taken as a summary of the principal features of their religious faith, upon which there is, so far as we know, entire unanimity throughout the body (1889 *Yearbook*).” The statement issued in 1872 stated conservatively that they were held “with great unanimity.” The *Yearbook* preface to the same statement declared that it was accepted “so far as” they knew with “entire unanimity throughout the body.” See Appendix, p. 243 for a copy of the complete 1872 Statement.

The conclusion reached is intriguing due to his unique and special relationship to the Lord's messenger, who happened to be his wife. She was surely aware of his thinking on the subject. Did she approve? If not, why did he continue his belief? Did she simply refrain from correcting him? Why? The questions raised are fascinating but not easily answered. At least James White himself, can be demonstrated to have been a consistent anti-trinitarian (Holt, *op. cit.*, p. 7).

### **The Trinity Rejected by Historic Adventists**

Joseph Bates and James White were not unique in holding an anti-Trinitarian position. The early Adventists, from various backgrounds, rejected the Trinitarian position for several different reasons.

One of the most frequent arguments cited by early Advent believers for the rejection of the Trinitarian doctrine was that it provided only a human sacrifice on the cross instead of a divine one. The Trinitarian position demanded a two-nature Christology, human and divine, with these two natures separate at all times and only the human nature dying on the cross. In contrast to this, the pioneers believed in a one-nature Christology, the divine and the human being "blended" into one. In 1868, J. H. Waggoner (father of E. J. Waggoner) published his work, *The Atonement*. A second edition was published in 1872 and an enlarged edition in 1884. In the chapter entitled "Doctrine of a Trinity Subversive of the Atonement," he writes what can be considered representative of "historic Adventism":

It will no doubt appear to many to be irreverent to speak thus of the doctrine of a trinity. But we think they must view the subject in a different light if they will calmly and candidly examine the arguments which we shall present. We know that we write with the deepest feelings of reverence for the Scriptures, and with the highest regard for every Scripture doctrine and Scripture fact. But reverence for the Scriptures does not necessarily embrace reverence for men's opinions of the Scriptures.

It is not our purpose to present any argument on the doctrine of the trinity, further than it has a bearing on the subject under consideration, namely, on the Atonement.

Many theologians really think that the Atonement, in respect to its dignity and efficacy, rests upon the doctrine of a trinity. But we fail to see any connection between the two. To the contrary, the advocates of that doctrine really fall into the difficulty which they seem anxious to avoid. Their difficulty consists in this: They take the denial of a trinity to be equivalent to a denial of the divinity of Christ. Were that the case, we should cling to the doctrine of a trinity as tenaciously as any can; but it is not the case. They who have read our remarks on the death of the Son of God know that we firmly believe in the divinity of Christ; but we cannot accept the idea of a trinity, as it is held by Trinitarians, without giving up our claim on *the dignity of the sacrifice* made for our redemption.

And here is shown how remarkably the widest extremes meet in theology. The highest Trinitarians and lowest Unitarians meet and are perfectly united on the death of Christ—the faith of both amounts to Socinianism. Unitarians believe that Christ was a prophet, an inspired teacher, but merely human; that

his death was that of a human body only. Trinitarians hold that the term “Christ” comprehends two distinct and separate natures: one that was merely human; the other, the second person in the trinity, who dwelt in the flesh for a brief period, but could not possibly suffer, or die; that the Christ that died was only the human nature in which the divinity had dwelt. Both classes have a human offering, and nothing more. No matter how exalted the preexistent Son was; no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even eternal; if the manhood only died, the sacrifice was only human. And so far as the vicarious death of Christ is concerned, this is Socinianism. Thus the remark is just, that the doctrine of a trinity degrades the Atonement, resting it solely on a human offering as a basis (*The Atonement in the Light of Nature and Revelation*, pp. 164-166; 1884 ed.).

### **Uriah Smith**

Uriah Smith, writing in *The Review and Herald* of March 27, 1888, responded to an article from the *Free Methodist* of Chicago. The article’s writer, C. E. Harroun Jr., had proposed “the idea that Christ was not possessed of a dual nature while here upon the earth.” To this Smith responded: “At the same time he fails to answer the point made by S. D. Adventists, that if his nature can be separated into human and divine, and only the *human* part died, then the world is furnished with only a *human* sacrifice, not a divine sacrifice, as we contend (*The Review and Herald*, March 27, 1888).”

The common view of the Trinitarian doctrine provided only a human sacrifice! The early pioneers sought to uplift the sacrifice of Christ to a higher level, to that of the divine.

### **J. M. Stephenson and “The Atonement”**

Some of the earliest thoughts concerning the nature of the atonement in relationship to the Trinitarian doctrine came from the pen of J. M. Stephenson. Between August 22 and December 5, 1854, the *Review* published a series of nine front-page articles by Stephenson under the title, “The Atonement.” James White, *Review* editor, urged readers at the beginning of the series to “carefully peruse each article when published.” After discussing the Unitarian view of the sacrifice, Stephenson proceeds to discuss the view of the sacrifice as provided by Trinitarianism:

The Trinitarian view, I think is equally exceptionable. They claim that the Son of God had three distinct natures at the same time; viz., a human body, a human soul, united with his Divine nature: the body being mortal, the soul immortal, the Divinity co-equal, co-existent, and co-eternal with the everlasting Father. Now, none of the advocates of this theory, claim that either his soul or Divinity died, that the body was the only part of this triple being which actually died “the death of the cross;” hence, according to this view (which makes the death of Christ the grand atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world) we only have the sacrifice of the most inferior part – the human body – of the Son of God (*The Review and Herald*, November 21, 1854).

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Stephenson saw the Trinitarian position running 180 degrees opposite to that which is written in Isaiah 53:12, “he hath poured out his *soul* unto death.” Instead of a Christ who offered His whole person (“soul” - *nephesh*) as the sacrifice for the sins of the world, Stephenson saw only an inadequate sacrifice of a human body presented by Trinitarians. At the incarnation, Christ “did not lose his personal identity in his transition from God to man, from the Word to flesh.” (*Ibid.*) Commenting on John 1:14, he stated:

“The Word,” “God,” “the only begotten of the Father,” was made flesh; not flesh made, and the Word put into it; or united with it, but “*the Word was made flesh.*” The natural import of this language is, that the only begotten of the Father, was actually converted into flesh, and as flesh denotes the real nature of the beings for whom he became a substitute, we may reasonably suppose that he became flesh; that the *Divine nature was made human*; nay, that the very substance of which he was originally composed was converted into flesh; otherwise he would not be a real man, a real substitute for man. To be such, he must represent man’s *nature*, as well as his condition (*Ibid.*).

One author who influenced Stephenson in his writing on the atonement was Henry Grew. Grew was a Baptist minister who “championed the Conditionalist position that persuaded George Stoors and Charles Fitch—and thus confirmed our own early Conditionalist views as Adventists (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 155).” In the last section of a nine-part study, Stephenson quoted from Henry Grew’s work, *An Examination of the Divine Testimony of the Nature and Character of the Son of God*, comparing the teaching of Jesus Christ and his apostles with that of Trinitarians:

<b>Jesus Christ and His Apostles</b>	<b>Trinitarians</b>
To us there is but one God, the Father. 1 Cor. 8:6	To us there is but one God, the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost.
My Father is greater than I. John 14:28	The son is as great as the Father.
Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. Col. 1:15	Who is the invisible God, the uncreated Jehovah.
But of that day, c., knoweth no man, no not the angels, c., neither the Son, but the Father. Mark 13:32.	The Son is omniscient, and knew of that day as well as the Father.

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All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Matthew 28:18 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. John 17:2

God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. Eph. 3:9 By whom also he made the worlds. Heb. 1:2

The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him. Rev. 1:1

For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5

Denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 4

Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and signs, and wonders which God did by him. Acts 2:22

For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. John 5:26

I live by the Father. John 6:57

This is my beloved Son. Matt. 3:17

That they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. John 17:3

No given power can qualify the Son of God to give eternal life to his people.

Jesus Christ created all things by his own independent power.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ from his own omniscience.

There is one Mediator between God and man; who is also supreme God and man in one person.

Denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also the only Lord God, and a distinct person.

Jesus performed his miracles by his own omnipotence.

The son is self-existent.

The son lives by himself.

This is the only true God, the same numerical essence as the Father.

That they might know thee, who art not the only true God, in distinction from the Word whom thou hast sent.

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That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:11

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to his own glory (*The Review and Herald*, December 5, 1854).

The Seventh-day Adventist Biblical Research Committee wrote that “Stephenson’s Christology intended definitely to honor Christ and also to correct popular misconceptions about Christ’s sufferings (*The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, p. 532).” The Research Committee further stated, “Indeed, according to Stephenson, so great was Christ’s condescension in giving up His divinity in order to become a man, that we need to realize that His earthly experience was only a portion of His sacrifice on our behalf (*Ibid.*).” Finishing the section of their study called, “Atonement, Christology, and the Trinity,” the committee stated that “early Adventist anti-Trinitarianism . . . cannot fairly be accused of intending to downgrade our Lord. It labored lovingly to upgrade popular conceptions of the atonement. *Movement of Destiny* need not have been embarrassed (*Ibid.*, p. 533)!”

In 1869, the *Review* printed an article written by Roswell F. Cottrell. Cottrell’s father was the R. F. Cottrell that James White had reported on earlier. This article is significant for, according to Arthur White, it “sets forth well the attitude of the pioneers and believers on the question of the Trinity,” and reveals what they thought about Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

### “The Doctrine of the Trinity” by R. F. Cottrell

Reprinted from *The Review and Herald*, June 1, 1869

This has been a popular doctrine and regarded as orthodox ever since the bishop of Rome was elevated to the popedom on the strength of it. It is accounted dangerous heresy to reject it; but each person is permitted to explain the doctrine in his own way. All seem to think they must *hold* it, but each has perfect liberty to take his own way to reconcile its contradictory propositions; and hence a multitude of views are held concerning it by its friends, all of them orthodox, I suppose, as long as they nominally assent to the doctrine.

For myself, I have never felt called upon to explain it, nor to adopt and defend it, neither have I ever preached against it. But I probably put as high an estimation on the Lord Jesus Christ as those who call themselves Trinitarians. This is the first time I have ever taken the pen to say anything concerning the doctrine.

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6. See Robert Diener, *A History of the Godhead in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, p. 2.

My reasons for not adopting and defending it, are 1. Its name is unscriptural—the Trinity, or the triune God, is unknown to the Bible; and I have entertained the idea that doctrines which require words coined in the human mind to express them, are coined doctrines. 2. I have never felt called upon to adopt and explain that which is contrary to all the sense and reason that God has given me. All my attempts at an explanation of such a subject would make it no clearer to my friends.

But if I am asked what I think of Jesus Christ, my reply is, I believe all that the Scriptures say of him. If the testimony represents him as being in glory with the Father before the world was, I believe it. If it is said that he was in the beginning with God, that he was God, that all things were made by him and for him, and that without him was not anything made that was made, I believe it. If the Scriptures say he is the Son of God, I believe it. If it is declared that the Father sent his Son into the world, I believe he had a Son to send. If the testimony says he is the beginning of the creation of God, I believe it. If he is said to be the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person, I believe it. And when Jesus says, “I and my Father are one,” I believe it; and when he says, “My Father is greater than I,” I believe that too; it is the word of the Son of God, and besides this it is perfectly reasonable and seemingly self-evident.

If I be asked how I believe the Father and Son are one, I reply, They are one in a sense not contrary to sense. If the “and” in the sentence means anything, the Father and the Son are two beings. They are one in the same sense in which Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one. He asked his Father that his disciples might be one. His language is, “that they may be one, even as we are one.”

It may be objected, if the Father and the Son are two distinct beings, do you not, in worshiping the Son and calling him God, break the first commandment of the Decalogue?

No; it is the Father’s will “That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.” We cannot break the commandment and dishonor God by obeying him. The Father says of the Son, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” Should angels refuse to worship the Son, they would rebel against the Father. Children *inherit* the name of their father. The Son of God “hath by *inheritance* obtained a more excellent name than” the angels. That name is the name of his Father. The Father says to the Son, “Thy throne, O God is forever and ever.” Heb. 1. The Son is called “The mighty God.” Isa. 9:6. And when he comes again to earth his waiting people will exclaim, “This is our God.” Isa. 25:9. It is the will of the Father that we should thus honor the Son. In doing so we render supreme honor to the Father. If we dishonor the Son we dishonor the Father; for he requires us to honor his Son.

But though the Son is called God yet there is a “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. 1:3. Though the Father says to the Son, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever,” yet, that throne is given him of his Father; and because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, he further says, “Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee.” Heb. 1:9. “God

hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36. The Son is “the everlasting Father,” not of himself, nor of his Father, but of his children. His language is, “I and the children which God hath given me.” Heb. 2:13. (Emphasis in original.)

Cottrell’s burden was not only to explain to the Trinitarians why he could not agree with them but, even more, to present what he believes about Jesus Christ. Cottrell, like Waggoner, insisted Christ is divine and worthy of worship. While not ascribing to Christ the concept of being coequal and coeternal with the Father, they did not view Christ as a created being but, rather, a literal, begotten Son. While not attempting to describe the manner in which Christ was brought forth, they believed the Scriptures concerning the Sonship of Christ to mean literally what they said.

### **Pagan Origins—Papal Foundation**

Another famous Adventist pioneer who rejected the Trinitarian teaching was J. N. Loughborough. In a *Review* article, Loughborough answers the question: “What serious objection is there to the doctrine of the Trinity (*The Review and Herald*, November 5, 1861)?” Loughborough replied: “There are many objections which we might urge, but on account of our limited space we shall reduce them to the three following: 1. It is contrary to common sense. 2. It is contrary to scripture. 3. Its origin is pagan and fabulous (*Ibid.*).” While following a similar line of reasoning on the first two statements that other pioneers used, Loughborough also introduces the pagan origins of the doctrine. He writes:

3. Its origin is pagan and fabulous. Instead of pointing us to scripture for proof of the trinity, we are pointed to the trident of the Persians, with the assertion that “by this they designed to teach the idea of a trinity, and if they had the doctrine of the trinity, they must have received it by tradition from the people of God. But this is all assumed, for it is certain that the Jewish church held to no such doctrine. Says Mr. Summerbell; “A friend of mine who was present in a New York synagogue, asked the Rabbi for an explanation of the word ‘elohim.’ A Trinitarian clergyman who stood by, replied, ‘Why, that has reference to the three persons in the Trinity,’ when a Jew stepped forward and said he must not mention that word again, or they would have to compel him to leave the house; for it was not permitted to mention the name of any strange god in the synagogue.” Milman says the idea of the Trident is fabulous.

This doctrine of the trinity was brought into the church about the same time with image worship, and keeping the day of the sun, and is but Persian doctrine remodeled. It occupied about three hundred years from its introduction to bring the doctrine to what it is now. It was commenced about 325 A. D., and was not completed till 381 (*Ibid.*).<sup>7</sup>

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7. See Appendix p. 249 for the entire article.

Loughborough traces the doctrine of the Trinity from pagan origins to papal acceptance. This papal acceptance was recognized by A. T. Jones. In a *Review* article, “Historical Necessity of the Third Angel’s Message,” Jones lists Michael Servetus as opposing Calvin and “the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity (*The Review and Herald*, June 17, 1884).” In 1891, Jones published his monumental work, *The Two Republics*. Chapter 14, “Establishment of the Catholic Faith,” concerns itself with the Trinitarian doctrine and its acceptance within the papal church. The *Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, a post-Vatican II publication, states that the Trinity is the foundational doctrine of the Catholic Church!

**The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church.** In the New Testament there is frequent mention of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. A careful reading of these scriptural passages leads to one unmistakable conclusion: each of these Persons is presented as having qualities that can belong only to God. But if there is only one God, how can this be?

The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarification, decided to state the doctrine in this way: in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—truly distinct one from another. Thus, in the words of the Athanasian Creed: “The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three gods but one God (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 16; 1994).”

Notice the frank admission that Catholic writer, Graham Green, made concerning the non-scriptural status of the Trinity doctrine:

Our opponents [Protestants] sometimes claim that no belief should be held dogmatically which is not explicitly stated in scripture (ignoring that it is only on the authority of the Church we recognize certain Gospels and not others as true). But the Protestant churches have themselves accepted such dogmas as the Trinity for which there is no such precise authority in the Gospels. . . (Graham Green, “The Catholic Church’s New Dogma: The Assumption Of Mary,” *Life*, October 30, 1950).

**I**f the Scriptures say he is the Son of God, I believe it. If it is declared that the Father sent his Son into the world, I believe he had a Son to send (R. F. Cottrell, *The Review and Herald*, June 1, 1869).

## Chapter 9

### Ellen G. White and the Doctrine of God

The previous chapter documented that the leading men of the Advent movement were all anti-Trinitarian. We specifically cited: Joseph Bates, James White, J. H. Waggoner, R. F. Cottrell, J. N. Loughborough, J. N. Stephenson, Uriah Smith, and A. T. Jones. Some others that might be noted resemble a “Who’s Who” of early Adventism. They include: J. N. Andrews, B. L. Whitney, E. J. Waggoner of 1888, Washington Morse, D. M. Canright, James Matteson, A. C. Bourdeau, J. B. Frisbie, S. B. Whitney, A. J. Dennis, M. C. Wilcox, and James Edson White (son of Ellen White).<sup>1</sup> In a research paper, Russell Holt stated concerning early Adventists: “to a man, they rejected the trinity, yet, with equal unanimity they upheld the divinity of Christ (‘The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance,’ p. 6).” We concluded the last chapter by noting that the doctrine of the Trinity is the foundational teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

The understanding of the Advent pioneers contrasts widely with the current standard accepted by the church today as expressed in the Fundamentals: “There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons (Fundamental Belief #2).” In a special issue of the *Adventist Review* devoted to the twenty-seven fundamental beliefs (currently twenty-eight), we find the following concerning the doctrine of the Trinity:

While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, *it is assumed* as a fact by Bible writers and mentioned several times.

Only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity. (*Adventist Review*, vol. 158, no. 31, p. 4; undated, but published in July 1981).

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1. For further documentation, see *Did They Believe in the Trinity?*, available from Smyrna Gospel Ministries.

This is in striking contrast to the strong assurance the early Adventists had concerning their methodology. Writing about the early workers, Elder S. N. Haskell noted:

When the time passed in 1844, there were none who believed the truth as we now hold it. All believed the prophecies that brought us to that time. Then began a greater searching of the Bible than had ever been, probably, at any time since the days of the apostles. They went over and over the old arguments concerning the prophecies that pointed to 1844, and after most thorough examination they could see no other conclusion than that the prophetic periods terminated at that time. As they studied, they began to see one link of truth after another; and as these truths unfolded to the pioneers, — I have reference to such men as Elders James White, J. N. Andrews, Uriah Smith, and J. H. Waggoner, — they did not dare present that truth to the people until they had made it a special subject of prayer and the spirit of prophecy had set its seal to it<sup>2</sup> (Stephen Haskell, *The Review and Herald*, October 27, 1904).

While the corporate church has altered its views on the incarnation and the atonement since the days of the pioneers, the doctrine of God has seen even greater changes. These changes have made our doctrines more appealing to the Evangelicals. The truth is that it is Satan behind the changes, for he well knows that God founded this movement in truth and desires to see it destroyed in whatever way possible.

In 1896, Sister White wrote: “If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory (*The Review and Herald*, October 6, 1896).” If the Lord could have come before 1896, then logic would say that the faith and doctrines believed before 1896 would have been truth. This truth was to be given to the world in what is known as “the loud cry.” Because we had become lukewarm and unfaithful in carrying the truth forward, God commissioned two men—Elders Jones and Waggoner—to bring revival to his church. Their view of God and Christ did not differ from that of their brethren. Sister White called this “a most precious message (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 91)” and declared it to be “the third angel’s message in verity (*The Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890).” This “most precious message” did not include the Trinitarian doctrine! A proper understanding of God is vital to our salvation and to our ability to serve God as he directs. It is the gospel plain and simple! God’s people must have a clear understanding of him to be enabled to give the loud cry.

Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world.

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2. It should be noted that all the men Haskell mentions were anti-Trinitarian.

In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, *we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself.*

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character.

This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles, all depend upon *a right knowledge of God. This knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come* (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 409).

At the beginning of his high-priestly prayer, Jesus said: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).” The Scriptures also state: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding (Proverbs 9:10).”

Arguably, no person outside of Adventism has studied and researched the writings of Ellen G. White more than the late Walter Martin. During the time of the Seventh-day Adventist–Evangelical Conferences of 1955–1956, Martin asked for and was given free access to the vaults at the White Estate along with any other materials he requested. Martin testified that he had read “extensively in the publications of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination and almost all of the writings of Ellen G. White, including her testimonies (*Eternity*, October 1956).” Dr. Barnhouse stated in a taped telephone conversation with Al Hudson that: “Froom and the rest of them [Roy A. Anderson and other church leaders] say that Walter Martin knows more about Seventh-day Adventists than any professor in Takoma Park.”<sup>3</sup> After his extensive study, Martin came to the conclusion that Ellen G. White was at first Arian in belief but later became Trinitarian.<sup>4</sup> This charge was never repudiated by either Froom or Anderson.

Was there double talk as Martin claims? Was Sister White inconsistent? Is there a problem in the interpretation of her writings such as the problems of interpretation that exists between Calvinists and Arminianists over certain Bible passages? The rest of this chapter and chapter 19 will address these questions.

There are two tenets of Trinitarianism that are usually addressed when promoting the doctrine. The first is that Jesus Christ is both coequal and

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3. See *The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956*, published by the Adventist Laymen’s Foundation, PO Box 69, Ozone, AR 72854.

4. From a presentation by Walter Martin and Ken Samples at the Campus Hill Church, Loma Linda, CA, January 26, 1989. See pp. 236, 237 for the actual statement by Martin.

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coeternal in all respects with God. The Father–Son relationship is not to be taken literally but figuratively or spiritually. Even then, Christ is not to be considered the Son of God until the incarnation at Bethlehem. The second tenet is that the Holy Spirit is a separate, third being, existing with God and Christ as coequal and coeternal. The Trinitarian doctrine was formally pronounced at the Councils of Nicæa (A.D. 325) and Constantinople (A.D. 381). As we have earlier noted: “The Mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 16).” Ellen White wrote:

She [the papacy] is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men (*The Great Controversy*, p. 581).

Did Sister White agree with the councils which gave the decrees that established the Catholic faith?<sup>5</sup> We will begin by examining some of Ellen White’s earlier statements to see if Martin’s evaluation of her early writings was correct. A representative statement from Sister White’s writings that Walter Martin would have read expressing a non-Trinitarian position is found in *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate—a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6. His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2. And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: “The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.” Proverbs 8:22-30 (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34; published in 1890).

A careful reading of this paragraph reveals several important points that should not be overlooked. Firstly, Sister White calls the Father, “The Sovereign of the universe.” She does not state that Christ is the Sovereign with him. However, she does say that the Sovereign had “an associate—a

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5. See A. T. Jones’ work, *The Two Republics*, Chapter 14, “The Establishment of the Catholic Faith (pp. 329-396)” for a historical account of the Council of Nicæa and Chapter 16, “The Catholic Faith Re-Established (pp. 383-402)” for a historical account of the Council of Constantinople. These chapters also include the creeds declared in the respective Councils.

co-worker,” singular tense. This “associate” she declares to be Christ who is “the *only being* that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.”<sup>6</sup>

The implications concerning the Holy Spirit as a “being” are not hard to perceive. Furthermore, she quotes portions of Proverbs 8:22-30, attributing this to Jesus Christ. Like most commentaries, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* acknowledges these verses to apply to Christ, but the authors state that they only apply in an “allegorical” sense (vol. 3, p. 972). The author of *Patriarchs and Prophets* is describing real events, not allegories! The whole language of the chapter is that Jesus Christ is the literal Son of God “invested” with power and authority from his Father. Going further she writes:

To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ’s, was first among the hosts of God (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 36).

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. *The Son of God shared the Father’s throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both.* About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng—“ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. 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.* The Son of God had wrought the Father’s will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God’s plan, but would exalt the Father’s glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love (*Ibid.*).

At this council, the Father set forth the true position of his Son as the Creator of all things. “None but Christ, the Only Begotten of God” could enter into all his counsels and purposes. The throne was shared with the Son “and the glory of the eternal self-existent One encircled both.” Both means *two*.

Theologians have looked upon the Sonship of Christ in different ways. The Trinitarian perspective is that Christ is not the literal son, only a spiritual son and this did not occur until the incarnation. The Father–Son relationship is one of role-playing. A second perspective is that Christ was

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6. This matches what was written in the 1888 edition of *The Great Controversy*: “Christ the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,—one in nature, in character, and in purpose,—*the only being in all the universe* that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God ( p. 493).”

merely a good man who had no pre-existence, and God “adopted” him as his Son. A third view is that which the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach: Christ is the literal Son of God *created* by God as were the angels but before any other creature was created. A fourth perspective is the one that Sister White taught: Christ is the *literal, begotten* Son of God.

There is but one way of escape for the sinner. There is but one agency whereby he may be cleansed from sin. He must accept the propitiation that has been made by the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. The shed blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” A complete offering has been made; for “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,”— ***not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person***, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (*Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895).

Clearly, she did not see Christ as being created as the angels were nor did she see Jesus as being adopted. She understood Jesus to be the begotten Son of God. How was he begotten? Neither she nor the Bible explain; however, she does make the following interesting statement:

The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave his only begotten Son, tore from his bosom Him who was made in the express image of his person, and sent him down to earth to reveal how greatly he loved mankind (*The Review and Herald*, July 9, 1895).

In the *Signs of the Times* article of May 30, 1895, Sister White stated that Christ “was one *equal with God* in authority, dignity, and divine perfection.” Several places in her writings she, along with the pioneers, acknowledge Christ to be equal with the Father. However, she states that this equality was one given or conferred upon Christ by the Father and was not an equality that Christ naturally had. Note the following statements:

The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 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? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” (Hebrews 1:1-5)

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 (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 268, 269).

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 (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 17, 18).

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. . . . *The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer*, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 37).

In order for Christ to be exalted as equal with the Father, there must have been a time when he was not in every respect equal with him. This exaltation would not have been possible if Christ had been a coequal, coeternal being with the Father. However, if Christ was the literal Son of God, then the Father would have been able to elevate him. The Ellen G. White compact disc shows that never once did Sister White call Christ a "created son" nor an "adopted son." Despite many theologians insisting that the Sonship of Christ is one of role-playing, Ellen G. White never even hints at such a possibility. The writings of Ellen G. White speak in a very literal way of Christ being the "begotten Son" of God.

The breadth of this subject is tremendous and we prayerfully ask the reader to consider the counsel of Proverbs 18:13: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Secondly, there are other statements that we will be carefully examining, including statements that *appear* to present the Trinitarian position. We do not accept the position of Walter Martin, and we believe that a careful study will show Martin, not Sister White, to be in error. We ask the reader to retain an open mind and an earnest desire to have the Holy Spirit's guidance.

History testifies that the early Adventists were non-Trinitarian. Interestingly, not one of the early pioneers ever questioned Sister White or expressed a difference with her concerning the doctrine of God. Neither did she ever question them about their views. The tenets she expressed in her early writings clearly paralleled their thoughts.

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In order that the human family might have no excuse because of temptation, Christ became one with them. The only being who was one with God lived the law in humanity, descended to the lowly life of a common laborer, and toiled at the carpenter's bench with his earthly parent (*The Signs of the Times*, October 14, 1897).

Let it be emphasized again: Christ is to be worshipped equally with God; however, the equality he possesses was given or conferred upon him by the Father. "Our great Exemplar was *exalted to be equal with God* (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 426)."<sup>7</sup>

### The Hierarchy of Heaven

In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Sister White calls the Father "the Sovereign of the Universe (p. 34)" and "the King of the Universe (p. 36)." In every reference to Christ being exalted to equality with God, it is the Father who ordains it to be so. As in the Scriptures, we find the writings of Sister White portraying the Son carrying out the will of the Father. The Father is viewed as supreme.

Christ is our Example. He was next to God in the heavenly courts. But He came to this earth to live among men (*Notebook Leaflets from the Elmshaven Library*, vol. 1, pp. 114, 115; Letter 48, 1902).

In the order of heaven, Sister White lists Christ next to God. It was the desire of Satan to take the place of Christ and to become like the Father.

The Lord has shown me that Satan was once an honored angel in heaven, next to Jesus Christ. . . . And I saw that when God said to his Son, Let us make man in our image, Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man. He was filled with envy, jealousy and hatred. He wished to be the highest in heaven, next to God, and receive the highest honors (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, p. 17).

What position did she understand Satan to have?

In the controversy between Christ and Satan, the character of God was now fully vindicated in his act of banishing from Heaven the fallen angel, who had once been exalted *next to Christ* (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 184).

He [Satan] was next to Christ in exaltation and character (*The Review and Herald*, October 22, 1895).

Forty days and nights Jesus was subjected to the temptations of the enemy—the one who was once an angel *next to Christ in majesty and glory in the heavenly courts*. It is stated, Thou wast exalted because of thy beauty, et cetera. But he wanted to have the place of Christ, and Christ was one with the

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7. As we continue this study, it would be well to note that an important key in having a proper understanding of the testimonies is found in the testimonies themselves. "The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 42; Letter 73, 1903)." Thus, to correctly understand the testimonies we must compare them with other testimonies, just as we compare Scripture with Scripture.

Infinite God; and because this was not accorded him, he became jealous, and he was the originator of sin (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, p. 180; MS 57, 1890).

These statements reveal Satan's place in heaven had been next to Christ, who was next to God. Referring to Satan, Sister White wrote:

He glorified in his brightness and exaltation and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host, angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was exalted above him, as one in power and authority with the Father. He shared the Father's counsels, while Lucifer did not thus enter into the purposes of God. "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He honored above Lucifer (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 37)?"

While the great controversy between Christ and Satan is fought out today on this earth between their respective followers, the war clearly began in heaven. "Evil originated with Lucifer, who rebelled against the government of God. Before his fall he was a covering cherub, distinguished by his excellence. God made him good and beautiful, as near as possible like himself (*The Review and Herald*, September 24, 1901)."<sup>8</sup> God put all of his creative ability into Satan who believed that his position should have been equal with Christ's and worthy of worship. This was not to be so. "Let the brightest example the world has yet seen be your example, rather than the greatest and most learned men of the age, who know not God, nor Jesus Christ whom he has sent. *The Father and the Son alone are to be exalted* (*The Youth's Instructor*, July 7, 1898)."<sup>9</sup> This statement includes only two divine beings who are to be exalted and worshipped, not three.

### **The Death of Christ**

As noted in the last chapter, one of the tenets of the Trinitarian doctrine is the lack of a divine sacrifice dying in totality. The Trinitarian doctrine teaches "that the Son of God had three distinct natures at the same time; viz., a human body, a human soul, united with his Divine nature: the body being mortal, the soul immortal, the Divinity coequal, coexistent, and coeternal with the everlasting Father. Now, none of the advocates of this theory, claim that either his soul or Divinity died, that the body was the only part of this triple being which actually died (the death of the cross;) hence, according to this view (which makes the death of Christ the grand atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world) we only have the sacrifice of the most inferior part—the human body—of the Son of God (J. M. Stephenson, *The Review and Herald*, November 21, 1854)."

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8. See also *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1163.

9. See also *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 58.

The early Seventh-day Adventists saw the subject of the atonement as the heart of the three angels' messages. They believed that Jesus died in total-ity. Their understanding of the begottenness of Christ, coupled with an understanding of the mortality of the soul and the state of the dead, led them to believe that the Bible statement "Christ died for our sins" meant he died body, soul, and spirit. In fact, Sister White wrote that Satan, the author of all lies, was the originator of the belief that Jesus could not die!

When Jesus had opened before his disciples the fact that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die at the hands of the chief priests and scribes, Peter had presumptuously contradicted his Master, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." He could not conceive it possible that the Son of God should be put to death. *Satan suggested to his mind that if Jesus was the Son of God he could not die (The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 3, p. 231).*

At this point questions arise! Could the One who was divine die at all? Was not Jesus, the Son of God, immortal? *How could he die?*

At the time when He was most needed, Jesus, the Son of God, the world's Redeemer, *laid aside His divinity*, and came to earth in the garb of humanity (*The Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, October 12, 1896).

In addition to this, we find the following concept several places in Sister White's writings:

The human race was under sentence of death, but the Son of God *clothed his divinity with humanity*, and came to this world to live and die in our behalf (*The Review and Herald*, June 1, 1905).

How do these ideas relate to each other? One statement says that divinity was "laid aside," the other says divinity was "clothed . . . with humanity." The Scriptures teach that Jesus laid aside his mental and physical attributes of divinity at the incarnation.<sup>10</sup> In doing this, what was left to be clothed with humanity? The following testimony is a key to understanding the mystery:

"And the Devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the Devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine." He presented the world to Christ as a most dazzling, enchanting spectacle. But Christ saw that which Satan tried to veil from his eyes, and that which he flattered himself he had done. Christ had not exchanged his divinity for humanity; but he had clothed his divinity in humanity, and he gave Satan the evidence for which he had asked,—showed him that he was the Son of God. *Divinity flashed through humanity, and the evil one could not resist the authority of the divine voice*, as Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is

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10. See Luke 2:52; Mark 13:32; Revelation 1:1; John 5:19; and John 14:10. Also see Chapter 14 for a detailed study of the matter under consideration.

written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (*The Review and Herald*, October 29, 1895).”

While Christ laid aside his mental and physical attributes of divinity at the incarnation, *he was still the divine Son of God invested with authority because of who he was! He was still the Son of the Living God.* In all of his humanity, he never gave up his divinely appointed *authority* which the Father had given him. This explains why Satan’s temptation in the wilderness was not to make the stones turn into bread, but rather to “command” them to be bread.

### **“Original, unborrowed, underived”**

Despite her Trinitarian background in the Methodist Church, Ellen White never used the terms “Trinity” or “Triune God” in her writings. During the first fifty years of Sister White’s ministry, her brethren found nothing in her writings to cause them to alter their anti-Trinitarian theology. A turning point came in 1898 with the publication of *The Desire of Ages*. On page 530 the following statement appeared:

In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. “He that hath the Son hath life.” 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 530).

The significance of this declaration is noted by Elder M. L. Andreasen, who wrote: “This statement at that time was revolutionary and compelled a complete revision of my former view—and that of the denomination—on the deity of Christ (*Without Fear or Favor*, p. 76).” While clearly speaking of the divinity of Christ, what did Ellen White mean by Christ’s life being “original, unborrowed, underived?” Was she now advocating a Trinitarian position? Following the rule that “The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 42; Letter 73, 1903),” we look to an article published one year prior to the publication of *The Desire of Ages*. This article appeared in *The Signs of the Times* and was entitled “Christ the Life-giver.” We find in this article a clarification of Sister White’s understanding of the concept.

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). It is not physical life that is here specified, 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 life 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. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as his personal Saviour* (*The Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1897). (See also *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 296, 297.)

The significance of this statement is tremendous! While stating that Christ's life was "original, unborrowed, underived," she also stated that "this life is not inherent in man." So far, there is nothing to send up a red flag. The next two sentences opens up a whole new perspective: "He [man] can possess it [life, original, unborrowed, underived] only through Christ. He [man] cannot earn it [life, original, unborrowed, underived]; it is given him as a free gift if he [man] will believe in Christ as his personal Saviour."

According to what Sister White wrote a year before *The Desire of Ages* was published, man is offered the same quality of life that Christ had. If Christ could bestow this life as a free gift upon man, then he could have received that same life from his Father. It was the original, unborrowed, underived life of the Father that Christ possessed and is able to bestow upon man. This is what Jesus meant when he said; "For as the Father hath life in himself; *so hath he given* to the Son to have life in himself (John 5:26)."

### The Original Source

Sister White's libraries contained well over 1,000 volumes. These volumes were cataloged in two main groups: "One section involved her private library in her 'sitting room bookcase,' the other, her office library where her literary assistants worked (*A Bibliography of Ellen G. White's Private and Office Libraries*; Compiled by Warren H. Jones, Tim Poirier, and Ron Graybill, p. i)." One of the entries listed as being in her private library is *Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament*, by John Cummings. On page 5 we find the following statement: "'In him was life,'— that is, original, unborrowed, underived (*Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament*, p. 5, 1856)."

It is no coincidence that this statement and the reference in *The Desire of Ages* are almost word-for-word identical. Research reveals that Sister White used the language of Cummings' book, for we find her quoting these words, and more, here and in at least two other places. These passages have been published in at least thirteen places.<sup>11</sup> In a letter dated November 1, 1905, she wrote to the manager of one of our sanitariums:

In Him is life that is original,—unborrowed, underived life. In us there is a streamlet from the fountain of life. In Him is the fountain of life. Our life is something that we receive, something that the Giver takes back again to Himself (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 19, p. 23).

The parallel statement from Cummings reads as follows:

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11. Those references (the primary in **bold**) are as follows: **ST, April 8, 1897** reprinted in *ST*, Feb. 13, 1912; *5 BC*, p. 1130; *1 SM*, pp. 296-300; and *Maranatha*, p. 302; **DA, p. 530** reprinted in *Ev.* p. 616; *7A BC*, p. 438; *LHU*, p. 17; and *FLB*, pp. 47, 187; **Letter #309, 1905** published in part in *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 19, p. 23; *RH*, August 6, 1914; and *MM*, p. 7.

“In him was life,” — that is, original, unborrowed, underived. In us there is a streamlet from the Fountain of Life; in him was the Fountain of Life. Our life is something we receive, something that the Giver takes back again to himself (Cummings, *op. cit.*).

Except for one word, these statements are word-for-word identical. It is not our purpose to discuss the extent of the literary borrowing of Sister White and the problems resulting from it.<sup>12</sup> It has been freely admitted by the brethren that such borrowing was done, and with Cummings’ book being in Sister White’s private bookcase, it is reasonable to believe that Sister White, *under inspiration*, and not one of her literary assistants, made the decision on its usage.

Two areas of Cummings’ statement should be considered. We’ll examine the context first. Cummings noted: “He [the apostle John] at once begins by asserting the Deity of Christ as God and Lord of all (*Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament*, p. 5).” While upholding the Deity of Jesus Christ, Cummings makes no statement here concerning the Godhead in relationship to a Trinity or a Triune God. This closely parallels the thoughts of the early Advent pioneers and Sister White who wrote positively of the Deity of Christ but never of the Trinity or Triune God.

Secondly, let us examine the content of Cummings’ statement. Christ is said to be the “Fountain of Life.” We are said to be a “streamlet.” A streamlet is defined as a “small stream (*Webster’s Dictionary*).” A streamlet does not carry a large *quantity* of water nor is it the source of the water. However, it does carry the same *quality* of water that comes from the source! Ellen White wrote concerning our receiving the life that flows from the Fountain:

In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as his personal Saviour (*The Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1897).

Here Sister White states that man may have “original, unborrowed, underived” life, but *he can receive it only as a gift from Christ*. Christ can bestow the same *quality* of life upon the sinner that he has because he has received it from his Father *to give*. “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself (John 5:26).” Jesus has received it because he is the only begotten Son of God.

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12. Sometimes called “literary parallels (*A Bibliography of Ellen G. White’s Private and Office Libraries*, p. iii).” In the bibliography there is a special appendix of books not found in Sister White’s libraries but listed because “This list includes books not found on any of the other lists, but books which Ellen White is likely to have used because of references to such books in her letters and manuscripts, or because of the evidence of literary parallels (*Ibid.*).”

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The “weight of evidence” clearly reveals that Sister White believed Jesus to be the literal Son of God.<sup>13</sup> The questions arise: What about Sister White’s statements concerning the eternal nature of Christ? If Jesus was eternal, then would it not have been impossible for him to be the begotten Son of God *before Bethlehem*? First let us notice a typical statement:

The world was made by Him, “and without him was not any thing made that was made.” If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. *He was with God from all eternity*, God over all, blessed forevermore.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, *existed from eternity*, a distinct person, yet one with the Father (*The Signs of the Times*, April 26, 1899). (See also *The Review and Herald*, April 5, 1899 and *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 247.)

This statement *seems very clear* to most people. The following Bible statements *also seem very clear*:

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever (Revelation 14:11).

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

Adventist Bible students have found that these Scriptures mean what they say; however, they do not teach what most people, who only surface read, think they do. The same is true with some of Sister White’s statements. Her writings must be kept in line with Bible concepts. When she wrote “eternity,” we have no reason to believe she meant otherwise. But what does the Bible say about “for ever and ever”? Is this not eternal in the usual sense of the word? Yes and no. Scripture must be compared with Scripture to find the Biblical meaning of passages that might otherwise be interpreted using human wisdom instead of divine wisdom. If the different statements that Sister White wrote concerning Jesus Christ, his eternal nature, and his begottenness are true, then they must be reconcilable. We cannot use six or seven statements that *seem* to teach a Trinitarian doctrine and ignore the *scores* of references that speak otherwise!

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13. Concerning the weight of evidence, Sister White has written: “He [God] requires of His people faith that rests upon the weight of evidence, not upon perfect knowledge (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 258).” “Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 255).”

### **The 1888 Factor**

The 1888 factor helps to clarify matters. Sister White wrote that God sent a “most precious message” through Elders Jones and Waggoner. What was the 1888 understanding of Christ’s nature and his relationship to the Father? E. J. Waggoner wrote:

The Word was “in the beginning.” The mind of man cannot grasp the ages that are spanned in this phrase. *It is not given to men to know when or how the Son was begotten; but we know that he was the Divine Word, not simply before He came to this earth to die, but even before the world was created.* Just before His crucifixion He prayed, “And now, O Father, glorify thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” John 17:5. And more than seven hundred years before His first advent, His coming was thus foretold by the word of inspiration: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.” Micah 5:2, margin. *We know that Christ “proceeded forth and came from God” (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man (Christ and His Righteousness, pp. 9, 10).*

Waggoner quotes Micah 5:2 and interprets this to mean that Christ was brought forth “so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man.” The Hebrew word translated “eternity” or “everlasting” is עולם (*owlam*). *Owlam* is defined as a “vanishing point; generally, time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity (*Strong’s* #5769).” This word is used in such places as 1 Samuel 1:22 where we read that Samuel was to “appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.” The phrase “for ever” comes from *owlam* and Adventists have been quick to point out that this means only as long as he lived. Another usage of *owlam* is found in Jonah 2:6 where Jonah describes his experience in the fish: “I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever [*owlam*]: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.” This was only a three-day period. *Owlam* is also translated “everlasting” in Proverbs 8:23, a text that Sister White applies to Christ. *Owlam’s* usages vary and must not violate the weight of evidence from other Scriptures.

### **Andreasen and Time**

A few years ago after reading what Waggoner had written, there was a conflict within in my mind. I knew that Sister White had recommended his work. I had also read Sister White’s statements on the Sonship of Christ such as those we have noted, but I still did not understand how they could fully and totally agree with Sister White’s statements on the eternal nature of Christ. Then one day I was reading M. L. Andreasen’s book,

*The Sabbath*, and it all became very clear just as if the light switch had been turned on. Andreasen wrote:

We can understand how God can bless human beings. We can even understand how He can bless animals and give them their work to do in carrying out God's purpose; but how can God bless a day, a division of time, neither animate nor inanimate, not alive nor dead, a thing without substance, a conception rather than a reality; time, which defies definition, though all mankind is aware of its existence and reality? How can time be blessed so as to be a blessing to man?

The answer is that time does not have any virtue or power in itself to be a blessing or a help to others. Time is as impersonal as space, and equally inconceivable. One difference between the two is noticeable: space extends in all directions, while time might be compared to a one-way road, permitting traffic in one direction only. Man has no power over time, to hasten or retard it. Whether he will or not, he is carried along with it, and despite all protests is one day older tomorrow than he is today. He cannot reverse the process, however much he may wish to do so. Time is superior to him, and he obeys its mandates.

There are those who believe that God did not create time, but that in some way He found it already existing. But this cannot be. Time and space are not self-existent entities, operating apart from God and independent of Him. If that were true, they would be equal with God, or even His superior; for that which is coeval with God or exists prior to God must at least be equal with Him; and that which is not created by God is self-existent and is God. The Christian believes that "without Him was not anything made that was made," and that time and space are created by God as verily as anything else He has made. John 1:3.

Though the two conceptions of time and space are beyond human comprehension, each is helpful in understanding the other. Our conception of space, for example, helps us to understand time better, and how it is possible for God to bless time (*The Sabbath*, pp. 54, 55).

There can be no concept of eternity without the concept of time. As Andreasen noted, if all things were created by Jesus Christ, then Jesus created time as well. For lack of better words and speaking as Paul did "after the manner of men," there is a period of history before time or eternity existed. Because Christ is the author of time, he must also be the author of eternity, as we know it. Therefore, Christ, the Son of God, was begotten before time and eternity existed since it was Christ who brought these things into being. With this understanding, we can see how Jesus "was with God from *all eternity*" and how he is also the literal Son of God begotten before Bethlehem.

If Ellen G. White did not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, how can we understand statements such as "There are three living persons in the heavenly trio (*Evangelism*, p. 617)."? This will be the subject of the following chapter.

## Chapter 10

### The Bible Doctrine of God

The Apostle John, writing under inspiration, echoes the thoughts of God when he states: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth (3 John 4).” Those striving to please God will walk in *all the truth* presented to them. This is essential for “there is absolutely no safeguard against evil but truth (*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 30).” Perhaps no teaching in professed Christianity, even in Adventism, is less questioned today than the doctrine of the Trinity. Most believers have never really studied the doctrine carefully from the Scriptures nor have they understood its origin. This, however, has not always been the case. The doctrine of God was a major point of discussion in the early meetings of the Church of Rome. Also, within Adventism the early pioneers took a strong stand on the issue of the Godhead. Their position was anti-Trinitarian. The Adventist Church has undergone such a change on this doctrine that George Knight, professor of church history at Andrews University, could accurately write:

Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination’s Fundamental Beliefs.

More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the Trinity. For Joseph Bates the Trinity was an unscriptural doctrine, for James White it was that “old Trinitarian absurdity,” and for M. E. Cornell it was a fruit of the great apostasy, along with such false doctrines as Sundaykeeping and the immortality of the soul (*Ministry*, October 1993, p. 10).

While the study on the doctrine of God has lain dormant within the church for several years, it has begun to be agitated again. Many are being led to examine for the first time what they really believe about the doctrine for themselves. How appropriate are the following words penned to the remnant people:

There are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith and compelled to stand

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singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. . .

The Lord calls upon all who believe His word to awake out of sleep. Precious light has come, appropriate for this time. It is Bible truth, showing the perils that are right upon us. This light should lead us to a diligent study of the Scriptures and a most critical examination of the positions which we hold. . . . Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God so that when the testing time shall come and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear (*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 30).

One of the most basic questions concerning the doctrine of God is how many Gods are there? Some believe that there is one God in three persons. Others believe in two Gods, the Father and Jesus Christ. Some believe in three Gods in three persons (tritheism). From recorded history, the great majority of pagans have been polytheists. Polytheism is the belief in many gods. The belief of the children of Israel in only one God set them apart from the surrounding pagan nations. The incorporation of this monotheism into Christianity has been noted by Gary Strong:

The Jews held that there was only one God, and the Christian faith comes out of that thinking. However, as the Jewish believers went out to the Gentiles with the gospel message they had to deal with the monotheism [one God] of the Jewish-Christian belief versus [sic] the polytheism [many Gods] of the Gentiles. The problem arose when trying to explain who Christ and the Holy Spirit are. The Trinity doctrine was the result of trying to solve this problem (*A Close Look at The Trinity*, p. 84).

The Trinity doctrine was formulated in the Councils of Nicæa (A.D. 325) and Constantinople (A.D. 381). The Council of Nicæa was the first council to declare Jesus to be coequal and coeternal with the Father. The Council of Constantinople added the same status to the Holy Spirit. As we have noted before, the doctrine of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the papacy.

The Doctrine of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p. 16).

While God's truth is to be discerned from the Scriptures alone (*The Great Controversy*, p. 595), any teaching that is the central doctrine of the antichrist should at least wave as a "red flag" to warn true Christians. Not only that, the papacy claims the Trinity to be the basis of all her other doctrines such as eternal hell, Sunday sacredness, the mass, etc. This is not good theological company to be keeping!

### **The Shema of Judaism**

The Shema of Judaism is, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD (Deuteronomy 6:4)." Concerning this text, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, a decidedly Trinitarian work, states: "Literally, 'Jehovah

our God, Jehovah [is] One.’ In striking contrast to the nations about them, who were polytheists, the Hebrews believed in one true God. This profession of faith has been the watchword of the Hebrew race for more than 3,000 years (See Mark 12:29) (vol. 1, p. 974).” Special attention has been given by theologians to the word “one” in Deuteronomy 6:4. It is translated from the Hebrew **אֶחָד** (*echad*). *Echad* is defined as united or one. For instance, a cluster of grapes could be called one (*echad*), yet that cluster would contain several individual grapes. This is the sense that the Trinitarian would understand *echad* in Deuteronomy 6:4. An example of such usage from Scripture would be Genesis 2:24: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one (*echad*) flesh.”

However, *echad* can also be translated “one” in the sense of an individual, single unit. Such usage can be found in Genesis 42:11 where Joseph’s brothers stated: “We are all one (*echad*) man’s sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.” Here the meaning of *echad* is a single unit. *One* man (Jacob) was their father. Therefore, we must examine the rest of the Scriptures to see which meaning of *echad* the text is using. The Jews understood *echad* here to be a single unit rather than a unity. This is shown in an incident from the gospels. Notice carefully:

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offering and sacrifices.

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question (Mark 12:28-34).

Unlike others that questioned Christ, this scribe was a sincere seeker of truth. To his question, “Which is the first commandment of all?” Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4, 5 and then followed that with Leviticus 19:18. The scribe responded, “Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God.” If there were a Trinity, here was a perfect time for Jesus to make it clear. However, Jesus did not say, “Excuse me brother, you misunderstood, there are two Gods,” or “three Gods.” Instead, the Scripture states

that “Jesus saw that he answered discreetly.” Furthermore, Jesus told him, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.”

The doctrine of the Trinity, as proclaimed by the Adventist Church, states: “There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons (Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief #2).” This belief parallels the Basis of the Constitution of the World Council of Churches which states: “The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Yet, neither Moses nor Jesus ever spoke of a three-person God. Christ himself made that clear the night before the crucifixion when he prayed: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).” Here Jesus ascribes to his Father the title of “the only true God.” He did not say, “The only true Gods” nor did he say “the only true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

The Trinity doctrine is called a “mystery (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 16)” because it is a doctrine of human invention, the wisdom of the world, and, in fact, the *masterpiece of Satan!* However, the truth about God, his Son, and the Spirit is spoken of so clearly in the Scriptures that it need not be a mystery. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, said: “For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us 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. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge (1 Corinthians 8:5-7a).” The creeds of men say “one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” The Scripture says “*one God, the Father*.” Period! Paul also says that we have “*one Lord Jesus Christ*.” The Trinity doctrine states that “the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord (From the article entitled “Creed, the Athanasian”; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Student’s Source Book*, p. 299).” The Scripture states that there is “one Lord,” Jesus Christ. “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, *One God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:5, 6).” Here again the “*One God*” is declared to be “*the Father*.”

Paul, in writing to Timothy, stated: “For there is *one God*, and *one mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).” Here are seen two separate and distinct beings. There is “one God” who is the Father. There is also “one mediator” between the “one God” and men. That “one mediator” is “the man Christ Jesus.”

The apostle James declares that even Satan and the evil angels know that there is one true God. “Thou believest that there is *one God*; thou doest well:

the devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19).” James says we do well to believe “that there is one God.”

If we support the Trinity doctrine or tritheism, we shall be out of harmony with these texts. One of the most basic truths of the Bible is the truth that there is one supreme Being. Jesus taught us to address this being as “Our Father.” Because this truth is so basic to the Scriptures and to the plan of salvation (John 17:3), Satan has sought to counterfeit it with the Trinitarian doctrine that produces a position for himself in the counsel of God.

While the Bible teaches that there is one supreme God, it also teaches that God had “an associate—a co-worker who could appreciate his purposes, and could share his joy in giving happiness to created beings (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34).” Perhaps the most famous of all Bible texts is John 3:16 and this verse tells us that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This text reveals that this associate was his only begotten Son. This Son was with the Father in the counsel of peace spoken of by Zechariah:

And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zechariah 6:12, 13).

The “man whose name is The BRANCH” is acknowledged by all Trinitarians as the Son of God. Of interest is the word “both” in verse 13. It is the Hebrew plural for exactly two! Thus, the picture portrayed in Zechariah is that of two workers: God and his Son. This concept is taught by Paul and the other writers of the New Testament epistles. It is at the beginning of nearly every book of the New Testament. Notice some examples:

Paul, an apostle *of Jesus Christ by the will of God*, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia (2 Corinthians 1:1).

Grace be to you and peace from *God the Father*, and from *our Lord Jesus Christ* (Galatians 1:3).

Grace be to you, and peace, from *God our Father*, and from *the Lord Jesus Christ* (Ephesians 1:2).

Paul, an apostle *of Jesus Christ by the will of God*, and Timotheus our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from *God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ* (Colossians 1:1, 2).

Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in *God the Father* and in *the Lord Jesus Christ*: Grace be unto you, and peace, from *God our Father*, and *the Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Thessalonians 1:1).

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James, a servant of *God and of the Lord Jesus Christ*, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting (James 1:1).

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of *God, and of Jesus our Lord* (2 Peter 1:2).

Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from *God the Father*, and from the *Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father*, in truth and love (2 John 3).

Jude, the servant of *Jesus Christ*, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by *God the Father*, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called (Jude 1).

# Chapter 11

## Jesus Christ the Son of God

The last chapter began the study of the doctrine of God from the Scriptures. The following chapters will carry quotations from the pen of Sister White for the purpose of clarification and illustration. However, the doctrine will be based on the Bible and the Bible alone. This is in keeping with the following counsel:

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority,— not one or all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 413).

When called to stand for our faith in courts of law and the synagogues (churches), we will not be able to say, “Sister White says *this*” or “Sister White says *that*.” Only a plain “thus saith the Lord” will provide the testimony necessary at that time.

Paul, writing to Timothy, states: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).” The fact that the word can be rightly divided tells us that it may also be wrongly divided. Jesus said in John 4:24: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” We *must* worship according to truth, not according to the dictates of the councils. The first angel’s message of Revelation 14 calls us to worship the true God. To do this, we must rightly divide the word of truth.

Under inspiration, Zechariah wrote: “the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zechariah 6:13).” The Hebrew word for “both” is שְׁנַיִם (*shenayim*). It is the plural for two. God had an Associate that could enter into counsel with him. This Being the Bible describes as his “only begotten Son.” A Father–Son relationship is simple enough for a child to understand, yet the Trinitarian does not accept the word of God for what it means. Instead, God’s Word must be given a deep spiritual meaning.

### **Testimonies of Inspiration**

Let us notice the Father's testimony concerning Jesus Christ. At the baptism of Jesus, God spoke: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17)." Here God calls Jesus his "beloved Son." The exact same phrase is used in Matthew 17:5 where the Father acknowledged, at the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus to be his Son.

In talking to Nicodemus, Jesus stated: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16-18)." Here Jesus claims to be God's Son and states that God indeed did have a Son to send. When standing before Caiaphas, Jesus acknowledged under oath that he was the Son of God.

And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed (Mark 14:60, 61)?

Matthew includes Caiaphas' words, "I adjure thee by the living God (Matthew 26:63)." Until this point Christ had been silent but now he replies plainly, "I am (Mark 14:62)." Ellen G. White adds this insightful comment:

To this appeal Christ could not remain silent. There was a time to be silent, and a time to speak. He had not spoken until directly questioned. He knew that to answer now would make His death certain. But the appeal was made by the highest acknowledged authority of the nation, and in the name of the Most High. Christ would not fail to show proper respect for the law. *More than this, His own relation to the Father was called in question. He must plainly declare His character and mission.* Jesus had said to His disciples, "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10:32. Now by His own example He repeated the lesson (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 706, 707).

The apostles declared Jesus to be the Son of God. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 16:13-17)." While Peter's confession is known by many, it was actually Nathanael who first acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God. In John 1:49 we read: "Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

The first truth that the apostle Paul preached after his conversion was that Jesus was the Son of God: “And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God (Acts 9:19, 20).”

### **Not a “Spiritual Son”**

God has declared Jesus to be his Son. Under oath Jesus said that he was the Son of God. The apostles proclaimed him to be the Son of God. If the plan of salvation is supposed to be simple enough for a young child to understand, can we honestly accept the testimony of God, Christ, and the apostles or must we put some deep interpretation upon these words to make them mean something that they do not say? The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that Jesus is not really the Son of God; instead, he is a coequal with God who plays the role of a son. God plays the role of a father and the Holy Spirit plays the role of actualizer. According to the Trinitarian doctrine, when the Bible says that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,” it really means that God shared his fellow or pal with man. According to this teaching, Jesus did not call God his Father because he was his Father but rather “to bring us into a close and personal relationship with God (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. 20).” According to the doctrine of the Trinity, “The Father seems to *act* as source, the Son as mediator, and the Spirit as actualizer or applier (*Ibid.*, p. 24).” The false theory that the relationship of God and Christ is not literal, but role-played, is arrived at through the use of a spiritual application to the terms “Father” and “Son.”

LeRoy Froom, historian and apologist for the Adventist Church, wrote his book *Movement of Destiny* with the purpose, among others, of promoting the Trinitarian doctrine. Froom uses a spiritual interpretation to state that when the Bible says Jesus is the Son of God, he is not really the Son of God. Note Froom’s reasoning:

The term “*son*” is widely used in both the Old and the New Testaments wholly apart from the idea of generation or priority. Thus Paul makes a typical reference to “*sons* of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2; 5:6, R.S.V.). In fact, the term “son” was one of the most common Biblical ways of *identifying the characteristics of a personality*.

In Biblical terminology *son*, or *sons*, was constantly used to indicate the distinguishing *character*—such as sons of Zion, sons of Belial, sons of God, sons of men, sons of light, sons of the prophets, sons of the stranger, sons of the alien, sons of thunder, sons of the covenant. Christ said to a certain perfidious group, “Ye are of your father the devil” (John 8:44). The term *son* was therefore used to denote the *characteristic trait, the distinctive attribute*. It signified the predominant character or intrinsic nature of a person (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 301; emphasis in original).

Froom places a “spiritual” application on the term “son.” There are indeed symbols and figures used in the Bible. The seventh chapter of Daniel portrays four different beasts coming out of the sea (Daniel 7:3). These beasts are noted to be symbolic of “kings” or “kingdoms (Daniel 7:17, 23).” However, the Bible student must be careful not to put a spiritual meaning where it is not intended. For example, Jesus claimed to be the “light of the world (John 8:12).” If we couple this with Genesis 1:3 where we read that on the first day God spoke and said “Let there be light,” we might be led to believe, along with the Jehovah’s Witnesses, that Christ was the first and highest of all created beings. This would be a very poor conclusion to reach due to an improper interpretation. The question now arises, is there a safe rule of interpretation to use? The reformers and Advent pioneers used a very safe rule of interpretation. As Ellen White noted:

The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed (*The Great Controversy*, p. 599).

This rule does not deny the use of symbols, but it simply says that if the language is plain and simple, accept the Bible for what it says. If there is reason to believe that the terms are symbolic, then the Bible will supply the key for understanding that symbol as it does with the beasts and kingdoms in Daniel.

### **The Literal Son of God**

Now we must ask ourselves, is Christ the real Son of God or is he only spoken of in this way because of a spiritual relationship? The safe rule of Bible interpretation tells us that if the vital points of salvation are simple enough for a child to understand, then Christ must be the literal Son of God. However, God does not leave us on this important subject without further evidence. In Hebrews 1:4, we read that Jesus has “by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they [the angels].” He has his name by inheritance! He is the real Son of God! Paul continues by quoting the Septuagint version of Deuteronomy 32:43, applying the phrase “let all the angels of God worship him” to Christ. Worship is a very serious matter. To worship a creature would be blasphemy, but Paul noted at the very beginning of his epistle that God created the worlds through Christ. God appointed his Son to be the active agent in the creation process. As the true literal Son of the living God, Jesus rightly receives the name “God” because he is the same substance and matter of his Father. In fact, Paul calls Jesus the “express image of his person (Hebrews 1:3).”

To further show the position of the Son of God, Paul quotes from Psalm 45:6, 7 in Hebrews 1:8, 9: “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy

God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” According to Paul, the Father is here speaking to his Son and he calls Jesus “God”! If the Father is pleased and content to call Jesus “God,” then should we consider his Son as anything less than divine? Even after the incarnation when Jesus had laid aside his immortality and other divine attributes, he was still the divine Son of God not because of the attributes he possessed but because of *who he was*! Christ has always been the Son of God. I have a son. His name is Hans Stump. He is not diminished in any way by being my son. He is still a Stump even though he was begotten.

Not only does the Father call Jesus God, but he also goes on to refer to himself as the God of Christ Jesus, saying: “God, even *thy God*, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows (v. 9).” This harmonizes with the following Scriptures:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is to say, *My God, my God*, why hast thou forsaken me (Matthew 27:46)?

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, *I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God* (John 20:17).

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of *my God*, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him *the name of my God*, and the name of the city of *my God*, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from *my God*: and I will write upon him my new name (Revelation 3:12).

That the *God of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him (Ephesians 1:17).

While the Father is called the God of Jesus Christ, Jesus is *never* called the God of the Father! Even though God has elevated Christ to sit equal with him on the throne of the universe, there is a willing subordination of the Son to the Father. Paul makes note of this subordination writing to the church at Corinth:

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

### **What Does “Only Begotten” Mean?**

Virtually all Christians give assent to the claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; however, most theologians do not accept that Jesus is the literal begotten Son of God. They believe, instead, that he is a coequal and coeternal “person” of the Godhead, not the literal offspring of the Father. They say “son” is to be understood as a role or a symbolic position Jesus

assumed to help humanity understand the love and sacrifice of God for man through using an endearing human relationship.

May we leave the thoughts of the theologians behind and examine what the Word of God says? The term “only begotten” is from the Greek word, μονογενης (*monogenes*). This is a compound word from two Greek words. The first word, μονος (*monos*), means one or only one, and the second word, γενος (*genos*), means kindred or offspring. Together they mean only born.

Writing in the January 2007 issue of *Reflections*, the official newsletter of the Biblical Research Institute, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez defines *monogenes* as unique. In doing this, he is following the lead of many other theologians who also define *monogenes* as unique or only one.

In an effort to define *monogenes* as unique, an appeal is made to the Greek text of John 1:18. Before we look at the Greek of John 1:18, we should note that there are two sets of Greek texts that are used most often to translate the New Testament.

The first set of texts is known as the *Textus Receptus* or the Received Text. The *Textus Receptus* was the Greek New Testament used by the reformers. The different copies (literally thousands of manuscripts and portions thereof) compared quite closely one to another and the *Textus Receptus* was so well accepted that it became known as the Received Text. It was also called the Majority Text because it was based on the vast majority of texts still in existence.

The second set of texts is composed of two manuscripts: The Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus. Regarding the Vaticanus manuscript, *Easton's Bible Dictionary* states, “VATICANUS, CODEX is said to be the oldest extant vellum manuscript. It and the Codex Sinaiticus are the two oldest uncial manuscripts. They were probably written in the fourth century. The Vaticanus was placed in the Vatican Library at Rome by Pope Nicolas V in 1448, its previous history being unknown (Article entitled “Vaticanus Codex”, reference no. 26766 in *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, soft copy of Online Bible).”

It is claimed that the Vaticanus manuscript was written in the fourth century, but no proof is offered. It has no known history until 1448 when it appeared in the Vatican Library at Rome! The Sinaiticus manuscript has a similar history, being found by Dr. Tischendorf in the convent of St. Catherine in 1859. Its previous history also remains unknown.

The New Testament portion of Bibles such as the King James Version and the New King James Version have been translated from the *Textus Receptus*. Almost all modern translations such as the NIV, NASB, and the RSV have been translated from texts based on the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus

manuscripts. The Westcott–Hort Greek text is based on these manuscripts, as is the *Novum Testamentum Graece* or the Nestle text.

The Textus Receptus was the Bible of early Eastern Christianity, as well as the Bible of the Syrian Church, the Waldensian Church of northern Italy, the Gallic Church in southern France, and the Celtic Church in Scotland and Ireland. Some of the reasons the reformers accepted the Textus Receptus as the basis of their translations were: 1) Their numerous copies were in agreement, 2) The Textus Receptus agreed with the earliest versions of the Bible—the Peshitta (A.D. 150) and the Old Latin Vulgate (A.D. 157), 3) The Textus Receptus agreed with the vast majority of the more than 86,000 citations from Scripture by the early church fathers, and 4) The Textus Receptus was not mutilated with deletions, additions and amendments as the minority texts were.

While the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus are claimed to be the oldest manuscripts still in existence, there is evidence that copies of the Received Text were in existence before the Vaticanus or the Sinaiticus supposedly existed. Benjamin Wilkinson in his book *Truth Triumphant* writes: “It is altogether too little known that the real editor of the received text was Lucian (p. 45).” Lucian lived circa A.D. 250-312.

The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts differ in thousands of places from the Textus Receptus. One notable place they differ is found in John 1:18. The texts are basically the same except for *one* word. The Textus Receptus reads \_\_\_\_\_; whereas, the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts read \_\_\_\_\_

*Huios* (\_\_\_\_\_) is the Greek word for son. *Theos* (\_\_\_\_\_) is the Greek word for God. Thus, the Textus Receptus reads *only begotten son* while the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts read *only begotten god*. Trinitarians using the corrupted Catholic manuscripts do not believe that there can be a “begotten God”; therefore, they declare that the word *monogenes* must, instead, mean unique or only one. The New International Version translates John 1:18 as: “No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.” Is such a translation, however, consistent with the rest of Scripture?

Let us look at how the term *monogenes* is used in the Bible. Does it really mean only born or only begotten? This term is used in reference to Jesus five times in the Bible, always by John (John 1:14; 1:18; 3:16; 3:18; 1 John 4:9). The only other references are three passages in the book of Luke and a passage in Hebrews which we shall shortly examine. An honest reading of John's and Luke's writings, without a preconceived notion, would lead the reader to accept them at face value. Since we are looking for a usage to enlighten us on the passages from John, let us examine the three usages from Luke. The first is concerning the widow of Nain's son:

“Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only (*monogenes*) [“only-begotten,” Rothrham, translation] son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her (Luke 7:12).” There is no indication that *monogenes* means anything other than only born child here.

The second reference is Luke 8:42 concerning Jarius’ daughter: “For he had *one only* (*monogenes*) [“only begotten”—Rothrham translation] daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.” No indication that *monogenes* means anything other than only born child here.

The third usage is Luke 9:38 where a man’s son was possessed with an evil spirit: “And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine *only child* (*monogenes*).” There is no indication that *monogenes* means anything other than only born child here. In each of these cases *monogenes* makes reference to an only born child.

Finally, we shall examine Hebrews 11:17 which Trinitarians heavily depend upon. “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten (*monogenes*).” Trinitarians note that Isaac was not Abraham’s only begotten son; he was not even Abraham’s first son. Ishmael was Abraham’s first son and Abraham also had sons by Keturah, but does this invalidate the meaning of *monogenes*? If we read the next verse we see a more complete picture because Paul’s thought does not end with verse 17. Reading verses 17 and 18 together in one unit as they were intended to be read, the text says:

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, *Of whom it was said*, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Isaac was Abraham’s only born child to whom the promise of the seed was made! There was a condition given by Paul and *monogenes* fits that condition. It is interesting that the very theologians who decry the proof text method in the place of “higher criticism” so conveniently neglect context in this vital topic!

Clearly, the Greek word *monogenes* means only born. Christ is the literal offspring of the Father and this certainly agrees with Proverbs 8 where, speaking under the symbol of Wisdom, Christ declares:

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth [Hebrew: born]; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth [Hebrew: born] (Proverbs 8:22-25).

Before anything else was ever in existence, God through Christ brought all things into existence, “visible and invisible ( Colossians 3:16).” This

includes the concepts of “time” and “space”; therefore, in the sense that Christ is the author of time, Christ has truly existed throughout all time with God. (See M. L. Andreasen, *The Sabbath*, pp. 54, 55.)

Satan is behind the false view that Jesus is not the Son of God because he does not want you to know, believe, and dwell in God’s love. (See 1 John 4:16.) Satan knows that the Bible says that we love God as a result of our understanding and appreciating God’s love for us (1 John 4:19). He also knows what 1 John 4:9 says: “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” Anything he can do to keep the truth of God’s great love from us, he will do and he has invented a false understanding of *monogenes* to keep us from understanding God’s love. If *monogenes* means “unique” or “special” then the Bible writers did not understand it and neither do the people who speak Greek as their first language.

I have talked with people whose first language is Greek and always the term *monogenes* is understood to mean only born, not unique. I discussed this matter with a language professor once who has himself studied Greek for many years, years in which he held Trinitarian views. I asked him what *monogenes* means and he assured me that it solely means “only begotten.”

As I consider this matter, it seems very strange that theologians who do not speak Greek as their first and primary language should presume to tell the Greek people what their own language means. If someone who knew or spoke English as a second language or who only studied English in part should begin to tell me that the English phrase “only begotten” meant “unique,” I would not put much stock or consideration into the rest of what he might say. Why do we dare redefine the Greek language to teach a doctrine of Satan?

### **The Gospel From the “Counsel of Peace”**

While “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,” it must be remembered that Jesus was willing to come and die as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. This was the greatest example of cooperation ever displayed, the blueprint being devised in the ages of eternity past. God, in his omniscience, knew before creation began that his highest created being would one day rebel against him. God also knew that this rebel would lead many of his fellow angels in war against him. Therefore, eons before men or angels existed, a plan was devised to bring harmony to the universe. This plan of God’s Son dying for the sins of men was laid before “the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).”

God had instructed Adam and Eve: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die (Genesis 2:16, 17 margin).” Even though our first parents at the time of their

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sin experienced a spiritual fall and the physical life forces began to decay, they did not die in totality that very day. The reason that they did not die was that a plan had been put into action. Peter stated at Pentecost:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, *being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (Acts 2:22-24).

Acts 2:23 in the Amplified Bible states: “According to the definite and fixed purpose and settled plan and foreknowledge of God.” *This* is why Jesus is the “lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Christ was “delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of *God*.” The plan had already been worked out. When we read in John 3:16 that God gave his Son, the giving did not begin at Bethlehem. He made the decision before the crisis, before the opportunity for sin had even the chance to surface. This decision was agreed upon in “the counsel of peace” between God and Christ.

And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zechariah 6:12, 13).

Under inspiration, Zechariah mentions, “The LORD of hosts”—the Father and “The BRANCH”—Christ. The Branch was to be both a ruler (lord) and priest (anointed one— Christ). The high priest of Israel was referred to as the one that was “anointed.” (See Leviticus 4:3, 5, 16.) This is the same Hebrew word found in Daniel 9:25, 26 that is translated “Messiah.” Peter further stated on the day of Pentecost that God had made Jesus “both Lord and Christ.” The term “Christ” means Anointed One or Messiah. (See Acts 2:36.)

God sent his Son on a mission to pay the greatest ransom ever. The Bible states that Christ “gave himself a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:6).” Galatians 1:4 says that Jesus “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, *according to the will of God and our Father*.” The wages of sin is death and only the death of the Son of God could buy back man from the death he had earned. This death of Christ was “*according to the will of God and our Father*.” Here we see God’s great love for humanity. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).”

The mission of Christ was to preach the gospel, set the sinner free from sin, heal the brokenhearted, and pay the ransom for man's sin.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:16-19).

For centuries, the Jews had looked for the Anointed One or Messiah. As one reads the account of Andrew learning of Jesus, one can feel the excitement that must have been in the disciple's heart. "One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, *We have found the Messiah*, which is, being interpreted, the Christ (John 1:40, 41)." While Andrew and the other disciples began to realize who Jesus was, most of the Jews did not recognize Jesus as the Christ or Anointed One. They did not realize that he must first die for their sins before he could rule as king.

Just as soon as man had sinned the promise of a Redeemer was given. There would come from the seed of the woman One who would bruise the head of the serpent. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Genesis 3:15)." This promise was repeated to Abraham, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice (Genesis 22:18)." The promise was repeated to Isaac and Jacob. (See Genesis 26:4; 28:14.) The promise was next handed down to Judah: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be (Genesis 49:10)." The scepter did come to Judah in the person of King David who received the promise of a special son:

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever (2 Samuel 7:12-16).

While this was to apply to David's son Solomon, on the day of Pentecost Peter applies part of this prophecy to Jesus Christ:

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore

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being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne (Acts 2:29, 30).

Under the figure of a Branch, Jeremiah prophesied of a King who would come after Solomon. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jeremiah 23:5, 6)." The Branch, who was to be a king, would rule with righteousness because he had received the Spirit of God. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD (Isaiah 11:1, 2)." The Redeemer to come was to be "the seed of the woman." He was to be called "the man whose name is The BRANCH (Zechariah 6:12)." He was to be called "the Son of the Highest (Luke 1:32)," and "the Son of God (Luke 1:35)."

The Bible teaches that the God who "cannot lie" told the truth when he said, "This is my beloved Son." Christ, who had "no guile" in his mouth, told the truth when he claimed to be the Son of God. The "Scripture of truth" did not lie when it prophesied of the priest-king who was to be "the Son of the Highest." To personally know Jesus Christ as the Son of God is a life-or-death matter!

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also (1 John 2:22, 23).

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:10-13).

The Scriptures teach that "the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)." Salvation from sin and death comes only through Jesus Christ the Son of God. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12)."

There is but one way of escape for the sinner. There is but one agency whereby he may be cleansed from sin. He must accept the propitiation that has been made by the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. The shed

blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” A complete offering has been made; for “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,”— *not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily* (*The Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895).

Some people might agree with a sign that appeared in the window of a pharmacy that stated, “God Punishes, but Jesus Saves.” While all sincere Christians would appreciate the concern and effort the store owner made to witness, the sign sends a message that is at odds with the gospel. The sign presents God and Christ working from two different positions with two different goals. God is portrayed as a judge who will punish, while Jesus is presented as a loving Saviour who will save the sinner from the judgment of the Father. This approach is used in Catholicism and many false Christian systems of worship where the true Gospel is not understood. While there is a judgment, let us remember that both God and Christ are earnestly working to win man’s heart so that he can be in their company forever. It was God who gave his only begotten Son, and Christ who willingly came to die for the sinner “according to the will of God (Galatians 1:4).” The love that God and Christ share for humanity was expressed by Jesus as a love equal to that which the Father and Son share. Jesus said:

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love (John 15:9).

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (John 17:23).

No wonder Jesus said, “I and my Father are one (John 10:30).” They are working together with a singleness of purpose for the salvation of man.

If you draw close to Jesus and seek to adorn your profession by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, your feet will be kept from straying into forbidden paths. If you will only watch, continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation, and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last. If you hold the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end, your ways will be established in God; and what grace has begun, glory will crown in the kingdom of our God. The fruits of the Spirit are “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” If Christ be within us, we shall crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 148).

## Chapter 12

### Jesus Christ the Divine Object of Our Faith

Most paintings of the Lord's Supper present a long table with Jesus in the center with six disciples on each side. While this is not the exact arrangement, artists have understood that Christ was the center of attention. Jesus was the center of the disciples' experience and must be the center of our experience. It is Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God that is the object of our faith. One of the first instances of the disciples worshipping Christ is given in Matthew 14 concerning the incident of Jesus walking on the water.

And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. *Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God* (Matthew 14:22-33).

Here we see the disciples worshipping Jesus as the "Son of God." While their understanding of the matter was yet unclear, they began to realize this great truth and worshipped Jesus accordingly. While Peter's great confession was yet to come, they were beginning to understand who Jesus really was and he became the divine object of their faith.

### **Jesus Christ Worshipped as the Son of God**

Jesus told Nicodemus that he was the Son of God. Indeed, we live today because God sent his Son to die for us. Jesus said, “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18).” Those who believe are not condemned, but those who do not worship the Son of God are judged unworthy, by default, because they do not believe in the Son.

John the Baptist testified, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36).” Here John holds out Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the divine object of our faith. In *The Desire of Ages* we read this note of interest:

When it appears that God is about to work in a special manner for his people, let them not be enticed into a controversy that will work only ruin of souls. The questions that most concern us are, *Do I believe with saving faith on the Son of God? Is my life in harmony with the divine law? “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.” “And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.”* John 3:36; 1 John 2:3 (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 396).

The account of the healing of the man born blind in John the ninth chapter reveals the worship of Jesus as *the Son of God*. After the man had been healed and later excommunicated, the record states:

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him (John 9:35-38).

The story of Philip meeting the Ethiopian eunuch, as recorded in chapter 8 of Acts, is well-known. However, there are some very important aspects of this story that often are not noticed. First, it must be remembered that the meeting of the two was of divine providence. Verse 26 says that “the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza.” After their meeting, verses 39 and 40 record that Philip was caught away by “the Spirit of the Lord,” and was later “found at Azotus.” Without controversy, God had arranged for this special meeting between Philip and this high-ranking official from the court of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians.

The center of their discussion was the prophecy of Isaiah 53. After an unrecorded amount of time was spent discussing the death of Christ and other Christian doctrines such as baptism, the eunuch said, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized (Acts 8:36)?” An important note is the confession that Philip, working under the Spirit of Inspiration, required of

the eunuch. First, let us notice what Philip did not ask. He *did not* ask for the eunuch to respond to twenty-eight fundamental beliefs. He *did not* ask the eunuch to believe that Jesus was the supreme God or the second person of a Trinity! Philip told the eunuch he could be baptized if he believed with all his heart. What did the eunuch understand this to mean? His response was: “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37).” *This* proclamation was the confession that was sufficient for baptism. The record says that the eunuch “went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:39).”

The very first message that the Apostle Paul preached after his conversion was the truth that Jesus was the Son of God. “And immediately he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God (Acts 9:20 margin).” Paul’s continued theme of preaching was that God sent his Son to die for the sins of man. (See 1 Corinthians 2:2; Galatians 1:4; Romans 5:6-11; etc.)

In his first epistle, the Apostle John presents Jesus Christ as the divine object of faith in the character of the Son of God:

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that *God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God* (1 John 4:9-15).

Continuing this theme, John states that his account of the life of Jesus was written so that we might “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you *might have life through his name* (John 20:31).”

### **The High Nature of Jesus as God’s Son**

Let us examine the exalted nature of our Lord as announced by the Father. Matthew 3:17 states: “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” At the Mount of Transfiguration the Father again makes known the lofty nature of our Lord. “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him** (Matthew 17:5).” Commenting on this verse, the nineteenth-century writer Henry Grew stated:

When the heavens are opened, that the nature and character of the Saviour may be announced by the Majesty on high to a perishing world, what do we hear? This is the second person of the adorable Trinity? This is the supreme God? No; but, “this is *my beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” And what did the blessed Ambassador of peace require? “Dost thou believe on

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the Son of God?” [John 9:35] This great truth was indeed the dividing line between his disciples and the world. The former believed, and were saved; the latter denied, and perished. As Jesus never *claimed* a higher nature than this; he never required his disciples to *believe* that he possessed any higher nature (*An Examination of The Divine Testimony on the Nature and Character of the Son of God*, p. 30; emphasis in original).

It was the confession of Peter that Jesus was the Son of God which received the benediction of his Lord.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 16:13-17).

Should we be dissatisfied with a confession that the Saviour approved? Have we been given license to add to the divine testimony? What right do we have to contradict the Word of God? Shall we rewrite the testimony? Satan has rewritten the testimony in the minds of many believers to read, “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God doth not dwell in him and he is not in God, unless he does confess that Jesus is not the Son of God.”

### **The Foundation of the Believer’s Faith**

The Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ is the foundation of the believer’s faith. Writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul stated:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Ephesians 2:19, 20).

The apostles and prophets are not the foundation of the believer. The apostle’s and prophet’s foundation is the same as ours: Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone. In both Ephesians and Romans Paul applies the prophecy of Isaiah 28:16 to Jesus, as does Peter in 1 Peter 2:6.

Therefore thus saith the Lord, even the Lord, Behold, I lay for the foundation of Sion a costly stone, a choice, a corner-stone, a precious stone, for its foundations; and he that believes on him shall by no means be ashamed (Isaiah 28:16 Septuagint).

Two statements found in *The Desire of Ages* show that Ellen White strongly agreed with these statements of Scripture. Concerning Peter’s confession as recorded in Matthew 16:16, we read, “Peter had expressed *the truth* which is the *foundation* of the church’s faith (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 413).” We also find a parallel statement on page 412: “*The truth* which Peter had confessed is *the foundation* of the believer’s faith.”

Jesus said that it was life eternal to not only know God, but the One he sent. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).” Commenting upon this verse in connection with the foundation of our faith, Sister White wrote:

Now, as never before, we need to understand the true science of education. If we fail to understand this, we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” If this is the price of heaven, shall not our education be conducted on these lines? Christ must be everything to us. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” What a foundation is here laid for the faith of those who shall live in all ages (*The Christian Educator*, August 1, 1897).

Standing in the shadow of the cross, the Saviour here presented principles that lie at the foundation of all true Christian experience. Lifting up his eyes unto heaven, he said: “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (*The Review and Herald*, July 19, 1906).”

The knowledge, in itself, of this wonderful truth is no grounds for glorification. We cannot obtain this knowledge apart from God. “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know (Job 11:7, 8)?” We are told that God’s thoughts are much higher than our thoughts. (See Isaiah 55:9.) Only God can reveal the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus told Peter, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 16:17).”

Our first work is to be converted. We are individually to be born again. We are to be able to represent in character the new life in Christ. *The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He sent is of primary importance, for Christ declares that it is eternal life to the believer.* Those in positions of responsibility in our sanitariums should make sure that their lamps are trimmed and burning. Men and women who are engaged in any line of God’s work are to heed Christ words, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” In building up a sanitarium this is the first work to be done. The foundation is to be laid in Jesus Christ (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 17, p. 358).

It is only as Jesus Christ is exalted to his highest character as the Son of God that he can be truly lifted up in the fullest sense as the Saviour of man. Paul writes, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).”

**A**nd this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).

## Chapter 13

### The Distinctiveness of the Father and His Son

A few years ago I had opportunity to enter into a most interesting theological discussion with two very sincere Christians about the nature of the Godhead. One individual was a Pentecostal believer of “Jesus Only.” This belief is a type of monarchianism which maintains that the Godhead is composed of one Being who revealed himself as the Father in the times of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ during the time depicted in the gospels, and the Holy Spirit from the ascension until today. The other individual I was conversing with was a member of the Nazarene Church who was Trinitarian in belief. The Pentecostal was first asked by the Nazarene if his church believed in the Trinity. After a clarification from each on their beliefs, they asked me what I believed on the subject. I stated very simply that, based on the Bible, I could not believe the doctrine of either one, the reason being that both theologies reject the Bible teaching that God did have a real Son and that he sent him to die for the sins of humanity.

#### **False Gospels Teach Role-Playing**

The “Jesus Only” view presents a god who does not really have a son, but rather presents a god who only *assumes* the *role* of a son. After the crucifixion, this being then arose from the dead to assume the *role* of the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian view, in reality, states a very similar position but from a different perspective. While it allows for three distinct persons within the Godhead, it denigrates the sacrifice of Calvary to one of role-playing. The Trinity doctrine states that the terms “Father” and “Son” as revealed in Scripture do not really mean father and son, but rather express *roles* they accept in carrying out of the plan of salvation. For example:

In the New Testament, Jesus used *Father* to bring us into a close and personal relationship with God (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. 20).

It may be inferred from the Scriptures that when the Godhead laid out the plan of salvation at some point in eternity past, They took certain *positions* or *roles* to carry out the provisions of the plan (*The Signs of the Times*, July 1985).

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This is basically the same view that LeRoy Froom advocates in his book, *Movement of Destiny*, in an effort to promote Trinitarianism.<sup>1</sup> During the middle 1950's, while preparing his first book on Seventh-day Adventists, Walter Martin approached the brethren in the General Conference asking for their official position on the Godhead. A Trinitarian position was essential in removing Seventh-day Adventism from the status of being a cult.<sup>2</sup>

Do the terms "Father" and "Son" refer to roles that God and Christ play, or do they really state the literal relationship between the two? Does John 3:16 really say: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" Or should it read, "God so loved the world, that he gave his fellow God.?" Does the wise man merely ask a rhetorical question when we read: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? *what is his name, and what is his son's name*, if thou canst tell (Proverbs 30:4)?"

The Scriptures clearly state that God and Christ are two distinct beings and that the terms "Father" and "Son" *are not* used to express the roles portrayed, but rather to express a real and personal relationship between the two. Jesus said, "I and my Father are one (John 10:30)," and then he went on to explain that oneness:

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are . . . 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: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 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; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (John 17:11, 20-23).

Early Adventists accepted these verses in a literal way. They believed in a real God and a real Son. Sister White wrote, "The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 269)." James White also noted:

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1. See *Movement of Destiny*, p. 301.

2. See "Adventists and the Trinity," by Roy Allan Anderson, *Adventist Review*, September 8, 1983, p. 4.

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Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one as he was one with his Father. This prayer did not contemplate one disciple with twelve heads, but twelve disciples, made one in object and effort in the cause of their master. Neither are the Father and the Son parts of the “three-one God.” They are two distinct beings, yet one in the design and accomplishment of redemption. The redeemed, from the first who shares in the great redemption, to the last, all ascribe the honor, and glory, and praise, of their salvation, to both God and the Lamb (*Life Incidents*, p. 343).

Thus, the prayer of Jesus was for the disciples to have perfect unity as he had perfect unity with the Father. God desires the whole universe to be in harmony with him, as Christ is in harmony with him. In Philippians 2:5 we are told, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” What mind did Jesus have? He had the mind and thoughts of his Father. Notice how clearly Jesus brings this out as recorded in the book of John:

I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and *I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him* (John 8:26).

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but *as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things* (John 8:28).

*I speak that which I have seen with my Father:* and ye do that which ye have seen with your father (John 8:38).

*For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.* And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even *as the Father said unto me, so I speak* (John 12:49, 50).

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? *the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself:* but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works (John 14:10).

If Scripture utilizes the speech of mortals in the sense it is universally used and understood by mortals, then God is the Father of Jesus Christ and Jesus is his Son. The repetition of the terms “Father” and “Son” for God and Christ is astonishing! Jesus refers to God as “my Father” at least fifty-two times in statements such as:

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before *my Father* which is in heaven (Matthew 10:32).

All things are delivered unto me of *my Father:* and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him (Matthew 11:27).

*My Father*, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of *my Father's* hand. I and *my Father* are one (John 10:29, 30).

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for *my Father* is greater than I (John 14:28).

I am the true vine, and *my Father* is the husbandman (John 15:1).

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To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with *my Father* in his throne (Revelation 3:21).

Jesus is positively mentioned as the “Son of God” at least thirty-seven times in the New Testament in verses such as these:

Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art *the Son of God* (Matthew 14:33).

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God* (Mark 1:1).

And I saw, and bare record that this is *the Son of God* (John 1:34).

Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art *the Son of God*; thou art the King of Israel (John 1:49).

Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, *I am the Son of God* (John 10:36)?

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

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that *Jesus is the Son of God* (1 John 5:5)?

If God and Christ are role-playing, why is it not simply stated that “god number one” gave “god number two (his pal, brother, or buddy)” for the sins of the world? If it is role-playing, then the question of God’s honesty with humanity must be addressed. How can God claim to be “a God of Truth” and One who “cannot lie” if he is dishonest with humanity (Deuteronomy 32:4; Titus 1:2)? How can Jesus Christ claim to be “the faithful and true witness (Revelation 3:14)” if he does not really mean what he says?

Repeatedly, we have heard that the gospel is to be simple enough for a child to understand. What does a child think when he or she reads John 3:16? Childlike faith understands that God had a Son to give and that he did indeed give that Son for the sins of the world. The Scriptures plainly state that Jesus:

- ❶ Came down from heaven. “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me (John 6:38).”
- ❷ Was from God: “Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me (John 8:42).”
- ❸ Was sent by the Father and is a distinct, separate individual: “For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, *Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb* (John 16:27-29).”

The disciples understood clearly that God and Christ were two distinct beings and that God is the Father of Jesus. How different from the Trinitarian which must call the relationship in the Godhead a mystery. “While no

single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, it is assumed as a fact by Bible writers. . . . Only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity (*Adventist Review*, Special Issue, vol. 158, no. 31, July 1981).”

### **Further Plain Testimonies**

Paul, writing in Hebrews, expresses the distinctiveness between God and Christ clearly: “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offering and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God (Hebrews 10:5-7).”

The distinctiveness of God and Christ is revealed in the salutations, or the opening lines, of almost every New Testament epistle. For example:

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, . . . Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 1:1, 3).

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother (1 Corinthians 1:1).

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia (2 Corinthians 1:1).

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead) (Galatians 1:1).

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting (James 1:1).

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord (2 Peter 1:2).

Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love (2 John 3).

This same motif is expressed in the body of the epistles as well:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3).

Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you (1 Thessalonians 3:11).

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work (2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17).

### **Creeds of Men or Creed of God?**

The date A.D. 325 is a landmark date for apostasy. This was the year the Nicene Creed was developed. The Nicene Creed established Christ to be coequal and coeternal with the Father, thus denying the Father–Son relationship. This Creed was followed by the Constantinople Creed of A.D. 381

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which placed the Holy Spirit on equal status with God and with Christ. Later the Athanasian Creed was written near the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century. This Creed was not written by Athanasius (a deacon from the time of the Council of Nicæa who worked with Alexander to oppose Arius) but was representative of his belief. The Athanasian Creed states in part:

1. Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith:
2. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity;
13. So likewise the Father is Almighty: the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty.
14. And yet they are not three Almighty: but one Almighty.
17. So likewise the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord.
18. And yet not three Lords: but one Lord.
25. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after another: none is greater, or less than another.
26. But the whole three persons are coeternal and coequal.
44. This is the Catholic Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he can not be saved (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Student's Source Book*, pp. 298, 299).

This blasphemous Catholic doctrine does not measure up to God's Word. The Scriptures plainly state: "But to us 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 Corinthians 8:6)." The Bible says nothing about one in three or three in one, but rather declares "one God the Father" and "one Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6)," the Son of the "only true God (John 17:3)." This is not a "Jesus Only" creed nor is it a Trinitarian creed. Shall we believe the creeds and councils of devil-inspired men instead of the sacred words of truth inspired by the Holy Spirit? God forbid! The Bible plainly declares that "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Hebrews 1:1, 2)." The testimony of Jesus agrees: "There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son (*The Review and Herald*, November 8, 1898)."

The Scriptures clearly state the distinctiveness between the Father and Christ. This distinctiveness is in number as well as in their relationship one to the other. The Bible further affirms that Christ is the only mediator between sinful man and the "only true God," the Father. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy

## The Distinctiveness of the Father and His Son

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2:5).” The Bible demands that we must worship “The Father and the Son [who] alone are to be exalted (*The Youth’s Instructor*, July 7, 1898).”

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him (Hebrews 1:6).

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Revelation 4:11).

Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever (Revelation 5:12-14).

“Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, will be disappointed (*The Review and Herald*, July 26, 1892).”

The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 269).

## Chapter 14

### The Death of the Cross

Elder James White, writing in *The Review and Herald* of February 7, 1856, noted:

The “mystery of iniquity” began to work in the church in Paul’s day. It finally crowded out the simplicity of the gospel, and corrupted the doctrine of Christ, and the church went into the wilderness. Martin Luther, and other reformers, arose in the strength of God, and with the Word and Spirit, made mighty strides in the Reformation. The greatest fault we can find in the Reformation is, the Reformers stopped reforming. Had they gone on, and onward, till they had left the last vestige of Papacy behind, such as natural immortality, sprinkling, *the trinity*, and Sunday-keeping, the church would now be free from her unscriptural errors.

As we have noted earlier, the Adventist pioneers rejected the doctrine of the Trinity. While several reasons were advanced for this rejection, the point most offensive was that it was subversive to the atonement. Remember that the Advent movement was based on a fuller revelation of the atonement than had ever been understood before. “The Scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed (*The Great Controversy*, p. 409).’” Anything that is subversive to the atonement is subversive to the Advent movement!

The reason the Trinity was considered to be subversive to the atonement involved the fact that it degraded *the dignity of the sacrifice*, and thus the power of the atonement. First, an appreciation of the law of God cannot be realized without an appreciation of the greatness of the sacrifice needed to atone for the transgressor. The importance of any law is revealed by the sacrifice needed to atone for its transgression. If God’s law is of such a low nature that a human sacrifice or even the life of an angel could atone for its transgression, then the stature of such a law is far different than the stature of a law that requires a divine sacrifice. In fact, the difference would be as great as that between a creature and the Creator!

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God's law is so high, so sacred and just, and its transgression so abhorring in his sight that only the life of his dear Son, and nothing less, could be accepted as an atonement for its violation. The realization of this truth will establish a tremendous respect for God's law in the believer's heart.

Our understanding of the law and the offering for its violation go hand in hand. We cannot have a totally correct view of one without the other. To degrade the law, we must of necessity degrade the offering needed to atone for its violation. To degrade the sacrifice, we must of necessity degrade the law which requires it. The inverse is also true. If we exalt the law, we must of necessity exalt the value of the sacrifice needed to atone for its transgression. Also, an exaltation of the sacrifice must of necessity exalt the stature of the law which requires it.

Since the Trinitarian doctrine only makes provision for a human sacrifice, the dignity of the law, the Lawgiver, and the Sacrifice are degraded. Elder J. H. Waggoner explains it thus:

It is not our purpose to present any argument on the doctrine of the trinity, further than it has a bearing on the subject under consideration, namely, on the Atonement.

Many theologians really think that the Atonement, in respect to its dignity and efficacy, rests upon the doctrine of a trinity. But we fail to see any connection between the two. To the contrary, the advocates of that doctrine really fall into the difficulty which they seem anxious to avoid. Their difficulty consists in this: They take the denial of a trinity to be equivalent to a denial of the divinity of Christ. Were that the case, we should cling to the doctrine of a trinity as tenaciously as any can; but it is not the case. They who have read our remarks on the death of the Son of God know that we firmly believe in the divinity of Christ; but we cannot accept the idea of a trinity, as it is held by Trinitarians, without giving up our claim on *the dignity of the sacrifice* made for our redemption.

And here is shown how remarkably the widest extremes meet in theology. The highest Trinitarians and lowest Unitarians meet and are perfectly united on the death of Christ—the faith of both amounts to Socinianism. Unitarians believe that Christ was a prophet, an inspired teacher, but merely human; that his death was that of a human body only. Trinitarians hold that the term “Christ” comprehends two distinct and separate natures: one that was merely human; the other, the second person in the Trinity, who dwelt in the flesh for a brief period, but could not possibly suffer, or die; that the Christ that died was only the human nature in which the divinity had dwelt. Both classes have a human offering, and nothing more. No matter how exalted the preexistent Son was; no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even eternal; if the manhood only died, the sacrifice was only human. And so far as the vicarious death of Christ is concerned, this is Socinianism. Thus the remark is just, that the doctrine of a Trinity degrades the Atonement, resting it solely on a human offering as a basis (*The Atonement in the Light of Nature and Revelation*, pp. 164-166; 1884 ed.).

A very important point must be noted from Waggoner. A correct understanding of the doctrine of the atonement (which involves a rejection of the Trinitarian teaching) does not require “a denial of the divinity of Christ.” In fact, it is based on the concept that the sacrifice upon Calvary was a divine sacrifice instead of merely a human one. The truth that the divine Son of God died upon the cross was the center of Paul’s teachings. Writing to the Corinthians he stated: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified* (1 Corinthians 2:1, 2).”

While Paul and other inspired writers mention the incarnation, the life of Christ, the resurrection, ascension, and his high-priestly ministry, the emphasis has been on the cross. That does not mean that any portion of the plan of salvation is more necessary than another. To illustrate this, let us examine a lesson from the human body. God has given man two lungs to provide oxygen for the body and to remove carbon dioxide. We could not live without our lungs. God has also given each of us a liver. The liver secretes bile and acts in the formation of blood and in the metabolism of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals. We couldn’t live without it. In addition to this, God has given each of us a heart. This fist-size organ weighing between nine and eleven ounces pumps the blood around the body sixty to eighty times a minute, every minute we live. In one day alone it pumps an astounding 4,000 gallons of blood. We couldn’t live without it! Now very simply, if you were asked which of these organs is the most vital to you, what would you say? Take any away and the person dies! All are important and the failure of any one organ leads to the failure of the whole body. In like manner, the different aspects of the plan of salvation are all necessary. If we remove any one portion of that plan, the whole plan fails. This being true, then why did Paul emphasize the death of Christ on the cross so much? It was because, as Wieland and Short elegantly wrote, “Through the death of Christ He (God) could break and win the hearts of sinners, and thus reconcile them to Himself (*1888 Re-Examined*, p. 173, 1950 ed.).”

The medium of the cross is God’s way of speaking to the heart of man in a way that nothing else can. Not only does it fulfill the demands of the broken law, but it illustrates the love of God and his Son for sinful man. Virtually anyone who has ever claimed the title “Christian” has heard about the cross. Have we really *studied the cross* and the events surrounding it? What really happened at Calvary? We quote John 3:16 and freely speak of Christ dying on the cross, but, as Elder Waggoner pointed out over one hundred years ago, many have a very faulty understanding of what Golgotha is portraying to us. This chapter will investigate the three following points: 1.) Did Jesus

die in totality? 2.) How could the Son of God die if he was divine? 3.) If Christ really died in totality, how does he live to make intercession?

### **Christ Died For Sinners**

Today we live in a troubled world. Racial differences, “ethnic cleansing,” and prejudice cause these divisions. While we live in a very fragmented and divided world, the one common denominator that links all humanity is the fact that all are sinners! “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).” John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Here we are told that Christ was given for one class of people: *sinners!*

In the heart of his message on justification as found in Romans, Paul testifies, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us** (Romans 5:6-8).” Paul states that *Christ did die and that he died for those who hated his Father.*

Writing to the Corinthians, Paul also declared: “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures** (1 Corinthians 15:3).” Two significant things from Paul’s words will be noted at this time. First, the gospel he taught was that which he received. Paul declares that he had received first-hand instruction from Christ himself. Earlier in this epistle, he had written: “For *I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you* (1 Corinthians 11:23a).” He also instructed the Galatians: “For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:12).” Clearly, what Paul claims to have taught was the pure, direct Gospel of Christ.

Secondly, neither Paul nor the other Bible writers used words in meaningless ways. When Paul wrote that “Christ died,” he meant just that. The term Jesus Christ is more than a name. It is really a compound of the Son of God’s earthly name, “Jesus,” which means Saviour, and his heavenly position, “Christ,” which means the Anointed One or Messiah. If Paul had wanted to emphasize that it was only the human nature of the Son that died, he could have written that “Jesus died” but instead he wrote “Christ (the Anointed One or divine Messiah) died.” Paul believed that the Son of God really died.

The testimony of Jesus Christ himself is equally clear. In Revelation 1:18 Jesus says: “I am he that liveth, and **was dead**; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” Jesus says that he was dead. Friend, did he lie? I don’t believe that he ever told anything but

pure truth. We can agree with Peter when he stated that Jesus “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth (1 Peter 2:22).” No, Jesus told the truth when he said that he was the Son of God and that he died. He is “the faithful and true witness (Revelation 3:14).”

When Jesus and the disciples came to the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he told his disciples that he was going to die. After giving Peter and the disciples an opportunity to acknowledge that he was the Son of the living God, the Bible says, “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day (Matthew 16:21).” Peter didn’t take this very favorably. The next verse records: “Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee (v. 22).” Peter tried to deny that Jesus must die. This brought the rebuke from Christ, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men (v. 23).” It was Satan, the father of all lies (John 8:44), not God, that had inspired Peter into his rashness.

When Jesus had opened before his disciples the fact that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die at the hands of the chief priests and scribes, Peter had presumptuously contradicted his Master, saying, “Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.” He could not conceive it possible that the Son of God should be put to death. *Satan suggested to his mind that if Jesus was the Son of God he could not die (The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 3, p. 231).*

The evidence is clear that God wants us to understand that the atonement is based on the real and full death of the Son of the Great Lawgiver. Satan wants us to believe “that if Jesus was the Son of God he could not die!”

### “According to the Scriptures”

Paul noted in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “Christ died for our sins *according to the scriptures.*” The most graphic and detailed account of Christ’s death is found in Isaiah, chapter 53. This chapter describes the totality of Christ’s death. We have been counseled: “The entire chapter should be committed to memory. Its influence will subdue and humble the soul defiled by sin and uplifted by self-exaltation (*The Youth’s Instructor*, December 20, 1900).” The last three verses of chapter 52 and the first six verses of chapter 53 begin with the sufferings of Yahweh’s servant. However, it must be remembered that the law required death, not torture. Verses seven through twelve speak explicitly of death:

- “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as **a lamb to the slaughter**, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth (v. 7).” Here Christ is described as being brought as “a lamb to the slaughter.” I grew up in an area where there were cattle and various animals on farms and any farmer knows what hap-

pens during slaughter time. The animal is killed! The Hebrew word for slaughter (טבח- *tebach*) can also be translated “massacre.”

- “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for **he was cut off out of the land of the living**: for the transgression of my people was he stricken (v. 8).” The expression “cut off” is used in Daniel 9:26 to describe the death of the Messiah. Furthermore, the verse states that the Messiah was to be “cut off *out of the land of the living*.” If one is not living, he must be dead.
- “And he made his **grave** with the wicked, and with the rich in **his death**; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth (v. 9).” This text which describes Christ’s burial states plainly that he was to be put in a “grave.” Friends, it is neither legal nor proper to bury people in graves unless they are dead! Furthermore, this text speaks of “his death.”
- “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when **thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin**, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand (v. 10).” This is perhaps one of the strongest statements in all of Scripture concerning the atonement. Of all people who should be able to fathom the importance of this, it is Seventh-day Adventists. Few understand the implications of the usage of the term “soul” as Adventists do. The Word of God does not say that the Messiah would give his human body for the offering, but instead his “soul.” The Hebrew word for “soul” is נפש (*nephesh*). This refers to the total being, all that lives and breathes!
- “He shall see of **the travail of his soul**, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because **he hath poured out his soul unto death**: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (vs. 11, 12).” Here is a clear allusion to the drink offering which was poured out to show total and complete sacrifice. The Word states that Jesus “*poured out* his soul unto death.” Here “soul” is again the Hebrew *nephesh*. The word for “death” (מוֹת- *maveth*) is from the root word translated “die” in Ezekiel 18:4 where we read that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” We have preached for years that Satan wants you to believe that you don’t *really* die when you die. Beloved, Satan is just as interested in you believing that Jesus didn’t really die on the cross.

### The Divine Son of God Died

This brings us to the second question of our study: How could the Son of God die if he was divine? To answer this we need to first understand some

of the attributes of God that set him apart from his creatures. The first attribute of God is that he is *omnipotent*. This simply means that he is all-powerful; his power is unlimited. This is especially noticeable concerning his creative ability. In fact, it is this ability that God says sets him apart from all false gods. Notice the contrast illustrated in the following verses:

But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion (Jeremiah 10:10-12).

For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heaven (Psalm 96:5).

The second attribute of God is that he is *omnipresent*. This means that God can be anywhere or everywhere at any time. In fact, by his spirit he can be all places at all times. David said, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there (Psalm 139:7, 8).”

The third attribute of God is that he is *omniscient*. This means that God is all-knowing. He has total knowledge of that which has occurred in the past, as well what is currently happening. He also knows the future. “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isaiah 46:10).” Not only does God have total knowledge of events, He also understands all scientific and psychological mysteries. (See Job chapters 38-41.)

The fourth attribute of God is that he is *inherently immortal*. That means he is not subject to death. This is also the exclusive property of God.<sup>1</sup>

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen (1 Timothy 1:17).

Who only hath immortality, 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).

### **The Form of a Slave**

The Apostle Paul, under inspiration, writes concerning Christ: “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 (Philippians 2:6, 7).” The original Greek in the first

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1. A distinction is here made by using the term “inherently” because when Jesus comes back, “this mortal shall . . . put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:54).”

part of verse 7 is: ἀλλ' εαυτον εκενωσεν (*all eauton ekenosen*) which literally translates to: “but himself emptied.” Paul says that the One who was divine – “in the form of God,” “emptied” himself of that divine form. In other words, Christ emptied himself of the divine attributes in the incarnation and accepted the essential attributes of a slave.

Jesus laid aside his omnipotence. “The faithful and true witness” stated very clearly: “Verily, verily (truly, truly), I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. . . . *I can of mine own self do nothing*: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me (John 5:19, 30).” Ellen G. White wrote: “*All* the miracles of Christ performed for the afflicted and suffering were, by the power of God, through the ministration of angels (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 67).” Christ did not retain his omnipotence in the incarnation; instead, he totally depended on the Father.

Christ laid aside his omnipresence. Even a casual reading of the gospels reveals that Jesus accepted the physical restrictions of humanity. This is one reason that Jesus told the disciples that it was “expedient” for him to go away so that the omnipresent Comforter could come.<sup>2</sup>

Christ laid aside his omniscience in the incarnation. Luke 2:52 states that “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” One can not *increase* in wisdom if he already possesses it all. In fact, Jesus plainly told the disciples that he did not even know the exact time of the second coming. “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father (Mark 13:32).”<sup>3</sup>

Finally, Christ laid aside his immortality in the incarnation. The Scriptures teach that the soul of Christ died, that he gave up the “breath of life” at Calvary.

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because *he hath poured out his soul unto death*: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isaiah 53:12).

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, *yielded up the ghost* (Matthew 27:50).<sup>4</sup>

When we tie these four attributes together, we see that Christ, in the incarnation, laid aside the attributes of divinity while retaining his divine

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2. See John 11:1-21; John 16:7; etc.

3. If God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are three coequal beings, all being omniscient, then the Holy Spirit would also know the time of the coming of Christ.

4. The Greek for “ghost” is *(pneuma)*: spirit or breath.

relationship with his Father; in other words, *he was divine because of who he was and not because of powers or abilities he had within himself*. He was still the divine Son of God. The Scriptures confirm what the servant of the Lord wrote nearly one hundred years ago:

At the time when He was most needed, Jesus, the Son of God, the world's Redeemer, *laid aside His divinity*, and came to earth in the garb of humanity (*Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, October 12, 1896).

It must be understood that Christ came from the Father, “not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person (*The Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895).” Christ received by nature all the attributes of God. Because Jesus was the begotten Son of God, he received the attributes of God, including inherent immortality. This immortality, along with his omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, Christ laid aside in the incarnation and could do so because he had received these from God. A mere creature, one created from nothing, would not measure up to the divine stature necessary to be the sacrifice for the sins of the world. If Christ had been coequal and coeternal with God in every respect, then he *could not* have laid these attributes aside.

### **Divinity Clothed in Humanity**

How do we relate to statements from Ellen White where she writes that Christ “clothed his divinity with humanity (*The Review and Herald*, June 1, 1905).”? Was his divinity “clothed” or “laid aside?” We do not believe that these statements are antithesis one to the other, but rather complement one another. We find the answer to their relationship in the following Scriptural passage and comment of Sister White:

And the Devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the Devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine (Luke 4:5-7).

He presented the world to Christ as a most dazzling, enchanting spectacle. But Christ saw that which Satan tried to veil from his eyes, and that which he flattered himself he had done. Christ had not exchanged his divinity for humanity; but he had clothed his divinity in humanity, and he gave Satan the evidence for which he had asked,—showed him that he was the Son of God. Divinity flashed through humanity, and the evil one *could not resist the authority of the divine voice*, as Jesus said, “Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (*The Review and Herald*, October 29, 1895).”

It was not his omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, or immortality that Satan could not resist. No, it was his divine authority! While Christ laid aside the physical and mental attributes of divinity at the incarnation, *he was*

*still the divine Son of God invested with authority because of who he was!* He was still the Son of the living God. In all of his humanity, he never gave up his divinely appointed authority which the Father had given him. This explains why Satan's temptation in the wilderness was not to *make* the stones turn into bread, but rather to *command* them to be bread. (See Matthew 4:3, 4.) In the parable of the wicked husbandmen, the householder said that they would respect his Son because he was his Son! "But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son (Matthew 21:37)."

### **Our Hope Is in His Resurrection**

If Christ really died, how can he live today? The answer is that the One who bestowed life to his Son before eternity began raised him from the dead. In nearly thirty instances the New Testament speaks of God raising Christ from the dead. The testimony of Scripture is plain:

And killed the Prince of life, whom *God hath raised from the dead*; whereof we are witnesses. . . . Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, *whom God raised from the dead*, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole (Acts 3:15; 4:10).

And to wait for his Son from heaven, *whom he [God] raised from the dead*, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

Who by him do believe in *God, that raised him [Jesus] up from the dead*, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God (1 Peter 1:21).

The Word of God is very clear that our hope would die without the resurrection of Christ. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul noted:

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins (1 Corinthians 15:12-17).

In each of these and other statements from the New Testament, when the construction of the Greek is examined, the following is noted. Firstly, when speaking of the Father as being the One who raised Christ, the Greek syntax is always in the *active voice*, which represents the subject as the doer or performer of the action. In each case, the Father is the One who performs the action. Secondly, in each case where it describes Christ as receiving life, it is always in the *passive voice*, which represents the subject as being the recipient of the action.

Paul also mentions Christ being raised by the Father in Romans 4:24, 25: "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that

raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was *raised again* for our justification.”

In reviewing the facts of Scripture from this study, we may restate the following points: Firstly, Christ laid aside his immortality to die. Secondly, he died in totality. His “soul” (*nephesh*) was poured out. Thirdly, to be raised from the dead, he had to die! The Trinitarian doctrine states that God and Christ are coequal and coeternal in every respect; that Christ was and is self-existent, not dependent on God for his life. It teaches that Christ had three natures, the divine spirit, the human body, and the human soul. The only one capable of dying was the human body. The Adventist version accepts the human body and divine spirit, but leaves out the human soul. Either theology only has the human body, the part considered the most inferior of the three (or two) natures, as the sacrifice for the sins of the world!

While we are not instructed as to the manner in which God gave life to Jesus in the resurrection, we do know that it was the second time that God gave life to his Son, thus “again.” The record of the first time can be found in Proverbs 8:22-25.<sup>5</sup>

The Lord made me the beginning of his ways for his works. He established me before time was in the beginning, before he made the earth: even before he made the depths; before the fountains of water came forth: before the mountains were settled, and before all hills, he begets me (Proverbs 8:22-25, LXX).”

The word in verse 23 for “time” is (*aionos*). The root word for *aionos* is (*aion*) from which we have the English word, “eon”—an indefinitely long period of time or an eternity. God had brought forth his Son before time, before the eons, and gave Christ his Spirit. At his death, Jesus committed the keeping of his Spirit to his Father; therefore, God could restore that spirit back to Christ in the resurrection.

Peter writes: “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (1 Peter 2:24).” God’s law had been broken by man. Its penalty is death. Our hope of eternal life centers in Jesus Christ, who truly paid that penalty for us. Jesus said:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath *he given to the Son* to have life in himself; And hath *given him authority* to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they

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5. Ellen White states that this refers to Christ. See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34.

that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:24-29).

### **The Cross Demonstrates God's Love**

The death of Christ proves the love of God. "We love him, because he first loved us (1 John 4:19)." That love is what motivates the Christian: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead (2 Corinthians 5:14)." Christ is the perfect revelation of the character of God. "When Paul beheld Jesus lifted up on the cross, he didn't just see Jesus, but the Father Himself crucified with His Son. Not that the Father died physically, but rather His message at the cross was a revelation of the eternal, unselfish principles of His character. **God, through Christ, has declared that He will serve even the creatures He has made, no matter what the personal inconvenience, pain, and suffering to Himself.** He is willing to serve and save man at any cost to Himself (Fred Allaback, sermon entitled "The Double-Cross"; emphasis in the original)." Referring to the charges that Satan had made against God, Ellen White wrote:

Satan had accused God of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he would not himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the accusation that Satan made against God in heaven; and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he would not render himself. Christ came to the world to meet these false accusations, and to reveal the Father (*The Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890).<sup>6</sup>

Not only did the cross answer questions concerning the character of God, the death of Christ revealed the true nature of Satan and sin. Calvary revealed the character of rebellion. It showed that Satan would go to any length to cause suffering to God. There is no limit to the effort Satan would put forth to have things his way. Satan was demonstrating the principle that has motivated him: he expects others to serve him at any expense necessary. Unlike God, who is willing to offer service at his expense to us, Satan expects our service to him at our expense!

Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." What Christ is telling us is that as our love for him grows, we will accept the principle of the cross: a willingness to serve others at our own expense. The unconverted heart follows the principle of Satan. The converted heart follows the principle of Christ. Only the true death of Christ as demonstrated at Calvary can motivate men's hearts to make such a change.

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6. This statement is also published in *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 406, 407.

## Chapter 15

### The Holy Spirit of God

Alvin Toffler, in his book *Future Shock*, wrote: “In 1965, in an article in *Horizon*, I coined the term ‘Future Shock,’ to describe the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time (p. 4).” Perhaps the material in this book has been very shocking. The Bible truth about God and his Son has shattered the false concepts many had previously held. History, however, tells us that the concept of the Trinity was not a “future shock” program. This satanic falsehood, like Sunday sacredness, was introduced to Christianity over a period of several years so that the people could gradually accept it.

An example of the effectiveness of this slow approach is clearly seen in the history of Sunday being accepted as a day of worship. History tells us that Sunday sacredness was so deeply entrenched in the Protestant reformers’ minds that most never considered changing from Sunday to Sabbath, even though the origin of Sunday sacredness was acknowledged in the Augsburg Confession to be Catholic tradition rather than Scriptural authority! The same was true about the Trinity doctrine. This false teaching came into the church over a period of time and was not at first universally received, but gradually came to be accepted as fact.

The doctrine of the Trinity was not taught by the patriarchs and prophets; it was unknown to the apostles and early Christians. This doctrine, as we have noted, is, in fact, the establishing doctrine of the papacy! A. T. Jones, in his voluminous book, *The Two Republics*, entitles the chapter on the acceptance of the Trinity, “Establishment of the Catholic Faith (pp. 329-354).” The framework of the Trinity doctrine was laid in the Council of Nicæa in A.D. 325. This Catholic Council, presided over by the sun-worshipping Constantine, declared God and Christ to be coequal and coeternal. However, this Council did not deal with the subject of the Holy Spirit. The Catholic understanding of the Holy Spirit was formulated at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381. This Council elevated the Holy Spirit to personhood, coequal and coeternal with God and Christ. This teaching is the central pillar of Catholicism. Notice their claim:

## The Foundation of Our Faith

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The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p. 16).

What are some of the teachings of the Catholic Church? Tradition instead of the Bible, Sunday instead of the Sabbath, immortality of man, eternal hell, and instead of the Lord's supper there is the idolatrous mass (transubstantiation). Other blasphemous falsehoods include papal infallibility, prayers to the saints, the Immaculate Conception, Mary as the mother of God, idol worship, and a host of other pagan satanic teachings. All of these pagan teachings are based on the doctrine of the Trinity!

An evaluation of the Catholic faith reveals not a thread of truth in the whole fabric. Sadly, most of the Protestant churches have accepted many of the false doctrines of Rome, and nearly every one of them has accepted the centerpiece of the whole system of falsehood: the Trinity. A. T. Jones quotes the historian Schaff concerning the acceptance by the Protestant Church of the Catholic faith and then comments as to the results of the Councils that formed that faith:

But as the *faith of Leo* which was established by the Council of Chalcedon, "substantially completes the orthodox Christology of the ancient church," and has "passed into all the confessions of the Protestant churches" (Schaff-*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. iii, § 142, par. 1, 2); and as the work of these four general councils—Nice, Constantinople, first of Ephesus, and Chalcedon—was to put dead human formulas in the place of the living oracles of God, *a woman in the place of Christ*, and a MAN IN THE PLACE OF GOD, it is not necessary to follow any farther the course of ambitious strife and contentious devilry (*The Two Republics*, p. 482).

### **Inspiration Predicted a Falling Away**

A falling away from the truth was predicted by the apostle Paul. Speaking to the elders of Ephesus, he said: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:29, 30)." He also wrote: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition (2 Thessalonians 2:3)." In fact, he went on to say, "For the mystery of iniquity *doth already* work (v. 7)." This verse should warn us not to trust the writings of the ante-Nicene Fathers, but to base all our teaching on the Bible alone. No matter how ancient the teaching may be, it is not to be put above the Bible!

### **Worship Reform**

God's people in the last days are to be reformers. When some people think of reform, they consider the food we should eat and the type of clothing to be worn. While these reforms are needed by the people of God, the most

important reform needed is mind reform. True mind reform will result in reform in doctrine and worship. *The three angels' messages give a call to reform in worship*. That reform means leaving off the worship and practices of Babylon to worship the Creator God. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Revelation 14:6, 7)."

For man to worship "the only true God (John 17:3)," he must come out of Babylon. "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (Revelation 14:8)." *Coming out of Babylon, however, is not just changing churches!* It involves a whole change of thought patterns. It means having the mind and character of God. "Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5)." This mind and character is the opposite of the mind and character of Babylon, revealed in Isaiah 14:12-14 where Satan wished to exalt himself to the position of God. In fact, the false Trinity has been Satan's plan to find a place for himself in the counsel of God.

Babylon's way of thinking, and all the doctrines and lifestyles that go with it, are denounced by God in the strongest of terms and the follower of Christ is *commanded* to come out of her. God says this is urgent: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues* (Revelation 18:4)." If we fail to heed the call of Christ, we shall be lost eternally.

The doctrine of the Trinity is the central pillar of the beast of Revelation 13 and the central pillar of the image as well. Revelation 17:5 calls the great harlot, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." This false religion is a mother of harlots, and in God's eyes the daughters receive the same name as the mother (Babylon) because they have the same mind (belief system and doctrines) and character.

### **The Advent Movement Was Raised Up For Worship Reform**

If we are to give the last-day reform message to the world, telling the people to come out of Babylon, we had better know what we are to tell them to come out of. God's three-fold warning does not tell us to move people from one church to another, but from one movement to another. This is especially true today, when *all* the mainline churches have "so much in common"! God raised up the Advent movement to give his message of worship reform. The Advent movement rejected *all* the false abominations of worship that

the Catholic Church bequeathed to Protestants. As noted earlier, James White wrote:

The greatest fault we can find in the Reformation is, the Reformers stopped reforming. Had they gone on, and onward, till they had left the last vestige of Papacy behind, such as natural immortality, sprinkling, the trinity, and Sunday-keeping, the church would now be free from her unscriptural errors (*The Review and Herald*, February 7, 1856).

God did raise up a people who *were* free from the pagan-papal errors mentioned by Elder White. Sadly, today finds a situation of apostasy (a falling away) from that truth which God gave to his people.

### Two Contrasting Movements

In 1973, the World Council of Churches (WCC) published a book entitled, *So Much In Common*.<sup>1</sup> This book contained, “Documents of interest in the conversations between the World Council of Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church (p. 1).” On page seven we find the following statement:

The Council came into existence in 1948 after centuries of unsuccessful attempts to find an effective tool for Christian unity. Most major theologians and reforms tried to recover the unity of Christ’s Church lost in the spiritual battles among the confessions, in the beginning without success. In the 19th century things started to change. Lay movements and missionary societies broke through denominational barriers. In the 20th, Christian missionary leaders, groups searching for a common Christian response to social problems of the times, and theologians seeking doctrinal unity, came together to establish the World Council of Churches.

At the very time that Satan was bringing about the beginning of the ecumenical movement, God was raising up the Advent movement. This movement was to be free from papal error and could only call people out of Babylon while she herself was free from it. The Satan-inspired ecumenical movement finds its unity in the Trinity doctrine. To be eligible for membership in the WCC, one must express agreement with the “Basis” upon which the Council was founded. (See *So Much In Common*, p. 40.) That Basis is:

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit (Constitution: World Council of Churches, quoted in *So Much In Common*, p. 40).

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1. This book was coauthored by Dr. B. B. Beech and Dr. Lukas Vischer, who at the time of the writing was the “Faith and Order Secretariat.” Beech later met with Pope Paul VI on May 18, 1977 and presented the Pope with the official golden medallion of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (See *The Review and Herald*, August 11, 1977.)

The basic foundation of the ecumenical movement has, during the 20th century, become a part of the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church belief. Fundamental Belief # 2 states in part: “There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. 16).” This statement is a reflection of the creed from the Council of Constantinople and meets all the qualifications necessary for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to join with the World Council of Churches.

To begin with, it would appear that the Seventh-Day Adventist Church is not in disagreement with the theological basis of the World Council of Churches, as voted at New Delhi in 1961: [Basis quoted.]

The member churches of the World Council of Churches and Seventh-Day Adventists are in agreement on the fundamental articles of the Christian faith as set forth in the three ancient symbols (*Apostolicum, Nicaeno-Constantinopolitum, Athanasium*). This agreement finds expression in unqualified acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity and the Two-Natures (*So Much In Common*, p. 107).

With the acceptance of the Trinity doctrine so ingrained within the Adventist Church, it is very difficult for some to be objective when studying this issue. This is especially true in relationship to the understanding of the Holy Spirit. However, God is calling for reform in these last days in our thinking as well as in our worship and disastrous will be the result for those who neglect to comply. Since God raised up the Advent movement to counter the last great false revival of Satan, it would be illogical for God not to give our founding fathers, men who must combat every false form of worship, the truth about the Holy Spirit. Based upon their writings, our early pioneers understood God’s Spirit to be descriptive of his innermost being, separate and distinct from his physical body. God’s Spirit was never understood to represent an entity separate and alone, independent of the Father or Son. These men of God understood that when God gives men of his Spirit, he is giving them of his very self and is not sending a separate entity as a substitute in his place.

### **The Meaning of Spirit**

The word “spirit” appears to many as a rather vague term. The problem is compounded by the translators of the King James Version using “ghost” ninety-eight times for the same word translated “spirit”. Let us first look at the term “spirit” in the Old Testament. The word “spirit” almost always comes from the Hebrew, רוּחַ (*ruwach*). *Ruwach* is defined in *Strong’s Concordance* as: “wind; by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively, life, anger, unsubstantiality; by extension, a region of the sky; by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions).” Besides “spirit,” some other translations of *ruwach* are: air, anger, blast, breath, cool, courage, mind, quarter, side, tempest, wind, whirlwind. The lexiconist Gesenius devotes nearly a page

and a half of his lexicon defining *ruwach* and giving the various nuances. (See *Gensenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, pp. 760, 761.)

The majority of cases involving *ruwach* relate it to *breath* or *life*. A word closely related to *ruwach* that's translated "breath" is *neshamah*. *Neshamah* is used in Genesis 2:7 where we read: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (*neshamah*) of life; and man became a living soul." *Neshamah* is also twice translated "spirit" and "souls" once. *Neshamah* is used interchangeably with *ruwach*. Notice the parallelism:

By the blast (*neshamah*) of God they perish, and by the breath (*ruwach*) of his nostrils are they consumed (Job 4:9).

All the while my breath (*neshamah*) is in me, and the spirit (*ruwach*) of God is in my nostrils (Job 27:3).

The Spirit (*ruwach*) of God hath made me, and the breath (*neshamah*) of the Almighty hath given me life (Job 33:4).

Other parallel usages shows these terms to be synonymous: the breath (*neshamah*) of life, Genesis 2:7; the breath (*ruwach*) of life, Genesis 6:17. These verses show "spirit" to be living, active, and full of life.

### **Spirit and Mind**

The Greek word usually translated "spirit" is *pneuma*. It is defined in *Strong's Concordance* as: "a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy Spirit." This is very similar in concept to the Hebrew *ruwach*.

Both *ruwach* and *pneuma* carry the concept of mind or intellect. Isaiah 40:13 states: "Who hath directed the Spirit (*ruwach*) of the LORD, or being his counselor hath taught him?" The Septuagint (LXX) reads: "Who has known the mind (Greek: *nous*) of the Lord? and who has been his counselor, to instruct him?" Paul quotes this verse in Romans 11:34: "For who hath known the mind (*nous*) of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?" Here we see that both the translators of the LXX and Paul understood the concept of spirit and mind to be closely related.

However, spirit goes much further than just the concept of mind; it is the very essence of being or the inner person. Suppose a person has become paralyzed and is lying in a bed unable to move or even speak though his mind and thoughts are clear. Is his paralyzed body the real essence of his person? Twice Luke records that Jesus "waxed strong in spirit (Luke 1:80; 2:40)." This is not speaking of a physical process but of a development of that aspect of a person that cannot be explained in physical terms. To illustrate this further, notice these words Paul wrote to the believers:

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am *I with you in the spirit*, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ (Colossians 2:5).

For I verily, as absent in body, but *present in spirit*, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed (1 Corinthians 5:3).

### **“Words . . . are Spirit”**

Words express the concepts of the mind and are defined by Jesus to be spirit. “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63).” This truth is taught by parallelism in Proverbs 1:23: “Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out *my spirit* unto you, I will make known *my words* unto you.” The parallel is between spirit and words. Also, in Ezekiel we read: “And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and *I will speak unto thee*. And the *spirit entered* into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me (Ezekiel 2:1, 2).” Here we are told that the words God speaks and his Spirit that enters are synonymous.

The pouring out of God’s Spirit is often referred to as rain. Deuteronomy 32:2 states: “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.” Here God’s doctrine (his Word) comes as the rain (Spirit). When God pours out his Spirit, he does it through words and concepts. This is why Ellen White describes the latter rain as “greater light” in *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 507.

This complements the Scriptural teaching that calls Jesus the “word of God.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus stated that he came to deliver the Word of God to men:

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works (John 14:10).

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things (John 8:28).

### **Man Made in the Image of God**

Man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) “not only in character, *but in form and feature* (*The Great Controversy* p. 645).” Does God have a physical form akin to man? Both Daniel and Ezekiel testify that he does:

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. . . . I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of

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2. See Revelation 19:13 and John 1:1-14.

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heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him (Daniel 7:9, 13).

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the *appearance of a man* above upon it (Ezekiel 1:26).

So, while we read that God has a physical form, there is another aspect to God. Jesus said: “God is a Spirit (John 4:24).” God’s Spirit is his inner being, mind, thoughts, and personality which is not restricted to physical form. If God is a two-dimensional being, bodily form and spirit, then man, who is made in his image, is a two-dimensional being. This is not to be confused with the concept of the immortal, undying soul. An important difference between the Creator and the creature must be noted. God’s inner spirit can consciously dwell apart from his physical form. Upon death, man’s spirit (breath) returns to God and is *never consciously* separate from his physical form. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul compares the divine spirit with the human spirit:

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*. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the *mind of the Lord*, that he may instruct him? But we have the *mind of Christ* (1 Corinthians 2:10-16).

### **God Is Omnipresent by His Spirit**

Even though God has a bodily presence, it is by his Spirit that God can be omnipresent. David wrote:

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there (Psalm 139:7, 8).

Here we see Hebrew parallelism in verse seven with the terms “spirit” and “presence” used interchangeably. The Spirit of God is not an extra God, but the essence of his inner person, that aspect of God that is not in any manner physical. The term “God the Holy Spirit” is nowhere to be found in inspiration. Neither the Bible nor Sister White ever used that term. It is a man-made term to promote the idea of a third being that is coequal and coeternal with God and Christ.

While the Bible does not speak of “God the Holy Spirit,” it does speak of the “Spirit of God” and the “Spirit of Christ.”

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the *Spirit of God* moved upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2).

And the *Spirit of God* came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly (1 Samuel 11:6).

The *Spirit of God* hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life (Job 33:4).

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the *Spirit of God* dwelleth in you (1 Corinthians 3:16)?

Searching what, or what manner of time the *Spirit of Christ* which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (1 Peter 1:11).

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the *Spirit of God* dwell in you. Now if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:9-11).

These usages are in the possessive form with the last reference (Romans 8:9) using “Spirit of God” and “Spirit of Christ” interchangeably. God and his Son share the same Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because *he hath anointed me* to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised (Luke 4:18).” Jesus said that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him because he had been anointed to preach the gospel. Jesus was “set up [anointed] from everlasting (Proverbs 8:23).” The very term “Christ” means “the Anointed One.” God anointed Christ with his Spirit. This is why we are told in Philippians 2:5, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” The mind or spirit that was in Christ was the mind – spirit of the Father. In fact, Paul states that “the Lord is that Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17).”

**I**t is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63).

## Chapter 16

### Jesus Another Comforter

Since “The Lord is that Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17),” it becomes very clear that he must be the Comforter, for Jesus said that “the Comforter . . . is the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).” The basis for Christ being the Comforter is found in the incarnation. To be able and qualified to comfort and help his people, he *had* to be made like his brethren.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. *For it became him*, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren (Hebrews 2:9-11).

The Greek word for “became” is *(prepo)*. It is defined as “suitable,” “proper,” “it is fit or right.” Matthew uses this word in describing the dialog between John and Christ at his baptism. “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh *(prepo)* us to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15).” Paul also uses it later in Hebrews: “For such an high priest was what we needed for *(prepo)* us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (Hebrews 7:26 margin).” What then is Paul trying to tell us in Hebrews 2:10? Simply that it is suitable, proper, fit, right, for God to make Christ “perfect through sufferings (Hebrews 2:10).” Paul continues:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:14-16).

Christ partook of the seed of Abraham. Paul, in Romans 1:3, says that “. . . Jesus Christ our Lord . . . was made of the seed of David [not immaculate or sinless] according to the flesh.” Paul leaves the reader with no doubt that he has a Saviour that comes close to him.

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Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:17, 18).

The word translated “behooved” in the Greek is *opheilo*) which means “to be bound to,” “under obligation,” “indebted,” “owe.” Commenting on this, Elder M. L. Andreasen wrote:

If Christ is to be a merciful and faithful high priest, Paul says it behooves Him “in all things” to be like His brethren. This is obligatory. It is a duty He owes and must not avoid. He cannot make reconciliation for men unless He takes His place with them and in all things becomes like them. It is not a question of choice. He *should*, He *must*, He *ought* to, He is *under obligation* to, He *owes* it. Unless He has to struggle with the same temptations men do, He cannot sympathize with them. One who has never been hungry, who has never been weak and sick, who has never struggled with temptations, is unable fully to sympathize with those who are thus afflicted (*Letters to the Churches*, Series A, no. 1, p. 6).

Christ did not partake of the human experience in order to send somebody else to comfort us! Let us notice closely the words of Jesus to the disciples on the night of his betrayal:

If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you 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* (John 14:15-18).

Jesus stated that he would send the “Spirit of truth” who was already dwelling with them. He clearly stated, “*I will come to you.*” The question that must be settled is, did Christ mean that he himself would come or that he would send an associate? The word comforter is from the Greek (*parakletos*) which means “an intercessor,” or “one called beside.” *Parakletos* is also found in 1 John 2:1: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate (*parakletos*) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” John says that our advocate or comforter is Jesus.

Two words related to *parakletos* are: *parakaleo* and *paraklesis*. *Parakaleo* is the verb form: giving comfort. *Paraklesis* is the noun form: the comfort we receive. *Parakletos*, as used by John, is the One who gives the comfort. Writing to the church at Corinth, Paul describes the work of a comforter:

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort (*paraklesis*); Who comforteth (*parakaleo*) us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort (*parakaleo*) them which

are in any trouble, by the comfort (*paraklesis*) wherewith we ourselves are comforted (*parakaleo*) of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation (*paraklesis*) also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation (*paraklesis*) and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted (*parakaleo*), it is for your consolation (*paraklesis*) and salvation. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation (*paraklesis*) (2 Corinthians 1:2-7).

While God is acknowledged as the One sending the comfort, he does it through his Son, “who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (2 Corinthians 1:4 NKJ).” A person may sympathize, but he cannot empathize with another unless he has had a similar experience. A comforter can give comfort because he has suffered the same trials and struggles as the one he seeks to comfort. This is why Paul stated that it was imperative for Christ to accept the fallen nature of man so that he could properly comfort him. This concept makes the following Spirit of Prophecy statements shine with increased clarity:

The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. *He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter*, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, and he can strengthen the wavering, and set right the erring. He can inspire with confidence, with hope in God; and confidence in God always results in creating confidence in one another (*The Review and Herald*, August 26, 1890).

What saith our Saviour? “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to 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.” When trials overshadow the soul, remember the words of Christ, remember that He is an unseen presence in the person of the Holy Spirit, and He will be the peace and comfort given you, manifesting to you that He is with you, the Sun of Righteousness, chasing away your darkness. “If a man love me,” Christ said, “he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Be of good cheer; light will come, and your soul will rejoice greatly in the Lord (Letter 124, 1897; *Daughters of God*, p. 185). (See also *Adventist Home*, p. 350; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p. 179; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 296; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, p. 49.)

If Jesus is the Comforter, why did he speak of “another Comforter?” The text in question is John 14:16 where Jesus says: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another Comforter*, that he may abide with you for ever.” To express the thought of Christ, John uses the Greek word (*allos*). *Allos* means another of the same kind, as opposed to

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*heteros*) which means another of a different kind. Notice the usages as given in these examples:

Another (*allos*) parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field (Matthew 13:24).

And there were also two other (*heteros*), malefactors, led with him to be put to death (Luke 23:32).

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another (*heteros*) gospel: Which is not another (*allos*); but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6, 7).

Thus when Jesus said that he would send “another (*allos*) Comforter,” he was saying that the comfort that the disciples were to receive was to be of the same nature as the comfort that he had given them. Receiving “another Comforter” did not imply receiving a *different* Comforter. The following illustration is helpful in clarifying this principle:

It’s like asking someone for “another glass of water.” You don’t expect them to give you a *different* glass with water, but to use the *same* glass but give you more water. Christ said, “I will pray the Father and He will give you *more of the same* Comforter (as you now have); that He may abide with you forever (Gary Strong, *A Close Look at the Trinity*, p. 45).”

If Jesus is speaking of himself as the Comforter in John 14:16, he is referring to himself in the third person. This would also be true in the following texts:

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 (John 14:17).

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he* shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).

Are there any Scriptures which give a clear precedent of Jesus speaking of himself in the third person? Yes, in the following texts Jesus refers to himself in this very manner:

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but *he* that came down from heaven, even *the Son of man* which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must *the Son of man* be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in *him* should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his *only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in *him* should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through *him* might be saved. He that believeth on *him* is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:13-18).

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, *The Son* can do nothing of *himself*, but what *he* seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth *the Son* likewise (John 5:19).

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and *Jesus Christ*, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).

This same concept is revealed in Ellen White's writings: "Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to his father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. The Holy Spirit is *Himself* divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He would represent *Himself* as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p. 23)." No wonder Sister White wrote that the Holy Spirit was "the soul of his [Christ's] life (*The Review and Herald*, May 19, 1904)."

### **Close Link in the Incarnation**

The first chapter of Luke records Gabriel's announcement to Mary that she would be the mother of the Christ.

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy *thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).

Though not noted in the King James Version, the word "thing" is a supplied word with the adjective "holy" in the neuter gender. The same adjective "holy" is used in the beginning of the verse with the word "Ghost" (*pneuma*—Spirit). Therefore, the missing word to be modified in the second usage could be "spirit" instead of "thing." The verse would then carry the following meaning: The spirit of the Father would overshadow Mary and the Holy Spirit that would be born would be called the Son of God. This understanding parallels a statement from Sister White:

Think of Christ's humiliation. He took upon himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin. He took our sorrows, bearing our grief and shame. He endured all the temptations wherewith man is beset. He united humanity with divinity: *a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh*. He united himself with the temple. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," because by so doing he could associate with the sinful, sorrowing sons and daughters of Adam (*The Youth's Instructor*, December 20, 1900). (See also *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1147.)

A parallel scripture for Luke 1:35 is found in Matthew's record. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 1:18)." Joseph was then told, "fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost (v. 20)." The Adventist pioneers were quick to realize that if the Holy

Spirit were coequal and coeternal, a person in all the same respects that God and Christ are, then Jesus would not be the Son of God, as the Scriptures clearly state, but rather the Son of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Pioneer Understanding of the Role of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation**

Hampton W. Cottrell, an old pioneer in the movement, writing to the then younger LeRoy Froom, commented on Matthew 1:18, 20:

The conclusion drawn at that time [the time of the pioneers] was that the Holy Spirit was not a person in the sense that God and Christ are persons, if so, the same difficulty would be encountered with the Holy Spirit being everywhere present as is held by the Trinitarians concerning God and Christ as persons being everywhere present, and if it should be so conceded Christ would be the son of the Holy Spirit, rather that of God as the Bible declares him to be (Letter of H. W. Cottrell to LeRoy Froom, September 16, 1931).

Elder Cottrell (1852-1940) lived during a time when he had an opportunity to know and work with most of the early pioneers, as well as the new workers that came up after the turn of the century. He, like the rest of the early workers, was not a believer in the doctrine of the Trinity. Elder Froom had written to Elder Cottrell asking for information concerning the early believer's position on the "Trinity-Godhead." Brother Cottrell's letter began: "From my personal knowledge the doctrine of the 'Trinity-Godhead' was not taught by Seventh-day Adventists during the early days of my ministry." He went on to write:

It was taught and presumably believed to be true that the terms God, Christ, Holy Spirit and Comforter were expressions frequently used in the Bible interchangeably as follows:

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Cor. 3:17. "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Mat. 10:20. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. 8:9-12. "I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:19. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost 2 Peter 1:21 (*Ibid.*)."

After making a few more observations with Scripture quotations, Cottrell concluded his letter by saying:

Elder Froom, It has been several weeks since I received your letter concerning the "Trinity-Godhead." I first thought best not to get mixed up in this or similar questions, so concluded not to write, but today there came to my mind a very strong impression that I ought to refer to a few of the Scriptures that

were formerly used in favor [of] the view then advocated, at least in the section of country where I labored (*Ibid.*).

Interestingly, Elder Cottrell labored in many sections of the country and world. The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia records that Elder Cottrell began his missionary work in Cleveland, Ohio, and then labored in Canada, New England, and Europe. He helped with the transition of denominational headquarters from Michigan to Washington, D. C. Later in life he served as president of the Pacific Union, the Western Oregon Conference, and the North Pacific Union. Therefore, it is difficult to know what part of the country he was making reference to in his letter. However, history documents that the early brethren in all these areas were non-Trinitarian.

### **Parallels in Inspiration**

↳ The Apostle Peter states that “the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were *moved by the Holy Ghost* (2 Peter 1:21).” Here Peter states that the prophets were moved by the “Holy Ghost.” However, in his first epistle he stated: “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time *the Spirit of Christ* which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (1 Peter 1:9-11).” Here Peter states that the prophets were moved by “the Spirit of Christ.” Thus Peter considered the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ to be one.

↳ The book of Daniel records the words of Gabriel when he said to Daniel: “But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael [Christ] your prince (Daniel 10:21).” This channel of inspiration matches that expressed in Revelation 1:1: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.” The line of communication originates with the Father who gives it to his Son. Christ gives the message to his angel, who then delivers it to the prophet.

### **Other Parallels**

↳ Chapters two and three of Revelation present seven messages addressed to seven churches. Each message begins with an introduction by Christ using terminology connected with himself in the first chapter that reveals he is the One giving the message. The first message to the church at Ephesus is addressed as coming from the One who “holdeth the seven stars in his right hand (Revelation 2:1).” In Revelation 1:16, Jesus is described as having the seven stars in his right hand. The second message is addressed to the church at Smyrna by “the first and the last, which was

dead and is alive (Revelation 2:8).” In Revelation 1:17 and 18, Jesus is described in the same manner. This is the pattern in each of the seven messages. The speaker is introduced in a way which leaves no doubt that it is Jesus Christ speaking. Yet every single message ends with the admonition: “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the *Spirit* saith unto the churches (Revelation 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22).”

↳ Another parallel is found in the record concerning Abraham and Sarah. Galatians 4:29 states that Isaac was “born after the Spirit”; however, in the Genesis account we read that it was “the LORD” who visited Abraham and Sarah.

And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him (Genesis 18:10).

Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son (Genesis 18:14).

Here the one speaking (Christ) said very plainly that *he* would return unto her.

↳ Jeremiah 31:31-34 records the new covenant experience and states that it is “the LORD” who is speaking. Yet in the New Testament, it is attributed to the “Holy Spirit.”

Whereof *the Holy Ghost* also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more (Hebrews 10:15-17).

↳ Isaiah says he heard the *voice of the Lord saying*: “Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed (Isaiah 6:9, 10).” In Acts 28:25, Paul attributes these verses to the *Holy Ghost* and then quotes Isaiah 6:9, 10 in the next two verses.

↳ Paul, writing to the Romans, declares that the Spirit makes intercession for the saints. “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but *the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us* with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because *he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God* (Romans 8:26, 27).” The same apostle declares in Hebrews that it is Jesus who “ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25).” Also, Paul, writing to Timothy, stated clearly, “For there is one God, and *one mediator* between God and men, *the man Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 2:5).” “No middle-man comes between the sinner and Christ (*The Signs of the Times*, June 28, 1899).”

↪ The following two quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy parallel Christ with the latter rain, the refreshing dew of the Lord:

As with life, so it is with growth. It is God who brings the bud to bloom and the flower to fruit. It is by His power that the seed develops, “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” Mark 4:28. And the prophet Hosea says of Israel, that “he shall grow as the lily.” “They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.” Hosea 14:5, 7. And Jesus bids us “consider the lilies how they grow.” Luke 12:27. The plants and flowers grow not by their own care or anxiety or effort, but by receiving that which God has furnished to minister to their life. The child cannot, by any anxiety or power of its own, add to its stature. No more can you, by anxiety or effort of yourself, secure spiritual growth. *The plant, the child, grows by receiving from its surroundings that which ministers to its life—air, sunshine, and food. What these gifts of nature are to animal and plant, such is Christ to those who trust in Him. He [Christ] is their “everlasting light,” “a sun and shield.” Isaiah 60:19; Psalm 84:11. He [Christ] shall be as “the dew unto Israel.” “He [Christ] shall come down like rain upon the mown grass.” Hosea 14:5; Psalm 72:6. He [Christ] is the living water, “the Bread of God . . . which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” John 6:33 (Steps to Christ, pp. 67, 68).*

The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. It sends down its roots into the earth. It drinks in the sunshine, the dew, and the rain. It receives the life-giving properties from the air. So the Christian is to grow by co-operating with the divine agencies. Feeling our helplessness, we are to improve all the opportunities granted us to gain a fuller experience. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take deep root in Christ. *As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, we are to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. The work is to be done “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zech. 4:6. If we keep our minds stayed upon Christ, He [Christ] will come unto us “as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” Hosea 6:3. As the Sun of Righteousness, He [Christ] will arise upon us “with healing in His wings.” Mal. 4:2. We shall “grow as the lily.” We shall “revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.” Hosea 14:5, 7. By constantly relying upon Christ as our personal Saviour, we shall grow up into Him in all things who is our head (Christ’s Object Lessons, pp. 66, 67).*

*H*e united humanity with divinity: *a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh*. He united himself with the temple (*The Youth's Instructor*, December 20, 1900).

## Chapter 17

### Receiving the Spirit of Christ

Jesus repeatedly stated that he would be with his followers and dwell with them.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you (John 14:18).

I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matthew 28:20).

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20).

Most students interpret these texts to mean that Jesus will be with us by the Spirit, the Comforter. However, as we noticed in the last chapter, Jesus *is* the Comforter! This helps the statements of Christ to take on added meaning and depth.

The Apostle Paul wrote the following two parallel passages: “*Christ in you, the hope of glory* (Colossians 1:27),” and “That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by *the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us* (2 Timothy 1:14).” This parallel raises questions. If Christ is to dwell *in us*, *how* and *where* does he dwell *in us*?

First, let us address the question of where Christ is to dwell in us. Certainly there is only one place he may dwell and that is the mind. This may be seen from the following texts: “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might *by his Spirit in the inner man* (Ephesians 3:16).” “For I delight in the law of God after *the inward man* (Romans 7:22).” The expressions “the inner man” and “the inward man” are identical in the Greek.<sup>1</sup> In Romans 7:22, Paul states that he delights in God’s law “after the inward man,” and then in verse 25 he says that with “the mind” he serves “the law of God.” Therefore, the place that Christ dwells in the believer is in the mind. So when Paul writes that we are to “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5),” he is telling us to actively have and exercise the mind of Christ which is the mind of the Father (his will, intellect, and character).

1. *(ton eso anthropon)*: the inside or inner man.

Jesus explained the way in which this is accomplished: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life* (John 6:63).” Jesus said that “it is the spirit that quickeneth” or gives life. He later declared that he was “the resurrection, and the life (John 11:25).” Jesus gives life by his Spirit and he gives his Spirit through his words. Another place that Paul speaks of receiving God’s Spirit is in his epistle to the Galatians:

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or *by the hearing of faith* (Galatians 3:1-5)?

Paul states that the Galatians had first received the Spirit “by the hearing of faith.” Since “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17),” the Galatians received the Spirit through the hearing of the Word of God. This explains the meaning of Galatians 3:5 where Paul speaks of ministering the Spirit. This text makes no sense when interpreted with a Trinitarian theology. However, if the Spirit that Paul speaks of as being ministered is God’s thoughts and character being served through his words, then the text makes perfect sense. Paul emphasized that this Spirit is ministered by “the hearing of faith.”

### **The Latter Rain**

Inseparable from the concept of receiving the Spirit of Christ is the subject of the latter rain. To have an understanding of the latter rain, its purpose and effect, we must first understand the mission of the Son of God. Jesus stated in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of man is come to seek and *to save* that which was lost.” Christ also declared himself to be “the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).” Jesus, “the truth,” would send the “spirit of truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).” This would be done for the purpose of guiding the disciples of Christ into all truth (John 16:13); therefore, a portion of the work of the Spirit of God is to reveal truth for the saving of souls.

At the day of Pentecost the disciples received the promise of the Spirit in what was prophesied as the “early rain.”<sup>2</sup> This, along with the latter rain, is described by Joel:

Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

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2. See Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call (Joel 2:23, 28, 32).

The purpose of the message is given in verse 32, “whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered (saved).” Peter quotes the message of Joel 2:28-32 on the day of Pentecost.<sup>3</sup> This was a message of salvation and redemption — the early rain that had been foretold. The disciples were given a message and then great power to give that message for the saving of souls and the glory of God.

Seventh-day Adventists have been waiting for the latter rain to empower them to give the loud cry. We have been waiting for power to get our lives prepared for the coming of Jesus. Yet, each new year seems to reveal little progress for most. Why do the times seem so spiritually dry for most? It is because of our misunderstanding of what the latter rain is and what it is to accomplish. An examination of the day of Pentecost reveals some important points. Concerning physical manifestations on the day of Pentecost, the Scriptures fail to tell us of any lame people being healed; of any blind eyes being opened; of any dead being raised to life; or of any visions being given.

There were physical manifestations of healings, visions, and even raising of the dead *after* the early rain was first given. On the day of Pentecost, the only special physical manifestation of the Spirit was the gift of tongues and that was given for the proclamation of a message! Pentecost reveals God’s plan for the early and latter rain. First, he gave a message through the Spirit of truth, and then power to deliver that message. A very special message has been given to Seventh-day Adventists:

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 92; Letter of May 1, 1895 to O. A. Olsen, then president of the General Conference).

God sent a message to deliver us from the bondage of both sin and man. This message was to bring the people to a “genuine faith which works by love and purifies the soul (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 704).” This

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3. It should be noted that Peter rightly divided the word of truth by not quoting the portion of verse 32 that stated that salvation was to be found in Jerusalem (corporate Judaism).

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faith leads the believer into obedience to all the commandments of God. Sister White continues:

Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. *This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world.* It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.

Now, it has been Satan's determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus and lead men to look to man, and trust to man, and be educated to expect help from man. For years the church has been looking to man and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. Therefore *God gave to His servants a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines (Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pp. 92, 93).*

As noted earlier, Elders Waggoner and Jones, whom Sister White refers to, were two young ministers that God used as "messengers" to his church, especially at the Minneapolis General Conference of 1888.

The Lord has raised up Brother Jones and Brother Waggoner to proclaim a message to the world to prepare a people to stand in the day of God. The world is suffering the need of *additional light to come to them upon the Scriptures*, — additional proclamation of the principles of purity, lowliness, faith and the righteousness of Christ. This is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1814).

They were presenting "the matchless charms of Christ" with wonderful clarity.<sup>4</sup> Ellen White heartily accepted their message and rejoiced in it. She described the message as the beginning of the loud cry of the third angel!

Let every one who claims to believe that the Lord is soon coming, search the Scriptures as never before; for Satan is determined to try every device possible to keep souls in darkness, and blind the mind to the perils of the times in which we are living. Let every believer take up his Bible with earnest prayer, that he may be enlightened by the holy Spirit as to what is truth, that he may know more of God and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Search for the truth as for hidden treasures, and disappoint the enemy. The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth (*The Review and Herald*, November 22, 1892).

The message that Jones, Waggoner, and Ellen White were giving from 1888 till near the end of the 1890's was the beginning of the loud cry. The latter rain was beginning to be poured out. Yet, a search of our history fails

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4. See *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 142.

to find great physical miracles during this time. God was sending a message to his people to give to the world. This was a message of salvation and its proclamation would lighten the whole earth with the glory of God.<sup>5</sup>

The Scriptures plainly testify of the rain that God still wishes to send his people today. “Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass (Deuteronomy 32:1, 2).” In verse two, God’s doctrine (his Word) is equated with the rain and his speech with the dew and rain. Proverbs 1:23 says: “Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.” Here the pouring out of God’s Spirit is equated with making known his Word. This complements what Jesus said in John 6:63: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” Ellen White simply stated it this way:

God designs that the message of redemption shall come to His people as the latter rain; for they are fast losing their connection with God (*The Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1900).

The latter rain is to be received as light from heaven for a sin-sick world, special light from heaven concerning the redemption of man. This helps enlarge our understanding of the following statements:

If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door (*The Review and Herald*, March 2, 1897).<sup>6</sup>

But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection (*Ibid.*).

Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light (*Ibid.*).

Truth is progressive. If we do not receive into our lives the light and truth of the early rain, we will not be able to receive the latter rain. The truth may be received by hearts all around us, yet we are unable to discern it or receive it. A. T. Jones gave a series of studies at the 1893 General Conference entitled,

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5. Obviously this message was cut off or we would have long been in the kingdom. 1888 was the beginning of the Adventists’ Kadesh-barnea. God wanted to take his people in the heavenly Canaan but we rejected his leading as the children of Israel did centuries before.
  6. Part of this article can be found in *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 506-512.

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“The Third Angel’s Message.” In his ninth message, Elder Jones clearly noted the relationship of the latter rain to light and the teaching of righteousness:

You remember the other evening when I was reading that second chapter of Joel, that one of the brethren, when I had read that 23d verse, — Brother Corliss — called attention to the margin. Do you remember that? And I said we would have use for the margin at another time. Now all of you turn and read that margin. The 23d verse says: “Be glad, then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you *the former rain*, moderately.” What is the margin? “A teacher of righteousness.” He hath given you “a teacher of righteousness.” How? “According to righteousness.” “And he will cause to come down for you the rain;” then what will that be? When he gave the former rain, what was it? “A teacher of righteousness.” And when he gives the latter rain what will it be? “A teacher of righteousness.” How? “According to righteousness.” Then is not that just what the testimony has told us in that article that has been read to you several times? “The loud cry of the third angel,” the latter rain has already begun, “in the message of *the righteousness of Christ*.” Is not that what Joel told us long ago? Has not our eye been held that we did not see? Did not we need the anointing? Brethren, what in the world do we need so much as that? How glad we ought to be that God sends his own Spirit in the prophets to show us, when we did not see! How infinitely glad we ought to be for that!

Well then the latter rain — the loud cry — according to the testimony, and according to the Scripture, is “the teaching of righteousness,” and “according to righteousness,” too. Now brethren, when did that message of the righteousness of Christ, begin with us as a people? [One or two in the audience: “Three or four years ago.”] Which was it, three? or four? [Congregation: “Four.”] Yes, four. *Where* was it? [Congregation: “Minneapolis.”] What then did the brethren reject at Minneapolis? [Some in the Congregation: “The loud cry.”] What is that message of righteousness? The Testimony has told us what it is; the loud cry — the latter rain. Then what did the brethren in that fearful position in which they stood, reject at Minneapolis? They rejected the latter rain — the loud cry of the third angel’s message.

Of course the brethren did not know they were doing this, but the Spirit of the Lord was there to tell them they were doing it, was it not? But when they were rejecting the loud cry, “the teaching of righteousness,” and then the Spirit of the Lord, by his prophet, stood there and told us what they were doing, — what then? Oh, then they simply set this prophet aside with all the rest. That was the next thing. Brethren, it is time to think of these things. It is time to think soberly, to think carefully (*1893 General Conference Daily Bulletin*, p. 183; emphasis in original).

Commenting and expanding on these concepts, Jones stated in his eleventh study:

What is the margin? “He hath given you the former rain?” What is that? — “A teacher of righteousness.” — “Given you the former rain moderately.” What is that, moderately? What was the former rain at Pentecost? — “A teacher of

righteousness.” “He hath given you a teacher of righteousness according to righteousness.” Was that the former rain? And he will give you “the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain,” as at the first. What will the latter rain be? — “A teacher of righteousness” again. According to what? [Congregation: “Righteousness.”] But what is another expression for the latter rain? [Congregation: “The outpouring of the Spirit.”] What is another one? [Congregation: “The times of refreshing.”] What is the latter rain to the third angel’s message? [Congregation: “The loud cry.”] What is the latter rain in connection with the fall of Babylon? — It is the bestowal of that power, and that glory, with which the angel of Rev. 18 comes down and lightens the earth.

Now let us read a few passages of those that we have had already to get the connection here definitely. On page 58 of the BULLETIN in Brother Haskell’s lesson, we had, as it was read from the REVIEW of Nov. 22nd, these words:—

“The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ. . . . This is the beginning of the light of the third angel, whose glory shall fill the whole earth.”

Another passage on page 16 of the BULLETIN, in that Testimony that was read:—

“Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness.”

What “work will be cut short in righteousness”? [Congregation: — “God’s work.”]

“The message of Christ’s righteousness is to sound from one end of the world to the other. This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel.”

What is this message of Christ’s righteousness as we read here before in these other places? — “This is the beginning of the light of the third angel, whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” Now, “This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel.” Then, when we have come to that time what time have we reached? [Congregation:- “The loud cry of the message.”] We have reached the time when God is going to close it up. That is the glory that closes the work of the message.

Now, another thing: What is that first expression which we have just read? — “He will cut it short in righteousness.” Then when that message of God’s righteousness — the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, God’s right doing — when that is received and is allowed to be carried on, and is held by his people, what does that mean about the work of God on earth? — It will be but a short time until the whole thing is done.

Now, that message of the righteousness of Christ is the loud cry. It is the latter rain. We have been praying for the latter rain here at this Conference already, haven’t we? Have you? [Congregation: “Yes sir.”] What were you looking for when your prayer was answered? Are you ready now to receive the latter rain? We have been praying here for the latter rain. Now there is the connection. The testimonies tell us what it is and Joel tells us what it is. I simply ask now, Are you ready to receive the latter rain? That is, are you ready to receive God’s message of righteousness, according to righteousness. Let us look at that a little further. Joel says, according to the margin, that it is a teacher

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of righteousness, that which brings the teaching of righteousness according to righteousness. Whose idea of righteousness? [Congregation: "God's."] No, mine. [Congregation: "No."] Why? If I receive the righteousness of Christ according to my idea, is not that enough? Is not that receiving the latter rain? Is not that receiving the righteousness of Christ? [Congregation: "No sir, it is your own righteousness."] But that is what is the matter with a good many people who have heard this message of the righteousness of Christ. They have received the message of the righteousness of Christ according to their own idea of what his righteousness is, and they have not the righteousness of Christ at all (*Ibid.*, pp. 242, 243).

No false idea of Christ's righteousness is more damnable than the pagan-papal Trinity doctrine that denies that God had a Son to send to die for the sins of mankind. Furthermore, most who hold this dark error also deny that Jesus came in the same sinful flesh that humanity must struggle with against sin. The message that A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner taught was not Trinitarian. They taught and believed that Jesus was the literal Son of God and that he accepted our sinful nature in the incarnation. They also taught and heartily endorsed the sanctuary doctrine in heaven. These three pillars of faith were evident in the preaching of the 1888 messengers. Compared with that which is taught today, it becomes easy to see why the message has been cut off. We have denied the basic doctrines of the three angels' messages! Yet, we have been led to believe that we already have the whole message and must simply await God's timetable for the receiving of great power to give that message which has been reduced to Babylonian error!

Before the loud cry can be given, the message must first be restored to God's people. Our time is nearly finished on this earth. The wickedness of this earth and the thousands who perish each day constrain God to move quickly. The revival of interest in the truth about God and his Son that has occurred in the last few years is the result of God's attempt to restore that foundational light to his people. But even a return to the light of 1888 is only to be the beginning. The truth about God and Christ reveals the Scriptures as never previously seen. Old truths become clearer and more brilliant. New truths emerge, not teachings that set aside old truths, but teachings that magnify and brighten old truths. In our search for this truth we have the one great unerring standard of God's word: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isaiah 8:20)."

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before

accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support (*The Great Controversy*, p. 595).

### **Satan’s Unholy Influence**

The Word of God, not miracles or the excitement of wild celebrations, must be the guardian of our souls. We may walk into churches and see miracles, healings, and celebrations, but that does not mean the latter rain has come. There is a spirit there, but it is the spirit of Satan. We are told that he can breathe his unholy influence upon people, imbuing them with his thoughts, mind, words, and character.

I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after He arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who arose when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him as He left the throne and led them out a little way. Then He raised His right arm, and we heard His lovely voice saying, “Wait here; I am going to My Father to receive the kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to Myself.” Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. On the hem of His garment was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, “My Father, give us Thy Spirit.” Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.

I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, “Father, give us Thy Spirit.” Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan’s object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God’s children (*Early Writings*, p. 55, 56).

### **Miracles Are Not the Test**

The appeal of certain brethren is to “stay with the ship; she’s going through and the miracles and thousands being baptized each day are proof.” This must be met with a “thus saith the Lord.” Miracles are not a proof, especially in the last days. Revelation tells us plainly that many false miracles will be worked in the last days by Satan and his agents:

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. *For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles*, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty (Revelation 16:13, 14).

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And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those *miracles which he had power to do* in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live (Revelation 13:13, 14).

Christians of all times, but especially last-day Christians, must follow the counsel of 2 Corinthians 5:7: “We walk by faith [hearing of the word], not by sight.”

The Spirit of Prophecy has given us insight to the reaction of unconsecrated men to the message to be given in the loud cry:

When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to meet their narrow ideas. Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 300).

The third angel’s message will not be comprehended, the light which will lighten the earth with its glory will be called a false light, by those who refuse to walk in its advancing glory (*The Review and Herald*, May 27, 1890).

There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of the heart by confession and repentance. In the manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the glory of God, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it. Because the Lord does not work according to their ideas and expectations, they will oppose the work (*The Review and Herald*, December 23, 1890).

The timing of the last two statements reveals God knew that the message being given by his “messengers” would be rejected. History testifies that our people did indeed view the message as something dangerous, and perhaps the saddest part of our history is that we are repeating that same rejection today. The majority of Adventism today has rejected the light that was understood and taught by Jones and Waggoner. The nature of God, Christ in the incarnation, and Christ’s high-priestly ministry are all under attack by the new theology. Sadly, many who profess to oppose the new theology under the heading of “Historic Adventism” reject the truth about God and his Son, and in so doing reject the early leading of God in the Advent movement.

Brethren, it is time that we left our *own* ideas of righteousness behind and accept Christ’s righteousness which is “pure, unadulterated truth (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 65).” Only as we receive of the early rain can we be ready to receive the latter rain. When we deny doctrines fundamental to the three angels’ messages we cannot expect to be led further into truth and righteousness. “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do (Psalm 11:3)?”

Two aspects of the truth about God that so beautifully dovetail into the message of righteousness by faith are the truths that Jesus is the literal begotten Son of the Father and that the Comforter is, in reality, Jesus who is able to personally live out his beautiful life in the believer. These two great truths involve both our justification and our sanctification.

God created man capable of responding to love. “We love him, because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).” It is this great love that draws the sinner to God and the Bible says this love was manifested, or made known, because “God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him (1 John 4:9).” Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me (John 12:32).” As we behold the wonderful love of God in giving his Son, our hearts melt and we are drawn to God in appreciation and love. If we do not resist, we will submit to the will of God.

And as Christ draws them [sinners] to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to the conscience. The wickedness of their life, the deep-seated sin of the soul, is revealed to them. They begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ, and exclaim, “What is sin, that it should require such a sacrifice for the redemption of its victim? Was all this love, all this suffering, all this humiliation, demanded, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life?”

The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God’s dear Son (*Steps to Christ*, p. 27).

The love of God in giving his only begotten Son is the great focal point of the plan of salvation, and if we fail to understand God’s love and character in giving his Son, we will fall short of loving God, as it is our privilege to love him. This love leads to the justification of the believer and it is also a part of God’s plan for the believer’s sanctification. As the believer makes the choice, day-by-day, to continue to serve Christ, he is motivated to make righteous choices because the love of God is in his heart and he would rather die than sin against the One he so dearly loves.

The truth that Jesus promised to come and live within humanity as the Comforter is also a great truth that ties in with righteousness by faith. We have seen clearly that man is depraved and must have a power outside and above him. To live righteously day-by-day and moment-by-moment, we must continually have the presence of God in our lives. Ellen White noted:

A power above and outside of man is to work upon him, that solid timbers may be brought into his character building. *In the inner sanctuary of the soul the presence of God is to abide* (*The Review and Herald*, October 25, 1892).

And in the Scriptures we read:

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (2 Corinthians 6:16).

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Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that *the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; *for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are* (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17).

*What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's* (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together *for a habitation of God through the Spirit* (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Ellen White writes further:

Man does not build himself into a habitation for the Spirit, but unless there is a co-operation of man's will with God's will, the Lord can do nothing for him. The Lord is the great Master worker, and yet the human agent must co-operate with the divine worker, or the heavenly building cannot be completed. *All the power is of God, and all the glory is to redound to God, and yet all the responsibility rests with the human agent; for God can do nothing without the co-operation of man. When a man believes in Jesus as his personal Saviour, and accepts of his righteousness by faith, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; and he escapes from corruption through the indwelling of the holy Spirit.* Without divine nature, without the influence of the Spirit of God, man cannot work out his own salvation. Said Christ, "Without me ye can do nothing." When human effort does not combine with divine agency, how deficient is its influence; but he who is endowed with divine power can present Christ to the world as one who is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God through him (*The Review and Herald*, October 25, 1892).

The Trinitarian doctrine makes no such allowance for Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith. If you were to ask most Trinitarians if Jesus is present at their meetings and abiding with them, at first they will say, "Yes, of course." But if you ask *how* Jesus is at their meetings and abiding with them, they will respond, "By the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit." To the Trinitarian, neither Jesus nor the Father are actually present for they are in heaven, but the "third member of the Godhead," the Holy Spirit, is there to represent Them. This teaching, however, takes Jesus and the Father away from the believer.

The need of Jesus accepting our humanity should be very clear. He cannot be our faithful high priest nor comfort us unless he is acquainted with our infirmities and knows by experience our needs. "Historic Adventists" emphasize the need of a proper understanding of the incarnation and they are correct on their emphasis, if not their application. Yet, ironically, most of

these brothers and sisters who claim that Jesus had to accept the fallen, sinful flesh of humanity claim that the “third member of the Trinity” is our comforter! They freely acknowledge that one, who has never known even unfallen sinless flesh, let alone fallen sinful flesh, is our comforter. This makes no sense at all!

It is no wonder that as God was raising up the Advent movement, he needed to give them a correct understanding of himself, his Son, and their Spirit before they could understand and appreciate righteousness by faith, as he wished them to know. Yet, we must learn a lesson from history. The Advent people understood in 1888 that God was not a Trinity, but many rejected, spurned, and scoffed at the message that was presented by Jones and Waggoner. Just having an intellectual knowledge of the truth about God or even about justification and sanctification, is no assurance that we will experience the reality of these truths in our hearts.

Man is, by his fallen nature, bent towards selfishness in its most extreme forms. The heart is proud and desires, of itself, to obtain salvation. There is a small section from *The Desire of Ages* that has spoken to my heart and I pray that it will speak to your heart as well:

The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ. The Lord can do nothing toward the recovery of man until, convinced of his own weakness, and stripped of all self-sufficiency, he yields himself to the control of God. Then he can receive the gift that God is waiting to bestow. From the soul that feels his need, nothing is withheld. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fullness dwells (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300).

Beloved, we want the presence of God abiding in the inner sanctuary of our souls, so that our characters will be built on the solid timbers of his perfect righteousness, and then our faith will be revealed by deeds of love (Galatians 5:6). As Ellen White so aptly wrote one hundred one years ago:

Faith and works are the two oars with which we are to make our way in the Christian life. The Lord calls upon all who think they know what faith is, to be sure that they are not pulling with only one oar, and their little bark going round and round, making no progress at all. Faith without intelligent works is dead. Faith in the healing power of God will not save unless it is combined with good works (*Australasian Union Conference Record*, October 15, 1905).

The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300).

# Chapter 18

## Answers to Trinitarian Objections

This chapter is designed to explore the meaning of either some Bible verses that are not mentioned elsewhere in this volume or verses that we would like to additionally expound upon. This material is adapted from a panel discussion which included Lynnford Beachy, David Clayton, Allen Stump, and Howard Williams.

### **1 John 5:7, 8**

We begin with a text that even Trinitarians have found difficult to fully explain but one they believe supports their position. It is found in 1 John 5:7, 8: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

What is the message of 1 John 5:7, 8? These verses say there are three that bear record. What are they bearing record of? Let us first look at the immediate context:

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:10-13).

The immediate context is clearly speaking of testifying that Jesus is the Son of God. This testimony is diametrically opposed to the theory of the Trinity doctrine.

The rest of First John, as well as the Gospel of John, bears indisputable proof that Jesus is the Son of God. You cannot read more than a few verses without coming back to the theme that Jesus is the Son of God. Notice some of the following verses:

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him (1 John 4:9).

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And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God (1 John 4:14, 15).

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him (1 John 5:1).

This theme is what we find summarized in John's Gospel in the following verse:

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:31).

Shall we then take an interpretation of this text which teaches the very opposite of the immediate context, as well as the context of the whole book? Shall we take an interpretation of this text which teaches the very opposite of the whole reason he tells us that he is writing the book and all of his books? That would most certainly be wresting the scriptures. Whatever interpretation we take from these verses, it must be in harmony with that obvious purpose of his writing.

What is this verse really teaching? In verse 8 we are told that there are "three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood and that these three agree in one." That is, they bear a united witness. The water bears witness and the blood bears witness, yet no one would suggest that the water and blood are persons. Why then should we insist that because the spirit bears witness in heaven it must be a separate individual? There are three ways in which witness is borne to the truth in heaven. These witnesses are one because they bear a united witness. It does not mean that they are one person, one being, or one God. Jesus explained what this oneness means when he prayed that we all might be one as he and his Father are one. (See John 17:22.) Not that we might become one human but simply that we might be in perfect harmony, even as he and his Father are in perfect harmony. In heaven, God bears witness to the truth and so do Christ and the Holy Spirit! In heaven there are three avenues of witness—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. On the earth there are three—the water, the spirit, and the blood. Are the three on earth a Trinity because they are mentioned in the same breath or agree as one? Certainly no intelligent person would claim this.

By the same reasoning we would have to conclude that the Father, the Word, and the Spirit are not necessarily a Trinity simply because they bear a united witness in heaven or because they are mentioned at the same time.

But how have they borne witness that Jesus is the Son of God? The Father witnessed that Jesus was the Son of God at his baptism when he spoke from heaven: "This is my beloved Son (Matthew 3:17)." Christ bore witness when he said, "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God (John 10:36)?" In John 10:25 Jesus tells us how the Spirit bears witness: "I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear

witness of me.” These works which bore witness of Christ, he tells us were performed by the Spirit of God in him. “But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you (Matthew 12:28).”

It is of interest that most reputable authorities agree that a part of 1 John 5:7, 8 was most certainly added to the Bible during the period known as the “Dark Ages.” Specifically, the part added reads, “in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth.” If the questionable portion were taken out, the verse would read:

For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* states concerning these verses:

The disputed words found their way into the KJV by way of the Greek text of Erasmus. It is said that Erasmus offered to include the disputed words in his Greek Testament if he were shown even one Greek MS that contained them. A library in Dublin produced such a MS (known as 34), and Erasmus included the passage in his text. It is now believed that the later editions of the Vulgate acquired the passage by the mistake of a scribe who included an exegetical marginal comment in the Bible text that he was copying. The disputed words have been widely used in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, but, in view of such overwhelming evidence against their authenticity, their support is valueless and should not be used (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 675).

Some people would object strongly to the very suggestion that errors may have crept into the text of the Bible in any way whatsoever. However, it is interesting to note what Ellen White had to say concerning this:

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 (*Early Writings*, pp. 220, 221).

Even more interestingly, Ellen White, in all her thousands of pages of writing and thousands of Scripture quotations, never once quoted 1 John 5:7, the text which we are presently considering.

However, even if we were to accept this verse as a legitimate part of Scripture, as we have seen, they do not support the Trinity doctrine.

### **Matthew 28:19**

Matthew 28:19 says: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” This text

is probably used more than any other verse in the Bible to try to prove that God is a triune being. This text is typically understood to mean that when an apostle or minister baptizes someone, he is supposed to baptize them using the formula “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” But what is the record of the apostles who directly heard Jesus? Acts 2:38 records the first time this command was carried out. Peter said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you *in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Peter instructed these people to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ rather than in the names of three separate persons. In Acts 10:48, Peter “commanded [Cornelius and his brethren] to be *baptized in the name of the Lord*.” From these verses it is plain that Peter didn’t understand Christ to have commanded him to baptize into a Trinity.

Peter must have understood the command of Jesus differently than most Trinitarians understand it today. As we continue in the book of Acts, we find that Peter was not alone in his understanding of this command.

When Peter and John came to Samaria they found a group of people who had been “baptized *in the name of the Lord Jesus* (Acts 8:16).”

Let us also consider Paul, who claimed he received the gospel directly from Jesus Christ. When he visited Ephesus and met some brethren who had only been baptized with John’s baptism, he instructed them about Christ, and the Bible says “when they heard this, they were *baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus* (Acts 19:5).”

There is no record in the Bible of anyone baptizing in three separate names of three individual persons. There are a few possibilities that could explain why the disciples always baptized in the name of Jesus:

- 1) The disciples may have been in direct rebellion against Jesus.
- 2) They may have misunderstood what he said.
- 3) Matthew 28:19 may be a gloss. Perhaps Jesus never gave this command.
- 4) The disciples understood the command of Jesus differently than most Trinitarians understand it today.

I do not believe that we can accept any of the first three possibilities, but the fourth statement offers a reasonable solution. Jesus was not trying to teach us that God is a Trinity or he would have been contradicting other statements he had made and many statements made by other Bible writers. This verse says nothing about God being three persons. However, Ephesians 4:6 says that there is “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” The Bible uses the phrase “God the Father” thirteen times, but it never says “God the Son” or “God the Holy Spirit.”

To literally baptize someone in the name of a person we must know the person’s name. Yahweh (Jehovah or other similar spellings) is the personal

name of the Father. Jesus (Yahshua or some other similar spellings) is the personal name of the Son, but the Scripture nowhere gives a name for the Holy Spirit. The Bible does not even hint that such a name exists, so we can see that Jesus was not giving a specific formula of words for the preacher to recite at a baptism. We know this first of all because all the recorded examples of people baptizing after this command was given show that it was done in the name of Jesus and, secondly, because it would not be possible to literally baptize in the proper name of the Holy Spirit because the Bible makes no mention of such a name.

The word “name” in the Bible often refers to a person’s character. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel because his character had changed. The word “name” in Matthew 28:19 has reference to the character rather than the proper names of individuals. Once we realize that Christ was commissioning his disciples to baptize into the character of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, it is easier for us to understand his words. This command is closely connected with the command to teach. Christ wants his disciples to understand the truth about God, his Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three of these are vital in a Christian’s life. The Father loves us so much that he gave his Son to die for our sins, and he gives his Spirit to guide us in our lives. If a person lacks the knowledge and experience of any of these aspects, his relationship with God will suffer. This is why Christ specifically mentioned all three.

From this we can see that Matthew 28:19 certainly does *not* prove a Trinity nor does it prove that the Holy Spirit is a separate being from the Father and his Son. If we are to find proof of these doctrines in the Bible, we must look somewhere else. Interestingly, there is evidence that a portion of this verse is a gloss just like portions of 1 John 5:7, 8. What a blessing that even if there are legitimate concerns about these verses they have not been distorted so as to teach error.

### **2 Corinthians 13:14**

2 Corinthians 13:14 has been designated by some as the most sublime text of all Scripture, especially in light of the supposed teaching of the Trinity. It says: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” The text speaks of:

- 1) The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2) The love of God.
- 3) The communion of the Holy Ghost.

In this verse the title God is used only once and it is used in reference to a specific person. Obviously, it is God the Father whose love is spoken of in this verse, and, according to John 3:16, he loves us so much that he gave his

only begotten Son to give grace to us that we can be drawn into communion with them both through the Spirit. Jesus said,

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).

Please observe that Paul did not say we would commune *with* the Holy Ghost, but he speaks “*of* the communion of the Holy Ghost.” What does he mean by this? When Paul spoke of the communion of the Holy Ghost, he was showing how our communion would be. It would be by the means of the Holy Spirit that we would commune or have fellowship *with* God and Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3 states, “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.*”

According to John, we have fellowship with the Father and with his Son, *through* the Holy Spirit. Paul wanted this experience to remain with the Christians in Corinth and also with us today, an experience of true fellowship with the Father and with his Son *through* the Holy Spirit.

### **Matthew 3:16, 17**

These verses state: “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Trinitarians insist that in these verses we see a clear demonstration of the Trinitarian nature of God. Without adding human bias or wishful thinking, what may we discover from reading this passage?

It is very evident there are two persons present, one is Jesus and the other is the owner of the voice which declares “this is my beloved Son.” Clearly, the speaker is God the Father. What is the identity of Jesus according to the passage? God, himself, identifies Jesus as “my beloved Son,” not as the second person of a coequal Trinity. This alone denies the assertion that we find a Trinity here. However, does this passage demonstrate the Holy Spirit to be a personal being apart, or separate, from the Father? Are there three persons present? While the Son is clearly a person and the Father is a person, what may we discover from the symbol used to represent the Holy Spirit? Here, the Spirit is represented as a dove. Never is the Holy Spirit represented by any symbol which indicates that it is a person. In the common sense, it is represented by oil, water, wind, fire, and in this verse as a dove. It really is stretching the imagination to suggest that here in this verse we see a third person. In actual fact, the passage declares that it is the Spirit of God! It is the Spirit which belongs to God. Here, as everywhere else in Scripture, the Holy Spirit is represented as belonging to someone, as being the property of God, rather than being an individual person with his own identity.

Ellen White sheds light on this point. She says,

Never before had angels listened to such a prayer as Christ offered at his baptism, and they were solicitous to be the bearers of the message from the Father to his Son. But, no! direct from the Father issues the light of his glory. The heavens were opened, and beams of glory rested upon the Son of God and assumed the form of a dove, in appearance like burnished gold. The dove-like form was emblematical of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. While the people stood spell-bound with amazement, their eyes fastened upon Christ, from the opening heavens came these words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (*The Review and Herald*, January 21, 1873)."

### **Genesis 1:26**

Genesis 1:26 states: "And God said, Let us make man in our image." Some people suppose that we can find the Trinity doctrine in the first chapter of the Bible. They make this claim because the Hebrew word *elohim*, which is translated "God," is plural, and they believe the plural pronouns in Genesis 1:26 help to support the Trinity doctrine as well.

The Hebrew word *elohim* is plural, but it never indicates plurality when referring to the true God. Every time *elohim* is used referring to the true God it has a singular meaning. *Gensenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* calls it "the plural of majesty" and the *Brown-Driver's Brigg's Hebrew Lexicon* says that when it refers to the true God it is "plural intensive" with a "singular meaning." There are a few places in the Bible where *elohim* has a singular meaning even when it refers to men or false gods (Exodus 7:1 and 1 Kings 11:5).

Regarding the plural pronouns in Genesis 1:26, the pronouns are plural in the original Hebrew, requiring it to be translated, "God said, let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness."

Those who claim this verse teaches the Trinity doctrine point out that *elohim* is plural and the pronouns are plural; therefore, there must be a plurality in God. If we are to take this explanation we would have to translate it, "*Gods* said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This translation would do injustice to the true meaning of *elohim*, and it would have several gods speaking in unison, saying, "Let us make man in our image." What is the Bible saying to us?

The Scripture says, "God... created all things by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9)." It is obvious that the God in this verse is someone other than Jesus Christ. And according to Hebrews 1:2, God the Father created all things by his Son.

Now we can know for a certainty who is speaking in Genesis 1:26 and to whom he is speaking. God the Father said to his Son, "let us make man in our image." Remember, Christ is "the express image" of the Father, so anyone created in the Father's image is automatically created in his Son's image.

Commenting on Genesis 1:26, Ellen White wrote:

After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God says to his Son, 'Let us make man in our image (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 24, 25).'

### **John 10:30**

John 10:30 states: "I and my Father are one." The advocates of the "Jesus Only" doctrine use this text to teach there is only one person who is a Father and a Son, as well as the Holy Spirit. There really should be no difficulty in understanding the true meaning of this text if we simply go by the rule that Scripture should be used to explain Scripture. In three places in John 17, Jesus prayed for unity among his disciples and in all three places he compared the unity that he desired among his people to the unity which exists between himself and God the Father. Note his words in the following passages:

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. . . That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one (John 17:11, 21, 22).

Nobody would be foolish enough to suggest that Jesus wanted his disciples to become one person or even one being. His meaning is that he wants them to be united, to be in perfect harmony, to enjoy a unity of thought, purpose, and action such as he enjoyed with his Father. This text no more indicates a unity of substance between the Father and the Son, than the unity between Christians suggests that all Christians are of one substance.

### **Hebrews 1:8**

Hebrews 1:8 says: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

Paul is quoting from Psalm 45:6 in the Septuagint. The translation of this verse from The Jewish Publication Society of the Old Testament reads:

Thy throne given of God is for ever and ever; a sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

This is entirely in keeping with a strict translation of the Greek. If this is correct, then there is no apparent conflict, but if the translation is correct as given in the King James Bible as well as in several other translations, how should we view this verse? According to the King James Bible, it should be noted that the Father, the Supreme Sovereign of the universe, gave this title to Jesus, so obviously Jesus is not the Supreme Being.

Jesus was declared to be God by the Father because of who he, Jesus, is. Jesus is divine by the very nature of being the Son of God. In comparison to the angels, Jesus hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they because he is God's own Son.

The Father exalted the Son to the same plateau as himself, thus making his Son worthy of worship. “And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him (Hebrews 1:6).”

Here we see that even the angels of God were instructed to worship the Son even as the Father is worshipped.

It is the Father who is ultimately responsible for all things, and he has given to Jesus the authority and position Jesus now holds. Paul understood this well, for he wrote:

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:27, 28).

These verses clearly show that God the Father has put all things under Jesus’ feet, and that he, God, is not under Christ. When all things shall be given back to the Father, then shall Jesus be subject to the Father that God may be all in all.

Thus, when Jesus is given the title of “God,” it is in reference to his divine nature and in reference to his relationship to us, his children. However, he, is not the Father himself. Ephesians 1:17 agrees with this for there the Father is called “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.” While the Father is called the God of Christ, Jesus is never called the God of the Father.

### **Isaiah 9:6**

Isaiah 9:6 says: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Some believe that this verse is teaching that Christ is God the Father. If this is so, how can he be the Son? And if he is both Father and Son, how can there be a trinity, for a trinity is composed of three. This verse certainly does not support a Trinity doctrine. And, as we compare Scripture with Scripture, we can be sure that neither does it support the “Jesus only” doctrine.

Jesus is referred to as the Father, not the Father of himself, but the Father of the children which *his Father* has given him.

In Hebrews 2:13, Paul quoted from Isaiah 8:18 and applied it to Christ. Here Christ says, “Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me.”

Many Trinitarians have said that the word everlasting in Isaiah 9:6 means that Christ always was and that he never had a beginning. However, when the term “everlasting life” is applied to us they all admit that it simply means

that we will live forever in the future, not that we have always been in existence.

Notice also that Isaiah 9:6 says that “his name shall be called... The mighty God.” Some use this phrase to mean that Christ is the supreme God. This might be a good argument if the verse had referred to Christ as the Almighty God, but it uses the term mighty God. In the Bible we read of mighty men, but never of Almighty men. It is certainly appropriate to refer to the Son as mighty, for he is powerful. It is also appropriate to refer to him as God, for the Most High God himself refers to his Son as God in Hebrews 1:8. Therefore the terms “everlasting Father” and “The mighty God” can rightly apply to the Son.

### **Isaiah 44:6 and Revelation 1:17**

Along this same line of thought concerning the oneness of God and Christ, some people have misunderstood Isaiah 44:6 and Revelation 1:17 where the Bible uses the term “the first and the last.”

Isaiah 44:6 says: “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.”

Because the term “I am the first, and I am the last” is used by Jesus in Revelation, some people conclude from reading this verse that Jesus is the one and only God of the Bible or, at least, part of the one God.

Let us read in Revelation where Jesus applied this term to himself. When John saw Christ in vision, he said, “I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last (Revelation 1:17).”

Jesus did not end his conversation here. In the next verse, he went on to say, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore (v. 18).”

Jesus used the term again when he spoke to the church at Smyrna. He said, “These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive (Revelation 2:8).” Jesus said that he, “the first and the last,” was dead. If he was the one and only God, he could not have died, for the Bible says in 1 Timothy 6:16 that God cannot die.

Therefore, we must conclude that the person speaking in Isaiah 44:6 is someone other than Jesus Christ. There are other titles and names in the Bible that are shared by both the Father and the Son, and the title, “the first and the last” is one of these titles.

Let us go back to Isaiah 44:6 and find out who is speaking. The speaker says, “beside me there is no God,” and in verse 8, he says, “Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.” This is very precise language to indicate that the speaker is alone. All of the pronouns are singular, indicating that only one person is speaking. Who is this one person? The New Testament clarifies this.

In 1 Corinthians 8:4, Paul wrote, “we know... that there is none other God but one.” And to make it abundantly clear who he was referring to when he spoke of the God beside which there is none other, Paul also wrote “to us there is but one God, the Father (v. 6).” Paul understood the one God of the Bible to be God the Father and no one else.

Jesus had the same understanding. After Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4, the scribe told him, “Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he (Mark 12:32).” Who is the one God the scribe was referring to? Was he referring to Jesus as the one God? Certainly not! He was referring to God the Father and Jesus knew it.

At another time, while Jesus was talking to the scribes and Pharisees, he said, “If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God (John 8:54).” Jesus knew that when the scribes and Pharisees said “God,” they were referring to his Father. When this scribe said, “there is one God; and there is none other but he,” Jesus knew that he was talking about his Father.

Jesus did not correct the scribe by saying, “You are wrong, I am really the one God of the Bible.” Not at all! To the contrary, the Bible says that Jesus saw that he answered discreetly or wisely (Mark 12:34). Jesus knew that this man was correct, that there is one God, the Father, and there is none other God but him.

Every time singular pronouns are used of God or Christ such as “he,” “him,” “his,” “I,” “me,” etc., they always refer to one person. Whenever a Bible writer wanted to speak of both the Father and Son, they always use plural pronouns like, “them,” “they,” “us,” “we,” “our,” etc. So far, I have not found any exceptions to this rule. When the scribe said, “there is one God; and there is none other but he,” the scribe was referring to only one person, God the Father.

With this clarification from the New Testament, we can be completely sure who is speaking in Isaiah 44:6. He is God the Father and no one else. He is the ultimate first and last, even though he allowed his Son to carry this title as well.

### **Revelation 1:8**

Revelation 1:8 states: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” In many Bibles, the first part of this text is in red letters. This text is sometimes used to suggest that Jesus is called the Almighty, a term which is used several times in the book of Revelation but always with reference to the Father exclusively. The mistake in believing that this verse

refers to Christ stems from faulty reading and carelessness on the part of some Bible publishers. In red-letter editions of the Bible, this verse is usually printed in red,<sup>1</sup> indicating that it is Christ who is speaking. This misleads many readers. The publishers, and many others, come to this conclusion because of reading verse 11 where Jesus states, “I am alpha and omega, the first and the last.” The terms used in this verse, “alpha and omega” and “first and last,” seem to correspond with the identical term, “alpha and omega,” and the similar term, “beginning and the ending,” in verse 8 and seem to indicate that it is Jesus who is speaking in verse 8. A closer examination of the passage, however, reveals that this is not so.

Let us begin a little earlier in the passage, in verses 4 and 5, where a greeting is given from the Father, from the seven spirits, and from Jesus Christ. We read:

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood (Revelation 1:4, 5).

Now notice that a definite description or designation is given to each of them. The one who sits on the throne is definitely described as him “which is, and which was, and which is to come.” The seven spirits are declared to be before his throne, and Jesus is described as “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth.”

There is no mistaking the Father’s description. He is the one “which is, and which was, and which is to come.” Nobody else is given that description. In fact, this description is in definite contrast to Jesus who is “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead.” When we come upon the statement a few verses later, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty,” to whom should we legitimately apply it? Clearly, it refers, not to Jesus, but to the Father. He is the one who “is and was, and is to come.”

### **1 John 5:20**

1 John 5:20 says: “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” Some Trinitarians teach that this text says Jesus is the “true God.”

Let us look, however, at the subject of the text who is “him that is true,” and the one who has come to give us an understanding of “him that is true,”

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1. The coloring, of course, is not in the original text but has been added by Bible publishers.

who is the “Son of God.” The purpose in giving us this understanding is so that we may know “him that is true,” and to know him we must come to Jesus.

Jesus, himself, said, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18).” Here Jesus shows that for us to be in “him that is true” we have to go through the Son.

Paul understood this quite well. Writing to the Ephesians, he said: “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Ephesians 2:18).”

By being in Christ, we are in “him that is true,” the Father.

This is what Jesus, himself, says in John 17:3, and the meaning of both passages is the same. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).”

### **Titus 2:13**

Titus 2:13 says: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

The question is, should this verse be read to say, “the appearing of the great God who is our Saviour Jesus Christ,” or should it be read as saying, “the appearing of the great God, as well as of our Saviour Jesus Christ?” “The Greek of this expression is ambiguous (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 367).” On the surface it would seem to be speaking of Jesus Christ only, since many believe when he returns the Father is not expected to return with him.<sup>2</sup> The verse would then suggest that Jesus is the great God referred to. This would be puzzling, to say the least, especially in the writings of Paul, who regards Jesus as a divine Being but who consistently insists that “there is but one God, the Father (1 Corinthians 8:6).”

The problem is solved when we realize that the Greek rendering suggests that the text is referring not so much to the appearing of either Christ or of God or even both of them, but rather to the appearing of the glory of them both. The literal translation of the Greek in the passage is, “waiting for the blessed hope and manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13 *Young’s Literal Translation*).”

Other translations of the Bible such as *The Revised Standard Version*, *Modern King James Version*, and *The Bible in Basic English*, have been faithful to the Greek text in recognizing that the “appearing” has reference to the glory of God rather than to God himself.

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2. The Bible teaches that the Father does return with the Son. See Revelation 6:16.

This interpretation of the verse is in perfect harmony with the statement that Jesus made that when he returns it will be with his glory as well as with the glory of the Father. His exact words are:

For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels (Luke 9:26).

Once we understand this, the meaning of the text becomes clear and is in perfect harmony with the rest of Scripture.

### **John 1:1**

John 1:1 says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This text is heavily used to prove the Trinity doctrine. All agree that the "Word" is Jesus Christ. Substituting Jesus for Word, the text would read this way: "*In the beginning was **Jesus**, and **Jesus** was with God, and **Jesus** was God.*" Jesus was not the same God he was with! In other words, the text is not trying to tell us that in the beginning Jesus was with himself, so let us look at the verse very carefully to see what it is really saying.

At the beginning Jesus was clearly with someone else, and the person he was with was God. The second time the term God is used is in a descriptive way and not in reference to the person called God.

As an example, let us say that in the beginning Adam was called "the human" and Eve was referred to as "the woman." Consider the following and ask yourselves whether John 1:1 is not structured in the same manner: In the beginning was the woman, and the woman was with the human, and the woman was human.

The first time the word human is used in this example, it is clearly referring to the person the woman is with. The second use of the word human is clearly a description of the nature of the woman, and this is the same way John 1:1 should be understood.

"In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God [by nature], and Jesus was divine"

The second verse tells us this: "The same [Jesus] was in the beginning with God [the Father] (John 1:2)."

God and Jesus have the same divine nature. Here we see that Jesus is as fully divine as God, his Father, is divine and that Jesus is not the Father but the Son of the Father.

### **Philippians 2:5-9**

Philippians 2:5-9 says: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 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.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”

What does the phrase “being in the form of God” mean? Does this mean that Jesus is the sovereign God himself? This phrase is evidently set in opposition to the phrase, “took upon him the form of a servant.” The intent of the passage is to show the degree of the condescension of the Son of God by highlighting the immensity of the humiliation which he embraced when he took humanity upon himself. The difference between humanity and divinity is infinite, with divinity being at the pinnacle of existence and humanity far down on the scale. What was the position of Christ before he came to earth? Was he human? Was he angelic? Where would he fall in the classification of beings? Clearly, he was divine; he was in the category of divinity. He was in the form of God. It was from this position that he descended to the level of humanity. In other words, it was not an angel who came to earth and it was not a human being, but rather it was One who was at the utmost height of existence, even One Who was divine and, in this respect, equal with God.

Let us note that it is not the divinity of Christ which is in question. It is not the fact that he is equal with the Father in nature which is in question. Rather, the problem is the concept of the Godhead which makes Jesus the sovereign God himself (the supreme Being of the universe). This would destroy the truth that the Father is the highest authority in the universe, the source of all, and that Jesus truly is his begotten Son.

What many find it difficult to come to grips with is the concept that Jesus can be a divine Being, One who is God by nature, yet not be the most high God himself. However, this is the clear teaching of the Bible and it is only as we pursue our studies upon the basis of what the Bible clearly teaches that we can arrive at a proper understanding of biblical truth.

The true relationship of Jesus to the Father is brought out in Colossians and Paul makes the matter very clear.

Colossians 2:9 says: “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Here we see that the fullness of the godhead exists in Christ, but as Colossians 1:19 explains, “. . . it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” Here we see that it is the Father who has ordained that the fullness of the godhead should dwell in Christ. This makes it clear that the Father is greater than Jesus and is the One who has ordained the status of Christ.

This is in perfect harmony with Matthew 28:18 where Jesus said, “All power [ *exousia* (authority)] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” All power is his, but it was given unto him by One who is evidently greater than he.

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:27, 28).

### **John 8:58**

John 8:58 says: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” There are some that believe that this text shows that Jesus was the great God himself, but this is not the meaning of the text as will clearly be seen.

The Jews heard the words of Jesus, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death (John 8:51).” They then took him to task about whether he was greater than their ancestor Abraham. Jesus answered and said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad (John 8:56).”

The Jews were amazed at the fact that even though Jesus was not yet fifty years old, he spoke of Abraham seeing his day. Jesus hastened to tell them that he was before Abraham; in other words, what Jesus was saying was, “The truth is, I existed before Abraham was even born!”

This passage certainly speaks of the pre-existence of Christ! The message Jesus wanted to convey to the Jews was that he was before, and greater than, Abraham. The Hebrew expression that the term “I AM” is drawn from means to be self-existent. Jesus noted in John 5:26, “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” Jesus has self-existent life, but this life, he says, was “given” to him by the Father. It is this life that enables Jesus to be the Author of creation and to exist before all things (Colossians 1:16; Proverbs 8:22-30; John 1:3).

### **Isaiah 43:10**

Isaiah 43:10 says: “Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me (Isaiah 43:10).” There is no doubt that this passage is speaking exclusively of God the Father and is also speaking of the children of Israel who are the witnesses and servants of the Lord God. They have witnessed and can testify that he alone is God, the Supreme Being of the universe, and that there is no other God. There never has been and never will be.

What was it that led Israel to this knowledge? “I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God (Isaiah 43:12).” This text is saying, “First I predicted your deliverance; I declared what I would do, and then I did it—I saved you. No foreign god has ever done this before. You are witnesses that I am the only God.”

Israel had an experience with God, and through the mighty experiences of deliverances they had, they came to know that he is the only true God.

**John 10:17, 18**

John 10:17, 18 say: “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might *take* it again. No man *taketh* it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have *power* to lay it down, and I have *power* to *take* it again. This commandment have I received of my Father (John 10:17, 18).”

These verses are often used to support the idea that Jesus did not really, truly, and fully die, and that he was able to raise himself from the dead. These verses must be harmonized, however, with other texts such as Isaiah 53:12 which says that Jesus “poured out his soul unto death,” and with over thirty texts in the New Testament that teach that Jesus was raised from the dead by the Father.

According to *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament*, the Greek word that is translated “I might take” also means “to receive (what is given), to gain, to get, to obtain, to get back.” The same Greek word is used in verse 18 but is translated “received.” Christ laid down his life that he might receive it again. The Greek word that was translated “power” (*exousia*) means power in the sense of “authority” or “permission” rather than the power of physical force.

Let us read the verses again with a more consistent translation of the words. Jesus said: “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might *receive* it again. No man *taketh* it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have *authority* to lay it down, and I have *authority* to receive it again. This commandment have I *received* of my Father.”

Christ had the authority or permission to lay down his life so that he could receive it again from his Father. Christ could not, and did not, raise himself from the dead, for then he could not have been dead. In the prophecy of Christ’s complete death, recorded in Psalm 88:8, Christ says, “I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.”

To make the claim that Jesus Christ raised himself from the dead would be to directly contradict the words of Christ, for Christ said, “I can of mine own self do nothing (John 5:30).” It would also contradict at least thirty verses in the New Testament that say that Christ was raised from the dead by his Father.

Paul, writing in Galatians 1:1, states that “God the Father... raised him from the dead.”

The Bible’s testimony that Christ died completely and that his Father raised him from the dead is overwhelming. Isaiah 53 speaks of the complete death of Christ:

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin ... he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isaiah 53:10, 12).

According to the Bible, the soul of Christ died. It was his soul that was made an offering for sin. A dead person cannot even think, let alone raise himself from the dead.

### **John 2:19**

John 2:19 says: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” One of the difficulties with accepting the Trinitarian interpretation of this verse is that there are more than thirty texts in the Bible which state that the Father raised Jesus from the dead. In fact, all the apostles taught that Jesus was raised from the dead by the Father. Can one text override the testimony of thirty? When we encounter seeming contradictions in the Bible, the weight of evidence must be considered. The first point that the weight of evidence gives us, is that the Father raised Jesus from the dead instead of raising himself. Psalm 16:10 states: “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

This text makes it clear that it was the Father who was responsible for the resurrection of Christ. It was the Father who did not leave Christ’s soul in hell. Let us examine John 2:19 more closely to see if there is further evidence to support this conclusion.

In the context of this verse, the Jews had asked Jesus for a sign because of the works he was doing. Their exact words were, “What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things (John 2:18)?” It was in response to this question that Jesus made the statement: “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” Jesus was telling them to look for a certain sign. This sign would demonstrate his messiahship, his authority. It would establish his credentials. In context, this is the point of his statement.

Now, did the Jews conclude that Jesus raised himself from the dead? Did they receive such a sign? The fact is that the Jews had absolutely no evidence that Jesus had raised himself from the dead, and they could not have had any evidence to that effect from the apostles, for all of them preached that the Father had raised Jesus from the dead. The question is, did they receive the sign which Jesus had promised? Jesus had made a valid point when he replied to their question, even though later the answer was not recognized by the Jews. The fact that they did not understand their answer demonstrates that the point Jesus was making was not that he would raise himself from the dead but rather that he would be resurrected in three days. The emphasis was not on *who* would do the resurrecting but in the fact that he *would* be resurrected!

Paul emphasized in Ephesians 1:19, 20 that “the exceeding greatness” of the Father’s “mighty power” was demonstrated “when he raised” Christ “from the dead.” If Christ had actually raised himself from the dead, then Paul’s words could not have been true, for it would not have been the Father’s power that would have been demonstrated but the power of Christ.

The question then becomes, “Why did Jesus say, ‘I will raise it up’?” At times Jesus spoke in a way that may best be described as *cryptic*. In light of the overwhelming testimony of the rest of Scripture that it was the Father who raised Jesus from the dead, this verse must be looked upon in a similar light as, for example, the passage where God claims that he hardened Pharaoh’s heart is looked upon or the passages which state that the Lord’s purpose in giving parables was to prevent the people from understanding lest at any time they should repent and turn and be saved. In these cases, we do not look at the precise meaning of the words spoken, but rather we accept that God is speaking of the consequences of certain actions as though he were the One who was the cause of those consequences. In light of all the evidence, we must conclude that Jesus is speaking in a similar manner in this verse.

### **Romans 8:26**

Romans 8:26 says: “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” This text is speaking of how the Holy Spirit assists, or helps, us when our hearts are heavy and we know not what to pray for as we ought.

Sometimes we are so burdened and distressed that we cannot even speak a word. All we can do is sigh or groan. The Spirit is able to relate to that feeling and God understands.

“The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.” How could the Scriptures refer to the Spirit as “it,” if the Spirit is God? We are made in the image of God—body and spirit. We could refer to our body or our spirit and it would be okay to refer to either of these by using the term “it,” but when there is a union of body and spirit, we are now dealing with a person and it would be inappropriate to refer to a person as it.

The Scripture tells us that we have only one that mediates on our behalf, “For there is one God, and one mediator (or intercessor) between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).”

According to 1 Corinthians 8:6 and Ephesians 4:5, there is one Lord, who is Jesus Christ. Now let us look at another eye-opening verse. It is 2 Corinthians 3:17: “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

We see that Jesus is that Spirit that maketh intercession for us, but because he is in a non-bodily form, he can be referred to as “it,” and this is not inappropriate. Ellen White also noted:

We have only one channel of approach to God. Our prayers can come to him through one name only,—that of the Lord Jesus our advocate. His Spirit must inspire our petitions. No strange fire was to be used in the censers that were waved before God in the sanctuary. So *the Lord himself* must kindle in our hearts the burning desire, if our prayers are acceptable to him. *The Holy Spirit*

## The Foundation of Our Faith

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*within must make intercessions for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered (The Review and Herald, February 9, 1897).*

### **Acts 5:3, 4**

“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God (Acts 5:3, 4).” In verse 3 Peter says that Ananias lied to the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, but in verse 4 Peter says Ananias lied unto God. It would seem that God is equated with the Holy Spirit.

The promise of the Holy Spirit to the apostles was something they looked forward to with great anticipation. As the Spirit came, they remembered the words of Jesus, “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).”

When the Spirit came on the day of Pentecost they knew that indeed the Father and the Son were with them. In fact, the entire book of Acts tells of the marvelous works they accomplished because the Spirit had given them power to work in building up the kingdom of God.

Peter knew well *who* the Holy Spirit was, so when Ananias lied about the sale of the land, Peter could use the terms Holy Ghost and God interchangeably and not be wrong.

If I tell you that you have grieved my spirit, do I mean you have grieved someone else? No, I mean you have hurt me on the inward level!

In John 11 we have a similar example at the death of Lazarus. In verse 33 we read this: “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.” Notice the term used is, “he groaned in the spirit.” A few verses later we read, “Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave (v. 38).” First the Bible says he “groaned in the spirit,” and then, speaking of the same person with the same experience, the Bible later says, “Jesus therefore again groaning in himself.” We can see that the terms “groaned in the spirit” and “groaning in himself” mean the same thing. It is an experience of an individual. Peter knew that the Holy Ghost was God himself, personally present with his disciples in a non-bodily form.

## Chapter 19

### Further Thoughts from The Spirit of Prophecy

There are in the writings of Ellen White statements which, to some, appear to address the issue of God from different perspectives. While all of Ellen White's earliest statements appear to be non-trinitarian, some of her later statements appear, to some, to teach Trinitarianism. I firmly believe that a careful and unbiased study of Ellen White's writings will not present two different views of God. However, due to certain prejudices that have been developed over many years on this issue, it is hard for some to be objective and, as a result, have come to erroneous conclusions. One such conclusion proclaims that Ellen White was at first non-trinitarian or, at least, did not fully teach the Trinity but, as her understanding grew, she later strongly taught the doctrine of the Trinity. Some have used the apparently divergent statements to dismiss Ellen White's writings from the discussion altogether and to use the Bible only.

The Bible *is* sufficient to teach all doctrine. This was the understanding of both Ellen White and the early Adventist pioneers. Ellen White wrote:

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms (*The Great Controversy*, p. 595).

The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed (*The Review and Herald*, December 15, 1885).

Elder James White expressed well the understanding of the Advent movement when he wrote:

Every Christian is therefore in duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit in searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts. We say that the very moment he does, he places the gifts in a wrong place, and takes an extremely dangerous position. The Word should be in front, and the eye of the church should be placed upon it, as the rule to walk by, and the fountain of wisdom, from which to learn duty in 'all good works (James White, "The Gifts of the Gospel Church," *The Review and Herald*, April 21, 1851).'

Elder George Butler, in an article entitled “The Vision,” gave a balanced approach to the relationship of the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy writings, and truth. He wrote:

The majority of our people believe these visions to be a genuine manifestation of spiritual gifts, and as such to be entitled to respect. We do not hold them to be superior to the Bible, or in one sense equal to it. The Scriptures are our rule to test everything by, the visions as well as other things. That rule, therefore, is of the highest authority; the standard is higher than the thing tested by it. If the Bible would show the visions were not in harmony with it, the Bible would stand, and the visions would be given up (*The Review and Herald*, August 14, 1883).

Elder Butler expresses the true historic Adventist position and the position of the pioneers. Elder William Grotheer has commented insightfully on Butler’s statement:

Butler stated – “The Scriptures are our rule to test everything by, the visions as well as other things.” Accepting this guideline – and there really is none other to accept – all one needs to do is to check whatever reference from the Writings which he might wish to use, by the Bible. If it harmonizes, whether it has been borrowed from some other source, . . . it speaks truth. Use it! There will be some quotes for which there is no Biblical verification, neither will there be any Biblical data contrary to the ideas expressed. If one wishes to follow the counsel expressed under such conditions, he is at liberty to do so, but let such a one manifest Christian forbearance in harmony with Paul’s counsel toward any who might [not] be so inclined. Those who wish not to follow any particular counsel not specifically affirmed by the Bible, but spelled out in the Writings, should be sure they are not condemned by the things which they allow (*Bible Study Guide*, pp. 78, 79).

Does that mean that we should exempt Sister White’s writings from our study? No. God has provided the Advent people with a wonderful gift, and we should never disregard it. We are to use it, however, as God designed, looking to the Bible first and foremost for truth and next to the the testimonies. For those who are inclined to reject what the Bible says about the “only true God” and his “only begotten Son” because they believe that Ellen White taught and believed the Trinity doctrine, we kindly invite them to carefully study the material in this chapter.

### **The Weight of Evidence**

Sister White has counseled us to accept the weight of evidence concerning doctrine. Even though there are a few statements of Sister White’s that *appear* to be Trinitarian, the weight of evidence clearly falls on the non-Trinitarian side. We believe statements that *appear* to be Trinitarian will be found, upon further study, to be in agreement with the rest of her writings. While not exhaustive, this chapter gives a representation of the statements of Ellen White that are most often used by Trinitarians to support the Trinity doctrine that have not been considered up to this time. We will examine these

statements and provide explanations that show that these statements do not support the Trinity doctrine and that, if fact, some do just the opposite!

### **Person and Personality**

One of the most famous statements of Ellen White used to prove a Trinity is found in *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 7, p. 63, later published in *Evangelism*, p. 615:

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.<sup>1</sup>

The main point of interest is the supposed change made from the original “personalities” to “persons.”

The background to this statement is of vital importance. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, Director of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, had adopted a system of theology and philosophy called pantheism, a teaching that God is in all things. These ideas were published in 1903 by Kellogg in a book entitled, *The Living Temple*. As we shall see, Kellogg drifted toward pantheistic ideas because he accepted the Trinity doctrine. Carefully notice the following statements which are taken from the same testimony from which the famous “heavenly trio” statement is taken.

I have not been able to sleep during the past night. Letters have come to me with statements made by men who claimed to have asked Dr. Kellogg if he believes the Testimonies that Sister White bears. He declares that he does, but he does not (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 7, p. 60).

Kellogg claimed to believe the testimonies and that they expressed what he was then teaching about the Holy Spirit. Writing to former General Conference President, G. I. Butler, he noted:

The ideas I hold in reference to the presence of God everywhere and in everything, as a manifest agency in all the workings of Nature, I did not originate (Letter of J. H. Kellogg to G. I. Butler, December 30, 1903).

Earlier that year, writing to W. W. Prescott, Kellogg quoted from *The Desire of Ages*, p. 161; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 205; *Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 33; *Christian Temperance*, pp. 52, 161 to sustain the point that his writings merely reflected the work of Sister White. Although he claimed to believe the testimonies and even used them to prove his points, Ellen White boldly declared that Dr. Kellogg did not believe them. Going back to the original testimony in Series B, Number 7:

I am so sorry that sensible men do not discern the trail of the serpent. I call it thus; for thus the Lord pronounces it. Wherein are those who are designated as

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1. See p. 196 for photocopy of the manuscript. Appendix p. 252 has a line-by-line translation of the manuscript.

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*departing from the faith* and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, *departing from the faith* which they have held sacred for the past fifty years? I leave that for the ones to answer who sustain those who develop such acuteness in their plans for spoiling and *hindering the work of God* (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 7, p. 61).

In this testimony Ellen White declares that some of the brethren were “departing from the faith which they have [had] held sacred for the past fifty years.” In 1872 the first published statement of Fundamental Principles was issued. It clearly reflected the beliefs of the first fifty years of the Advent movement. This statement declared in part:

That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps. 139:7.

That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, ...

Adventist Trinitarians who know our history acknowledge that there has been a paradigm shift in the church’s theology about the Godhead—a great change from the first fifty years of our history. The book *Issues*, authorized by the North American Division Officers and Union Presidents, called the 1872 statement of Fundamental Principles “distinctly non-Trinitarian (p. 39).” In the very testimony in question, Ellen White says that Kellogg’s teachings were a departing of the faith, not a work of progress. She declared that such would spoil and hinder the work of God! She also noted:

But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye already have **hold fast** till I come (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 7, p. 61).

Interestingly, Ellen White mentioned Thyatira. This church has been historically associated with Catholicism whose Trinity doctrine is the central pillar of their support. It was to this church, which rejected the sonship of Jesus, that our Lord addressed himself as “the Son of God (Revelation 2:18).” Notice the following statements that help broaden the picture:

The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be “the express image of His person.” “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Here is shown the personality of the Father. 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 (*Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63).

Now carefully read the following part of the testimony as it was edited by Ellen White in her own handwritten manuscript that has been widely distributed and publicized by the White Estate:

There are <sup>the</sup> living three persons <sup>alities</sup> of the heavenly trio in which every soul repenting of their sins ~~believing~~ receiving Christ by a living faith to them who are baptized (*Ibid.*, p. 63).<sup>2</sup>

There are two key points to this testimony. Firstly, Kellogg had lost faith in the testimonies. Secondly, a contrast is made between his spiritualistic beliefs and the truth about the personality and nature of God. Kellogg claimed to believe the testimonies, and he even used them to try to prove that Ellen White taught the Holy Spirit was a third being separate and apart from the Father and Son. She did not accept this new teaching, however, and warned the people against accepting this so-called “new light.” She urged the church to stay with the truth they had been teaching for at least the last fifty years. That truth was simply that the Father is God and Jesus is his Son and the Spirit is the Spirit of God. Ellen White wrote that in his new theology Kellogg was departing from the faith and accepting doctrines of devils.

This testimony describes the personality of God, his literal relationship with his Son, Jesus Christ, and also describes the Comforter to be, in fact, “the Spirit.” Then she said that the working of God through his angels on the day of Pentecost “is represented in the descent of the Holy Spirit (*Ibid.*, p. 63).”

On October 28, 1903, Dr. Kellogg wrote to G. I. Butler stating:

As far as I can fathom, the difficulty which is found in The Living Temple, the whole thing may be simmered down to this 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 of Dr. Kellogg to G. I. Butler, October 28, 1903).

The next day, October 29, 1903, the then current General Conference President A. G. Daniells wrote the following in a letter to Willie White concerning the pantheistic theories of Kellogg:

He [Dr. Kellogg] 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

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2. See p. 196 for photocopy of the manuscript. Appendix p. 252 has a line-by-line translation of the manuscript.



## Further Thoughts from The Spirit of Prophecy

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Ghost, and not God the Father, that filled all space, and every living thing. He said that if he had believed this before writing the book, he could have expressed his views without giving the wrong impression the book now gives (Letter of A. G. Daniells to Willie White, October 29, 1903).

Earlier in the letter, Daniells had noted concerning Kellogg:

He 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 felt sure that he believed just what the Testimonies teach, and what Dr. Waggoner and Elder Jones have taught for years; but he had come to believe that none of them had expressed the matter in correct form (*Ibid.*).

Kellogg thought he had taught what Ellen White, Jones, and Waggoner had taught but that he had expressed his views poorly. A. G. Daniells wrote to Kellogg, "Now you can readily see that all this can not be corrected by simply a change of terms (Letter of A. G. Daniells, to J. H. Kellogg, October 28, 1903)." Furthermore, Daniells noted to Willie White that before his mother, Ellen White, had come out against the book, Kellogg had given "fair warning that this battle would be fought out to the bitter end, and that the old traditional theories would be rolled under (Letter of A. G. Daniells to Willie White, October 29, 1903)." During the outset of the controversy, Kellogg acknowledged that he had a new model of thought that went beyond just the expression of his words. Daniells was not deceived by Kellogg's attempt to change the manner of expressing his thoughts. He wrote: "I felt fully satisfied that he had not changed his views in any essential particular (*Ibid.*)."

What a lesson for us! Theories concerning the Godhead, as well as other truths, are sometimes presented to the people as living water, but these theories are from "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." Many times these theories are introduced as new light. When resistance comes, however, the voices proclaim the theories to be old truth in new settings that even Ellen White, Jones, and Waggoner presented. We must each be Bereans (Acts 17:11) and study for ourselves the Word of Truth.

The statement from Series B is one of the chief "proof texts" used to prove the Trinity doctrine. However, a study of Sister White's writings reveals that she did not use the terms "being" and "person" interchangeably as some do today. She stated that Christ was "*the only being* that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34)." This passage denotes only two "beings." If the Holy Spirit is a "being" in the same sense as Christ is, then why has the Holy Spirit not been able to enter into all the "counsels and purposes of God"? Furthermore, there is a distinction that can be made between "person" and "personality" and a distinction in the manner in which "personality" can be defined. In a letter dated January 24, 1935, Elder H. W. Carr wrote to W. C. White requesting that Willie give his understanding of his "mother's position in reference to the personality of the Holy Spirit." Elder White responded, in part:

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This I cannot do because I never clearly understood her teachings on the matter. There always was in my mind some perplexity regarding the meaning of her utterances which to my superficial manner of thinking seemed to be somewhat confusing. . . .

My perplexities were lessened a little when I learned from the dictionary that one of the meanings of personality, was characteristics. It is stated in such a way that I concluded that there might be personality without bodily form which is possessed by the Father and the Son (Letter of W. C. White to H. W. Carr, April 30, 1935).

*The Published Ellen G. White Writings*, ver. 3.0 (CD-ROM) show nine different statements published in eighteen different places for the word “personalities.” Three of these statements refer to the Godhead. All three of these statements include only God and Christ. They are:

“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.” These words present God and Christ as two distinct personalities (*Notebook Leaflets*, p. 124).

On Sabbath, April 27, many of our brethren and sisters from neighboring churches gathered in the parlors with the sanitarium family, and I spoke to them there. I read the first chapter of Hebrews as the basis of my discourse. This chapter clearly indicates the individual personalities of the Father and the Son (*The Review and Herald*, August 1, 1907).

In this Scripture [John 1:1-4, 14-16; 3:34-36] God and Christ are spoken of as two distinct personalities, each acting in their own individuality (*Manuscript Release*, no. 760, p. 18).

In *Special Testimonies*, Sister White uses the term “personality” in a way that could not be interchanged with “person.” Concerning God and Christ, she wrote:

The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be “the express image of His person.” “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Here is shown the personality of the Father (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 7, p. 63).

Our thinking is further expanded with the following statement:

Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. *The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof*. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent (Manuscript 5a, 1895; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, pp. 23, 24).

Some believe that Ellen White has taught that the Holy Spirit is a separate being other than and apart from the Father and his Son. However, the above statement makes no sense to say that the Holy Spirit was “divested of the personality of humanity.” According to The American Heritage Dictionary, the word “divest” means, “to strip, to dispossess, to free of; to rid.” If

the Holy Spirit is a being as the Father and Son are, it is certain that he never was a human, and it would, therefore, be impossible for him to strip, or rid, himself of humanity.

In addition to these statements, as we have noted earlier, Sister White referred to the Holy Spirit as “it,” something she never did in reference to God or Christ.

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, in Christ’s name. He personifies Christ, yet is a distinct personality. We may have the Holy Spirit if we ask for *it* and make it [a] habit to turn to and trust in God rather than in any finite human agent who may make mistakes (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 324).

### “Three holiest Beings”

There is one statement in connection to the terms *persons* and *beings* that we should consider. It is the only time that we have a record of Sister White supposedly using the term “three ... *Beings*.”

You are born unto God, and you stand under the sanction and the power of the three holiest Beings in heaven, who are able to keep you from falling (*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 367).

The White Estate tells us that this statement comes from an edited stenographer’s report of a sermon preached by Ellen White at the Congregational Church of Oakland, California, on Sabbath afternoon, October 20, 1906. It is reprinted in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7.

There are some important points we wish to make for consideration. Firstly, this statement must be considered in the light of the weight of evidence. As we have seen earlier, Ellen White consistently spoke of only two divine beings. Secondly, this is from a stenographer’s report that was edited seventy-seven years after she first delivered the address without her having had a chance to edit or correct words or phrases that might not have exactly represented her thoughts. Thirdly, anyone who has ever done public speaking knows that it is easy to misspeak a word or phrase that could have been said more clearly in another way. Fourthly, Ellen White wrote:

And now to all who have a desire for truth I would say: Do not give credence to unauthenticated reports as to what Sister White has done or said or written. *If you desire to know what the Lord has revealed through her, read her published works* (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 696).

Of course, anything that gets into print is *published*. Ellen White was advising seekers of truth to read that which had passed through the proper channels which gave her the opportunity to verify that which was to be published to be in agreement with what the Lord had shown her.

### Publishers’ Use of Capitalization

One type of editorial change that has been made is the use of capitalization to emphasize the concept of deity. The first example we will note is from *The Desire of Ages*:

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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 (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671, 1940 ed.).

The original edition copyrighted in 1898 reads:

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 (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671, 1898 ed.).<sup>3</sup>

The edition with capitalization makes it appear that Ellen White believed in a pro-Trinitarian position. The phrase “third person of the Godhead” was published seven times while Ellen White was alive. (See *The Review and Herald*, May 19, 1904; November 19, 1908; *The Signs of the Times*, December 1, 1898; *The Watchman*, November 28, 1905; *Special Testimonies*, Series A, no. 10, pp. 25, 37; and *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671, 1898 ed.) Each time the term “third person” was published, it was in the lower case. Standard rules for capitalizing the titles of Deity have not changed since Ellen White’s death. However, this term has been republished six times since her death in the upper case, including the changing of *The Desire of Ages* reference into the upper case.

Another example of using capitalization is seen in the following comparison:

Evil had been accumulating for centuries and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the *Third Person* of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 392).

Evil had been accumulating for centuries, and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the *third person* of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power (*Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers*, Series A, no. 10, p. 25).

The footnote at the bottom of page 392 in *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* reads: “The articles in this section are from *Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers* (Series A, Nos. 9-11, 1897-1898). This article is from No. 10, pp. 25-33.” Every time the phrase “third person of the Godhead” was published under the pen of Ellen G. White while she was alive, the expression “third person” was always in the lower case! Since her death it has been reprinted at least six times in the upper case.<sup>4</sup>

One reference to the “third person” that was correctly republished in the lower case is found in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6,

3. See p. 251 for a copy of the 1898 edition.

4. See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671, 1940 ed.; *God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 194; *Lift Him Up*, p. 191; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 392; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2, p. 34; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 329.

pp. 1052, 1053. This statement calls the divine Spirit “that converting, enlightening and sanctifying power.”

Christ determined that when he ascended from this earth, he would bestow a gift on those who had believed on him, and those who should believe on him. What gift could he bestow rich enough to signalize and grace his ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of his greatness and his royalty. He determined to give his representative, the third person of the Godhead. This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, that converting, enlightening and sanctifying power, would be his donation. (Original source is *Southern Watchman*, November 28, 1905.)

### Publishers Alter Quotations

Since her death, there have been statements of Ellen White that have been altered through editing. This editing has produced a different meaning than that which was originally written by the prophet. The following is from a letter written to Elder S. N. Haskell, dated May 30, 1896. This reference from the *1888 Materials* has been directly altered by removing the term “it” for the Spirit and replacing it with “Him” and “He.”

The Spirit is freely given us of God if we will appreciate and accept *it* And what is *it*? The representative of Jesus Christ. *It* is to be our constant helper. It is through the Spirit that Christ fulfills the promise, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life”. (The bell is sounding for morning worship, I must stop here). (*The 1888 Materials*, p. 1538).

The Spirit is freely given us of God if we will appreciate and accept *Him*. And what is *He*?—the representative of Jesus Christ. *He* is to be our constant helper. It is through the Spirit that Christ fulfills the promise, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47). (The bell is sounding for morning worship. I must stop here.) (Letter 38, 1896, pp. 1-4; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 11, p. 35; Letter to S. N. Haskell, May 30, 1896).

The original letter to Haskell has at least fourteen references to the Spirit as “it.” Here are some more:

The church members need to know from experience what the Holy Spirit will do for them. *It* will bless the receiver, and make him a blessing. It is sad that every soul is not praying for the vital breath of the Spirit, for we are ready to die if *it* breath not on us.

We are to pray for the impartation of the Spirit as the remedy for sin-sick souls. The church needs to be converted, and why should we not prostrate ourselves at the throne of grace, as representatives of the church, and from a broken heart and contrite spirit make earnest supplication that the Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high? Let us pray that when *it* shall be

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graciously bestowed, our cold hearts may be revived, and we may have discernment to understand that *it* is from God, and receive *it* with joy. Some have treated the Spirit as an unwelcome guest, refusing to receive the rich gift, refusing to acknowledge *it*, turning from *it*, and condemning *it* as fanaticism. When the Holy Spirit works the human agent, *it* does not ask us in what way *it* shall operate. Often *it* moves in unexpected ways. Christ did not come as the Jews expected. He did not come in a manner to glorify them as a nation. His forerunner came to prepare the way for him by calling upon the people to repent of their sins and be converted, and be baptized. Christ's message was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel." The Jews refused to receive Christ, because he did not come in accordance with their expectations (*Ibid.*, p. 1540).

No excuse or valid reason can be given for altering the work of Sister White in such a manner. If we are going to publish a paraphrase, then we should state it to be such. There is no precedent in the Scriptures for such a direct change. While men in editorial positions may be working with an honest heart seeking to present the material as clearly as possible, it certainly opens one's mind to the concept of a conspiracy to alter the theology of God's people.

Another example of the changing of pronouns can be found in comparing the following statement first published in *The Signs of the Times*, September 27, 1899, and then republished in *Ye Shall Receive Power* in 1995:

*Signs of the Times*, September 27, 1899

"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."

*Ye Shall Receive Power*, page 59

"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."

### Clarification of Other Ellen G. White Statements

The next two statements deal with the personhood of the Holy Spirit. The first of these statements was published in *Evangelism*:

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We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds (Manuscript 66, 1899; *Evangelism*, p. 616).

This statement is from a talk given at the Avondale School on April 15, 1899. This talk was never published during Ellen White's lifetime. Part of it was first released in 1946 with the publication of *Evangelism*. A further part of it was published in 1990 in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 299, and then in 1994 more of it was released in *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, pp. 136-139. The entire talk has not yet been published, but from *Sermons and Talks* we know that the above quotation is not the full sentence. The point that Sister White was making is seen in the context of the whole statement:

We have been brought together as a school, and we need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds, unseen by human eyes; that *the Lord God* is our Keeper and Helper. He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind (*Sermon and Talks*, vol. 2, pp. 136, 137).

Ellen White was making it clear that she was not advocating that the Holy Spirit was merely some impersonal force, but the person of "the Lord God" who was constantly with them watching and listening to everything that happened. If she was trying to teach the Trinity, she failed, for the school did not adopt the Trinity doctrine and the great "weight of evidence" from her writings is clearly on the non-trinitarian side of the issue.

Another controversial statement is found in *Evangelism*, p. 617:

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."

The key to understanding this statement is found in Sister White's quotation of 1 Corinthians 2:11. This text, in essence, says that only man knows his spirit and only God knows his Spirit. In other words, man is to man's spirit as God is to God's spirit. Nobody who properly understands the spirit of man would say that his spirit is a separate part or entity apart from him. We also use the term "spirit of Satan," but never to say that there is another demon besides Lucifer that is separate and apart from him doing an evil work. Ellen White wrote concerning the Holy Flesh movement in Indiana at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

I bore my Testimony, declaring that these fanatical movements, this din and noise, were inspired by *the spirit of Satan*, who was working miracles to deceive if possible the very elect (Letter 132, to Brother and Sister S. N. Haskell, October 10, 1900).

In *Early Writings*, page 56, Ellen White spoke of Satan breathing out his spirit as an "unholy influence" upon those who failed to arise with Jesus as he went to the Most Holy Place. In these usages of spirit for man or Satan, we would never

think of the spirit being an entity apart from the individual. However, due to the teaching of the Trinity doctrine, most are trained to automatically assume that when we read of God's Spirit, it is someone apart from the Father. If we simply understand the identity of God's Spirit in a similar context to the way we understand the identity of man and the identity of man's spirit, most of the problems quickly are solved. My spirit is my inner self, who I am, but not another individual in addition to me.

The next statement concerns the use of the term "the three highest powers in heaven:"

We are to co-operate with the three highest powers in heaven,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, —and these powers will work through us, making us workers together with God (*Evangelism*. p. 617).

This statement, like the "heavenly trio" statement is taken from page 51 of *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 7. All the background is the same. She is writing concerning the Kellogg crisis and is encouraging her readers to remain faithful to the truths that had been held for fifty years. In connection with this statement of Ellen White, it is highly interesting to note a statement that Uriah Smith made fourteen years earlier at the 1891 General Conference Session. After sharing several Bible verses about the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, he noted:

You will notice in these few verses the apostle brings to view ***the three great agencies*** which are concerned in this work: God, the Father; Christ, his Son; and the Holy Spirit (*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 14, 1891, volume 4, p. 147).

This statement is remarkable because Elder Smith explains that the Pioneers understood the use of the term "three great agencies" in a way that is in harmony with the teaching that the Holy Spirit is not a third, separate being but rather the Spirit of the Father and his Son.

One statement that is often used to quiet unwanted discussion on the Holy Spirit is found in *The Acts of the Apostles*:

*The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery.* Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. *Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.* (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 52)

It is important to know what this statement is saying, as well as what it is not saying. Ellen White plainly states that the nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. This is true. No man can adequately even define the nature of his own spirit let alone the Spirit of God; however, this statement does not say we cannot know the identity of the Holy Spirit. The basis for the statement in *The Acts of the Apostles* is from a letter written to a Brother Chapman in

1891. Ellen White wrote to Brother Chapman in regard to his belief that the Holy Spirit was the angel Gabriel. She wrote in part:

Your ideas of the two subjects you mention do not harmonize with the light which God has given me. The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery not clearly revealed, and you will never be able to explain it to others because the Lord has not revealed it to you. You may gather together scriptures and put your construction upon them, but the application is not correct. ...

*It is not essential for you to know and be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is.* Christ tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and the Comforter is the Holy Ghost, “the Spirit of truth, which the Father shall send in My name.” “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” [John 14:16, 17]. *This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter...*

There are many mysteries which I do not seek to understand or to explain; they are too high for me, and too high for you. *On some of these points, silence is golden. ...*

I hope that you will seek to be in *harmony with the body.*

You need to come into harmony with your brethren (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, pp. 175-180).

Ellen White was encouraging Brother Chapman to come into line with what the brethren were teaching in 1891 which was clearly non-trinitarian.

We have seen that none of the statements of Ellen White that are supposed to be at the forefront of supporting the Trinity doctrine actually uphold it.

A study of Ellen White’s writings, allowing the “weight of evidence” to play its proper role, will allow the honest student to arrive at truth just as the study of the Scriptures “as a whole, is a perfect chain” of truth. Continued study will help solve some of the *apparent inconsistencies* between those statements that seem to teach different concepts.

**B**elieve in the LORD your God,  
so shall ye be established;  
believe his prophets, so shall  
ye prosper (2 Chronicles 20:20).

## Chapter 20

### “After The Way Which They Call Heresy”

Five days after Paul had been sent to Felix at Caesarea he was accused by the Jewish orator Tertullus as being “a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5).” The Greek word for “sect” is *(hairesis)* and is translated in verse 14 as “heresy.” Tertullus had accused Paul of being a member of a “sect,” an undesirable group! The apostle’s teaching was considered to be heresy! Yet, in Paul’s reply to Tertullus, he stated, “But this I confess unto thee, *that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers*, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets (Acts 24:14).” Paul declared that no matter what names people attached to his faith, he was worshipping the God of his fathers according to the law and the prophets. What was Paul teaching that was called “heresy”? Luke records the first thing Paul preached after his conversion: “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God (Acts 9:20).” This became the theme of Paul’s message:

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save *Jesus Christ, and him crucified* (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Concerning *his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:3, 4).

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, *Christ died for us*. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life (Romans 5:8-10).

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3).

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I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me* (Galatians 2:20).

Paul recognized that the Old Testament prophecies pointed to Jesus as being the Son of the Living God who would empty himself and come to this rebellious planet to die for the sins of his creatures who had transgressed the divine law. Judaism failed in Paul's day because it refused to worship God "according to the law and the prophets." The revelations concerning the Messiah were either ignored or misapplied by most of the Jews. Paul understood that Judaism would either stand or fall based on its concept of God and his Christ. The new emerging "sect of the Nazarenes" realized that Jesus was the Christ, the literal Son of the Living God, who came to die for man's sins. To reject that great light would be equivalent to a rejection of God and his salvation. Even though it was considered "heresy" to believe the real gospel, and even though it labeled them as being members of a cult, the early Christians boldly proclaimed their faith and belief in God and Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The ultimate success of Christendom and the failure of Judaism would rest on their concepts of God.

The early Christians knew that God was leading their movement and regardless of what the Jews or Gentiles called them, their love for Christ constrained them to witness to the truth even though it would bring persecution and, in many, cases death!

The early Advent movement parallels the early Christian Church in many respects. Recovering the biblical truths about God, the nature of man, the Sabbath, the law of God, etc., brought animosity from the world and the fallen churches. Their antagonism toward the Advent people was exhibited in name-calling and persecution. History details the trials the Advent people suffered. Yet, their faith could not be shaken because they firmly believed that God had brought the movement into existence as a fulfillment of prophecy and that he was leading them step-by-step. This confidence was bolstered among them by the endowment of the Spirit of Prophecy.

Ellen White repeatedly stated that God brought the Advent movement into existence and that he divinely led out in the development of the doctrines that were taught by the pioneers of the movement. The following statements provide clear evidence of her position:

*The truths given us after the passing of the time in 1844 are just as certain and unchangeable as when the Lord gave them to us in answer to our urgent prayers.* The visions that the Lord has given me are so remarkable that we know that what we have accepted is the truth. This was demonstrated by the Holy Spirit. Light, precious light from God, established the main points of our faith as we hold them today (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 53; Letter 50, 1906).

We can confidently say, The truth that has come to us through the Holy Spirit's working is not a lie. The evidences given for *the last half century* bear

the evidence of the Spirit’s power (*The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters*, p. 257, June 23, 1905, letter to G. I. Butler).

Ever we are to keep the faith that has been substantiated by the Holy Spirit of God *from the earlier events of our experience* until the present time (*The Upward Look*, p. 352; from Letter 326 to W. C. White, December 4, 1905).

The evidence is clear that Sister White taught that God was directly involved in helping the early pioneers to have a correct understanding of the major points of our faith. “The leading points of our faith as we hold them today were firmly established. Point after point was clearly defined, and all the brethren came into harmony (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 413; MS 135, 1903).” She further stated:

I know and understand that we are to be established in the faith, in the light of the truth given us in our early experience. At that time [after the 1844 disappointment] one error after another pressed in upon us; ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures, and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of devoted men and women assembled for this purpose. The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, p. 319, Letter 50, 1906).

### **Important Implications**

If the teaching of the pioneers was heresy, as some today claim, then Ellen White was either a liar or greatly deceived because she boldly declared that when false doctrines were presented that they were rejected. As noted earlier in her letter to Elder Butler, she declared in 1905 that the truths they had held for the “last half century bear the evidence of the Spirit’s power.” Concerning the doctrine of God, the evidence clearly demonstrates that the Adventist pioneers were all anti-Trinitarians.

If one believes that the Trinity doctrine is true, then it must logically follow that not only was Ellen White either a falsifier or greatly deceived, but God was not in the Advent movement because if the Trinity doctrine is true, then the early Advent movement helped Satan promote hideous lies about the Godhead!

It is extremely important to understanding that the Adventist pioneers were correct in teaching that the Trinity doctrine was unscriptural. If they were correct about the unscriptural Trinity, then they were also correct in preaching the second angel’s message concerning the fall of Babylon which accepted the Trinity. Since the Trinity is Babylon’s central pillar upon which all her teachings rest (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 16), the Advent movement would of necessity preach against this wine of false teaching. The fact that contemporary Adventism has adopted the beast’s central pillar reveals that it has abandoned both its mission and message!

### **Implications Concerning the Three Angels' Messages**

❶ The first angel's message carries "the everlasting gospel." False concepts of God and Christ do not constitute the "everlasting gospel." If the Trinity is true, then the Advent pioneers presented what Paul called "another gospel (Galatians 1:6)" and must surely be disqualified as the remnant. The remnant must preach "the everlasting gospel," not "another gospel."

The first angel's message instructs us to "fear God and give glory to him." How can we fear God and give him glory if we really do not know him?

The first angel's message instructs us to "worship him that made." How can we do this if we are worshipping a god or gods that do not exist?

❷ The second angel's message states that "Babylon is fallen." As noted earlier, if our pioneers understood God correctly, then they were correct in pronouncing Catholicism and apostate Protestantism as fallen. If not, then they were working against God. Seventh-day Adventism is either justified or rejected on the truth about God.

❸ The third angel's message begins with the warning against worshipping "the beast and his image." This worship is inevitable if we pay homage to Catholicism and apostate Protestantism's main teaching.

The third angel's message says that the saints "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." We break not only the first commandment but, according to James 2:10, the whole Decalogue, when we worship a false god. Furthermore, how can the remnant have the faith of Jesus if they have an improper understanding of him? Again, Adventism is either justified or rejected based on the truth about God.

In order to gain acceptance with the world and to remove the church from the status of being a cult, Adventist leaders have, over this last century, seriously compromised "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3)." The compromises on the incarnation and atonement in heaven that were made in the 1950's with the evangelicals through the Barnhouse and Martin contacts could never have been made if the brethren had not earlier adopted the doctrine of the Trinity. Concerning questions on the Trinity addressed to the brethren by the evangelicals, Roy Allan Anderson, one of the Adventists involved in the evangelical contacts, wrote: "Our answer concerning the Godhead and Trinity was crucial, for in some of the books they had read that Adventists were classed as Arians. . . . (*Adventist Review*, September 8, 1983)."

During the Seventh-day Adventist–Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956, Walter Martin "produced at least twelve feet of Adventist publications stacked up and marked for [LeRoy] Froom's perusal (Videotape interview with Walter Martin at Loma Linda, California, January 26,

1989)” that documented that the Adventist pioneers, including Ellen White, did not believe the Trinity. After looking the materials over, Martin said that Froom claimed that “They do not reflect orthodox Adventist theology, and we reject it (*Ibid.*)” Today’s “orthodox Adventist theology” has undergone such a radical change from the beliefs of the Advent pioneers that George Knight, a professor of history at Andrews University, could write:

Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination’s Fundamental Beliefs.

More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the Trinity. For Joseph Bates the Trinity was an unscriptural doctrine, for James White it was that “old Trinitarian absurdity,” and for M. E. Cornell it was a fruit of the great apostasy, along with such false doctrines as Sunday keeping and the immortality of the soul (*Ministry*, October 1993, p. 10).

The early pioneers such as James White, Joseph Bates, and others, were decried as belonging to a “sect” or cult. Uriah Smith noted the following in a reply to attacks made by D. M. Canright:

Other papers of other denominations all along the line are greedy to show a dislike to the Adventists by occasionally serving up a nice tidbit, if it only hits them hard enough. Articles are copied from these papers and sent to Europe, and are translated into various languages, and published there. And reverend doctors of divinity with great glee congratulate themselves that now they have found something with which to check the onward progress of this deluded sect (*Replies to Elder Canright’s Attacks on Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 10).

The evidence appears that they would still be called members of a “deluded sect” today. Yet, these pioneers were brave to withstand the scorn of the world because they received a holy boldness to witness for Christ and the truth. They believed as Paul taught:

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the

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world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:18-31).

Paul told Felix, “that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers (Acts 24:14).” The way of the Adventist pioneers was called heresy by Babylon. With the continued moral fall of Babylon since 1844, we should not be surprised to hear that it is still calling the truth heresy today.

### **Succession of the Faith**

On June 2, 1947, A. W. Spalding wrote a two–page letter to H. Camden Lacey. The letter began:

Will you extend your helping hand to me once more? I am in Washington making the last revision of my manuscript for the first volume of *An Episodic History of Seventh-day Adventists*. Two or three large questions confront me.

One of these is the history of the trinitarian and antitrinitarian doctrines among us. I understand that some of our leading men in the beginning were opposed to the doctrine of the trinity, at least as expressed by certain trinitarians (Letter of A. W. Spalding to H. Camden Lacey, June 2, 1947).

After making certain observations in relation to the subject, Spalding continued:

Now I should be grateful for any light you have to throw upon the subject. D. E. Robinson says that you are the first one he knows of to teach the straight doctrine of the trinity, in Australia. Perhaps you were Jashobeam the Hackmonite, but I am supposing there were also other Twenty-nine of the Mighties. There is to me a twilight zone in this history which I wish to have lighted. Did all the fathers sin? And if so, did they repent? How prove the unity of the faith in our succession if our pioneers were Arians and we are Athanasians (*Ibid.*)?

Lacey replied in a three–page letter dated June 5, 1947. The reply read in part:

I will attempt now to answer some of the queries you propound in your recent letter of the 2nd.

Most assuredly our people were anti–trinitarians, when we (the Lacey family) accepted the ‘Truth’ in 1888. At least, that is how it appeared to us at that time.

Now your questions: ‘Did all the fathers sin?’ Well, ‘sin’ is perhaps too strong a word. But they certainly ‘all’ held inadequate views on both the ‘Eternity of the Son’ (and therefore His essential Deity) and the ‘personality of the Holy Ghost.’ (And why do we not more generally speak of Him in that way, as does our authorized translation, and the Early Writings of Sr. White, until she came under the influence of her husband and other of the pioneers?)

‘And if so, did they repent?’ Not so as you could notice it, I fear. The attitude of some of those pioneers to the preaching of ‘Righteousness by Faith’ in 1888,

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illustrates pretty well their reactions to any ‘new light’ that might come to them: Nevertheless they were wonderfully used of God in laying the foundations of our message.

‘How prove the unity of the faith in our succession if our pioneers were Arians and we are Athanasians?’ Well now, the answer is obvious – to you, as well as to the rest of us; so: let us leave it there (Letter of Camden H. Lacey to A. W. Spalding, June 5, 1947)!

Lacey’s last statement should be given careful thought. The basis for succession of the faith is unity in the truth. Few on either side of the issue (Trinitarian or non-Trinitarian) question the importance of a proper understanding of the doctrine of God. Lacey is saying very plainly that as a Trinitarian he cannot claim unity of the faith with the pioneers. Yet, truth is the basis for succession of the faith. The implications should be as clear to us as they were clear to Lacey. If there is not succession of the faith between the pioneers of the movement and today, then we must admit that either we or the pioneers were in error. If they were in error on this vital subject, then how can we claim that God raised up this movement? No wonder Lacey said, “. . . let us leave it there!” However, this need not be. We do not have to repudiate the teachings that were established in truth! *What we must do is quit desiring the favor of the world over the favor of God.*

When Walter Martin and Dr. Donald Barnhouse met with R. A. Anderson and LeRoy Froom, the first thing that had to be established was whether Adventists believed the Trinitarian doctrine or not.<sup>1</sup> While these Evangelicals hated the Sabbath, did not agree with the mortality of the soul, and made fun of the sanctuary doctrine, they could accept Adventists as long as they accepted the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>2</sup> While compromises had to be made on the incarnation and the atonement, these concessions would never have been made if the doctrine of the Trinity had not been conceded earlier.

1. See *Adventist Review*, September 8, 1983, p. 4 and videotaped interview with Walter Martin at Loma Linda, California, January 26, 1989.
2. Barnhouse stated: “I hate Saturday as a Sabbath religious day. I hate it because Christ hates it (Audiotaped telephone conversation between Barnhouse and A. L. Hudson, May 16, 1958; printed in *The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955–1956*.)” Martin wrote concerning the state of the dead: “As far as this writer is concerned, although he is in definite disagreement with the doctrine [“Soul Sleep”], it does not constitute a bar to our having fellowship with them, . . . (*Eternity*, January 1957).” Barnhouse wrote concerning the investigative judgment: “It is to my mind, therefore, nothing more than a human, face-saving idea! . . . We personally do not believe that there is even a suspicion of a verse in Scripture to sustain such a peculiar position, and we further believe that any effort to establish it is *stale, flat, and unprofitable* (*Eternity*, September 1956; emphasis in original)!”

**B**ut we stand by the old land-marks. We are hindered in our work by men who are not converted who seek their own glory. They wish to be thought originators of new theories, which they present claiming that they are truth. But if these theories are received they will lead to a denial of the truth that for the past fifty years God has been giving to this people, substantiating it by the demonstration of the Holy Spirit (*Ellen White, A Call to the Watchmen*, p. 16; 1910).

## Chapter 21

### What Does It Mean To Be “Orthodox”?

Today a great deal is said about the need to be orthodox. Orthodox is defined as: “1. Adhering to the accepted or traditional and established faith. . . 2. Adhering to the Christian faith as expressed in the early Christian ecumenical creeds. 3. Adhering to what is commonly accepted, customary, or traditional (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed.)” Let us examine the definition of “orthodox” and see if it comes up to the test of Bible truth.

↳ Firstly, “orthodox” is that which is “traditional.” When asked why his disciples transgressed “the tradition of the elders,” Jesus “answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition (Matthew 15:2, 3)?” Christ further added, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:9).” The Son of God clearly stated that tradition was not a reliable method of determining truth. The Apostle Paul wrote: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after *the tradition of men*, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (Colossians 2:8).” Peter continued in this same theme, writing: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from *your vain conversation received by tradition* from your fathers (1 Peter 1:18).”

↳ Secondly, “orthodox” is considered to be that which has been established by the “early Christian ecumenical creeds.” A creed is defined as: “A brief, authoritative, formal statement of religious beliefs. The word creed comes from the Latin word *credo* (‘I believe’), the first word of both the Nicene Creed and the Apostles’ Creed (*Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).” The term “creed” is not in the Bible, but God, through his servant, has given us this counsel:

Rome withheld the Bible from the people and required all men to accept her teachings in its place. It was the work of the Reformation to restore to men the word of God; but is it not too true that in the churches of our time men are taught

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to rest their faith upon their creed and the teachings of their church rather than on the Scriptures (*The Great Controversy*, p. 388)?

In the professedly Christian world many turn away from the plain teachings of the Bible and build up a creed from human speculations and pleasing fables, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. Men hang with admiration upon the lips of eloquence while it teaches that the transgressor shall not die, that salvation may be secured without obedience to the law of God. If the professed followers of Christ would accept God's standard, it would bring them into unity; but so long as human wisdom is exalted above His Holy Word, there will be divisions and dissension. The existing confusion of conflicting creeds and sects is fitly represented by the term "Babylon," which prophecy (Revelation 14:8; 18:2) applies to the world-loving churches of the last days (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 124).

*The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's Word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, "It is written." Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline* (*The Review and Herald*, December 15, 1885).<sup>1</sup>

The early Adventists were very careful to steer away from creeds. During an organizational meeting on October 5, 1861, J. N. Loughborough outlined the five steps of apostasy,<sup>2</sup> of which he noted the formation of a creed as the first or foundation step.<sup>2</sup>

The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is, to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such (*The Review and Herald*, October 8, 1861).

↳ Thirdly, "orthodox" is that which is "commonly accepted"; in other words, the voice of the majority. However, the record is clear that as far as matters of faith and practice are concerned, the majority of humanity has always been in error. The Bible portrays God's last day saints as a "little flock" compared to the apostate churches (Luke 12:32). The Scripture declares that "*all the world* wondered after the beast (Revelation 13:3)." Jesus said, "*Many* will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:22, 23)."

1. See also *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 416.

2. For a more complete outline, see "Five Steps of Apostasy" in Appendix p. 253.

The experience of the twelve men sent to spy out the land of Canaan illustrates well the principle that the majority is usually wrong. The majority, eighty-three percent, brought back a wicked report. It was the majority that nailed Jesus to the cross. However, our courage is strengthened when we realize that, while the majority of humanity is on the track of error, all the heavenly hosts are in perfect unity with God. We should pray that God will open our eyes, just as he opened the eyes of Elisha’s servant when the Syrians had surrounded Dothan. (See 2 Kings 6.)

### **The Bible Is Left Out**

In reviewing the definition of “orthodox,” it should be noted that nothing about the Bible is mentioned. The teachings of Scripture are not considered the criteria for “orthodox.” Instead, “traditional” beliefs, based upon the “ecumenical creed” and “commonly accepted, customary or traditional” practices are the paradigm for “orthodox.” Ellen G. White certainly accepted no such axiom. This standard can hardly be acceptable to the Christian who stands on the Bible and the Bible alone. She wrote:

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain *the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms*. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, *the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority*—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support (*The Great Controversy*, p. 595).

A study of the writings of Ellen G. White reveals that she did not use the concept of “orthodox” in a favorable light. In fact, it was the “orthodox” ministers from the “orthodox” churches that attacked the Seventh-day Adventists and their message.

The orthodox churches used every means to prevent the belief in Christ’s soon coming from spreading (*Life Sketches*, p. 59, 1915 ed.; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 54).

From the beginning of my work, I have been pursued by hatred, reproach, and falsehood. Base imputations and slanderous reports have been greedily gathered up and widely circulated by the rebellious, the formalist, and the fanatic. There are ministers of the so-called orthodox churches traveling from place to place to war against Seventh-day Adventists, and they make Mrs. White their textbook. The scoffers of the last days are led on by these ministers professing to be God’s watchmen (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 69).

The attack of “orthodox” ministers and churches upon God’s people is not a new plan, but one that has been in progress since ancient times. It is based on human fear and weakness. The carnal mind is insecure and does not wish to be thought of as being outside the norm. Satan used this plan

well to prevent the people from hearing Jesus and he continues this plan in our day.

When Christ was upon earth, frowning priests and angry rulers threatened the people with exclusion from the synagogue, and thus kept many from hearing the great Teacher. To-day the so-called “orthodox” ministers by similar threats deter their hearers from listening to the words of Christ’s ambassadors. Many fear even to study the word of God for themselves, lest they shall be convinced. Young persons who find no attractions in the Bible, and who have never searched its pages, will, parrot-like, repeat the sayings of opposers to the truth. They imagine that it savors of manly independence to talk of having a mind of their own, when in fact they merely echo the opinions and sentiments of others. What the minister says in the desk, against the truth, is greedily devoured by those who love to have it so, and his assumptions, though wholly destitute of Scripture proof, are repeated as conclusive evidence (*The Signs of the Times*, March 16, 1882).

The contrast between the “orthodox” ministers and the sincere seeker of truth is presented well in the previous statement. The “orthodox” preacher stands on the sinking sand of “opinions and sentiments,” while “Christ’s ambassadors” stand on the firm platform of Scriptural truth. As noted in the prior statement, the times of Christ show great similarity to our day.

From its earliest years the Jewish child was surrounded with the requirements of the rabbis. Rigid rules were prescribed for every act, down to the smallest details of life. *Under the synagogue teachers the youth were instructed in the countless regulations which as orthodox Israelites they were expected to observe. But Jesus did not interest Himself in these matters.* From childhood He acted independently of the rabbinical laws. *The Scriptures of the Old Testament were His constant study,* and the words, “Thus saith the Lord,” were ever upon His lips (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 84).

Jesus, “the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6),” was not concerned with what was “orthodox” but rather with what the Scriptures said. If he is our example in all things, then why are so many of his professed followers interested in being “orthodox”? God has never required his people to accept the traditions of men in order to receive his approbation. In fact, God’s ideal has been for them to be a separate people. “For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations (Numbers 23:9).” “And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine (Leviticus 20:26).”

### **The Trinity Is “Orthodox”**

No doctrine of the Christian faith is supposed to be more orthodox than the Trinity. Let us examine it and see if it is really “orthodox” as its defenders claim.

↳ Firstly, is the Trinity traditional? Yes. The Trinity doctrine is a tradition not based upon Scripture. Let us first notice a Catholic statement printed in an early *Review*:

“Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

“A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; - she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.”

“Q. Do you observe other necessary truths as taught by the Church, not clearly laid down in Scripture?

“A. *The doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine the knowledge of which is certainly necessary to salvation, is not explicitly and evidently laid down in Scripture, in the Protestant sense of private interpretation (The Review and Herald, August 22, 1854; quoted from Doctrinal Catechism).*”

As noted in chapter 9, a special issue of the *Adventist Review* devoted to the twenty-seven fundamental beliefs (currently twenty-eight) of Seventh-day Adventists yields the following declaration concerning the doctrine of the Trinity:

*While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, it is assumed as a fact by Bible writers and mentioned several times.*

*Only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity (Adventist Review, vol. 158, no. 31, p. 4).*

Therefore, by both Catholic and Protestant admissions, the Trinity is a traditional doctrine not based upon the Scriptures.

↳ Secondly, was the Trinity established by an “ecumenical creed”? Yes. The Trinity doctrine was established in the Catholic Councils at Nicæa (A.D. 325) and Constantinople (A.D. 381). A. T. Jones, in his monumental work *The Two Republics*, documents the Council of Nicæa to be the “Establishment of the Catholic Faith.” (See chapter 14.) The Nicene Creed is the basis for the Trinity doctrine. At the Council of Nicæa, presided over by Constantine, it was the word of man, not God, which set the standard. “In 325, Constantine played a leading role in the Council of Nicæa, . . . he defined orthodoxy (*Encyclopedia Americana*, vol. 7, p. 649).” The Catholic Church openly claims this doctrine, established at a council ruled over by a despotic tyrant, to be the central pillar of her faith.

The Mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 16).

↳ Thirdly, is the Trinity an “accepted, customary or traditional practice or belief”? Yes. The Trinity is an accepted belief today and is essential to be considered an “evangelical Christian.” The “Basis” of the World Council of Churches, in part, states the belief in “the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Constitution of the WCC).” While the list of acceptable doctrines

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varies among evangelicals, the one doctrine that must be accepted and believed to be considered a part of the body of Christ is the Trinity doctrine. The compromises made between the Seventh-day Adventists and the evangelicals forty years ago could not have occurred if the doctrine of the Trinity had not been first accepted.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was considered a cult for over one hundred years because the rest of the Christian world did not consider us to be orthodox. With the acceptance of the Trinity doctrine after the death of Ellen G. White, the church put herself in a position to join hands with evangelicals. However, if we were going to be embraced by the rest of the world, we had to be willing to accept them. In 1926, the General Conference Executive Committee voted a statement: Relationship to other Societies. Part 1 of that statement declared:

We recognize every agency that lifts up Christ before men as a part of the divine plan for the evangelization of the world, and we hold in high esteem the Christian men and women in other communions who are engaged in winning souls to Christ (*So Much in Common*, page 73).

We were sending a message to the nominal churches: If you tone down on calling us a “cult,” we will tone down on calling you “Babylon.” The results are clearly-seen today. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is accepted by most evangelicals as a part of the body of Christ, and we, sadly, have toned down the three angels’ messages.

Israel was not considered “orthodox” by ancient Babylon. Jesus and the apostles were not considered “orthodox” by the religious leaders of their day. The Adventist pioneers were not considered “orthodox” by the nominal churches. If drinking of the wine of mystical Babylon is necessary to be “orthodox,” then I would rather take my stand with the unorthodox!

## Chapter 22

### The Omega of Deadly Heresies

The lessons of sacred history are varied and many, but perhaps one of the most important lessons to be learned is the tendency of God's people to fall away from truth following the death of faithful leaders and servants. Notice carefully the following verses from Deuteronomy:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods (Deuteronomy 31:16-18).

This prophecy was directly given to Moses from God himself. The history of Israel bears out the truthfulness of his prediction. Following the death of Moses, God gave Israel a strong leader in Joshua. His influence lasted another generation. "And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel (Joshua 24:31)." The sacred record continues in the book of Judges:

And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. *And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves*

unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth (Judges 2:7-13).

The Apostle Paul predicted a “falling away” from the truth. “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things (2 Thessalonians 2:3-5)?” Writing to Timothy, Paul declared: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (1 Timothy 4:1).”

### **Apostasy Predicted Among Seventh-day Adventists**

Ellen G. White also wrote of apostasy among God’s people. A particular set of statements describe an “alpha” and an “omega” apostasy. Ellen White declared that the book *The Living Temple*, written on health by John Harvey Kellogg, contained the theories that comprise the “alpha” of apostasy. The profits from the sale of the book were to be used for the rebuilding of the Battle Creek Sanitarium which had burned. While all agreed that the portions of the book that dealt strictly with health were good and of a nature to be recommended, Dr. Kellogg had woven false concepts about God into the book. These concepts were a type of pantheism which dealt with the nature of the presence and personality of God.<sup>1</sup> Ellen White noted:

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 character to mislead (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 248).

Ellen White used the term “omega” in reference to a great apostasy that was to follow the “alpha.” Notice the following:

Be not deceived; many will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. We have now before us the alpha of this danger. *The omega will be of a most startling nature* (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 16).

I am instructed to speak plainly. “Meet it,” is the word spoken to me. “Meet it firmly, and without delay.” But it is not to be met by our taking our working

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1. These concepts were so tightly woven into the book that W. W. Prescott wrote “it is almost impossible to take out these ideas and leave anything in the book beyond the simple statements of physiological truth (Letter to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, dated October 25, 1903).” See also M. C. Wilcox’s review of the book in *The Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1903, p. 11.

forces from the field to investigate doctrines and points of difference. We have no such investigation to make. In the book “Living Temple” there is presented the alpha of deadly heresies. *The omega will follow, and will be received by those who are not willing to heed the warning God has given (Ibid., p. 50).*

*I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people.* I knew that 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 (*Ibid.*, p. 53).

### Further Statements on Apostasy

Connected with these statements are complementary statements found in *Special Testimonies* that do not mention the term “omega” but deal with the same apostasy:

*One thing it is certain is soon to be realized,—the great apostasy, which is developing and increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout. **We are to hold fast the first principles of our denominated faith, and go forward from strength to increased faith.*** Ever we are to keep the faith that has been substantiated by the Holy Spirit of God from the earlier events of our experience until the present time. We need now larger breadth, and deeper, more earnest, unwavering faith in the leadings of the Holy Spirit. If we needed the manifest proof of the Holy Spirit’s power to confirm truth in the beginning, after the passing of the time, we need to-day all the evidence in the confirmation of the truth, when souls are departing from the faith and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. There must not be any languishing of soul now (*Ibid.*, no. 7, p. 57).

The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? *The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced.* The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. *Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement.* The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, *but God being removed,* they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.

Who has authority to begin such a movement? We have our Bibles. We have our experience, attested to by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. We have a truth that admits of no compromise. Shall we not repudiate everything that is not in harmony with this truth (*Ibid.*, no. 2, pp. 54, 55)?

Whole books have been devoted to the understanding of this apostasy; however, many of the authors have been involved in this very apostasy without even knowing it! By now it should be clear that all of Sister White's statements concerning this deadly heresy can be referring to only one issue—the nature of God's presence and personality as revealed in the false pagan-papal Trinity doctrine. Some writers have attempted to connect the omega with the collapse of the medical work as it was first established. While it is true that the alpha began within the ranks of the medical work, the medical teachings of Dr. Kellogg were never brought into question by the brethren. Others, who consider themselves "historic Adventists," have sought to connect the omega to the Seventh-day Adventist–Evangelical conferences of 1955, 1956. While these conferences were a *fruit* of the omega, they were not the beginning of the omega. It was the acceptance of the Trinity doctrine that made these conferences possible.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Alpha of Apostasy**

To better understand the whole issue, we need to go back to Dr. Kellogg and look at his understanding of the Holy Spirit. As we have noted before, the problem with *The Living Temple* was not physiology but rather theology. Writing to George I. Butler, Kellogg noted:

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 Godhead. How the Holy Ghost can be the third person and not be a person at all is difficult for me to see (Letter from J. H. Kellogg to G. I. Butler, October 28, 1903).

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 from J. H. Kellogg to G. I. Butler, February 21, 1904).

Kellogg appealed to Sister White's writings to support him in his theory. Ellen White said that Kellogg's thoughts did not have a foundation in her writings.

I am compelled to speak in denial of the claim that the teachings of "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

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2. See pp. 235, 236.

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 (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, pp. 53, 54).<sup>3</sup>

Neither did Elder Butler agree that Kellogg properly represented Sister White’s thoughts in *The Living Temple*. Replying to Dr. Kellogg, he wrote:

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 from G. I. Butler to J. H. Kellogg, April 5, 1904).

While Dr. Kellogg did not appear to have accepted a full Trinitarian position at the time of the writing of *The Living Temple*, the concepts in it paved the way for him to later fully accept the doctrine.

### **The Omega of Apostasy**

False concepts about God constituted the “alpha” of apostasy and false concepts about God constitute the “omega” of apostasy. As we carefully examine Sister White’s statements concerning the “omega,” we see that the Trinity doctrine and its acceptance within the larger body of Adventism perfectly fits her predictions.

To begin with, she stated that “the omega will be of a most startling nature (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 16).” Let us consider this statement in the light of the following candid acknowledgment by Elder William Johnsson, former editor of the *Adventist Review*:

Some Adventists today think that our beliefs have remained unchanged over the years, or they seek to turn back the clock to some point when we had everything just right. But all attempts to recover such “historic Adventism” fail in view of the facts of our heritage.

Adventist beliefs have changed over the years under the impact of “present truth.” *Most startling* is the teaching regarding Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Many of the pioneers, including James White, J. N. Andrews, Uriah

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3. Kellogg, writing to W. W. Prescott, stated: “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 dated October 25, 1903).”

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Smith, and J. H. Waggoner, held to an Arian or semi-Arian view—that is, the Son at some point in time before the Creation of our world was generated by the Father.

Likewise, the Trinitarian understanding of God, *now* part of our fundamental beliefs, *was not* generally held by the early Adventists. Even today a few do not subscribe to it (*Adventist Review*, January 6, 1994, pp. 10, 11).

Johnsson writes of “present truth,” but real “present truth” will never contradict established truth! Johnsson makes the forthright admission that nothing would be more “startling” to the pioneers of this movement than to see the concepts of God and Christ that are in the Church today! Johnsson further candidly admits that our teachings have changed and that the “Trinitarian understanding of God” is “*now* part of our fundamental beliefs.”

The omega would come and it would be of such a nature that Sister White trembled “for our people,” indicating that it would attack the entire denomination. “The omega will follow, and will be received by those who are not willing to heed the warning God has given (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 50).” “I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people (*Ibid.*, p. 53).” Today, acceptance of the twenty-eight fundamental beliefs, which include the Trinity doctrine, is necessary to be part of the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Ellen White also predicted the time frame within which the Omega would exist. She stated in 1904 “that the omega would follow in a little while.” She also indicated that it would arise primarily after her death. “Great things shall come to pass after I am gone; Satan will work as never before. All that can be shaken will be shaken out. We must draw near to God, for we cannot lean upon man or the crowd. We must know the Lord deeply as never before (*Asiatic Division News*, May 1-15, 1915, p. 43; quoted from *The Alpha and the Omega of Apostasy* by Julius Gilbert White).” She also stated: “One thing it is certain is soon to be realized,—the great apostasy, which is developing and increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout (*Testimonies for the Church Containing Messages of Warning and Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 57).” The omega apostasy would breach the church ranks *shortly* after the death of Ellen White and would continue until Jesus comes in the clouds of heaven.

### **The 1919 Bible Conference**

History reveals that it was shortly after the death of Ellen G. White that the Seventh-day Adventist Church quickly moved to embrace the Trinity doctrine. In the 1919 Bible Conference, W. W. Prescott gave a series of studies entitled “The Person of Christ.” These studies promoted Trinitarianism and were not universally received by the delegates. The discussion following his presentations became quite intense. General Conference President A. G.

Daniells attempted to calm the discussions down by stating, “We are not going to take a vote on trinitarianism or arianism, but we can think (Transcript from the 1919 Bible Conference).”<sup>4</sup>

### ***The Coming of the Comforter***

The movement to adopt Trinitarianism and to become like the rest of the world was on. Ellen White predicted that “books of a new order would be written.” In 1928, LeRoy Froom’s book *The Coming of the Comforter* was published. In this book, Froom teaches the false doctrine of the Trinity and, as Kellogg did before him, he uses Ellen White quotations to substantiate his position. This book was the result of studies that Froom had given during the 1928 North American Union Ministerial Institutes. At the time of the writing, Froom did not mention that he received help from Babylon in producing his book. It was over forty years later before he confessed:

May I here make a frank personal confession? When, back between 1926 and 1928, I was asked by our leaders to give a series of studies on the Holy Spirit, covering the North American union ministerial institutes of 1928, I found that, aside from priceless leads found in the Spirit of Prophecy, there was practically nothing in our literature setting forth a sound Biblical exposition in this tremendous field of study. There were no previous pathfinding books on the question in our literature.

I was compelled to search out a score of valuable books written by *men outside our faith*—those previously noted—for initial clues and suggestions, and to open up beckoning vistas to intensive personal study. Having these, I went on from there. But they were decided early helps. And scores, if not hundreds, could confirm the same sobering conviction that *some of these other men frequently had a deeper insight into the spiritual things of God than many of our own men then had on the Holy Spirit and the triumphant life*. It was still a largely obscure theme (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 322).<sup>5</sup>

Please carefully note what one researcher observed Elder Froom to be saying: “1.) There was nothing in our literature—why—because we were not trinitarians. 2.) That whatever was to be presented in 1928 would have its roots in whatever the holiness people taught—especially on this subject. 3.) He is charging our own men with neglect in the searching into the deeper spiritual things of God (Robert Diener, *A History of the Godhead in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, p. 6).”

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4. This evidence clearly disproves the false notion that Ellen White (through *The Desire of Ages*), corrected the prevailing anti-Trinitarian position of the Advent pioneers.

5. The men “outside our faith” that Froom included were: “Murry, Simpson, Gordon, Holden, Meyer, McNeil, Moody, Waugh, McConkey, Scroggie, Howden, Smith, McKensie, McIntosh, Brooks, Dixon, Kyle, Morgan, Needham, Pierson, Seiss, Thomas, West, and a score of others (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 320).”

Elder Froom also gives credit to holiness people for a better understanding of the eternal verities. He specifically mentions the “renowned Keswick Conferences of Britain . . . founded to ‘promote practical holiness (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 320).” This Pentecostal Trinitarianism was not accepted by all of the brethren in 1928. Froom describes the resistance to the Trinity doctrine as taught in *The Coming of the Comforter* in a letter to Dr. O. H. Christenson:

May I state that my book, *The Coming of the Comforter* was the result of a series of studies that I gave in 1927-1928 to ministerial institutes throughout North America. *You cannot imagine how I was pummeled by some of the old timers because I pressed on the personality of the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Godhead.* Some men denied that — still deny it. But the book has come to be generally accepted as standard (Letter of LeRoy Froom to Dr. Otto H. Christenson, October 27, 1960).

One statement in *The Coming of the Comforter* that is of special interest is found on page 40: “If He [the Holy Spirit] is a divine person, and we think of Him as an impersonal influence, we are robbing a divine person of the deference, honor, and love that is His due. Again, if the Holy Spirit is a mere influence or power, we shall try to get hold of and use *it*. But if we recognize Him as a person, we shall study how to yield to Him, that He may use us.” Froom had borrowed this idea almost verbatim from *The Fundamentals*, a book by Protestant evangelist R. A. Torrey. This raises the question: If one believes that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct being other than the Father and his Son and is given ‘deference, honor and love,’ then who are we worshipping and yielding our lives to? The only reasonable conclusion is Satan! This may seem difficult for many to accept, but Ellen White describes just such an occurrence in an early Broadside:

In February, 1845, I had a vision of events commencing with the Midnight Cry. *I saw a throne and on it sat the Father and the Son.* I gazed on Jesus’ countenance and admired his lovely person. The Father’s person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered him. I asked Jesus if his Father had a form like himself. He said he had, but I could not behold it, for said he if you should once behold the glory of his person you would cease to exist. Before the throne I saw the Advent people, the church, and the world. I saw a company, bowed down before the throne, deeply interested, while the most of them stood up disinterested and careless. Those who were bowed before the throne would offer up their prayers and look to Jesus; then he would look to his Father, and appeared to be pleading with Him. *A light would come from the Father to the Son, and from the Son to the praying company.* Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from the Father to the Son, and from the Son it waved over the people before the throne. But few would receive this great light; many came out from under it and immediately resisted it; others were careless and did not cherish the light, and it moved off from them; some cherished it, and went and bowed down with the little praying company. This company all received the light, and

rejoiced in it, as their countenances shone with its glory. And I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming Chariot go into the Holy of Holies, within the veil, and did sit. There I saw thrones that I had never seen before. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him; and I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after he arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who rose up when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him as He left the throne and led them out a little way. — Then He raised His right arm and we heard his lovely voice saying, “Wait here—I am going to my Father to receive the Kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to myself.” And I saw a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, and Angels were all around it as it came where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the Holiest where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, as He was standing before the Father, a great High Priest. On the hem of His garment was a bell and pomegranate. Then Jesus shew me the difference between faith and feeling. And I saw those who rose up with Jesus send up their faith to Him in the Holiest, and pray—my Father give us thy Spirit. *Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In the breath was light, power, and much love, joy and peace.* Then I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it.—*Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God; I saw them look up to the throne and pray, my Father give us thy Spirit; then Satan would breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy and peace. Satan’s object was to keep them deceived, and to draw back and deceive God’s children. I saw one after another leave the company who were praying to Jesus in the Holiest, and go and join those before the throne, and they at once received the unholy influence of Satan (To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad, April 6, 1846, p. 7).*

In this vision we see two different persons breathing two different spirits upon the people. Jesus would breathe “the Holy Ghost” which is described as having “light, power, and much love.” Satan’s “unholy influence” (spirit) carried “no sweet love, joy and peace.” The tragedy of accepting the Trinity is not only that we deny worship to “The Father and the Son [who] are alone to be exalted,” but we become snared by Satan’s spiritualism!<sup>6</sup>

### **1931 Statement of Beliefs**

The apostasy that Sister White warned of would actually change our whole religious structure. “The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. *Our religion would be changed.* The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of

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6. *The Youth’s Instructor*, July 7, 1898. See also *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 58.

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intellectual philosophy would be introduced (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 55).” When the theology of any religious organization is altered, that system is changed at its very foundation. For nearly a century, the church had professed an anti-Trinitarian position. In 1931 a new Statement of Beliefs was introduced which, for the first time, promoted the Trinity. The second statement reads:

2. That the Godhead or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption (*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, p. 29, 1963 ed.).

With the urging of the General Conference Statistical Secretary Edson Rogers, along with certain requests for a clarified statement from the field, a committee of four was appointed to oversee the preparation of a new Statement of Beliefs. The four chosen were Milton E. Kern, Francis M. Wilcox, Edwin R. Palmer, and Charles H. Watson. Wilcox was chosen by the other three to prepare the main draft. With the full knowledge and approval of the others, Wilcox gave his statement to Rogers who placed it in the 1931 *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. It appeared in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* in 1933. This statement was not voted on by the General Conference.

On January 14, 1942, the General Conference Committee voted that the (Wilcox) statement of “Fundamental Beliefs” be made available in leaflet form. It had appeared in our official *Church Manual* of 1933—similarly without formal adoption—and has been in each succeeding edition. *It was therefore by common consent and not by formal voted acceptance* that Wilcox’s suggested “Fundamental Beliefs,” . . . became our accepted Statement of Faith (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 419; emphasis in the original).

### **1941 Baptismal Vow and New Hymnal**

A new baptismal vow was introduced in 1941 which included an affirmative statement of the candidates’ belief of the Trinity. A committee of thirteen was appointed in 1941 to frame a uniform baptismal vow. Elder Branson was chairman and R. A. Anderson was the secretary. “The task of this committee was to formulate a uniform Baptismal Covenant, and Vow, based on the 1931 ‘Fundamental Beliefs’ statement in the Yearbook and Manual. It was also to point up a bit more sharply the First, Second, and Third Persons of the Godhead (Letter of L. E. Froom to R. A. Anderson, J. L. Shuler, D. E. Rebok, A. W. Peterson, W. G. Turner, J. E. Weaver, November 22, 1966).”

This was also the year that *The Church Hymnal* appeared. Our early song book had promoted the truth about God and Christ. *The Church Hymnal* was the start toward Trinitarian hymns.<sup>7</sup>

Our past has been accounted as error and “false doctrine.”<sup>8</sup> Books of a “new order” have been written.<sup>9</sup> “Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 55).” Elder Froom stated that the “denomination [was] irrevocably committed to [the] basic Christian verities (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 75).”<sup>10</sup>

### **Holdouts – Washburn and Longacre**

By the early 1940’s, there were still some holdouts who resisted the new theology. One was a minister by the name of Elder J. S. Washburn who, in 1940, wrote a blistering attack on Elder W. W. Prescott for a sermon that Prescott had preached in the Takoma Park, Maryland, Seventh-day Adventist Church on October 14, 1939. The title of Prescott’s sermon was “The Coming One” and dealt with the Trinity, among other subjects. Washburn wrote in his letter:

The doctrine of the Trinity is a cruel heathen monstrosity, removing Jesus from his true position of Divine Saviour and Mediator.

Satan has taken some heathen conception of a three-headed monstrosity, and with deliberate intention to cast contempt upon divinity, has woven it into Romanism as our glorious God, an impossible, absurd invention. This monstrous doctrine transplanted from heathenism into the Roman Papal Church is seeking to intrude its evil presence into the teachings of the Third Angel’s Message (Letter of J. S. Washburn to W. W. Prescott, April 24, 1940).

The significance here is that in 1940 the Trinitarian doctrine did not have a complete stronghold in the church.<sup>11</sup> In fact, Washburn’s letter, while highly personal, was liked so well by one conference president that he asked for thirty-two copies to distribute to all the ministers in his conference. Washburn also wrote:

Seventh-day Adventists claim to take the word of God as supreme authority and to have “come out of Babylon,” to have renounced forever the vain

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7. For a further discussion, see Robert Diener, *A History of the Godhead in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, pp. 7, 8.

8. See Johnsson *op. cit.* and *A Warning and its Reception*.

9. *The Coming of the Comforter, Questions on Doctrine, By Faith Alone, Movement of Destiny, Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, etc.

10. By the “basic Christian verities” Froom meant the new theology that teaches the Trinity, the pre-fall incarnation, and the complete and final atonement on the cross.

11. For a defense of Prescott’s character, see Elder D. E. Robinson’s letter of April 25, 1940 to J. S. Washburn.

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traditions of Rome. If we should go back to the immortality of the soul, purgatory, eternal torment and the Sunday Sabbath, would that be anything less than apostasy? If, however, we leap over all these minor, secondary doctrines and accept and teach the very central root, doctrine of Romanism, the Trinity, and teach that the son of God did not die, even though our words seem to be spiritual, *is this anything else or anything less than apostasy? and the very Omega of apostasy (Ibid.)?*

Washburn's strong words can be understood when it is remembered that he knew what early Adventists believed and he saw the Trinity doctrine coming in as grave apostasy!

Another long holdout was Elder Charles S. Longacre. Like Washburn, Longacre was an older minister who personally knew and had talked with Ellen White. He was no off-shoot individual. His list of positions of responsibility in the church was long and was weighted with important posts.<sup>12</sup> Elder Longacre was still alive when *Questions on Doctrine* was being prepared. The original draft sent out contained the following question and response:

Is it possible for an individual to remain in good and regular standing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church if he consistently refuses to submit to church authority regarding the historic doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ?

The answer to this question is an unequivocal No (Question #34, *Questions on Doctrine* file).

Of the copies sent to the field for consideration, one copy was returned with the following question hand-written in beside the answer: "Would we disfellowship Elder Longacre?" Just months before his death in 1958, Elder Longacre is still a known anti-Trinitarian. God has always had a "faithful few" who have continued to carry the torch of truth while others have accepted the "hellish torch of Satan."<sup>13</sup>

### **The Revision of *Daniel and Revelation***

By 1944 most of the obstacles had been removed so that the new theology could fully engulf the movement. One thorn in the flesh was Uriah Smith's book *Daniel and Revelation*. This book, originally published in two portions *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* (1867) and *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Daniel* (1873), carried the endorsement of Ellen G. White.<sup>14</sup> It was and has been the longest-running Adventist publication in print outside of the Spirit of Prophecy books. However, it taught an anti-Trinitarian view of Christ. The necessity of

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12. See *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, pp. 810, 811.

13. See *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 409.

14. See *Colporteur Ministry*, pp. 123, 124.

removing it from circulation for this reason was suggested by W. W. Prescott at the 1919 Bible Conference.<sup>15</sup> Rather than dropping what many considered an otherwise fine volume, it was decided that the book would be “revised” to help bring it up to date with historical events that had occurred since it had last been revised by Elder Smith. However, the main thrust in the revision was to remove the anti-Trinitarian statements.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Publication of *Evangelism***

The book *Evangelism* was published in 1946 to help continue the progress of Trinitarianism within Adventism by attaching the authoritativeness of inspiration to the “new theology.” While the volume contains a wealth of Spirit of Prophecy statements, it gave Froom who was on the editorial committee the opportunity to compile Ellen White statements in such a manner so as to distort her true position. This was done using the following tactics: 1. Statements were used out of context including the use of numerous ellipses, 2. Subtitles were applied to introduce thoughts in the reader’s mind not in the quote, and 3. An unbalanced number of statements were used without the complementary statements necessary to give a total true picture. In a letter to his ally R. A. Anderson, Froom stated:

I am sure that we are agreed in evaluating the book, *Evangelism* as one of the great contributions in which the Ministerial Association had a part back in those days. You know what it did with men in the Columbia Union who came face to face with the clear, unequivocal statements of the Spirit of Prophecy on the Deity of Christ, personality of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and the like. They either had to lay down their arms and accept those statements, or else they had to reject the Spirit of Prophecy.

I know that you and Miss Kleuser and I had considerable to do with the selection of these things under the encouragement of men like Elder Branson who felt that the earlier concept of the White Estate brethren on this book *Evangelism* was not adequate (Letter of LeRoy Froom to Roy A. Anderson, January 18, 1966).

Froom is stating that in 1946 there was still a hold-out against Trinitarianism within the Columbia Union. Here we see the Spirit of Prophecy was

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15. “Ought we to continue to circulate in a standard book a statement that the Son is not co-eternal, that the Son is not co-eval or co-eternal with the Father (W. W. Prescott, 1919 Bible Conference materials for afternoon session of June 2, 1919)?”

16. See *Movement of Destiny*, p. 160. Also, in 1949, Prof. D. E. Rebok was asked by the *The Review and Herald* to revise *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*. He eliminated the teaching that Jesus accepted the sinful nature of man as had been taught in the earlier edition on p. 174. Froom states: “So the inaccurate note was deleted, and has remained out in all subsequent printings. Thus another error was removed through these revisions of the 1940’s, as concerned some of our standard and otherwise helpful books (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 428).”

used as a club to force the brethren into line instead of the “Bible and the Bible alone” being the sole rule of faith and practice among the brethren. Furthermore, the leadership of the church did not believe that the brethren at the White Estate had an “adequate” concept for *Evangelism*.

### **A Call for Repentance**

In 1950, Elders Robert Wieland and Donald K. Short, two young missionaries from Africa, expressed concern to the brethren that the church had veered off the course given by the Lord in 1888. They were asked to write out their thoughts with the result being the manuscript *1888 Re-Examined*. While not seeing the Trinitarian issue, they did an excellent work in a short period of time discussing the situation of the church at that time. They believed that the church was “ripe for disillusionment”:

It is now abundantly evident that “we” have traveled the road of disillusionment since the Minneapolis meeting of 1888. Infatuation with false teachings has taken the place of clear, cogent, heaven-inspired truth, as regards “righteousness by faith.” By the hard, humiliating way of actual experience with counterfeits, Israel has brought herself to the time when she is ripe for disillusionment (*1888 Re-Examined*, 1950 ed. p. 202).

Wieland and Short were attempting to show how a “false Christ” could appear among us. They accurately believed that misrepresentation would precede impersonation (p. 171). A careful reading of *1888 Re-Examined* reveals that while Wieland and Short mostly discussed the importance of the incarnation and the high-priestly ministry of Christ, there were touches of Christology that ran against the normal Trinitarian thinking. For example, they stated clearly that Christ had accepted the “likeness of sinful flesh” that it “was not mere *appearance*, but reality (*Ibid.*, p. 156; emphasis in original).” This led them to believe that Jesus “emptied Himself of all divine power to work a miracle, except through faith in the Father (*Ibid.*, pp. 156, 157).” Furthermore, they taught that Christ really died at Calvary:

The death of such a false Christ would have no power to draw all men, such as a clear understanding of the death of the true Christ. It would rather be an inexplicable transaction that took place between the Father and the Son, which somehow sufficed to pacify the wrath of the Father against mankind in general. The confusion is pointed by the fact that the false view requires the belief that the Son of God did not die, but only the Son of man, i. e., His body. It throws a cloud of impenetrable mystery around the very phase of Christ’s work which was intended to appeal to human hearts and intelligence, and draw them to a sincere, unaffected reconciliation with God (*Ibid.*, p. 158).

It is the sincere belief of the writer that God was using Wieland and Short to attempt a rescue of his people. While they did not understand all the issues involved at the time, it was more than a modest start. The General

Conference, however, officially rejected the message and began at once to counter the work that Wieland and Short began.<sup>17</sup>

### **The 1952 Bible Conference**

Partly in response to the call of Wieland and Short in 1950, Elder William H. Branson convened the 1952 Bible Conference. It was the church's first Bible Conference since 1919 and only the second since 1888. While the theme was to be the righteousness of Christ, the messages never got to the root of the problem; namely, the Trinitarian view was never challenged. Near the end of the conference, Branson gave the following challenge:

To a large degree the church failed to build on the foundation laid at the 1888 General Conference. . . . But the message of righteousness by faith given in the 1888 Conference has been repeated here . . .

And this great truth has been given in this 1952 Bible Conference with far greater power than it was given in the 1888 Conference. . . . No longer will the question be. "What was the attitude of our workers and people toward the message of righteousness by faith that was given in 1888? What did they do about it?" From now on the question must be. "What did we do with the light on righteousness by faith as proclaimed in the 1952 Bible Conference (*Our Firm Foundation*, vol. II, pp. 616, 617; quoted from *Watchman*, *What of the Night*, November, 1996, p. 3)?"

Branson made clear reference to *1888 Re-Examined* and then attempted to shift the focus from 1888 to 1952. The answer to Branson's question concerning the so called "light on righteousness by faith as proclaimed in the 1952 Bible Conference" did not have to wait long to be stated.

### **The 1955, 1956 Seventh-day Adventist–Evangelical Conferences**

If the true message of righteousness by faith had been given and received by the church in 1952, then the Seventh-day Adventist–Evangelical Conferences would have never taken place. As noted earlier, these conferences were held between prominent Evangelicals (Walter Martin, George E. Cannon, Donald Barnhouse) and leaders of the Adventist Church (LeRoy Froom, Roy A. Anderson, Walter E. Read, and T. E. Unruh).<sup>18</sup> The main focal point of these conferences was the Trinitarian doctrine. Roy A. Anderson later wrote about his experience of first coming in contact with the Evangelicals:

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17. See *A Warning and Its Reception*.

18. Froom was the author of *The Coming of the Comforter*, Anderson was on the 1941 Baptismal Vow committee, and Read was a member of the committee that edited *Daniel and Revelation*.

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“What do you folks believe about the Trinity?” was a question put to me some years ago by two gracious Christian gentlemen who came unannounced to the General Conference headquarters in Washington D. C. . . .

Both men were Christian college professors who had read much about Adventists, but all from detractors, and one of them was commissioned to write a new book about Adventist beliefs. However, they felt they should contact the headquarters to discover what we *actually* believe on points of vital interest rather than just quoting from others.

The answers to their earnest questions lengthened into days of prayerful discussions. Our answer concerning the Godhead and the Trinity was crucial, for in some of the books they had read that Adventists were classed as Arians (*Adventist Review*, September 8, 1983, p. 4).

As Martin had noted to Anderson, some books had classed Adventists as Arians because of their anti-Trinitarian belief. In fact, Martin had failed to classify Seventh-day Adventists as “Christians” in the first printing of his book *The Rise of Cults*. The emphasis at the beginning of the conferences was on past anti-Trinitarian statements made by the pioneers of Adventism, including Ellen White! To a group of ministers in 1989, Martin gave a brief history of how it occurred:

The climate at that time [1955, 1956], Adventism was considered like Jehovah’s Witnesses, like Mormonism, like most of the major cultic structures of the day. . . .

When I first meet with L. E. Froom, he took me to task for about fifteen minutes on how I could ever possibly think that Adventism was a cult. “Adventism rings as true as steel,” I said. “Do you think Arius was a Christian?” And he was an excellent church historian and he said, “Of course he wasn’t a Christian; he denied the deity of Jesus Christ.” I said, “So did Ellen White.” Dr. Froom replied, “What!” I said, “Yes” and opened up a suitcase and produced at least twelve feet of Adventist publications stacked up and marked for Dr. Froom’s perusal, and for the perusal of the committee to check the sources in there. And they were in mortal shock, I might add, to think that it was as pervasive as it was. Mrs. White reversed herself later on very quickly and affirmed the doctrine of the Trinity very strongly and taught it. But she was influenced by Uriah Smith. She did deny the eternal deity of Christ at one time and relegated Him to the place of a second deity. That’s why you were classified with the Jehovah’s Witnesses early on because of the Arian emphasis in Adventism, and because of the fact that you affirmed Michael the Archangel to be Christ.

Dr. Froom and the committee decided that they would peruse this material immediately. So we adjourned the meeting and they took all the materials with them, and I guess others, and went through the materials. *They came back and said, “Well, a great deal of these things you’re calling attention to are there, we agree, and we don’t agree with these statements. They do not reflect orthodox Adventist theology, and we reject it.”* I said, “Good, happy to hear that. Now can you fault us because we read this material, and it’s not peripheral issues we are talking about?”

We went through all kinds of materials and then the idea came for a book where we would question and the Adventist denomination would respond. . . . Out of that came the book *Question on Doctrine*. Contrary to some of the fantasies and myths which I hear today from Adventists who ought to know better, the book had the approval of the General Conference (Walter Martin, videotape conference at Campus Hill Church in Loma Linda, California, January 1989).

Elder Froom and the other leaders who met with Martin “accounted as error” the foundation that had sustained the work since its early times. Dr. Barnhouse, writing in *Eternity* magazine, noted:

Immediately it was perceived that the Adventists were strenuously denying certain doctrinal positions which had been previously attributed to them.

The Adventists specifically repudiate any teachings by ministers or members of their faith who have believed, proclaimed, and written any matter which would classify them among Arians (*Eternity*, September 1956).

Elder Froom in both *Questions on Doctrine* and later in *Movement of Destiny* blatantly lied concerning our history. He attempted to show that anti-Trinitarianism was “an encapsulated cancer, gross but confined (*The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, p. 530).” In *Questions on Doctrine* we read, “The founding fathers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church over a century ago came out of various denominational backgrounds. While all were premillennialists, *some were Trinitarian; others were Arian* (p. 29).” This is but a half truth. The fact is, while the pioneers were from “various denominational backgrounds,” once they became Seventh-day Adventists they all gave up their false Trinitarian beliefs. In *Movement of Destiny*, Froom labeled the anti-Trinitarians as having the “minority (p. 149)” view. Then he went on to explain why certain statements were made in *Questions on Doctrine*. Froom noted that some of the answers given to the Evangelicals were made as a public disavowal of statements made by the early pioneers, “. . . the early erroneous concepts of a [so-called] minority clearly needed to be repudiated. So the appointed framers of the answers to their questions prepared a simple statement disavowing these personal, individual, [so-called] minority positions, for inclusion in the forth coming book, to be called *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (*Movement of Destiny*, pp. 483, 484).” These statements were necessary to clear up the misconceptions from prior statements. The disavowal read in part:

The belief of Seventh-day Adventists on these great truths is clear and emphatic. And we feel that we should not be identified with or stigmatized for, certain limited and faulty concepts held by some, particularly in our formative years.

This statement should therefore nullify the stock “quotations” that have been circulated against us. We are one with our fellow Christians of denominational groups in the great fundamentals of the faith once delivered to the saints (*Questions on Doctrine*, pp. 31, 32).

What a shame to say that we are “one with our fellow Christians of denominational groups.” Froom and the rest can call it “Christian” till the plagues fall; God calls it “BABYLON,” and what authority do we have to call “Christian” that which God pronounces “Babylon?”

### **1971—*Movement of Destiny***

Although we have already noted and quoted from Froom’s book *Movement of Destiny*, we should also note the following points. *Movement of Destiny* was a clear attempt to rewrite our history and present the growth of the Advent movement as being of an evangelical character from its roots. The book fully supported the Trinity and the continued compromises made in the 1950’s. Froom also took liberty to attack Wieland and Short for their observance of how the church had gotten off the track of truth as it was given in 1888. The book carried a preface by Elder Neal Wilson, then General Conference vice president and chairman of the guiding committee for *Movement of Destiny*. The book’s forward was originally written by Elder Robert Pierson, then president of the General Conference; however, due to backlash over references to Elder Robert Wieland, Pierson withdrew his statement. In his place, Elder H. M. S. Richards, Sr., of the Voice of Prophecy, wrote the forward for the later edition! Of importance is the impetus for the book and the timing of its appearance. Froom acknowledges that:

Back in the spring of 1930 Arthur G. Daniells, for more than twenty years president of the General Conference, told me he believed that, *at a later time*, I should undertake a thorough survey of the entire plan of redemption. . . .

. . . I was a connecting link between past leaders and the present. But, he said, it is to be later—not yet, not yet.

Elder Daniells recognized the serious problems involved, and sensed almost prophetically certain difficulties that would confront. He knew that time would be required for certain theological wounds to heal, and for attitudes to modify on the part of some. Possibly it would be necessary to wait until certain individuals had dropped out of action [died!], before the needed portrayal could wisely be brought forth (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 17).

### **1980 Statement of Beliefs and Beyond**

The General Conference at Dallas in 1980 provided the laity a final opportunity to “meet” the omega of apostasy. The main focus of the session was the development of a new Statement of Beliefs to replace the 1931 statement which had only undergone minor revisions. The final product was an officially-voted statement that affirmed the Trinitarian teaching. This statement has since taken on the lion-like jaws of a creed. Those who are found not lining up are disfellowshipped!

In 1984, a new pro-Trinitarian baptismal vow was released. A new *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, with its strong Trinitarian position as well as its responsive readings in multiple modern translations, was introduced in

1985. In 1988, *Questions on Doctrine* was replaced with *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* This book continued the omega apostasy with positions similar to *Questions on Doctrine*. We saw the publication of the book *Issues* in 1992 with its public challenge to independent ministries which claim to be “historic Adventists” to return to an anti-Trinitarian position.<sup>19</sup> There were few takers. The next year we find the church’s admission that the early pioneers would not be allowed to join the church today because of their anti-Trinitarian position.<sup>20</sup>

### **Current Relationship of Independent Ministries**

While many independent ministries on the edge and within the Adventist Church today acknowledge the apostasy in *Questions on Doctrine* and other “books of a new order” concerning the incarnation and the atonement in heaven, most fail to realize the much larger scope of the matter. In fact, some of the most vocal supporters of Trinitarianism are Adventist independent ministries!

Several ministries such as Firm Foundation, Hartland, Amazing Facts, and Pilgrim’s Rest have gone on record rejecting the leading of God in the early days of the Advent movement and have strongly supported the pagan-papal Trinity.

In response to materials sent which clearly presented the Biblical and historical position of the pioneers, W. R. May responding for Amazing Facts, wrote:

Thanks for writing. Doug is conducting a major evangelistic crusade in Michigan so I am handling much of his mail. I do not wish to offend you but I would like to call your attention to several important things:

1. Many of the pioneers were in error on several Bible teachings. We do not base our doctrines on what various pioneers believed, but rather, upon what the church decided.
2. The Spirit of Prophecy is clear that:
  - a. Light is not revealed to a few (CW 45).
  - b. Light is not given contrary to the established faith of the body (EW 45).
  - c. New light should be submitted to the brethren and laid aside if they see no light in it (CW 47).

Like Froom and many others, Amazing Facts has accounted the first fifty years as “error.” While we agree that we should not accept any doctrine just because the pioneers believed it, we also believe that just because the “church” decides a certain doctrine is truth does not make it truth! Our truth must stand on the Bible and the Bible alone. The Spirit of Prophecy

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19. See *Issues*, p. 39.

20. See *Ministry*, October, 1993, p. 10, quoted on p. 91 of this book.

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references are excellent. What a shame the church did not listen to the counsel Elder May highlights when the Trinity doctrine was adopted!

Let us look at the facts concerning points Elder May makes relating to the Spirit of Prophecy. He states that “light is not revealed to a few,” but the wonderful truth about God and his Son was *not* revealed to just a few! All the pioneers understood and believed it, but the Trinity came into the church through the efforts of a *few* key men.

Elder May also states that “light is not given contrary to the established faith of the body,” but we should note that the doctrine of the Trinity *was* contrary to the “established faith of the body.” And lastly, Elder May adds, “new light should be submitted to the brethren and laid aside if they see no light in it.” It should be noted that new light is to be submitted to not just the brethren, but to “the brethren of experience (*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 47).” The “brethren of experience,” especially those that Ellen White referred to, were those who went through the 1844 experience. They all rejected the Trinity, seeing no light in it.

To avoid the connection the Trinity has to the papacy, some independent ministries have gone to the other extreme and accepted tritheism, the belief of three gods. Like Kellogg and Froom, they are quick to quote the *Testimonies* to “prove” their position.

At the time of this writing, we fail to see the leaders of the larger ministries correctly identifying or understanding the omega. However, that is a poor reason for us to forgo the blessings of truth which alone can make us free. We have been plainly told:

In the last solemn work *few great men will be engaged*. . . . God will work a work in our day that but few anticipate. *He will raise up and exalt among us those who are taught rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the outward training of scientific institutions*. These facilities are not to be despised or condemned; they are ordained of God, but they can furnish only the exterior qualifications. *God will manifest that He is not dependent on learned, self-important mortals*. . . .

To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 80, 82, 137).

God is going to work in such a manner that no glory will go to man! The message of Revelation 14:7 to give glory to God will be accomplished, “not by might, nor by power,” but by the Spirit of God and all glory will be his. What should be our relationship to this apostasy? “We are to hold *fast the first principles of our denominated faith, and go forward* from strength to increased faith. Ever we are to keep the faith that has been substantiated by the Holy Spirit of God from *the earlier events of our experience* until the present time (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 7, p. 52).”

Shortly before I sent out the testimonies regarding the efforts of the enemy to undermine the foundation of our faith through the dissemination of seductive theories, I had read an incident about a ship in a fog meeting an iceberg. For several nights I slept but little. I seemed to be bowed down as a cart beneath sheaves. One night a scene was clearly presented before me. A vessel was upon the waters, in a heavy fog. Suddenly the lookout cried, "Iceberg just ahead!" There, towering high above the ship, was a gigantic iceberg. An authoritative voice cried out, "Meet it!" There was not a moment's hesitation. It was a time for instant action. The engineer put on full steam, and the man at the wheel steered the ship straight into the iceberg. With a crash she struck the ice. There was a fearful shock, and the iceberg broke into many pieces, falling with a noise like thunder to the deck. The passengers were violently shaken by the force of the collision, but no lives were lost. The vessel was injured, but not beyond repair. She rebounded from the contact, trembling from stem to stern, like a living creature. Then she moved forward on her way.

Well I knew the meaning of this representation. I had my orders. I had heard the words, like a voice from our Captain, "Meet it!" I knew what my duty was, and that there was not a moment to lose. The time for decided action had come. I must without delay obey the command, "Meet it (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, pp. 55, 56)!"

Beloved, the iceberg appeared shortly after the "alpha" apostasy. To confront the omega will bring a "fearful shock," and we will be "violently shaken by the force of the collision." The true ship is "injured, but not beyond repair." Let us obey the Captain of our faith and "Meet it"!

As we have seen in our study, knowing God is eternally important. The prophet Daniel tells us that "the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits (Daniel 11:31)." Now is the time to know our God and be strong as never before. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32)."

To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 136).

Appendix  
A  
DECLARATION  
OF THE  
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES  
TAUGHT AND PRACTICED  
— BY —  
THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS.

“Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” EPHESIANS 2:20

STEAM PRESS  
OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PUBLISHING  
ASSOCIATION,  
BATTLE CREEK, MICH.:  
1872

IN presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them. We often find it necessary to meet inquiries on this subject, and sometimes to correct false statements circulated against us, and to remove erroneous impressions which have obtained with those who have not had an opportunity to become acquainted with our faith and practice. Our only object is to meet this necessity.

As Seventh-day Adventists we desire simply that our position shall be understood; and we are the more solicitous for this because there are many who call themselves Adventists who hold views with which we can have no sympathy, some of which, we think, are subversive of the plainest and most important principles set forth in the word of God.

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As compared with other Adventists, Seventh-day Adventists differ from one class in believing in the unconscious state of the dead, and the final destruction of the unrepentant wicked; from another, in believing in the perpetuity of the law of God as summarily contained in the ten commandments, in the operation of the Holy Spirit in the church, and in setting no times for the advent to occur; from all, in the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord, and in many applications of the prophetic scriptures.

With these remarks, we ask the attention of the reader to the following propositions which aim to be a concise statement of the more prominent features of our faith.

I. That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps. 139:7.

II. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist; that he took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that he dwelt among men full of grace and truth, lived our example, died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in Heaven, where, with his own blood he makes atonement for our sins; which atonement so far from being made on the cross, which was but the offering of the sacrifice, is the very last portion of his work as priest according to the example of the Levitical priesthood, which foreshadowed and prefigured the ministry of our Lord in Heaven. See Lev. 16; Heb. 8:4, 5; 9:6, 7; c.

III. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of his will to man, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

IV. That Baptism is an ordinance of the Christian church, to follow faith and repentance, an ordinance by which we commemorate the resurrection of Christ, as by this act we show our faith in his burial and resurrection, and through that, of the resurrection of all the saints at the last day; and that no other mode fitly represents these facts than that which the Scriptures prescribe, namely, immersion. Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12.

V. That the new birth comprises the entire change necessary to fit us for the kingdom of God, and consists of two parts: first, a moral change, wrought by conversion and a Christian life; second, a physical change at the second coming of Christ, whereby, if dead, we are raised incorruptible, and if living, are changed to immortality in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. John 3:3, 5; Luke 20:36.

VI. We believe that prophecy is a part of God's revelation to man; that it is included in that scripture which is profitable for instruction, 2 Tim. 3: 16; that it is designed for us and our children, Deut. 29: 29; that so far from being enshrouded in impenetrable mystery, it is that which especially constitutes the word of God a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, Ps. 119: 105, 2 Pet. 2:19; that a blessing is pronounced upon those who study it, Rev. 1:1-3; and that, consequently, it is to be understood by the people of God sufficiently to show them their position in the world's history, and the special duties required at their hands.

VII. That the world's history from specified dates in the past, the rise and fall of empires, and chronological succession of events down to the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom, are outlined in numerous great chains of prophecy; and that these prophecies are now all fulfilled except the closing scenes.

VIII. That the doctrine of the world's conversion and temporal millennium is a fable of these last days, calculated to lull men into a state of carnal security, and cause them to be overtaken by the great day of the Lord as by a thief in the night; that the second coming of Christ is to precede, not follow, the millennium; for until the Lord appears the papal power, with all its abominations, is to continue, the wheat and tares grow together, and evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, as the word of God declares.

IX. That the mistake of Adventists in 1844 pertained to the nature of the event then to transpire, not to the time; that no prophetic period is given to reach to the second advent, but that the longest one, the two thousand and three hundred days of Dan. 8:14, terminated in that year, and brought us to an event called the cleansing of the sanctuary.

X. That the sanctuary of the new covenant is the tabernacle of God in Heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8, and onward, of which our Lord, as great High Priest, is minister; that this sanctuary is the antitype of the Mosaic tabernacle, and that the priestly work of our Lord, connected therewith, is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation. Heb. 8:1-5, c.; that this is the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days, what is termed its cleansing being in this case, as in the type, simply the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place, to finish the round of service connected therewith, by blotting out and removing from the sanctuary the sins which had been transferred to it by means of the ministration in the first apartment, Heb. 9:22, 23; and that this work, in the antitype, commencing in 1844, occupies a brief but indefinite space, at the conclusion of which the work of mercy for the world is finished.

XI. That God's moral requirements are the same upon all men in all dispensations; that these are summarily contained in the commandments spoken by Jehovah from Sinai, engraven on the tables of stone, and

deposited in the ark, which was in consequence called the “ark of the covenant,” or testament. Num. 10:33, Heb. 9:4, c.; that this law is immutable and perpetual, being a transcript of the tables deposited in the ark in the true sanctuary on high, which is also, for the same reason, called the ark of God’s testament; for under the sounding of the seventh trumpet we are told that “the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.” Rev. 11:19.

XII. That the fourth commandment of this law requires that we devote the seventh day of each week, commonly called Saturday, to abstinence from our own labor, and to the performance of sacred and religious duties; that this is the only weekly Sabbath known to the Bible, being the day that was set apart before Paradise was lost, Gen. 2:2, 3, and which will be observed in paradise restored, Isa. 66:22, 23; that the facts upon which the Sabbath institution is based confine it to the seventh day, as they are not true of any other day; and that the terms, Jewish Sabbath, and Christian Sabbath, as applied to the weekly rest-day, are names of human invention, unscriptural in fact, and false in meaning.

XIII. That as the man of sin, the papacy, has thought to change times and laws (the laws of God), Dan. 7:25, and has misled almost all Christendom in regard to the fourth commandment, we find a prophecy of a reform in this respect to be wrought among believers just before the coming of Christ. Isa. 56:1, 2, 1 Pet. 1:5, Rev. 14:12, c.

XIV. That as the natural or carnal heart is at enmity with God and his law, this enmity can be subdued only by a radical transformation of the affections, the exchange of unholy for holy principles; that this transformation follows repentance and faith, is the special work of the Holy Spirit, and constitutes regeneration or conversion.

XV. That as all have violated the law of God, and cannot of themselves render obedience to his just requirements, we are dependent on Christ, first, for justification from our past offenses, and, secondly, for grace whereby to render acceptable obedience to his holy law in time to come.

XVI. That the Spirit of God was promised to manifest itself in the church through certain gifts, enumerated especially in 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4; that these gifts are not designed to supersede, or take the place of, the Bible, which is sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, any more than the Bible can take the place of the Holy Spirit; that, in specifying the various channels of its operation, that Spirit has simply made provision for its own existence and presence with the people of God to the end of time, to lead to an understanding of that word which it had inspired, to convince of sin, and to work a transformation in the heart and life; and that those who deny to the Spirit its place and operation, do plainly deny that part of the Bible which assigns to it this work and position.

XVII. That God, in accordance with his uniform dealings with the race, sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the second advent of Christ; and that this work is symbolized by the three messages of Rev. 14, the last one bringing to view the work of reform on the law of God, that his people may acquire a complete readiness for that event.

XVIII. That the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary (see proposition X), synchronizing with the time of the proclamation of the third message, is a time of investigative judgment, first, with reference to the dead, and at the close of probation with reference to the living, to determine who of the myriads now sleeping in the dust of the earth are worthy of a part in the first resurrection, and who of its living multitudes are worthy of translation—points which must be determined before the Lord appears.

XIX. That the grave, whether we all tend, expressed by the Hebrew *sheol* and the Greek *hades*, is a place of darkness in which there is no work, device, wisdom, nor knowledge. Eccl. 9:10.

XX. That the state to which we are reduced by death is one of silence, inactivity, and entire unconsciousness. Ps. 146:4; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Dan. 12:2, c.

XXI. That out of this prison house of the grave mankind are to be brought by a bodily resurrection; the righteous having part in the first resurrection, which takes place at the second advent of Christ, the wicked in the second resurrection, which takes place a thousand years thereafter. Rev. 20:4-6.

XXII. That at the last trump, the living righteous are to be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and with the resurrected righteous are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, so forever to be with the Lord.

XXIII. That these immortalized ones are then taken to Heaven, to the New Jerusalem, the Father's house, in which there are many mansions, John 14:1-3, where they reign with Christ a thousand years, judging the world and fallen angels, that is, apportioning the punishment to be executed upon them at the close of the one thousand years; Rev. 20:4; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; that during this time the earth lies in a desolate and chaotic condition, Jer. 4:23-27, described, as in the beginning by the Greek term *abussos* ( ) bottomless pit (Septuagint of Gen. 1:2); and that here Satan is confined during the thousand years, Rev. 20:1, 2, and here finally destroyed, Rev. 20:10; Mal. 4:1; the theater of the ruin he has wrought in the universe, being appropriately made for a time, his gloomy prison house, and then the place of his final execution.

XXIV. That at the end of the thousand years, the Lord descends with his people and the New Jerusalem, Rev. 21:2, the wicked dead are raised and come up upon on the surface of the yet unrenewed earth, and gather about the city, the camp of the saint, Rev. 20:9, and fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. They are then consumed root and branch, Mal. 4:1, becoming as though they had not been. Obad. 15, 16. In this

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everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thess. 1:9, the wicked meet the everlasting punishment threatened against them, Matt. 25:46, This is the perdition of ungodly men, the fire which consumes them being the fire for which “the heavens and the earth which are now” are kept in store, which shall melt even the elements with its intensity, and purge the earth from the deepest stains of the curse of sin. 2 Peter 3:7-12.

XXV. That new heavens and earth shall spring by the power of God from the ashes of the old, to be, with the New Jerusalem for its metropolis and capital, the eternal inheritance of the saints, the place where the righteous shall evermore dwell. 2 Peter 3:13; Ps. 37:11, 29; Matt. 5:5.

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## QUESTIONS FOR BRO. LOUGHBOROUGH

*The Review and Herald*, November 5, 1861; emphasis in the original.

BRO. WHITE: The following questions I would like to have you give, or send, to Bro. Loughborough for explanation.

W. W. GILES. *Toledo, Ohio.*

QUESTION 1. What serious objection is there to the doctrine of the Trinity?

ANSWER. There are many objections which we might urge, but on account of our limited space we shall reduce them to the three following: 1. It is contrary to common sense. 2. It is contrary to scripture. 3. Its origin is Pagan and fabulous.

These positions we will remark upon briefly in their order. And 1. It is not very consonant with common sense to talk of three being one, and one being three. Or as some express it, calling God "the Triune God," or "the three-one-God." If Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each God, it would be three Gods; for three times one is not one, but three. There is a sense in which they are one, but not one person, as claimed by Trinitarians.

2. It is contrary to Scripture. Almost any portion of the New Testament we may open which has occasion to speak of the Father and Son, represents them as two distinct persons. The seventeenth chapter of John is alone sufficient to refute the doctrine of the Trinity. Over forty times in that one chapter Christ speaks of his Father as a person distinct from himself. His Father was in heaven and he upon earth. The Father had *sent* him. *Given* to him those that believed. He was then to *go to* the Father. And in this very testimony he shows us in what consists the oneness of the Father and Son. It is the same as the oneness of the members of Christ's church. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which *thou* gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." Of one heart and one mind. Of one purpose in all the plan devised for man's salvation. Read the seventeenth chapter of John, and see if it does not completely upset the doctrine of the Trinity.

To believe that doctrine, when reading the scripture we must believe that God sent himself into the world, died to reconcile the world to himself, raised himself from the dead, ascended to himself in heaven, pleads before himself in heaven to reconcile the world to himself, and is the only mediator between man and himself. It will not do to substitute the human nature of Christ (according to Trinitarians) as the Mediator; for Clarke says, "Human blood can no more appease God than swine's blood." Com. on 2 Sam.xxi,10. We must believe also that in the garden God prayed to

himself, if it were possible, to let the cup pass from himself, and a thousand other such absurdities.

Read carefully the following texts, comparing them with the idea that Christ is the Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Supreme, and only self-existent God: John xiv,28; xvii,3; iii,16; v,19,26; xi,15; xx,19; viii,50; vi,38; Mark xiii,32; Luke vi,12; xxii,69; xxiv,29; Matt.iii,17; xxvii,46; Gal.iii,20; 1 Jno.ii,1; Rev.v,7; Acts xvii,31. Also see Matt.xi,25,27; Luke i,32; xxii,42; John iii,35,36; v,19,21,22,23,25,26; vi,40; viii,35,36; xiv,13; 1Cor.xv,28, c.

The word Trinity nowhere occurs in the Scriptures. The principal text supposed to teach it is 1 John 5:7, which is an interpolation. Clarke says, "Out of one hundred and thirteen manuscripts, the text is wanting in one hundred and twelve. It occurs in no MS. before the tenth century. And the first place the text occurs in Greek, is in the Greek translation of the acts of the Council of Lateran, held A. D. 1215." - Com. on John i, and remarks at close of chap.

3. Its origin is pagan and fabulous. Instead of pointing us to scripture for proof of the trinity, we are pointed to the *trident* of the Persians, with the assertion that "by this they designed to teach the idea of a trinity, and if they had the doctrine of the trinity, they must have received it by tradition from the people of God. But this is all assumed, for it is certain that the Jewish church held to no such doctrine. Says Mr. Summerbell, "A friend of mine who was present in a New York synagogue, asked the Rabbi for an explanation of the word '*elohim*'. A Trinitarian clergyman who stood by, replied, 'Why, that has reference to the three persons in the Trinity,' when a Jew stepped forward and said he must not mention that word again, or they would have to compel him to leave the house; for it was not permitted to mention the name of any strange god in the synagogue."\* Milman says the idea of the Trident is fabulous.†

This doctrine of the trinity was brought into the church about the same time with image worship, and keeping the day of the sun, and is but Persian doctrine remodeled. It occupied about three hundred years from its introduction to bring the doctrine to what it is now. It was commenced about 325 A. D., and was not completed till 681. See Milman's Gibbon's Rome, vol. iv, p.422. It was adopted in Spain in 589, in England in 596, in Africa in 534. - Gib. vol. iv, pp.114,345; Milner, vol. i, p.519.

\* Discussion between Summerbell and Flood on Trinity, p. 38.

† Hist. Christianity, p. 34.

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**Copy of 1898 *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671**

LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.

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The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this Satanic captivity was amazing. 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 fulness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.

Of the Spirit Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me." The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.

"When He [the Spirit of truth] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit, will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. One might be able to present the letter of the word of God, he might be familiar with all its commands and promises; but unless the Holy Spirit sets home the truth,

The Foundation of Our Faith

Manuscript 21, 1906

The Father is not to be described by the earthly The Father is all the fullness of the God head invisible to mortal earthly sight.

The Son is all the fullness of the God head revealed manifested, He is the express image of his Fathers person For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him Should not perish but have everlasting life. Here is the personality of the Father.

The Spirit the Comforter whom Christ promised to send after he ascended to heaven is Christ is the Spirit in all the fullness of the God head making manifest to the All who receive him and believe in Him There are the living three persons alities of the heavenly trio in which every Soul repenting of their sins believing receiving Christ by a living faith to them who are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to them In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost these high digified personalities Give power because they are Gods property to be called the Sons of God, What is the sinner to do, believe in Jesus Christ because they are his property which he hath purchased with his own blood through the test and trial to which he was subjected to redeem from the slavery

114  
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As can be seen, Sister White's handwriting was at times very difficult to read. The interlinear type translation above was made primarily from the original manuscript. Words that at first were not clear were compared with the typewritten manuscript from Ellen White's file copy of 1906.

## The Five Steps to Apostasy

By J. N. Loughbrough

In setting up of this “abomination that maketh desolate” (Dan.12:11), we see that five distinct steps were taken:-

1. Forming a creed, expressing their faith in man-made phrases instead of adhering to the word of the Lord.
2. Making that man-made creed a test of fellowship, and denouncing all as heretics who would not assent to the exact wording of their creeds.
3. Making the creed a rule by which all heretics must be tried. Many were thus declared sinners whose faith was more in harmony with the direct statements of the Bible than that of those who decreed against them.
4. Constituting themselves a tribunal for the trial of heretics, and excluding from their fellowship all who would not assent to their creeds. Not content to debar such from church privileges in this world, they declared them subjects for the lake of fire.
5. Having thus kindled a hatred in their own hearts against all who did not conform to their creeds, they next invoked and obtained the aid of the civil power to torture, and kill with sword, with hunger, with flame, and with beasts of the earth, those whom they had declared unfit to remain in the world.

Then appeared on the stage of action one class of professed Christians with a head over them, actually declaring that he was “God on earth,” persecuting another class of Christians who were conscientiously following the Lord and his Word, - a class of whom it might be said, in the light in which God views them (as was said, of the ancient worthies), “of whom the world was not worthy.” Heb. 11:38 (J. N. Loughborough, *The Church, Its Organization, Order, and Discipline*, pp. 76, 77).

 Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 129).

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# Notes

**I**n this expanded version of *The Foundation of Our Faith* you will find critical information concerning the belief of our Adventist forefathers on the Godhead and a proper understanding of Ellen G. White's belief on this very important subject.

We invite you to prayerfully seek God's Holy Spirit as you thoughtfully read these pages. In them you will find the roots of the Advent movement traced, the development of Adventist Christology explained, and a portrayal given of the beautiful harmony between the teachings of the Bible, the writings of Ellen White, and the faith of our Advent pioneers.

Several pages of truth-filled information have been added on the Holy Spirit and on the Sonship of Jesus Christ. You will also find a new chapter that provides answers to seemingly-difficult Bible texts on the Godhead.