

A photograph of a waterfall cascading into a pool of water. The water is clear and blue, with a white splash at the base. The background is filled with lush green plants, including ferns and other foliage. The overall scene is serene and natural.

# **The Return of Elijah**

*Comfort My People*

*By Adrian Ebens*

# THE RETURN OF ELIJAH

By

Adrian Ebens

6<sup>th</sup> Draft  
15<sup>th</sup> April 2010

*In memory of my grandmother*

*Bessie Smith*

*A woman of courage and conviction*

*Error spreads from the point where error begins.  
The first and most foundational error accepted by mankind was  
that given to Adam and Eve – “You shall not surely die”.*

*This error assumes that man can continue to exist without God.  
It assumes that man’s power is self-existent, regardless of its origin.  
This assumption underpins the heart of every false teaching.*

*For him who has ears to hear, let him hear.*

## **The Inroads of Spiritualism Cause Delusion**

“Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die." "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4,5. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time. ... Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion.” GC 561

## **Spiritualism Destroys Faith in Jesus Being the Son of God**

Their principles and faith are "after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Jesus has not taught them this philosophy. Nothing of the kind can be found in his teachings. *He did not direct the minds of poor mortals to themselves to a power which they possessed. He was ever directing their minds to God, the Creator of the universe, as the source of their strength and wisdom.* Especial warning is given in verse 18. "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." The teachers of Spiritualism will come in a pleasing, bewitching manner to deceive you, and if you listen to their fables you are beguiled by the enemy of righteousness, and will surely lose your reward. *When once the fascinating influence of the arch deceiver overcomes you, you are poisoned, and its deadly influence adulterates and destroys your faith in Christ's being the Son of God,....*4bSG 88

## **Miller's Dream**

I dreamed that God, by an unseen hand, sent me a curiously wrought **casket** about ten inches long by six square, made of ebony and pearls curiously inlaid. To the casket there was a **key** attached. I immediately took the key and opened the casket, when, to my wonder and surprise, I found it filled with all sorts and sizes of jewels, diamonds, precious stones, and gold and silver coin of every dimension and value, beautifully arranged in their several places in the casket; and thus arranged they reflected a light and glory equaled only to the sun. EW 81

\* The "casket" represents the great truths of the Bible, relative to the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, which were given Bro. Miller to publish to the world.

+ The "key attached" was his manner of interpreting the prophetic Word – Comparing scripture with scripture - the Bible its own interpreter. With this key Bro. Miller opened the "casket," or the great truth of the advent to the world.

James White The Present Truth May 1850. No. 10

## **The Keys that Unlocked the Jewels of Adventism and Dispel Spiritualized Interpretation**

*Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted.* In the little book entitled "Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology," Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation:-- "1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible; 2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study; 3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering; 4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error; 5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible." The above is a portion of these rules; and in our study of the Bible we shall all do well to heed the principles set forth.

RH, November 25, 1884

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## Preface

Over recent years, I have become increasingly concerned about issues related to church governance or more specifically the impact gender neutral ordination and its impact on families and on family blessing structures with the dismantling of Male Headship. As I explored this subject, I came to the realization that my study had followed the path expressed by V. Norskov Olsen where he states

Whenever an issue regarding ecclesiology arises it should be solved in the light of theology, Christology, pneumatology, and soteriology, for the church is not an organization or institution of man, neither should it be administered as such, but a living organism – the body of Christ<sup>1</sup>

In my effort to understand family and church structures, I have been led to consider Theology, (the study about God) Christology, (The study about Christ) pneumatology (The study about the Holy Spirit) and soteriology (The study about salvation). When I was able to connect a common thread through all of these disciplines, I sensed an amazing revelation of truth and something deeply profound.

From those who have read this manuscript so far, the predominant response lies in the area of theology and Christology, but it must be understood that while I am challenging concepts in these areas, my starting point has been primarily ecclesiology and its impact soteriology. This is why the title of the manuscript is called “The Return of Elijah” which takes its inspiration from Malachi 4:5,6. At the heart of this message is a restructuring of family (and I perceive) church leadership – the turning of hearts of children to fathers and fathers to children. If the reader seeks to assess this manuscript without these thoughts in mind, the main objective will be completely missed and the document will not be comprehended. It is conceded that there is a great deal of time spent addressing Christology and more specifically the nature of Sonship, but I find that Dr Olsen has labeled the urgency of my search and study when he states:

The understanding of the nature of the church and the formation of any structure of the church and its ministry become – for better or worse – a test or expression of one’s understanding of Christ and Biblical revelation.<sup>2</sup>

If what Dr Olsen states above is correct then it must be clear that current moves within the denomination to sanction the ordination of women to pastoral ministry as well as the ordination of women to eldership – whether for better or worse – must signify a change in our understanding of the person of Christ. Therefore it must be noted that any intensification of attempted shifts in Church structure and governance must automatically challenge our perception of Christ.

I confess that I have lived happily as a Trinitarian believer for over 20 years and never felt the need to systematically examine the foundations of this teaching; It was my understanding that the Divinity guaranteed by the Trinity was the only means of safeguarding the sacrificial atonement of Christ. With difficult questions, I rested content with its mystery. It has been the growing call for shifts in church governance that has brought me face to face with the question “Who is Jesus Christ, is He God’s true Son or is He the second Person of the Godhead

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<sup>1</sup> V. Norskov Olsen. *Myth and Truth Church, Priesthood and Ordination* (Loma Linda University Press, Riverside California, 1990) Page 3

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

assigned/volunteered to the role of a Son?” The impacts on ecclesiology derived from this question are vast and far reaching. The Father/Son/Spirit structure is the benchmark for all structures, for all structures that work effectively and benevolently prosper must indeed be a reflection of God.<sup>3</sup>

I find it interesting that the rise and growth of the movement against the Trinity began around the same time as elements of the church were pushing for Women to be ordained to pastoral ministry at the 1995 General Conference Session. For at least a generation the church had been relatively silent on the topic of the Trinity until the early 1990's. Is this a coincidence? No it is simply a confirmation of the link between ecclesiology theology and Christology. Though not stated explicitly, Fred Allaback seems to have instinctively made this link with the release of his book in 1995 “No New Leaders, No New Gods” and while I would not support many of the claims made in the book both in regard to theology and concerning church leadership, the connection is still noteworthy.

With reference to the growing movement against the Trinity within the church I would state the following. It is my observation that many Adventists hold an anarchist view of sharing what they believe is truth and important for the church. I have witnessed several people seeking to hand out materials in church settings that are outside the established position of the church. Church leaders are side stepped and new members are often targeted. It is my conviction that those who seek to present a view of Christ as the true Son of God and yet disregard his established authority structure do not know the Son of God at all. Christ does all things decently and in order. We as a people are to move as a body and not each man presenting his own views regardless of church governance.

On this basis I must state clearly that anyone who would seek to use the material in this manuscript to undermine or destabilize the confidence of membership in the leadership of the Adventist Church is acting incorrectly and without my consent.

Others within the church have accused me of failing to submit to leadership by preparing this document before seeking Guidance. Such fail to understand the tension between the principles of Protestantism and Gospel Order. We must move forward together as a body but no man's conscience must be blunted when he comes to the Word. If one man is responsible for molding the thoughts of another regarding Scripture, neither can be considered Protestants. We must study, challenge and exhort one another regarding the truths of the Bible. A submission to Church Governance is not an agreement to become brain dead. So I hold these principles in tension – a firm determination to submit to Gospel order combined with a fervent desire to seek out all the truth of God's Word.

Now for some personal comments.

For those of you that know me and share the common bond of love in Christ, I ask you to examine this paper with an open heart. If you find things that you believe are not Scripturally correct, in the name of Jesus pray for me, and come to me in the spirit of love and sit with me and together on our knees let us find the truth of God. Please do not throw away your friendship with me by turning your back and refusing to talk to me and spreading reports about my name and character as several have already done. Follow the principles of Matthew 18 and come to me. I did not expect to be writing this paper and part of me cries out Lord – no, not me, but I was compelled by the matchless charms of Christ that I found in this message to write it down.

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<sup>3</sup> Col 1:17,18 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

For those of you who don't know me well or not at all, I ask you to pray for me that God will guide my mind and that I will not bring dishonour upon his beloved church. I also pray that you will compare Scripture with Scripture and ask God in fervent prayer – “Are these things so?” Be like the Bereans and prove all things and hold fast to that which is good. I certainly do not claim to have everything correct in the paper and some things I have written may need to be expressed differently to avoid confusion. Allow me the benefit of human weakness and inability to express things precisely before jumping to conclusions that you believe I hold when in fact I may not hold them.

As you read, please understand that I am submitting both objective elements as well as my subjective responses to you to examine. Some readers have incorrectly assumed that my emotional responses indicate that my mind is no longer subject to counsel or discussion. This is completely false. The subjective elements are submitted as part of the evidence. Please keep this in mind as you read.

To every one who engages in this discussion, I have been reminded of some very important counsel.

Nothing frightens me more than to see the spirit of variance manifested by our brethren. We are on dangerous ground when we cannot meet together like Christians, and courteously examine controverted points. I feel like fleeing from the place lest I receive the mold of those who cannot candidly investigate the doctrines of the Bible. Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause". 1SM 411

In late 2006, I had the great privilege of traveling to the United States and visiting many of the homes of the pioneers like William Miller, Joseph Bates, James and Ellen White. I stood in the foyer of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, I walked through the grounds of J.N Andrews University and I thanked God for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. What a blessing it has been to my life. I love this church very much and am grateful to so many of its faithful leaders that have faithfully shared the Third Angels message. I considered it the highest honour to have been ordained as one the church's ministers and I take seriously the charge that was laid upon me to be a watchman on the wall of Zion and feed the flock of God.

As opposed to some who have attacked the church in reference to the issues contained in this paper, and have in some cases harmed the flock of God by showing their supposed superiority, my heart and motive is to build up the church of God and stir her to research this question in relation to the vital issues of righteousness by faith. Many of us are praying for the latter rain and are yearning for Jesus to come. Some of us are perplexed by the lowering of Bible standards and are pleading for our Saviour to intervene and save His church. I believe the issues contained in this book are directly connected to how we might finally see the latter rain fall. As Israel of old was challenged to clarify their understanding of the God they served, so I am asking each member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to study and clarify their position on this issue, so that in united earnest prayer, we might see the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit fall upon us and prepare us for the great harvest.

Yours in the Blessed Hope  
Pastor Adrian Ebens  
Ordained Minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

## Introduction

If God tells us that His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isa 55:8) how can we be sure that when we read the Bible, that we receive His thoughts and not twist them to our destruction? The thoughts of humanity are based upon the first deception given to man that he will not surely die, that he has an inherent life or power source.<sup>4</sup> This lie, embedded undetected in our thinking, will twist everything God says to us.

Bible scholars often state with boldness that in their search for truth they have applied the most rigid exegetical principles suggesting that exegesis will circumvent falsehood from creeping into one's work. But the question is, what is this exegesis based upon? Adventism grew out of a very specific Bible study method, that method was given to William Miller and has been the key upon which the truths of Adventism were developed. As the prophet of God clearly stated "Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted."<sup>5</sup> This Bible study method is not taught in our schools or colleges, its legacy largely forgotten.

As Uriah Smith states

All Scripture language is to be taken literally, unless there exists some good reason for supposing it to be figurative; and all that is figurative is to be interpreted by that which is literal.<sup>6</sup>

This is how Adventism was born. Men studied the Scriptures faithfully according to the rules laid down by Father Miller. When they could go no further then the Spirit of prophecy would show them where their assumptions were incorrect and where they needed to focus their attention. This was the exegesis of Adventism, the facts of Scripture searched out and placed upon a correct set of assumptions by the Spirit of prophecy, confirming the fact that truth comes by revelation; truth comes to us in our pursuit for a real relationship with God. Truth cannot be extracted by the will of man or any of his scientific methods apart from that yearning to know God and have God revealed to us.

I have attempted to form this study in that method, a literal method of interpretation that brings all the facts of Scripture together in a harmonious whole. In places of difficulty, I have sought explanation from the Spirit of Prophecy. This is in harmony with our founding fathers.

In this manuscript, I lay down a framework drawn from Biblical principles that drive human assumptions. All Protestants agree in "the Bible and the Bible only". We believe in the principles of Divine revelation and God's preservation of His Word. Those things are a given. My question is: what assumptions do you work from, to interpret the facts of Scripture? Let me use a key issue of this manuscript as an example. When we say that Jesus is equal with the Father, how do we interpret the word *equal*? The word *equal* demands one to draw on their personal value system and make an estimation. It requires us to pull out our measuring rulers and make a calculation. I contend that the human heart influenced by the lie of the serpent has a faulty value

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<sup>4</sup> E.J Waggoner . RH November 25, 1897. "He who receives Jesus Christ as the Life will not cut off the life which is in Him by the old serpent fable of Eden, "Thou shalt not surely die." In the light of God's presence in his Word the humble soul will acknowledge his sinfulness, and thereby his mortality, and look to Jesus Christ alone as the Source of righteousness and eternal life to the believer now, the Bestower of immortality at his coming."

<sup>5</sup> EGW. RH November 25, 1884

<sup>6</sup> Uriah Smith. *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation* (Review and Herald, 1897) Page 123

system which directly affects our interpretation of the word *equal*. This faulty value system is so engrained, we don't even realize that we are using it.

If you draw nothing else from this study, I would be content if you as a reader were able to sufficiently evaluate your own thinking for how you understand the word *equal*. Upon our understanding of this word hangs the very core of our belief in God and also our understanding of what constitutes human relationships in the family, the church and the community. Upon this little word (which was made controversially significant by Satan when he stated he would be like [or equal to] the Most High) rests the key to unlocking key elements of the Great Controversy.

In asking you to assess your understanding of the word *equal* I am asking you to closely evaluate your value system and whether it bears the scrutiny of Scripture. In the manuscript I contrast a relationship-based **value** system with a performance-based one. I am not contrasting a relationship focus to performance focus this is entirely a different matter. Many high achievers are very focused on relationships, they need them to succeed. Business men, sales men and network marketers all need relationships, but they use relationships to get value from their performance or achievements. Please note the difference as this seems to have been missed by some readers.

The manuscript is laid out as follows:

The first section of this book reveals a Biblical framework that contrasts a foundation based on the lie "You shall not surely die", with the Biblical foundation that we only receive life through a relationship with God. The reality of knowing life only comes from God profoundly affects our self perception and world view.

The second section addresses how a *performance-based value system*, or old covenant thinking, distorts and twists our ability to read Scripture as intended. The rigours of exegesis are not immune from this distortion. This is a critical point. In our attempt to reveal this distortion, we will look at several layers that affect human thinking and affect outcomes. **THIS SECTION IS VITAL** to grasp the proposals in the manuscript. For those who wish to disagree with my proposals, I ask you to initially restrict your objections to these first two sections until it is clear you understand what I am proposing.

The third section looks at the impact of *performance-based-thinking* on various Adventist teachings. We will observe how that key Adventist doctrines cannot stand in the face of a *performance value system*. You may skip this section if you desire, but it does help to see how I use the *relationally-based* and *performance-based* value paradigms within a range of Adventist teaching.

The fourth section deals with logic issues or Scripture methodology. This discussion encompasses the issues of testing a premise by Scripture, the difficulties, and of correctly testing a premise due to underlying assumptions that are connected to *performance value systems* that, while natural, will distort outcomes. I have gone to great lengths in this section to present how assumptions can lead to faulty outcomes and how this can occur without even realizing it. This section also attempts to show the fallacy of one's trust in what they perceive is purely exegetical, when one's assumptions are not self perceived.

The fifth section takes our discussion on *value systems* and logic issues into the Godhead debate. We test the premise of three Persons of the Godhead according to *performance* and *relational value systems* to assess which system will best harmonise statements from inspiration. The key

issues addressed here are *identity*, *equality* and *authority* and how our value system affects these words. If you jump to this section and read this first, you will almost certainly fail to discern my intent. Some readers have responded to this document with typical responses to what is perceived to be simple anti-trinitarian propaganda. **All such responses will be met with a question concerning comprehension of the first two sections before other considerations will be entertained.**

The sixth section applies the principles of my findings to the issues of human relations and addresses the same issues of *identity*, *equality* and *authority*. The Father-Son relationship is the key relationship upon which humanity defines its own concepts of relationship. In this light it becomes obvious that our view of God deeply impacts family, church and community values. Presenting God as the life source in earlier chapters lays the groundwork for implications for righteousness by faith and preparation for the latter rain, and reveals why current understandings are potentially causing distortions on righteousness by faith and therefore preventing the promised blessings.

I have tried to keep my style of writing as non-technical as possible, especially in the first two sections, to provide as wide a reach as possible for those who might be interested in the discussion.

Dear Lord. May your Spirit be with this reader as they read this book.

## Section 1 – Defining the Two Value Systems (World Views)

### 1. Life Source

#### A. Two Kingdoms

For forty days Jesus had been in the wilderness communing with His Father and preparing Himself for the great battle with His arch enemy, Satan. The clash of these two kings<sup>7</sup> was now brought head-to-head. Seeing an opportunity, Satan comes to Christ in an attempt to thwart His mission. The mission of Christ was to reclaim the lost dominion that Satan now claimed as his own.<sup>8</sup> The path laid down for Christ to reclaim the lost dominion of the human race was the path to the cross.<sup>9</sup> Satan is urgent to divert Him from this path and after two attempts to move Christ from the path, he comes to his final temptation.

**Mat 4:8-10** Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; (9) And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (10) Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Satan took Jesus on a tour of all the kingdoms of the world. He showed him their glory and power and says in effect, “I know you want to take the world from me, instead of going to all the trouble of dying on the cross, I have a better plan. I will just give it to you for one small favour. It’s only a little thing, just bow down and worship me and you can have all of it.”

But what was Satan actually offering Christ? Jesus did not want Satan’s kingdom, he did not want his system of government and ways of doing things. Apart from the obvious blasphemous request of Jesus to worship Satan, what would have been achieved by the human race simply changing overlords from Satan to Christ? Satan was offering the world to Christ as an asset that any earthly king would have jumped at the chance to possess. But Christ was not interested in accumulating assets like Satan;<sup>10</sup> he wanted the hearts and minds of men and women to be connected to His own. He wanted to restore a kingdom with a completely different *value system*,<sup>11</sup> a completely different system of relationships.<sup>12</sup>

Satan claimed the world as a personal asset, something that made him feel powerful. But what is the state of his human “assets” enslaved to their satanic overlord, rather than children of Christ the King? What was Satan actually offering to Christ?

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<sup>7</sup> Rev 12:7-9. “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought”

<sup>8</sup> John 12:31. “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

<sup>9</sup> Luke 9:51. “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem...”. Matt 16:21. “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”

<sup>10</sup> John 18:36. “Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” Matt 16:23 “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

<sup>11</sup> Luke 12:15. “And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.””

<sup>12</sup> Luke 17:20,21. “...The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

While Satan probably showed Christ the magnificent temples and palaces of the world, I am certain he omitted to show him the true state of his subjects. He would have tried to hide from view the wretched state of mankind.<sup>13</sup> The death, destruction and disease that enslaved the bodies and minds of men were kept well out of sight.<sup>14</sup>

Our Saviour completely rejected Satan, his kingdom and his blasphemous request directly by saying to him “Get thee hence” or simply “LEAVE! I want nothing to do with your system of government; I will reclaim my subjects through the path to the cross.”<sup>15</sup> Praise God!

## B. The Results of Satan’s Kingdom

Let us look a little more closely at the state of the human race after 6000 years of domination by Satan’s almost universal rulership.<sup>16</sup> Do we see evidence of the glorious and glittering kingdom? In her opening address, the World Health Organisation's Director General Dr Gro Harlem stated: *“...initial estimates suggest that about 450 million people alive today suffer from mental or neurological disorders.... Major depression is now the leading cause of disability globally.”*<sup>17</sup>

Try to grasp the enormity of this problem in the following statistics from 1998/99:

- 1 million suicides every year.
- 10 to 20 million attempts every year or up to 38 attempts every minute.
- Suicide in the US for males between the ages of 35-49 is the number three cause of death.
- Australia’s youth suicide rate is the highest in the world.<sup>18</sup>

The net effect of Satan’s kingdom is millions of depressed people many of whom are driven to the point of wanting to end their life, up to 38 a minute in fact. What are the key elements of Satan’s kingdom that cause this reaction in the human race? To answer that question we need to go back to where it all began. We need to go back to the place where Satan’s kingdom was first introduced to the human race in the Garden of Eden.

## C. Roots and Philosophy of Satan’s Kingdom

Suddenly Eve found herself staring at the forbidden tree. “Why has God forbidden us to eat from this tree”, she wondered.<sup>19</sup> The fruit looked so inviting, beckoning her forward. Suddenly she heard a voice coming from the tree. Satan, seeing his opportunity, tempts her through the medium of a serpent; “Did God really say ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”<sup>20</sup> Satan is both enticing Eve to debate and placing doubt in her mind about the literalness of God’s Word. In the realm of debate and logic, Eve is no match for Satan. Add to this the unfamiliar

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<sup>13</sup> 1 John 5:19 “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”

<sup>14</sup> Dan 2:40; 7:7. “And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.” Dan 7:7 “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet.”

<sup>15</sup> John 12:24. “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

<sup>16</sup> Rev 13:3,4 “...all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

<sup>17</sup> *The Mind Game* – Phillip Day

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> “The fruit was very beautiful, and she questioned with herself why God had withheld it from them.” PP 54

<sup>20</sup> Gen 3:1. “And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”

weapons of deceit and darkness, and the contest will be devastatingly short should Eve signal her willingness to engage the contest by opening her mouth.

“We may eat of the fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”<sup>21</sup> Eve accepts the challenge by repeating the words that God had spoken but she is now deeply in trouble. Her own curiosity, combined with the opening challenge of Satan, left her unprepared for his following jaw dropping statement, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”<sup>22</sup> What was Satan really saying to Eve with this statement?<sup>23</sup>

I remember when I was about eight years of age, my sister had received a doll for Christmas that would cry and laugh and even drink milk. All you had to do was place a couple of batteries in its back and away it went. It provided hours of entertainment for my sister. I wanted to feed it to the dog, because the crying became really annoying after a while, but thought better of it because I didn’t want to hear my sister cry for an hour. This baby had life by simply putting two batteries in its back, and this is precisely the idea that Satan was trying to get across to Eve. Eve, you don’t need to worry about what anyone else says, you have life in yourself. You can do as you please and you will suffer no harm because you have life in yourself. You will not surely die!

Could you imagine an 18 month old baby saying to its parents, I think I can make it on my own now, I was just talking to the garden gnome in the backyard and he says that I have power inside of me that will keep me alive and provide all my needs, so I don’t need to depend on you anymore. Don’t call me, I’ll call you. This is exactly what happened to Adam and Eve in the garden. This concept “you shall not surely die” had snapped their sense of total dependence on their heavenly Father. It attacked the very foundations of who they were as individuals.<sup>24</sup> It confused their sense of *identity*<sup>25</sup> and consequently their *value* as God’s children.<sup>26 27</sup>

Notice Satan’s suggestion that when they ate this fruit, somehow their eyes would be opened to a higher state of existence. The inference here is not only that you have power in yourself,<sup>28</sup> but

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<sup>21</sup> Gen 3:2,3.

<sup>22</sup> Gen 3:4,5.

<sup>23</sup> “Here the father of lies made his assertion in direct contradiction to the expressed word of God. Satan assured Eve that she was created immortal, and that there was no possibility of her dying.” Confrontation, p.13

<sup>24</sup> Ps 11:3. “If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?”

<sup>25</sup> Rom 1:21,22 “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools...”

<sup>26</sup> Matt 6:30-33. “Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

<sup>27</sup> Luke 12:6,7. “Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

<sup>28</sup> “Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. ***He persuaded them not to ascribe it [Strength] to God, as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness.*** He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power...” Antiquities Book 1 Chapter 4 Para. 2

“The soul of man is immortal and imperishable. – Plato”;

The Vedic (Hindu) view of the world sees one true divine principle self-projecting as the divine word, 'birthing' the cosmos that we know from the monistic Hiranyagarbha or Golden Womb.

<http://www.Orig.in/cosmology/cosmology.htm>

that the material universe contains powerful objects, that once you possess, can make you even more powerful. In Genesis 3:4,5 Satan is in full scale evangelistic mode to win converts to his new utopian kingdom. He offered a kingdom that promised power and satisfaction to all that would embrace it. This kingdom is based on two core principles:

1. You have life in yourself making you totally independent of any external benefactor or authority, which manifests in the rejection of authority.<sup>29 30</sup>
2. Our environment contains people, objects and things that if possessed or associated with, can make us more powerful, more enlightened and more fulfilled in life. This manifests in an endless pursuit of wealth, power and possessions.<sup>31</sup>

It is important to remember that when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree, there was no inherent poison in it that made them afraid, sinful and rebellious. The Bible tells us that the fruit was good for food (Gen 3:6). The poison was the words that Satan spoke to Eve. The poison is the principles of his kingdom. Notice how Ellen White identifies the two key principles of rejection of authority and the pursuit of anything we desire, the desire for things.

“There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in *yielding to appetite*. (pursuit of things) It was distrust of God's goodness, disbelief of His word, and *rejection of His authority*, (Self determination) that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. *It was this that opened the door to every species of falsehood and error.*” Ed 25

Some people raise the question, why do I have to suffer when Adam and Eve ate the fruit, I didn't eat from that tree? The truth is that every time we distrust God's goodness, every time we doubt His Word and every time we try to act independently of God, we eat of that tree in exactly the same way that Adam and Eve did because we have swallowed the poison of Satan's kingdom.

#### **D. The Reality of God's Kingdom – God is the Source of All Life**

The idea that we could live apart from God may not seem that strange to many people but the Bible makes it clear that this type of thinking is suicidal. We read the following about Jesus in Colossians:

**Colossians 1:16,17** For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or

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“We can prove that the soul of man is immortal because man's acts of intelligence are spiritual; therefore, his soul must be a spiritual being.” [www.truecatholic.org](http://www.truecatholic.org)

<sup>29</sup> The principles of Satan's kingdom are crystalised in the often quoted maxim, “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole law” [www.dowhatthouwilt.com](http://www.dowhatthouwilt.com) ; [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thelema](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thelema)

<sup>30</sup> Rom 1:30. “backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents...”

<sup>31</sup> Ezek 28:16 “By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned;”; Luke 12:18,19. “So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry."'; Mark 4:19. “...and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”; Luke 18:24. “And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!”

authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (NIV)

Everything that we can see or perceive and even things we can't see were created and are now sustained by Jesus Christ.<sup>32</sup> Notice carefully the wording of the final sentence. And *in Him* all things hold together. The text clearly tells us that the life force that comes forth from the Son of God hold the whole universe together. Paul puts it another way in the book of Acts:

**Acts 17:24-28** “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth ... From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. <sup>27</sup> God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup> ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring’”. NIV

We see here a God who is intimately involved with our lives. Paul begins with the big picture and then zeros down to the personal and intimate level:

1. He has determined the times and places of every nation.
2. He is not far from *each* one of us.
3. ...and finally Paul goes straight to the heart of the issue and says that *in Him* we live and move and have our being.

## **E. Complete Dependence on God; Physically, Mentally and Spiritually**

If we live *in Him* then simple logic tells us we can't live without Him.<sup>33</sup> Putting it another way, Jesus said “...apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5) Please understand that this means we can't do anything physically, mentally or spiritually without Him.<sup>34</sup> We are totally and utterly dependent on Jesus for everything,<sup>35</sup> just like a little baby depends on its parents. Notice the following:

“Upon all created things is seen the impress of the Deity. Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind, brought in contact with the miracle and mystery of the universe, cannot but recognize the working of infinite power. Not by its own inherent energy does the earth produce its bounties, and year by year continue its motion around the sun. An unseen hand guides the planets in their circuit of the heavens. A mysterious life pervades all nature--a life that sustains the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, that lives in the insect atom which floats in the summer breeze, that wings the flight of the swallow and feeds the young ravens which cry, that brings the bud to blossom and the flower to fruit. The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. ***The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life.*** The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current

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<sup>32</sup> “For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You.” 1 Chronicles 29:14

<sup>33</sup> V. Norskov Olsen, Page 8. Dr Olsen speaks in terms of the covenant of life.

<sup>34</sup> “The physical organism of man is under the supervision of God; but it is not like a clock, which is set in operation, and must go of itself. The heart beats, pulse succeeds pulse, breath succeeds breath, but the entire being is under the supervision of God. “Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building (1 Corinthians 3:9). In God we live and move and have our being. Each heartbeat, each breath, is the inspiration of Him who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life--the inspiration of the ever-present God, the great I AM.” 1SM 294

<sup>35</sup> “The natural world has, in itself, no power but that which God supplies.” 1SM 293

of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.” (Emphasis mine) Ed 99

“As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of Divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart.” Ed 29

“The creation belongs to God. The Lord could, by neglecting man, stop his breath at once. All that he is and all that he has pertains to God. The entire world is God's. Man's houses, his personal acquirements, whatever is valuable or brilliant, is God's own endowment. It is all His gift to be returned back to God in helping to cultivate the heart of man.” FW 22

Inspiration tells us that all life (spiritual, mental, physical) flows directly from God, the fountain of life.<sup>36</sup> “In Him we live” (Acts 17:28). But Satan tells us that it is inherent within us, it is simply part of the biological process that we possess as our own, “you will not surely die” (Genesis 3:5). This lie chokes the fountain of life/light to our souls. When the fountain is choked then only darkness is left and life dies. Later we will discuss the reason why we continue to live, but for now we want to grasp this fundamental issue of how we possess life. It either flows from God or comes from ourselves.

There are many Christians who try to take a middle road on this issue and say “Yes, God made everything, but it is like a wind up clock. He started it and let it run.” As if somehow God made batteries and placed them inside of us. The Bible does not teach this idea. We are intimately connected to him and totally dependent on Him every millisecond of every second of every minute of every hour of every day. God is actively, knowingly, lovingly supplying us the electrical charge that keeps our hearts beating. He is actively knowingly inspiring our creative thought processes and actively and knowingly seeking to fill our hearts with love, joy, patience and kindness.

Do we consistently attribute creative ability to God?<sup>37</sup> Let's transport ourselves into the middle of a concert. The audience is held spell-bound as a talented young lady runs her fingers up and down the grand piano that stands impressively on the stage. She makes the piano literally sing – the touch of the master's hand. She then builds to the climax, and we sense the end has come. We will her to continue – but the song ends and the crowd erupts into applause, awed by such elegance and grace, combined with passion and intensity. The young lady bows and inhales the aroma of praise and then walks from the stage.

There is something revealing about this common scenario. Every time something like this happens the audience should break out into “Praise God from whom all blessings flow” or something of a similar nature. The applause should be directed to God who gave the skill and

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<sup>36</sup> “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.” Psalms 36:9

<sup>37</sup> A human artist receives his intelligence from God. He can only fashion his work in any line to perfection from materials already prepared for his work. In his finite power he could not create and make his materials to serve his purpose if the Great Designer had not been before him, giving him the very improvements first in his imagination.

The Lord God commands things into being. He was the first designer. He is not dependent on man, but graciously invites man's attention, and cooperates with him in progressive and higher designs. Then man takes all the glory to himself, and is extolled by his fellow men as a very remarkable genius. He looks no higher than man. The one first cause is forgotten. . . . 3SM 311

wisdom and ability. The pianist's heart should overflow with love and gratitude to God for the gift He has given her to use, but this is rarely the case. If we truly did act this way, we would not be elated by success or discouraged by failure; because the ability to perform does not originate with us, and if it does not originate with us then we can't take credit when we succeed or experience "debit" when we fail. This is not to say we do not want to encourage someone when they reveal the creative gifts that God has given them. Encouragement is part of the blessing process that God gives to us to give to each other. But the actual talent and performance should be credited to God as the originator of such gifts.

Here lies the curse of believing the devil's lie "You shall not surely die". Imagine a young man experiencing the thrill of driving a car for the first time. The excitement and power that come from driving at high speeds become intoxicating. The young man begins to feel he is invincible. The more convinced he becomes the more confidence is gained to driver faster and experience the power and supposed freedom. The more enslaved he becomes to the power the more certain becomes the certainty of a failure of driving skill and inevitable destruction. In the same way the further we embrace the lie of our invincible inherent power, the higher the level and frequency of destruction will result when a "handling failure" occurs. How many hits have you received already? How many more can you take? It's worth thinking about.

Let's go to the next level. We have looked at the implications of physical and mental dependence but what about spiritual and moral dependence on God.

The Bible tells us that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). This tells us that God is the source of love. It also refers to God as the God of hope (Romans 15:13). This idea is greatly expanded in Galatians:

**Galatians 5:22,23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

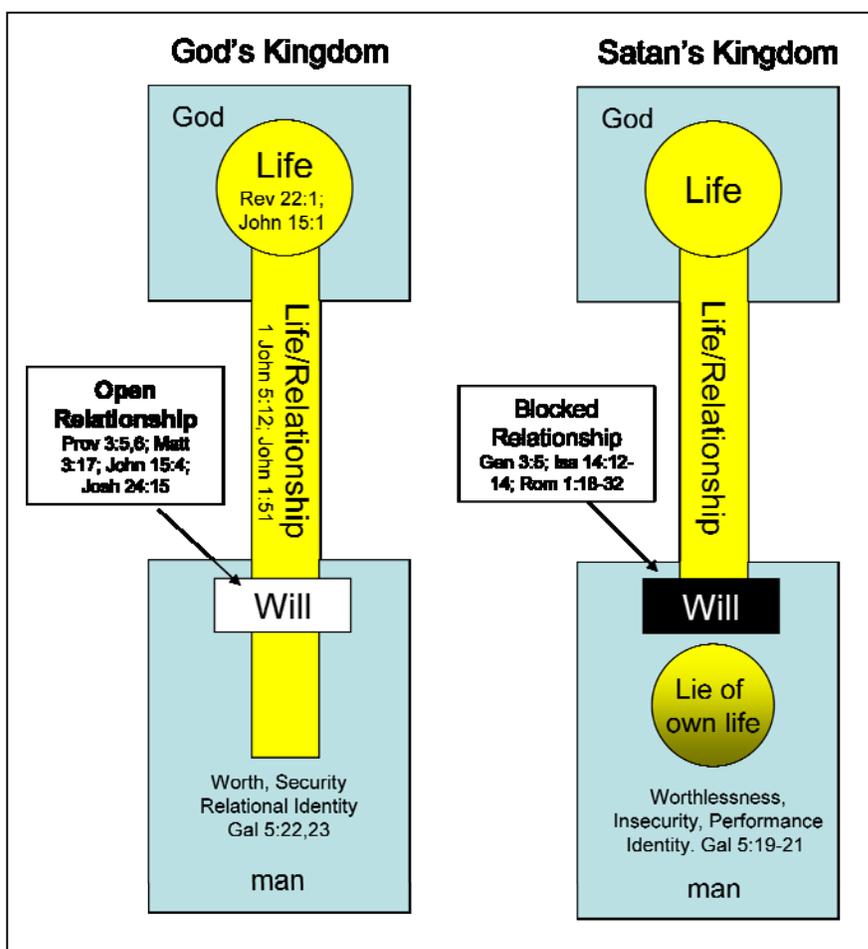
Let's analyse this text for a minute. All of these attributes come from having the Spirit of God. This simply means that without the Spirit of God you cannot have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and so on. I was thinking about this Biblical truth one day while I was walking in a park by a lake. It was calm and peaceful. I suddenly noticed a mother pushing her daughter on a swing. They were both laughing together and obviously enjoying each other's company. The love that this mother was experiencing for her daughter was inspired by God. The thought to be loving and kind and gentle to her daughter did not originate within the heart of the mother but in the heart of God and was given to that mother who chose to express it and it became a mother's love. In this sense it is not really mother's love at all but God's love expressed through the mother. That love became a part of the mother because she responded to the Spirit of God and expressed it. In the truest sense, there is no such thing as the love of a mother for her children or love between husband and wife that originates within the hearts of men and women. Human beings cannot create love, they can only express it under the influence of God.

I have presented this idea many times when preaching or speaking at seminars and it is interesting to see the audience respond. Some people's faces look as if I have just attacked the very foundation of the human race. For all the millions of love songs that have ever been sung and the billions of promises at the marriage altar that "I love you and will love you forever" not one of those promises can ever be kept without God pouring His love into our receptive souls. Let's place the attribute of love on the end of the bungy rope. Why do so many people "fall out" of love? A person who believes that love is originated in our own souls can often wake up in the

morning and not “feel” in love with their partner. He/She begins to doubt whether this person is right for them anymore and often begins to look for someone else to bring that feeling back. This is the fruit of the serpent’s lie and always will be. Falling out of love in many cases is really falling out of love with our Heavenly Father who is the only one who can create love

What about the sincere man who really meant his vows to love his wife forever and then suddenly he finds himself attracted to another woman. He may not want to feel this way but he “can’t help it”<sup>38</sup>, love is confused with lust, and there is doubt as to one’s integrity. He then begins to withdraw from his partner because the sense of guilt from acting this way prevents him from believing he could still be lovable. He thought he could continue to create love from his heart but now the Bungy rope propels him into the base of the Tree of Knowledge from where he launched and his marriage is over. Is it any wonder that finding joy in marriage is so elusive for most people? Human beings cannot create love they can only express it through their open connection with God, the source and fountain of love.

For the sake of those who are feeling like their marriage is not worth it anymore, remember that love originates only in the heart of God and is freely available to those who ask Him for it. If you feel you have lost that love for your partner, ask God to give it back to you. He will, He promised.



<sup>38</sup> To actively pursue a relationship with a person outside of marriage is actually a blocking of love from God. The adultery enacted breaks the law of God which breaks the flow of God’s love through us.

## 2. Value System

### A. My Beloved Son

As we hurried down the freeway at a greater rate of knots than normal, Lorelle's contractions developed into a pretty regular pattern. Not wanting to be caught out, we literally raced to the hospital. It was all very new and exciting; soon we would have our first child. We moved as fast as Lorelle was able up to the labour ward, the nurse took one look at us and said, "You're too happy, you need to go for a walk". Well that put a hole in our drum. 45 minutes later we came back and now Lorelle wasn't smiling any more. Another 30 minutes and we landed right in the middle of labour. Yep, there is no other word to describe it, labour, hard labour. We tried to remember all the techniques from the prenatal classes but it was hard to stay focused. Those contractions hit like a freight train coming head on. As soon as you had dealt with one the next one was straight on top of you. Finally after 11 hours, we received our first born son, Michael.

There is a really interesting photo of Lorelle and I, just after she gave birth. It's absolutely amazing. She is sitting there just beaming as though it was all in a days work and I'm swaying in the breeze looking like I was about to collapse. I developed a profound new respect for womanhood that day. I must tell you ladies, that watching your wife give birth is really hard work. When you finish laughing, I'll finish my point ☺. The emotional stress of watching the one you love in so much pain is incredible. For us men, we usually have a solution to a problem, but I had no answers this time and it hurt. I just prayed "God, I know there is a reason for all this pain but right now I can't see it." Man, I was glad when it was over.

When I held my son for the first time, it was an eternal moment. I looked down into his eyes and he was looking straight back at me and it was magic. As I continued to look down in awe and wonder, I was gripped with this deep sense of fear. I knew that my son was stamped with the same nature as myself, a nature embedded with the serpent's lie, that we have a centre in ourselves and can find *value* in our achievements. I knew that I had the responsibility for guiding that will and training him to learn where the real fountain of life is to be found, so it would release in him real love, and kindness and selflessness and obedience. After all this, I wondered, would he be my friend? Would his natural desire to find a centre in himself come between us and separate us. I just prayed right there "Oh Dear Father in heaven, don't let anything come between my son and I, may we always be close and I pray that he will come to know who I am and be my friend." The intensity of that prayer remains with me. I feel it often, and I still pray it believing that God will make it a reality.

Four years later I was spending a quiet Sabbath day walking and talking with the Lord, far away from the hustle and bustle of life. I was thinking about my Father in heaven and His love for me and how precious it is. All of a sudden, a memory started playing in my mind of the birth of my son and I relived that intense desire to never be separated from him and that he would truly know me. The scene passed and in the stillness, I heard a still small voice deep in my mind and it said "That's the way I feel about you." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry and I found it incredibly hard to accept, "but Lord," I said "you know what I am like, you know that I have done and said many wrong things," and so I went on fighting. You know, I was really surprised with myself. I am a man who has accepted Christ as my Saviour and believe my sins are forgiven, but when God came that close to me and told me the way He feels about me, it was hard to accept. Finally I just cried out "Oh thankyou, thankyou for loving me and thankyou for all that you have done for me. I love you very much." In a very real sense I felt like I was being held in His arms. I could not have been happier. I realised my Father in heaven loves me so much that He doesn't

want anything to come between us and it hurts Him to think that we could be separated and He is doing everything He can to stop that from ever happening.

## **B. Heaven's Value System Revealed in God's Loving Thoughts to Us**

In this experience, the wonderful privileges of being a part of God's kingdom were revealed to me at my heart level. Soon after this experience I was led to some passages in the Bible that really opened my eyes and made me praise God even more. I pray that the significance of this text will burn into your heart and never leave you. Here is a very clear window into the kingdom of God.

**Luke 12:6,7** Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are *worth* more than many sparrows.

Jesus is explaining the principles of His kingdom. In these verses we have a formula for what makes people significant in that kingdom. What makes them count, what makes them *worth* something, what makes them valuable. It was this text combined with the experience of the birth of my son that clarified my thinking that my centre truly was in my Heavenly Father. I had believed that with my mind for years but all my knowledge in Scripture had not fully penetrated my *performance value system*<sup>39</sup> until now. Now I began to gain a clearer picture of the true issues confronting the human race.

Jesus states the *value* of two sparrows in human terms. The word penny there is actually *assarius*.<sup>40</sup> One *assarius* was equal to one day's pay for an average person. With two *assarius*, you could buy 5 sparrows. Thus in an earthly sense these sparrows have little *value*. Jesus then makes a contrast and says "Yet not one of them is forgotten by God." The contrast here<sup>41</sup> is that because God remembers the sparrows they are very valuable in God's Kingdom. Jesus extends this principle by comparing how much God thinks about us as compared to sparrows. "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered." If that is not 'up front, close and personal' then what is? Do you know anyone who wants to know so much about you that they even monitor the number of hairs on your head? Then comes the punch line. "Don't be afraid; you are *worth* more than many sparrows." Can you see how *worth* and significance is gained in God's kingdom. It comes from simply realizing that God lovingly thinks about us continually.<sup>42</sup> We are definitely on His mind: He is giving us life, making our hearts beat, and actively pouring His love and blessing into our lives so that we can enjoy life and He imparts to us rich gifts, talents and abilities for our satisfaction, enjoyment and service for others.<sup>43</sup> Here is the secret of God's kingdom, the secret of significance. It is the key that unlocks the enslaving kingdom of worthlessness and depression. This principle of value through a relationship with our heavenly Father as opposed to value in power, position and performance is crystallized in the following verses:

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<sup>39</sup> The *performance value system* is born of the lie "you shall not surely die" and is the very core of spiritualistic philosophy. See GC 561.

<sup>40</sup> Strong's: Of Latin origin; an assarius or as, a Roman coin: - farthing. Thayer: an assarium or assarius, the name of a coin equal to the tenth part of a drachma

<sup>41</sup> Strong's: Neuter plural of G243; properly other things, that is, (adverbially) contrariwise

<sup>42</sup> This is the power of the Blessing. The Blessing that someone close significant to us takes time to think about us in loving ways. Cf Psalms 8:4

<sup>43</sup> James 1:17. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."

Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord. Jer 9:23,24

Here is revealed a clear contrast; do not glory, boast or find value in wisdom, might or riches but glory or find value in knowing and understanding your Heavenly Father. This principle is stated over and over in scripture. In the book of Matthew the story of being of more value than birds extends in to a whole series of statements that culminate in the familiar Matt 6:33 in which we are admonished to seek first the kingdom of God and not worry about the *things* of life. In verse 27, Jesus states "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?" The word stature can refer to height or length of life but also can metaphorically refer to an attained state that makes you fit for something. A performance based value system involves a constant wondering of whether one has attained a correct level. Jesus knows the human heart and how it has been influenced by Satan's lie of self existence and value through attainment. In verse 28, Jesus addresses the issues of security through possessions and how useless it is to think this way. In Luke 12:15 Jesus states it this way:

"...one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

### **C. Is There Anything Wrong with Performance?**

Some raise the question at this point, "Are you saying that performance is a bad thing?" There is nothing wrong with performance or achievement in and of itself. God has established a framework for human existence that requires us to use His power to perform every day. It is not the performance that is the problem, it is the desire or practice of deriving value from what you achieve or possess that reveals that we have been seduced by the serpent's lie.

### **D. The Relational Focuses on the Invisible**

This emphasis on trusting our heavenly Father and his provision is also expressed in being concerned about the invisible over the visible.

**Luk 17:20,21** "Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

**2Co 4:18** while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**Heb 11:1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

John makes a clear distinction between the two kingdoms in 1 John 2:15:

**1Jo 2:15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

A love of the world and the things of the world comes directly from a desire to “add height to your stature” by the possession and control of power, wealth and fame. Such desires are not found in the hearts of those who trust in the love of their heavenly father. They are not ruled by ambition to be better than others and be seen to be achievers. They have the ability to esteem others better than themselves because they do not need the world’s approval.<sup>44</sup>

### E. The Clearest Revelation of God’s Kingdom

The clearest and most penetrating statement of God’s value system is revealed in the first time that the Father is recorded as speaking to the human race. Up to this point all communication between heaven and earth came through Christ, the Word of God. But now the Father speaks and the words He speaks set forth the very principles of His Kingdom.

**Mat 3:17** And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Father sets the parameters of worth. Why should we listen to Jesus? The Father answers because He is my Son. Christ’s value is revealed IN THE RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FATHER.<sup>45</sup> The Father does not say “Listen to this divine Messenger because He is your Creator and occupies the highest office in heaven, even though this was true.<sup>46</sup> The Father reveals His value through the family relationship. So simple and yet so powerful in its ramifications for us. Christ is the Way to the Father<sup>47</sup> and here we see revealed the platform of that way; through a trusting relationship in the Heavenly Father.

It is interesting to note that the first place that Satan speaks and the Father speaks that the hearts of their respective kingdoms are revealed. Satan speaks in Gen 3:5 – “You shall not surely die” and the Father speaks in Matt 3:17 stating – “this is my beloved Son whom I love” The contrast of value systems is clear and evident.

It is wonderful to know that God longs to be in a relationship with us and EGW states in DA 113 that “The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.”<sup>48</sup> It is wonderful to know that our Father is ever thinking about us and wanting to be close to us. As the Psalmist states:

**Psalms 40:5** Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

If our *value* is determined by the loving thoughts that God has towards us, then this text tells us that we are priceless, because it says His plans and thoughts for us are greater than can be declared or numbered. How does it feel to be priceless? ***But it can only be as good as your belief***

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<sup>44</sup> Phil 2:3. “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

<sup>45</sup> Heb 1:3. “...who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.”

<sup>46</sup> This principle is expanded in Chapter 21

<sup>47</sup> John 14:6. “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

<sup>48</sup> RH June 28, 1892 “He who opens the Scriptures, and feeds upon the heavenly manna, becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He has no life or experience apart from Christ. He hears the voice of God speaking from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” That voice is assurance to him that he is accepted in the Beloved.”

*in the truth that God loves us so much regardless of how good or bad we are.*<sup>49</sup> *And you can only embrace that truth if you allow the fountain of life to flow from the Father and not yourself.* This is wonderful news and I am so thankful for it. So whenever you are tempted to doubt your *worth*, just look at the sparrows, believe and resist the temptation to hold your *treasure* or *value* in yourself.

## **F. Lucifer's Rejection of Heaven's Value System**

Can you imagine when God first made Lucifer and tenderly held his new son? God had shared his very heart and soul with this angel. He had shown him nothing but love and given him the privilege of serving at the highest levels of his family government. Lucifer had held his *value* through his *relationship* with His heavenly Father. But through the mystery of iniquity, he rejected the *value* he found in his Father and began to spit words of anger and rebellion. Moving in the shadows of deceit and lies,<sup>50</sup> he poisoned the minds of many of God's other children. Can you imagine the sorrow? Lucifer, created so perfectly, was now filled with hate and murder. He was bent on destroying the eternal Son of God, for Jesus reveals that Satan was a murderer from beginning.<sup>51</sup> The reality of this feeling was displayed on the cross of Calvary, where Satan hoped to eliminate Jesus.

It is crucial to remember, that in God's kingdom a person's *identity* and *value* are bound up in their *relationship* to the Creator God, our heavenly Father. This is due to the fact that a person's *value* or *treasure* is where their heart or centre is.<sup>52</sup> If our heart is centred on God, our *value* or *treasure* comes from Him. If our heart is centred on self, our *value* or *treasure* comes from ourselves.

When Lucifer stepped out of that *relationship*, he blocked the light of God's love and caused a flood of dark emotions.<sup>53</sup> Prior to Lucifer's rebellion, if you had asked him – "Who are you?" He would have said with calm assurance and confidence "I am a son of God and He loves me." His heart or centre was his Father and so there was his *treasure*. Once Lucifer rejected his Father, if you had asked him the same question "Who are you Lucifer?" What could he say? He has lost his true *treasure* and *identity* as a son of God. Lucifer was now centred in himself but he had no *life source* to fill his heart with joy and love. He had blocked that fountain when he traded *treasures* and whatever *identity* he would seek to create for himself from that point forward, he would never fill that emptiness and sense of loss he experienced from breaking his close *relationship* with his Heavenly Father.

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<sup>49</sup> Rom 4:5. "But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness."

<sup>50</sup> Lucifer made the suggestion that holiness is something inherent in the angels, that would guide them without the need for God's law. Notice this statement: "Leaving his place in the immediate presence of God, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint. Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will." GC 495

<sup>51</sup> John 8:44. "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."

<sup>52</sup> Matt 6:21. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

<sup>53</sup> The more Lucifer looked to himself as the source of power, the less grateful he became. "Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy. The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as the gift of God, and called forth no gratitude to the Creator" GC 495

Lucifer, now Satan, stands alone. There is no one to hold him, no one to love him and no place to call home. Satan's fountain is a broken cistern, its water is not cool and refreshing, and is unable to give him a sense peaceful security from the *value* the Father placed on him. He is now animated by all the emotions of worthlessness: insecurity, fear, emptiness, jealousy, pride, self-justification, arrogance, rage, anger and a controlling spirit.<sup>54</sup> He had traded the fountain of love, light and true *worth* for a fountain of hate, darkness and worthlessness.

Satan did not know which way was up anymore. He had to redefine who he was and somehow smother that emptiness, that worthlessness, that nothingness that he felt inside. Like any child who feels worthless, Satan carries all the marks of insecurity, fear, insanity and a desperate need for approval from whomever he can get it. He craves attention, and to satisfy that emptiness, his perverted nature yearns to be worshipped, adored and praised, anything to take away the pain, the loneliness and the worthlessness.

Since Satan has rejected God as his Father and replaced that with a belief he had life in himself, he felt he did not need a *relationship* with God for life or *value*. All of that, he believed came from within himself. Such a lie demanded continual attempts to prove that he had his own *life source*. He had to continually use displays of power to reassure himself and his followers that his lie was true. But where did his life come from to display such power? God continued to grant him life to allow him to demonstrate the principles of his new kingdom<sup>55</sup> to allow everyone to decide which kingdom was better.

To summarise briefly:

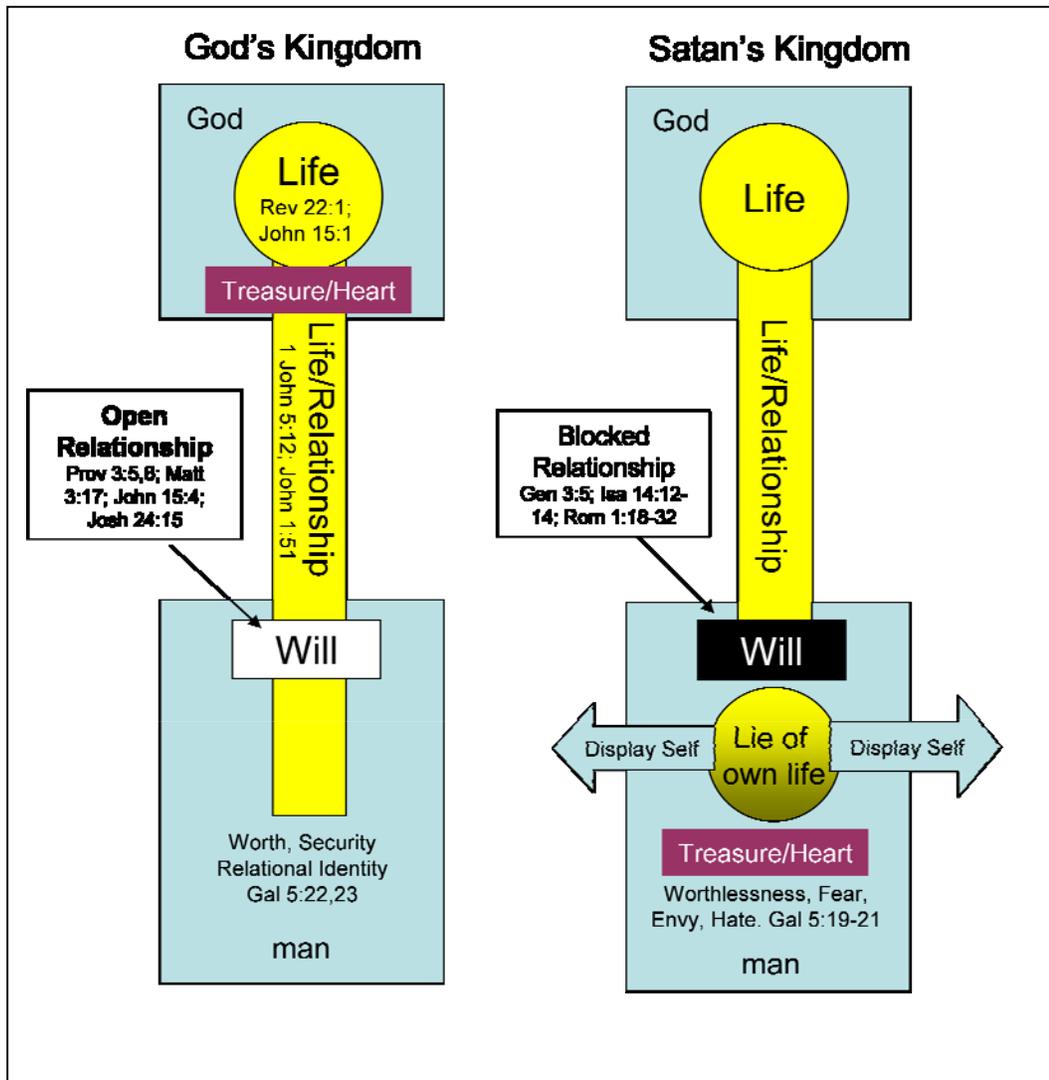
1. God is the source of life – physical, mental, spiritual. All our love and joy and creative ability and happiness flow from His throne and into our hearts.
2. Our *value* or *treasure* is where our heart or centre is.
3. Lucifer rejected God as his centre and shifted it to himself. He tried to move the fountain.
4. Shifting the centre destroyed the *treasure* of finding our *value* in our *relationship* with God.
5. Satan introduced the concept to Adam and Eve that everyone has life in themselves and this is our centre and *treasure*.
6. To cope with the loss of the true fountain of life and light and to keep the lie alive of the inherent power within, Satan established his kingdom on the principles of finding value through a display of power and *performance*.
7. Satan has therefore successfully embedded in the nature of man: (1) a belief that man has life in himself, and (2) a *value system* that is based on proving the existence of that life through *performance* and power display.
8. The ability to display power is only due to the fact that God grants us His life to give us time to see the flawed nature of Satan's kingdom. So in reality, gaining *value* from our *performance* is using the life of God and claiming it is our own. This is a clear case of theft.

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<sup>54</sup> "Satan stood in amazement at his new condition. His happiness was gone. He looked upon the angels who, with him, were once so happy, but who had been expelled from Heaven with him. Before their fall, not a shade of discontent had marred their perfect bliss. Now all seemed changed. Countenances which had reflected the image of their Maker were gloomy and despairing. Strife, discord, and bitter recrimination, were among them." ISP 27

<sup>55</sup> "God in His wisdom permitted Satan to carry forward his work, until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all." GC 497

9. Those living in God's kingdom certainly perform and achieve. The key is that they do not derive or obtain value from such performance and achievement.



### **3. Protecting God’s Life Source and Value System with the Law**

#### **A. Protecting Relationship to our Father/Life Source the Key**

Once we realize that everything we possess; our love or gifts and life all come from our Father in heaven,<sup>56</sup> we realize more than ever the need to safeguard our *relationship* with Him. Our whole life revolves around that *relationship*.<sup>57</sup> Prayer and Bible study and sharing our faith are no longer things we try and fit in around our work and recreational activities, rather the latter become secondary to staying connected to our Father.<sup>58</sup>

#### **B. Relationship Protected by Correct Identification of Relationship Members**

So how do we protect this *relationship*? The first thing we need to do in a *relationship* is determine exactly who are the two parties in the *relationship*; knowing who you are communicating with will dictate the content and manner of the communication. If both parties are not clearly identified, communication will break down. Let me illustrate with a story I read some time ago.

Two groups of allies were communicating on the radio during the war, one was American and the other was Canadian. Here is a transcript of the radio transmission between them:

**CANADIANS:** Please divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

**AMERICANS:** Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the north to avoid collision.

**CANADIANS:** Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

**AMERICANS:** This is the captain of a U.S. Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

**CANADIANS:** No, I say again, you divert YOUR course.

**AMERICANS:** This is the Aircraft Carrier USS LINCOLN, the second largest ship in the United states Atlantic fleet. We are accompanied with three Destroyers, three Cruisers and numerous support vessels. I DEMAND that you change your course 15 degrees north. I say again that’s one-five degrees north or counter-measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship.

**CANADIANS:** This is the lighthouse. Your call.

The American ship was not aware of the true identity of the Canadian party. A conflict almost broke out between the two groups until at the last minute the Americans learned the true nature of the Canadian party. The light from the Canadian lighthouse was seen as a ship that was in the way of the American warship, while its true identity was to light the way for ships and prevent them from crashing on the rocks.

This story perfectly illustrates the tragedy that occurred when the human race embraced the lie of Satan that you shall not surely die. It altered man’s sense of who he really was, it changed his *identity* into a falsehood. It also changed his perception about God.<sup>59</sup> Satan’s lie caused man to

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<sup>56</sup> James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

<sup>57</sup> Acts 17:28 “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”

<sup>58</sup> John 15:4 “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”

<sup>59</sup> Rom 1:23 “And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”

see God’s character in a false light. It caused man to see Him as self-serving and fearful of other accessing his power. This lie also destroyed man’s concept of God as his fountain, his *treasure* and centre of his life. In this terrible state, man could no longer communicate effectively with God because man had lost the identity of both parties: himself and God.<sup>60</sup>

### C. Ten Commandments Identify Relationship Members, Protect Relationship

Did God have anything in place to prevent mankind from losing a sense of the *identity* of both God and himself? Yes indeed! It is the Ten Commandments. Psalms 119:93 tells us that through God’s precepts we are given life. Romans 7:10 tell us that the commandments were ordained to life. 1 John 3:4 says that sin is the transgression of the Law and Rom 6:23 says the wages of sin is death. Therefore the commandments were given to protect our life. This means that if the commandments protect our life and our life comes through communion with God then the Commandments should reveal the true *identity* of both God and man and also indicate the boundaries of that communication. Do the commandments tell us about the God’s *identity*? Notice the following:

God’s Character		God’s Law	
1. Spiritual	John 4:24	1. Spiritual	Romans 7:14
2. Love	1 John 4:8	2. Love	Matt. 22:37-40
3. Truth	John 14:6	3. Truth	Psalms 119:142
4. Righteous	1 Cor. 1:30	4. Righteous	Psalms 119:144,172
5. Holy	Isa. 6:3	5. Holy	Romans 7:12
6. Perfect	Matt 5:48	6. Perfect	Psalms 19:7
7. Good	Luke 18:19	7. Good	Romans 7:12
8. Just	Deut. 32:4	8. Just	Romans 7:12
9. Pure	1 John 3:3	9. Pure	Psalms 19:8
10. Unchanging	James 1:17	10. Unchanging	Matt. 5:18
11. Stands Forever	Ps. 90:2	11. Stands Forever	Psalms 111:7,8
12. The Way	John 14:6	12. The Way	Malachi 2:7-9
13. Great	Ps. 48:1	13. Great	Hosea 8:12
14. Cleanses	Matt. 8:3 Ps. 57:2	14. Clean	Ezekiel 22:26

There are many places in the Bible that describe God with the same attributes as His law. This is very helpful in identifying the true person of God. Ellen White says “God’s law is the transcript of His character. It embodies the principles of His kingdom.” COL 305

Let’s have a closer look at each of the commandments and see what they tell us about God. As we look at each commandment we want to ask the question “What does this statement tell me about the author?”

<sup>60</sup> Isa 59:1,2 “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

God’s Character	
1. I brought you out of bondage. You will have no other God’s besides Me	Redeemer, Saviour, only God, <i>relational</i>
2. You shall not make any carved image	<i>Relational</i> , spiritual focus
3. You will not take the name of God in vain	Integrity, transparency, <i>relational</i>
4. Remember the Sabbath for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth	Creator, source of life, <i>relational</i>
5. Honour father and mother	Family/ <i>relational</i> focus, paternal
6. You shall not kill	Life is precious, <i>relationships</i> are forever, I am the source of life
7. You shall not commit adultery	Valid intimate <i>relationships</i> are forever
8. You shall not steal	Spiritual/ <i>relational</i> not material focus
9. You shall not lie	Integrity, transparency, <i>relational</i>
10. You shall not covet	Creator, source of life, <i>relational</i>

1. The first commandment tells us that God brought Israel out of the slavery of Egypt, which tells us that this God is a Redeemer and a Saviour. When He asks me to have no other God’s but Him, it tells me that He wants a close friendship with me.<sup>61</sup>
2. The second commandment tells me that God wants a heart-to-heart *relationship*. The worship of idols is not heart-to-heart worship. Neither is idolatry spiritual worship, meaning a connection of spirit with spirit, mind with mind.<sup>62</sup>
3. The third commandment tells me that God is transparent in His *relationships*. If we enter into a *relationship* with him, He does not want us to pretend in the *relationship* thus rendering it useless or vain.<sup>63</sup>
4. The fourth commandment is very special because it tells us that God is the fountain of life, that He created everything.<sup>64</sup> This commandment has a very big impact on our perception of Him and greatly influences our manner towards Him. It is significant to note that the Sabbath commandment has the most amount of words of any of the commandments.
5. The fifth commandment is also special because it tells us how God’s life flows through earthly channels.<sup>65</sup> We will examine this detail in the “glory of children” and the “coming of Elijah.” This command promises us long life if we honour our parents. It tells us

<sup>61</sup> Prov 18:24 “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

<sup>62</sup> Prov 23:26 “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.”

<sup>63</sup> Isa 1:13-15 “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

<sup>64</sup> Isa 40:12-18 “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? ... Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: ... All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

<sup>65</sup> 1 Cor 11:3 “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.”

specifically that our parents tell us something very special about God and in honouring them, we honour Him.

6. The sixth commandment tells us that God sees life as precious. It also tells us that God wants *relationships* to last forever.<sup>66</sup>
7. The seventh commandment tells us that some *relationships* are dangerous and in respect to God, is a reflection of the first commandment to have no other gods. It is a reminder that God is our *life source*.<sup>67</sup>
8. The eighth commandment tells us that God will provide our needs, that He will take care of us. It also tells us that God is not focused on things, but on *relationships*.<sup>68</sup>
9. The ninth commandment is a reflection of the third. God wants transparency and integrity in *relationships*. A false witness destroys the *identity* of one or both parties and destroys communication.<sup>69</sup>
10. The tenth commandment in respect to God, reminds us that He is the fountain of life. We will want for nothing when we believe this.<sup>70</sup> It also tells us again of the *relational-spiritual* mind of God. Commandments 5-9 all can be seen and displayed, but this commandment is an issue of the heart. It is invisible. So this commandment is critical in understanding the nature of God’s Kingdom.

So in summary the Ten Commandments tell us that God is:

1. The fountain of life
2. He is the Creator
3. He is our Redeemer
4. He wants true heart-to-heart *relationships*
5. He cares for us as a Father and supplies all our needs.

Knowing these things is vital in grasping a true picture of God that will help us to communicate effectively with Him. It will cause us to respect and reverence Him and love Him for all He does. It will help frame our communication in the form of trusting words that He will do what is best.

Now we know a little of what the commandments tell us about God, what do they tell us about us?

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<sup>66</sup> Rev 21:4 “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

<sup>67</sup> Matt 6:24 “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”; 1 Kings 18:21 “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.”

<sup>68</sup> Matt 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

<sup>69</sup> Prov 11:9 “An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.”

<sup>70</sup> Phil 4:11-13 “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Our Identity	
1. I brought you out of bondage. You will have no other God’s besides Me	Redeemed, worship one God
2. You shall not make any carved image	<i>Relational</i> , spiritual focus
3. You will not take the name of God in vain	Integrity, transparency, <i>relational</i>
4. Remember the Sabbath for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth	Created, life comes from God, <i>relational</i>
5. Honour father and mother	Family/ <i>relational</i> focus, paternal
6. You shall not kill	Life is precious, <i>relationships</i> are forever, God owns everyone
7. You shall not commit adultery	Valid intimate <i>relationships</i> are forever
8. You shall not steal	Spiritual/ <i>relational</i> not material focus
9. You shall not lie	Integrity, transparency, <i>relational</i>
10. You shall not covet	God provides all needs

1. The first commandment tells us that God brought Israel out of the slavery of Egypt a symbol of slavery to sin. It tells us we are redeemed.
2. The second commandment tells me that God wants me to have a heart-to-heart *relationship* with him. Heart-to-heart and mind-with-mind.
3. The third commandment tells me that we are to be transparent in our *relationships* and not pretend.
4. The fourth commandment tells us that we are created. It tells us that we are responsible to a greater power than ourselves. It invites us to rest in the arms of God and trust Him.
5. The fifth commandment tells us to respect family authority.
6. The sixth commandment tells us to see life as precious. It also tells us to consider *relationships* as lasting forever.
7. The seventh commandment tells us that some *relationships* are dangerous and that the family structure must not be destabilized, or it will affect the blessing and life flow from God through our parents or from us to our children.
8. The eighth commandment tells us not to be focused on things, but on *relationships*.
9. The ninth commandment protects our *relationships* from communication breakdown and reminds us of the blessings of honesty.
10. The tenth commandment warns us of the emptiness of self-centredness and the happiness we find in trusting God. It also tells us that we are to be spiritual because this is the only commandment of the last six that is invisible to human sight.

So in summary we found our *identity* defined as:

1. God is our Creator. We have no life in ourselves.
2. God is our Redeemer.
3. He supplies all our needs – physical, mental and spiritual.
4. We are *relational* beings with a yearning for heart-to-heart and mind-to-mind intimacy.

## D. Ten Commandments Key to Life, Identity and Value

Certainly we can say with David that the Commandment is exceeding broad.<sup>71</sup> The commandments play the vital role of clearly identifying both God and man, thus ensuring intimate communion between both. Without the law there can be no life for us. Based on what we have examined, notice carefully the following sequence:

1. The Law reveals God’s true *identity* to us.
2. The Law defines our true *identity*.
3. Since communication between two parties requires the clear identification of both, the Law protects the *relationship* between God and man.
4. Since the Law clearly identifies both God and man, it ensures that man will find his *treasure* and centre in God and not himself. It is designed to protect him from self-centredness.
5. Since God is the fountain of life, the Law protects our life.<sup>72</sup>
6. Since the Law centres us in God, the Law therefore protects our *value*.
7. Therefore the Law is the very foundation of the government of God.

Can you see then why the Bible says the following about the Law?

- God’s commandments stand forever (Psa 111:7,8).
- God’s commandments are holy, just and good (Rom 7:12).
- God’s commandments are the object of the New Covenant (Heb 8:10).
- God’s commandments are the Law of Liberty (Jam 2:12).

Can you see why Jesus said not one jot or tittle can be removed from the Law? (Matt 5:17,18)

## E. Ten Commandments Centre of Satan’s Attack

Therefore whenever anyone says that the Law of God has been changed or removed they are saying in effect – I can’t really know God or myself and I can’t have true *value* and *worth* and I am destined to die and be cut off from the fountain of Life.

How could anyone want to change or remove the Law? How can anyone say that keeping the Law is legalism? Of course, it is true that in failing to grasp its meaning we may, indeed, become legalistic in our attempt to keep it. Thus, future chapters will focus on how Satan’s value system completely changes the meaning of the Law and makes it something fearful and enslaving. But for now we make the point that the Law of God protects our relationship with Him.

Since Satan rejected that relationship, then the heart of Satan would certainly reject the Law. And that is just what he seeks to get us to do. Thus, as we will see, the system of obedience he imposes upon those whom he cannot lead to reject the law outright is really a system of disobedience masked as obedience.

Notice the following critical text:

**Rom 8:7** Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

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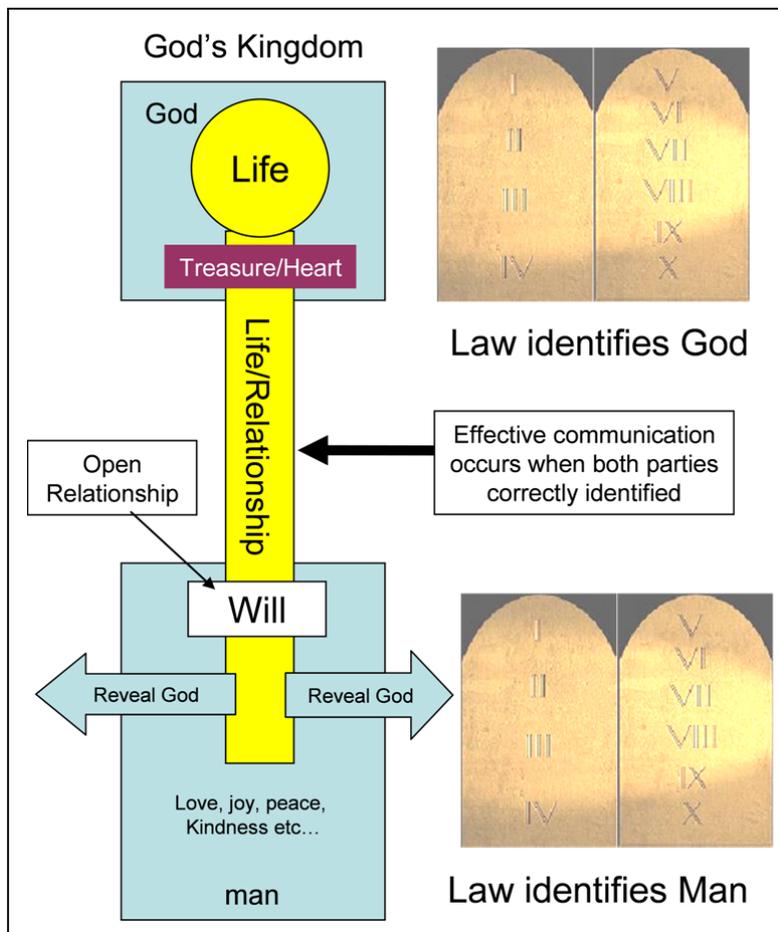
<sup>71</sup> Ps 119:96

<sup>72</sup> John 12:50 “And I know that his commandment is life everlasting:”

The carnal mind is a mind embedded with the lie of self-centredness or possessing life in itself. Such a mind will have contempt and hatred for the law of God which demands God-centredness. This being the case then wherever the Law is attacked or attempts are made to change it, there we see the hand of Satan. Daniel 7:25 tells us that the little horn power will think to change times and law. While all the commandments are vital, the most vital commandment is the fourth commandment which most clearly identifies our true *life source*. That is why this commandment has come under the most forceful attack. Many people are happy to acknowledge nine of the Ten Commandments because it is easier to maintain a level of self-centredness, but the Sabbath commandment makes it a lot harder. There is so much more we could say on this topic but for now let us praise God for His Law. The Law protects our connection to God and such a connection will open the power of God to us so that we shall be like Him, this is faith that works by love. Can we say with David:

- “How love I thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day” (Psalms 119:97).
- Blessed is the man that ...[has] his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; (Psalms 1:1,2).

In the previous chapter we noted that Satan shifted man’s thinking from God-centredness to man-centredness by telling us that we have life in ourselves. We will examine a little further in the next chapter the results of believing this lie.



## Section 2 – Performance-Based Impact on The Bible

### 4. *The Perversion of Self-Centredness*

#### A. The Impact of Separation from God

We discussed in Chapter 1 the philosophy that Adam and Eve were embracing when they ate from that tree and we discussed in Chapter 2 the tragic mixture of emotions that led Satan to concoct the concept that we can live without God and form an *identity* of our own by what we achieve. Even while the stomach juices of Adam and Eve were digesting the fruit, a sickening cloud of worthlessness and guilt was slowly enveloping their minds and shutting down that lovely, happy and joyful *relationship* between God and man. The curse of the serpent's lie had begun its insidious work and within a short period of time Adam and Eve were engulfed by guilt and fear. They, along with Satan and his angels, had mentally and emotionally suicided. They had lost their *identity* and *value*, and nothing they could do would bring it back. They couldn't restore themselves to favour with God. They had broken the *relationship* and only God could restore it. This fact is self evident even as we reflect on our own experience. If someone violates a *relationship* with us, the power to restore that *relationship* rests with the non-offending party; the offending party has surrendered their claim on the *relationship*.

At this point it is important to remember what we looked at in Chapter 1. God is the source of life, wisdom and joy. Adam and Eve have now cut themselves off from that source by believing the lie that they possessed all this in themselves. Their reasoning powers can no longer be used selflessly or objectively. Their minds are totally in harmony with Satan. They have no ability to unmask the lies Satan tells them. Satan begins to fill them full of false theories about God's character. At the same time Satan tells Adam and Eve that they are bad. He tells them they deserve to die and that they are worthless individuals. Satan is still hell bent on destroying our sense of *identity* and he does this by telling us lies about God and lies about ourselves. As long as we believe the lies about God and ourselves we can never hope to be in a lasting relationship with Him. For since those lies strike at the very heart of His law, the very believing of them is to break it and deny the relationship provided therein.

The stranger has separated the best of friends. When God comes visiting and calls their names, the voice they once regarded as the sweetest in the universe, now sends them into hiding with fear and desperation. Satan's programming has done its work!

Imagine coming home one day from work, joyfully anticipating the happy ritual you have developed with your child. Each afternoon your child comes running out the front door singing "Daddy, Daddy" and then throws himself into your arms with a tender hug. As you approach home you find that your beloved child has not come to greet you. Puzzled you enter the front door and you hear this shriek of terror and little foot steps running quickly into the garden to hide. Something has broken the *relationship*. Where there was love, there is now fear. No real father enjoys having his children run away at the beckoning sound of his voice. It hurts. It is a tragedy that sin can make us afraid of the most loving, generous, patient, freedom-loving Person in the universe.

God is faced with a very serious dilemma. How does He approach them now that they are listening to another voice? Every word that God utters is now interpreted in an evil light. This would have serious implications for the human race when God gave us the Bible later in history. Adam and Eve know they are guilty but they now have no security or *worth* to accept that they

are wrong, having accepted wrong ideas about God, the source of life and wisdom. Controlled by a spirit of guilt and insecurity they have become defiant. They have lost the power to reason honestly.

I marvel at the love of God displayed in his patience. God calls out to Adam, “Where are you?” not because He didn’t know, but to allow Adam to face the issue. Where is your mind Adam? What has happened to your *identity*? The physical always represents the spiritual, and the physical hiding of Adam and Eve clearly reveals the hiding that is going on in their minds. They have clothed themselves in deception and deceit to prevent themselves from having to face the truth which seems so frightening. God is trying to help them diagnose the problem so he can bring the blessed solution to them.

## **B. The Prison of Self-Centeredness**

Adam responds to the question by telling God that he was afraid because he was naked. This confession is interesting in the light of Genesis 2:25: “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.” Adam was naked before he ate the fruit but he was not ashamed. The inference here is that Adam is now ashamed. The Hebrew word (*buwsh*) also means confused, and confounded and disappointed. Adam was full of confusion, guilt and disappointment. He was confused about who he was and he felt guilt about what he had done. God now seeks to put His finger on the intensity of Adam’s pain. “Who told you that you were naked?” Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” God doesn’t ask Adam, “How do you know you are naked?” He asks Adam “*Who told you* that you were naked?” God is trying to point Adam to the instigator of the lies he was told. In other words “Who is causing you run away from me?” “Who has come between you and me?”

Adam is addressed directly, “Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” This is a simple question that demands a simple yes or no. Now that Adam’s mind pictures God as selfish and revengeful and himself as being stupid and worthless, he puts two and two together in his mind and gets 64. Adam “*knows*” that if he says yes, he is going to cop it and if he says no, he will cop it twice, once for eating from the tree and once for lying. Knowing there is no way out, Adam puts his boxing gloves on and comes out of his corner with fists flying (like any insecure person does) trying to lay a few blows on God. As the saying goes, “if you are going down, you may as well go down fighting.”

“The WOMAN whom YOU gave to me, SHE gave to me of the tree and I did eat” he accused.

Can you imagine Eve’s shock at this man who had only shortly before pledged to face with her whatever would come, but at the first hurdle he falls flat on his face! Sin cannot produce a heroic figure that gives himself selflessly to help and support others. It always results in every man for himself.

We don’t want to miss the process going on here. Adam’s reactions are being driven by his guilt and insecurity, combined with a false conception of the character of God, all stirred together with a large helping of pride from the lie of an independent *life source*. Here is the great heartbreak of sin: how does God show Adam that he has a false picture of his Father and that he is not worthless and stupid? How can Adam be given a true assessment of his situation when he has lost the power to reason objectively? God is the only source of true wisdom and Adam has disconnected himself from that source. And even when Adam does reason, how could his reason be freed from his new *performance-based value system* that fiercely rejects anything resembling

truth. Adam can't handle God telling him he is wrong, even if it is done in love for his own sake, because his self-centredness controls his reason.

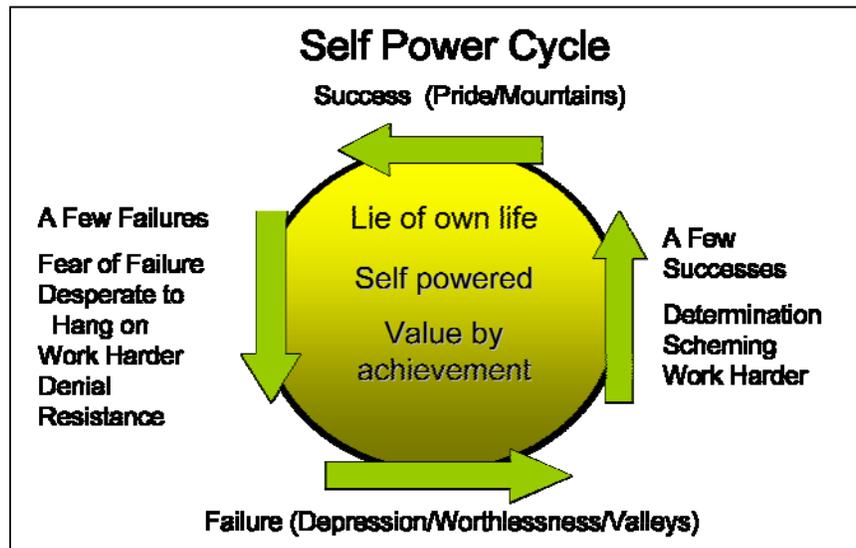
Many people have asked me. How can we have one Bible with one message and have thousands of different churches all professing to have the truth of that Book. It all goes back to the garden and the serpent's lie. Human nature received a *life source* model and a *value system* that would naturally distort everything God says. God speaks to us from within a kingdom that has Himself as the only fountain of life and our only source of *value*. Humanity comes to the Bible with man having his own *life source* and a *performance-based value system*. This *performance-based value system* has twisted every teaching of the Word of God. The truth of God is turned into a lie (Romans 1: 25). This is why God says to us:

**Isa 55:8-9** For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

And Paul states it this way:

**1Co 2:14** 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.

*Performance-based-thinking* or carnal nature sees everything through the lens of the power within. It drives us up the mountain of pride<sup>73</sup> when we succeed and drops us into the valley or ditch of despair when we fail. It causes us to ask the wrong questions, like "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of God?" (Matt 18:1) and "What must I *do* to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17) or "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7:15) Notice the following diagram:



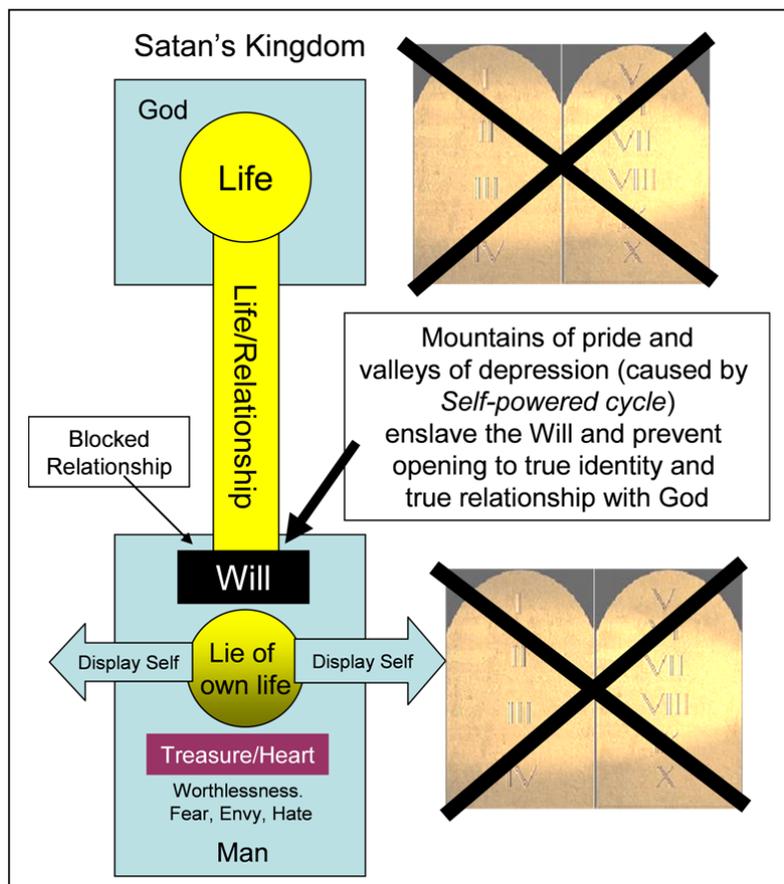
<sup>73</sup> Anciently, when a king journeyed through the less frequented parts of his dominion, a company of men was sent ahead of the royal chariot to level the steep places and to fill up the hollows, that the king might travel in safety and without hindrance. This custom is employed by the prophet to illustrate the work of the gospel. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low." When the Spirit of God, with its marvelous awakening power, touches the soul, it abases human pride. Worldly pleasure and position and power are seen to be worthless. "Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" are cast down; every thought is brought into captivity "to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5. DA 135

This *performance-based* lens will always turn the truth of God into a lie. Notice the following:

**1Co 8:1-2** Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

In a *performance-based system*, the knowledge of the truth will actually puff up. It will drive a person up the mountain of pride. This is the core problem for the church of Laodicea. She has been given so much truth that she feels rich and increased with goods and feels need of nothing (Rev 3:17). When we see others in the church doing ministry and great works for God, we often can get feelings of inadequacy and a sense of despair. All of this is *performance-based-thinking*. This issue is so important that I want to devote the next chapter to it, because *performance-based-thinking* never completely dies when we are first baptized and enter the church, it often continues to live for decades in the lives of professed Christians.

Indeed, conversion is the process of learning how to think and initiates a process of self-discovery of His unfailing love and offer of His righteousness and of the unfathomable depths of our own pride and of learning to look to and depend upon Him rather than self. It is because we fail to grasp this that we are so often caught up in guilt and fear that drive us to self-centered behaviors.



## **5. Same Gods Different Names**

### **A. A Radical Transformation**

The room was alive with activity, laughter, music and youthful excitement. Towards the front of the room were two large speakers pounding out driving rhythms with heady guitar. I had organised a party to celebrate with a group of my friends – well at least I tried to. I went and sat in one corner of the room where an animated teen was describing a scene out of one of the latest movies. I settled down and tried to soak in the atmosphere but something just wasn't right. I got up and went out to the patio out the back and joined in with some young Romeo's who were discussing their latest exploits in capturing the women of their dreams. No, I just couldn't get into that either. Boy, what is wrong with me? The music was starting to get on my nerves and I glanced across the room and saw a scene in the video which was playing that I found very offensive. The thought struck me like a freight train, I hate this stuff!

My mind accelerated with possible scenarios. Up till now this had been my definition of fun and now I couldn't take it any more. Something had taken hold of my heart and made it impossible to maintain the status quo. Somewhere out of the abyss came the hideous thought that my life of fun was over and that I would never be able to enjoy myself any more. The fear was so great that I experienced a strong temptation to stop submitting to my Saviour and return to my old life. Thankfully, Jesus patiently guided me through this and we continued to walk lovingly together.

It was a few weeks after my Damascus road experience with Jesus. My life was turned upside down. I had never felt so much peace in my life and the Bible just started to come alive. I was drinking it all in and experiencing a freedom I had never known before. When Jesus came into my life, it was with a bang. Suddenly, I became aware that some of my language was inappropriate, that some of my jokes quite vulgar and that certain aspects of my lifestyle were incompatible with the new direction I was now headed. I was on a journey to the new kingdom. It was like going to a totally foreign country and learning the language and customs from scratch. I wanted to learn because I loved the Lord of that kingdom but I had been schooled in a different kingdom and it was going to take some time to adjust.

It was not until the night of that party that I realised how radical a transformation was taking place. Since Jesus had captured my heart by His love, I could not resist Him when he called. So on the night of the party when I was doing what I thought was ok, I could sense that He was calling me away from that type of life. Since I didn't know anything else, I had become afraid that what would replace it would not be as good. It is so easy to be afraid of the unknown even when we know it is right. Thankfully I chose to trust Jesus that he would take care of me and it was better to trust him than my feelings.

When I accepted Jesus as my Saviour, I just floated for weeks. I sensed a special closeness to Him that has remained with me till this day. Jesus had opened for me the gates of heaven but now he must help me to remove the seeds of *performance-based-thinking*. He must help me root out that philosophy of life that made my *performance* and *achievement* the centre of my *value system*. It is a journey that every child of Adam must take. The only way we can make it is to keep our eyes fixed on the light of the cross and boldly step into the principles of the new kingdom.

I started attending a prayer meeting with my friends. On that first night as we knelt together I felt the sweet Spirit of God around us but there was another spirit from my old *performance-based*

life that was harassing me. As we prayed around the circle, a thought struck me “I can’t pray like these people can pray, they are so eloquent”. My mind seemed locked into this thought and as the prayer circle moved closer to me my heart began to race faster. Soon I would be in the spotlight and everyone would be listening to me. But wait a minute; this was a prayer meeting about Jesus not me!

## B. The Old Life Dies Hard

Here is the curse of the *performance-based-thinking*. Even though I had given my heart to Jesus and was seeking to follow Him, the principles of my old life were still ready and willing to drag me back to making myself the centre of everything; to make my *performance* in prayer the issue, as opposed to my *relationship* with God in prayer.

When I first began to study the Bible, I often felt inadequate because even though I was raised in a Christian environment, I realised that in Biblical terms I had not graduated from kindergarten. I loved listening to what I was taught but in the back of my mind something kept niggling me say “how can they just look up those verses so easily, I could never do that”. I was fumbling around trying to find the book and verse and I just prayed I would not be last so everyone would be waiting for me – how embarrassing! The years of training I had received in comparing myself with others began to surface in my new Christian journey. It was fairly easy for the Holy Spirit to convict me about my language and life style but it would take time for me to realise how deeply rooted the tentacles of the *performance-based-thinking* run.

As I continued on my journey I developed a deep love for the Bible. It was one of the best ways to learn about my hero who gave His life for me. I just loved studying about Jesus and it was such a blessing, but my old life was ready to snare me. In time I began to notice that people around me had far less knowledge than I did about Biblical things. My growing Biblical knowledge gave me more confidence to speak and soon I was taking small groups and then large groups in Bible study. Again, this was such a blessing to me and those around me, but I was slowly, steadily moving back onto a platform of *value by performance* rather than *value by relationship*. It happens slowly and imperceptibly but it happens. In hindsight I see that for many of us, we have the same gods but with different names. We graft the Christian faith into our *performance-based* root stock.

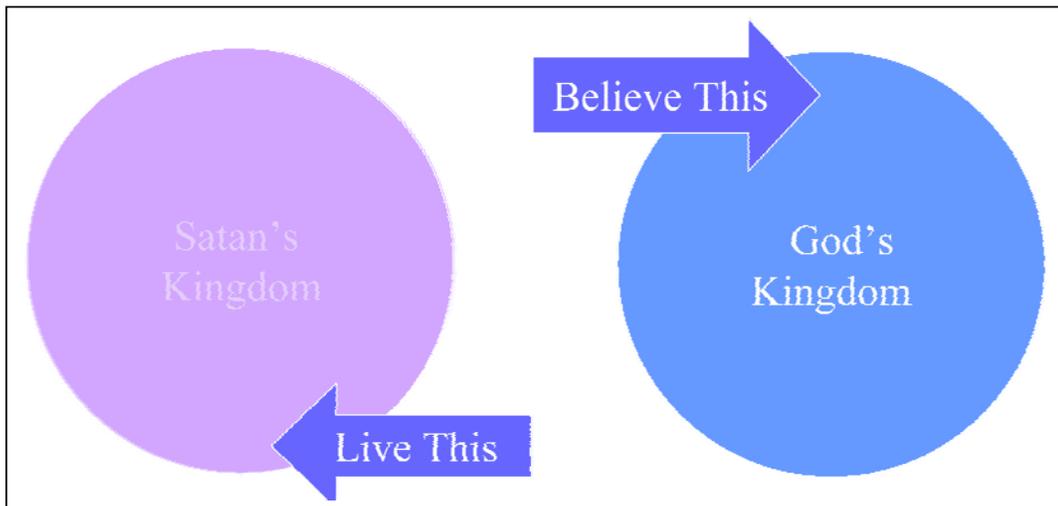
If you look at the table below, you can see how easy it is to believe in the Bible but live like the world. I don’t mean living a wild life style, I mean gaining *value* by what you do.

In the World	In the Church
Education	Bible Knowledge
Athletic Ability	Public Speaking Ability
Job Status	Church Office
Possessions	Spiritual Gifts
Physical Appearance	Church Fashion Parade
Nationality	Conservative/Liberal Theology

For many of us our walk with Jesus is hijacked by the insidious power of the serpent’s lie. As I look around the church today I can see that the gods we sought to escape in the world have found us in the church. They have clothed themselves in garments of light and we have embraced them as good friends. The inevitable result is anger, bitterness and fighting in the church.

### C. The Gap Between Belief and Action

It's so easy to look pious in church, but what about the person sitting on the other side of the church that won't talk to you because you said something about them behind their back and it got back to them. What about the pianist that went to another church because she was told her playing was sub-standard? What about the doctrinal police that roam to and fro through the church seeking out those that don't subscribe to their definition of orthodoxy, so that they might expel them from the church? What about those "free spirits" that seek to hijack the worship committee and force their new worship style on everyone and too bad for those who don't like it? The list is endless and the great enemy of our souls knows that as long as he can keep us dancing to this tune, then we are essentially still subjects of his kingdom. We may believe in the teachings of Christ but still live like the devil with *performance-based-thinking*. We get caught between.



The strongest evidence that we are still crippled by the principles of Satan's kingdom is the high level of disunity and lack of Christian love in the church. If we did regard our *relationships* the way God regards His, there would be a lot more love in the church and a lot more care about how we deal with each other.

It is very interesting that this subtle transfer of gods from the world to the church in our personal experience has also occurred in the church's corporate experience. In the fourth century when the emperor Constantine "embraced" Christianity there was a whole range of changes that took place in the Christian church. One point that is particularly interesting is that many of the statues of the pagan gods that were in the Pantheon were transferred to the Christian church and the names were changed to Biblical characters like Moses and David and Peter. Same gods, different names! It does not matter how you dress it up, it is still pagan and what can we say today? It is one thing to attack the corporate church for its apostasy from apostolic truth. It is another thing to see the same principles at work in our own lives. Let us make sure that we deal with the log in our own eye before we seek to remove the speck from our brother's eye.

It is interesting to study the journey of the most ardent followers of Christ – His disciples. The issue of power and position was often raising its head. Let's notice a few passages of Scripture:

**Matt 18:1** At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

There is one reason and one reason only why the disciples were asking that question – self-centredness. The disciples believed Jesus to be the Messiah, the Christ. They were excited and passionate about their belief in Him, some were even willing to die for Him, but just like when I was preparing to pray and my mind shifted from my *relationship* to my *performance* in prayer, the disciples moved from their *relationship* with the Messiah to their position in His new kingdom.

**Mark 10:35-37** And James and John, the sons of Zeb'edee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."

The god of position and status had so overtaken the new kingdom principles that James and John were learning, that they asked Jesus if they could sit at His left and right hand in His kingdom. Thankfully Jesus never wearied with their continual failure to let go of the old kingdom principles. He understood that it takes time for us to see how deeply rooted the principles of Satan's kingdom really are. The problem we face is that when we allow old principles to take over the following happens:

**Mark 10:41** And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.

When we allow the old kingdom principles to rule us, contention will always be the result. What James and John did made the other disciples angry. Why? Because they were sending a message "we are better than you". They may not have meant to do that but that is nearly always the result. Jesus took this opportunity to try and expand their understanding of how God's kingdom is different to the one they had grown up with. They would have to learn to think differently.

**Mark 10:42-45** And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Let these words forever ring in our ears! If you wish to be great in God's kingdom then learn to enjoy serving others rather than manipulating and controlling them. Jesus tells us that the pagans (Gentiles) lord it over others and enjoy exercising their authority and showing who's boss. Strangely enough this same spirit often rules the church with various members seeking to impose their will and authority on the church.

Why is it that the enemy of our souls finds it so easy to drag us back into our old way of thinking? As we have stated earlier, it is our deep sense of insecurity that makes it easy for Satan to tempt us to prove ourselves. Unless we remember how we obtain our *value* we will find it impossible to resist trying to turn stones into bread to prove that we are something.

There is something I find very frightening about this *performance-based* principle that tenaciously clings to us. Jesus was the best teacher this world has ever seen. He spent over three years with the disciples, teaching them as much as He could about the kingdom of heaven and

even after all this we find that even on the very night of his crucifixion, the disciples were still being controlled by the principles of the old life.

**Luke 22:20-24** In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with me on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him.” They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this. Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.

On the very eve of the greatest demonstration of love the universe has ever seen, those closest to Jesus, who knew more of His kingdom than anyone else, were arguing about which of them were the greatest. The sorrow Jesus experienced at that point must have been immense! Could those of us who claim to be followers of Jesus be repeating the mistakes as the disciples – fervent followers of Jesus, yet jostling amongst ourselves as to who is the greatest?

There is only one thing worse than being controlled by *performance-based* principles in the world; it is being controlled by them in the church. Are you absolutely sure that your Christian experience is not ruled by this thinking in some area? Are we sure that none of our beliefs have been forged in the crucible of *performance-based-thinking*? Are we sure that none of our teachings have been distorted by *performance-based-thinking*? Let us search through the Bible on our knees and plead for God to teach us the truth, so that the seed of Christ will not be choked by the weeds, or fall on the rocks of pride, or taken by the birds of fear, but go into the good soil of *relation-based-thinking* founded on God as our *life source* and *treasure*.

## 6. How Do You Read?

### A. Context is Everything

Today is going to be a special day. You are full of anticipation and excitement at the potential prospects that lie ahead. The head of a large manufacturing company is interested in a special design you have worked on and is seriously contemplating manufacturing it and exporting it around the globe. You both decide to meet for lunch at a nice little local restaurant. Having never met before, you nervously look around trying to identify this person who is going to transform your dream into reality. At last he arrives and you shake his hand vigorously and then you both move into the restaurant and find your place. To get acquainted your dining partner asks you a bit about your family and where you live and how your children are going in school. Everything is going along nicely except for the fact that just behind you there is a guy who has developed a real art of slurping his soup. At first you brush it off, but after a while it gets a little annoying. “Some people need to learn a few manners” you think to yourself, but brush it off so you don’t get distracted. The conversation with your potential business partner is going well and you are right in the middle of discussing some of the extra benefits of your design when all of a sudden the guy behind you let’s go a horrendous burp that nearly rattles the cutlery on your table. All eyes are suddenly transfixed on this unusual individual that seems to have no manners at all. The room fills with sounds of snickers and muffled laughter combined with horror and disgust. Finally the owner of the restaurant comes out and asks the man to leave, saying that his types aren’t welcome in the restaurant.

The thing that is really amazing is that if this same man was sitting in a restaurant that reflected a Chinese culture, no one would blink an eye lid. In fact the host and hostess might be disappointed if you did not make these gestures. Also in Chinese culture if you sought to shake the hand of someone you had not met before or talked about family issues over dinner you would be considered quite rude.<sup>74</sup>

It is amazing how the same actions can be interpreted in completely different ways depending on which culture or world view you come from. This fact is no different when we look at the two different cultures of the kingdom of God versus the kingdom of Satan.

The Christian faith has one foundation – Jesus Christ, and yet as we examine the plethora of groups that take the name of Jesus we are puzzled to find that so many contradictions can exist on one foundation. The journey into the kingdom of God involves a transfer of culture and a transfer of world view. In our last chapter we described the difficulty that we often face in learning to think in the ways of heaven.

The greatest difficulties of the Christian walk revolve around how we approach the Word of God, the Bible. We come out of the world where we have been schooled in achievement and position, but as we move into the kingdom of God it is absolutely vital that we surrender our opinions and let the Spirit of God teach us how to read God’s Word. Sadly this has not often been the case and the many contradictions, heresies and contentions found in Christian faith and history come directly from reading the Bible with a *performance-based* context rather than a *relational-based* context.

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<sup>74</sup> <http://www.chinawestexchange.com/Chinese/Culture/customs.htm>

Jesus drives at this point in His discussion with a lawyer in Luke chapter 10. The lawyer asks Jesus “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answers “What is written in the law?” and to get to the deeper issue he asks “How do you read it?” (Luke 10:25,26). Jesus does not ask *what* do you read, he asks *how* do you read or how do you interpret what you read. This is the key question for anyone wishing to take the journey from *performance-based* to *relational-based-thinking* – How do you read?

### B. Beliefs Based on Several Layers of Thought

When a person makes a statement of faith, it is usually based on several layers of thinking. As an example of this, let’s look at a statement related to the subject of the law of God. Take this statement:

“Trying to keep the law is legalism”

Let’s take a look at this from a typical protestant context. This statement we call a premise. But this premise is based on an assumption. That assumption is “All human effort is legalism” which is based on a Bible teaching called “righteousness by faith”. Putting this in together we see:

**Premise:** “Trying to keep the law is legalism”  
**Underlying Assumption:** “All human effort is legalism”  
**Bible Teaching or Belief:** “Righteousness by faith”

Following the logic sequence, it makes complete sense, but there are some Bible statements that seem to disagree with this premise. In Section 4 I will do a complete exercise on following through a premise with regard to the Sabbath, but back to our premise here. The three layers described are the visible part of our ‘belief-tree’. From this point, it appears quite flawless because the Bible says that we are not righteous by our works and that salvation is not of works, but it also says if you love me keep my commandments and anyone who says he loves God and does not keep His commandments is a liar. So there seems to be an apparent contradiction. This contradiction is related to the hidden thinking layers that are below visibility. They are layers embedded in our *performance-based* nature. When we add these hidden layers it becomes quite interesting:

Visible layers “The Tree”	Premise: “Trying to keep the law is legalism” Underlying Assumption: “All human effort is legalism” Bible Teaching or Belief: “Righteousness by faith”
Invisible layers “The Root”	<i>Value system:</i> Performance <i>Life source:</i> Man possess inherent <i>life source</i> – Serpent’s Lie <sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> “Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden, ‘Ye shall not surely die.’” GC 561. “Satan commenced his deception in Eden. He said to Eve, “Ye shall not surely die.” This was Satan's first lesson upon the immortality of the soul, and he has carried on this deception from that time to the present, and will carry it on until the captivity of God's children shall be turned.” EW 218

The invisible layers affect our thinking about righteousness by faith. Our *performance-based-thinking* twists the statements of Scripture into a lie. Take the following Bible verse:

**Eph 2:8-9** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:  
*it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

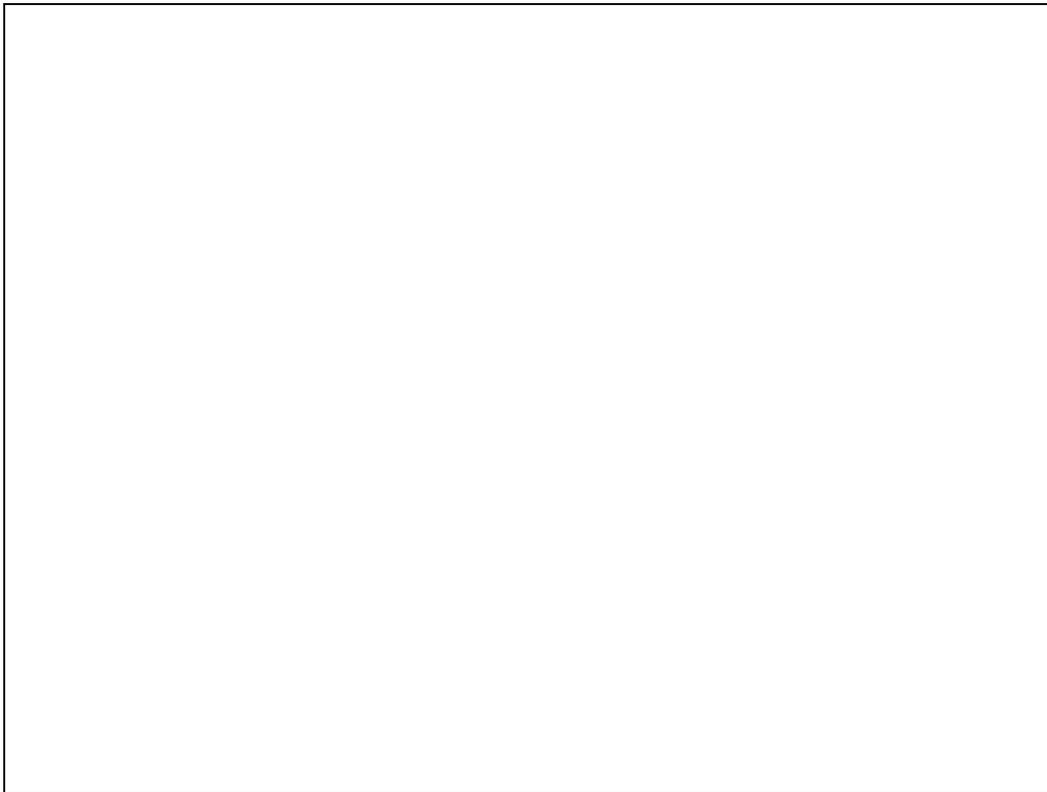
Since the invisible or sub-conscious layers inform our thinking that we possess a life or power source, all power that is demonstrated in our lives will be seen as human effort which is therefore legalism. The root of the tree feeds the branches of our belief system and we twist the Scriptures to our destruction.

This is the power of Babylon in the church. It combines the truth of righteousness by faith with the lie of a *performance-based value system* and produces a rejection of the very law that is our only hope for life and *value* as we saw in Chapter 3.

### C. An Example of Layered Thinking

Let us illustrate these five levels<sup>76</sup> in different contexts and see if we can get a tighter grasp on these layers of thinking. In the following diagrams, purple represents thinking that has not been penetrated by Scripture. Blue represented thinking that has been penetrated. Watch the black line of Scripture penetration move towards the bottom as we progress through the diagrams.

Let us take a Catholic view of the Law and document the five layers and see how much Scripture penetration we get into the five layers.



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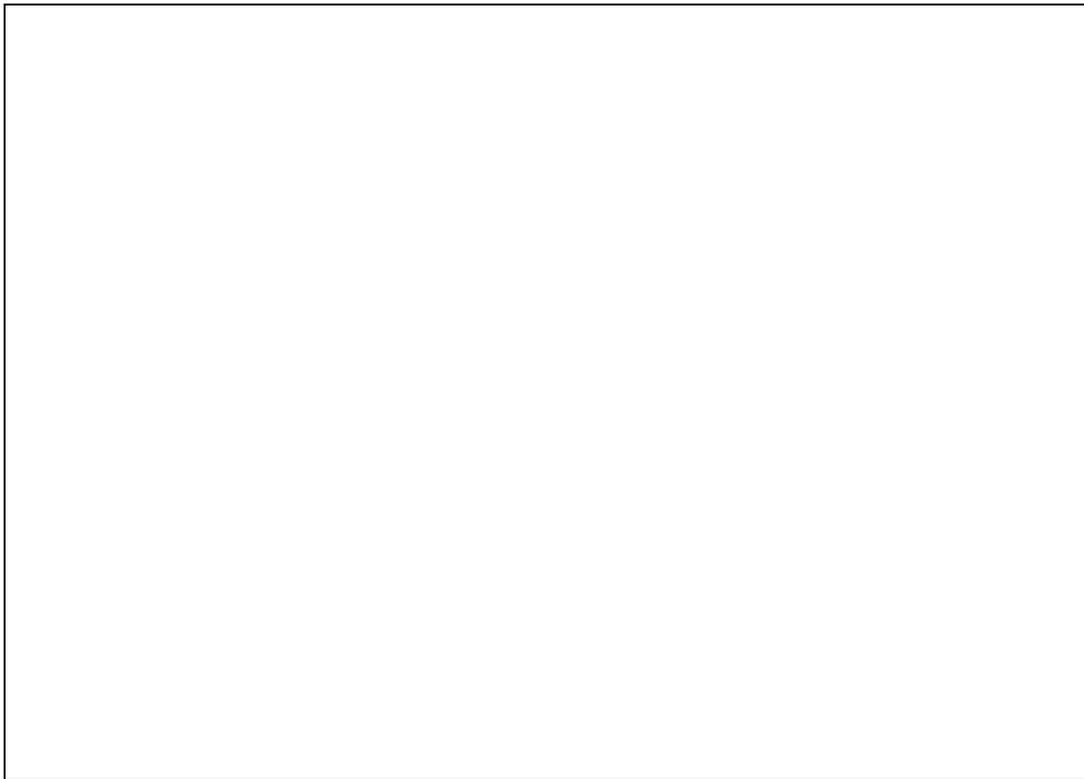
<sup>76</sup> I have identified at least nine layers. See Appendix D for more details. For the purposes of this exercise we will focus on five layers.

## Chapter 6 – How Do You Read?

The above Catholic based model agrees that the Law of God must be kept and attributes any effort by man to keep God's requirements as meritorious. From a Biblical point of view this is straight legalism and is simply man seeking to keep the law in his own efforts. Catholics would say grace covers the whole process, but since they clearly see works as meritorious it is plainly erroneous.

Let's now have a look at the typical protestant view again. This system is a bit more complex because it introduces more truth than the previous example. The higher the level of truth combined with error the harder it becomes to detect inconsistencies.

As we discussed, earlier, the Protestant church grew out of the Bible truth that a person is righteous by faith alone and not of works. This truth is now injected into the previous non-scriptural Catholic understanding of Christian faith. The injection of truth at the belief level makes our premise partially true, but since the invisible layers are still *performance-based* then it also makes the premise partially false. The false element of the premise causes a person to reject the keeping of the law as part of the gospel.



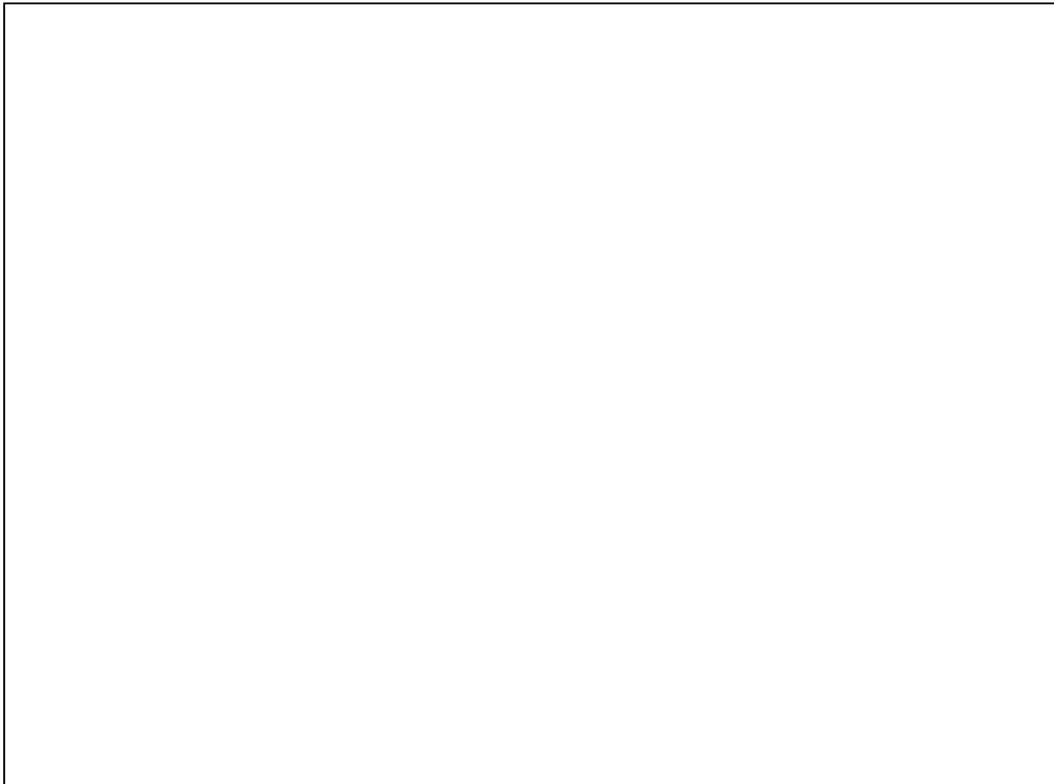
The only way the Protestants can continue to harmonise statements on the law is to change what the law is. The law becomes the new commandment to love one another and so rather than alter our *performance-based-thinking*, we change the law to fit our premise and layers of thinking.

Let us now place a Seventh-day Adventist belief system onto the law into the visible layers and leave the *performance-based* invisible layers and see what happens.

Our level of Scripture penetration is deepening. Remember as we said before that the deeper we go into truth, the harder it becomes to pick inconsistencies.

## Chapter 6 – How Do You Read?

The Adventist understanding of the law is based on the pillar beliefs of the Sabbath, the Second Coming, The Sanctuary and the State of the Dead. These doctrines combine into the doctrine on righteousness by faith that includes the keeping of the law as part of the new covenant. The true teachings correct the underlying assumption but since the invisible layers have not changed we get quite confused human effort. Our mind tells us that it is Christ who works in me, but my nature will take merit when the works are performed. We believe in righteousness by faith but we demonstrate righteousness by works. This is a very nasty spot to be in. So many of us have tried to be good Seventh-day Adventists and follow the teachings of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, but many of us are empty because *performance-based-thinking* still controls us. We still are affected by the mountains and the valleys of pride and despair, and the pressure builds to the point where something has to change.



To cope with this pressure, some Adventists, individually or banded together with others, give much time and attention to exposing the sins of the church, with no realization that this is a substitute for dealing with their own guilt and often despair.

On the other hand I have heard many stories of evangelists that have preached the love of Jesus in outreach programs and verbally abused their workers for not doing things correctly and keeping pace. Our protestant brothers and sisters can see the speck in our eyes over this issue, but many of us have not found the log, we are blinded to it by the hidden layers of *performance-based-thinking*.

When the *performance-based-thinking* goes on undetected, then something will have to change to relieve the pressure resulting from this inconsistency. Since Adventists know the law stands forever, then we would never change that. So what doctrines have changed? Some have tried to

change Righteousness by Faith and the Sanctuary. *Performance-based-thinking* on the law has demanded a change in our views of keeping it. The introduction of forensic justification in the late 70's and early 80's helped to relieve the pressure. It removed the pressure of overcoming sin. We could be covered by a blanket of grace that negated the need for Christian perfection. The change of emphasis on the Sanctuary came through a change in the teaching of the investigative judgment. The typical approach to the investigative judgment doctrine, as placed on a *performance*-base is almost as scary as an eternally burning hell. Many in our church have discarded the teaching altogether because they have not penetrated the hidden layers of *performance-based-thinking*.

So now we have at least two versions of righteousness by faith in the church, both are based on *performance* in the invisible layers. Some swing from side to side trying desperately to find some relief, but it will never come. If only we could allow the Word of God to penetrate the invisible layers and truly convert us, how much pain would be saved?

Why has God allowed us to wander down this path that makes being a Seventh-day Adventist so difficult? The only explanation I can find is in the rejection of the message that came to us in 1888. Notice the following quote:

“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. 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.” TM 91,92

The 1888 message presented to us righteousness by faith through an uplifted Saviour that allowed us to keep all the commandments of God. It directed us to make Christ the centre and not ourselves. It pointed us to the *life source* where rich currents would flow to us and fill us with the Spirit of Christ.

Clearly we have not come to this point. We have not discovered our *performance-based-thinking* with deep soul searching. Notice the following:

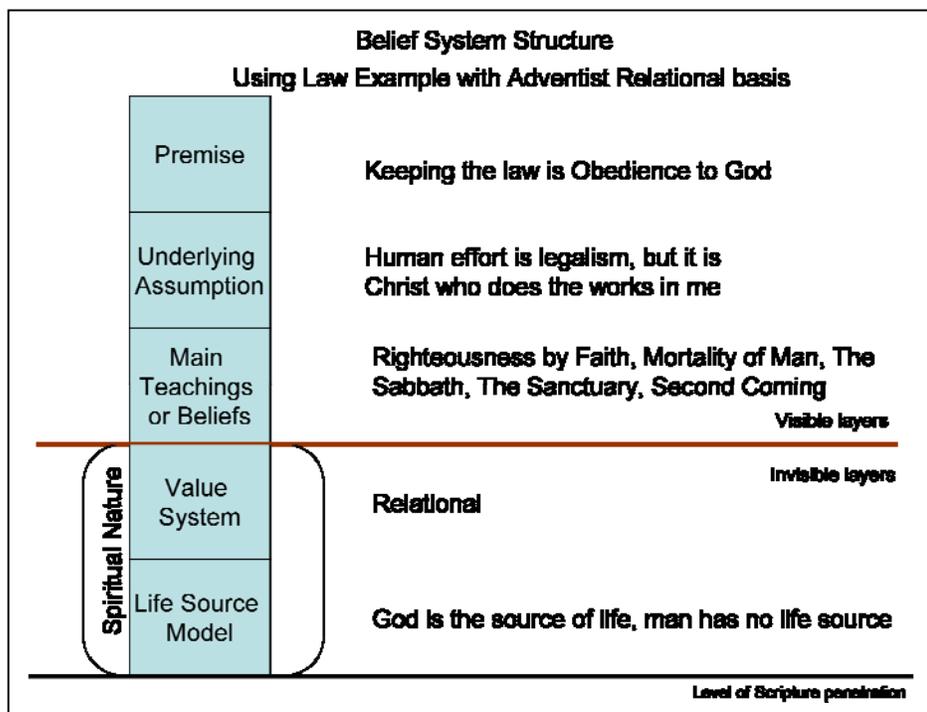
“No man can know what it means to be sanctified to God, unless he seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. He must humble his soul before God, be ready to sacrifice anything and everything rather than the favor of God. Cultivate love and affection for religious devotion. Better far give up earth than heaven. ***You need now to look well to your ways, that your feet slide not. The character of every desire and purpose, is as clear you well know before God as the sun in the heavens. You have my dear brother in Christ not cultivated spirituality and grown in grace. Self in you must die. Self-importance must be laid in the dust.***” 1888 Materials p. 1189

Have we looked well to our ways? Has self died? Are we easily offended? Do we bristle under rebuke? Do we compare ourselves with others? Do we seek a higher position in the church? Do we pride ourselves that we are doing the work of God? Is self laid in the dust? How do we do this?

“But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul.” COL 159

“The nearer we come to Jesus and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly we shall discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the less we shall feel like exalting ourselves. Those whom heaven recognizes as holy ones are the last to parade their own goodness. The apostle Peter became a faithful minister of Christ, and he was greatly honored with Divine light and power; he had an active part in the upbuilding of Christ's church; but Peter never forgot the fearful experience of his humiliation; his sin was forgiven; yet well he knew that for the weakness of character which had caused his fall only the grace of Christ could avail. He found in himself nothing in which to glory.” COL 160

While we may recognize the need for a faithful searching of the heart, *performance-based-thinking* can make this work unbearable. There is only one way we can commence such a work and not give up in despair; and that is to undertake the work as a son and not a servant. When we embrace sonship, our *value system* begins to shift from *performance-thinking* to *relationship-thinking*. Then and only then we can begin to face the painful work of soul searching to fully remove the invisible layers of our *performance-based-thinking*, remove the inconsistencies of our understanding of the law, and save us from false views of justification, sanctification, the sanctuary and many other teachings.



## Chapter 6 – How Do You Read?

*Dear Father in heaven*

*Forgive us for being slow of heart to believe what has been written by the prophets. Help us to overcome our prodigal thinking of believing you would only take us back as servants. Forgive us for focusing on the fact that we are no longer worthy to be your sons. May we embrace the full benefits of sonship and accept the rich currents of your righteousness that you wish to pour upon us through the spirit of Christ.*

*We thank you, in Jesus name.*

*Amen.*

In the next chapter I want to unpack more fully the critical need for a transfer from servant to son thinking that will allow us to transform the invisible layers of *performance-based-thinking*.

## **7. No Longer a Servant**

### **A. The Supreme Sacrifice**

There was a long pause as they both held each other. The intensity of emotion runs deep, but they both knew the time had come. Throughout the eons of time, Father and Son had always had close communion with each other and now that communion was soon to be broken. The Son of God is now to embark on the mission to reclaim His human sons and daughters. Both Father and Son understand the risks and the cost involved, but love drives them on.

For a brief moment, the Father and Son look into the future and watch the mission unfold. The scorn, the rejection, the hatred, the spitting, the kicking, the lash, the nails all pale into nothingness compared to that one horrid moment in time when heaven and earth stand still and behold the separation of Father and Son. The Son sees millennia of guilt, suffering, rebellion and worthlessness rolled upon Him and watches himself shake like a leaf, ripped and torn by the sense of His Father's backward steps, as He abandons Him to the horrors of THE DEATH (Hebrew 2:9).

The embrace tightens – How can the Father give Him up to this fate? At a deeper level they both wrestle with the possibility of failure and loss to the power of sin. The Son of God would take human nature upon himself providing a window of opportunity for His arch rival Satan, to overpower Him. There were no guarantees of success. How could they plan together such madness, such risk? How could they even entertain such an absurd plan? Yet love drives them on.

That long pause which seems like an eternity finally ends; they both resolve to carry out the plan. The Son steps to the edge of heaven, one final look into the loving face of His Father and then He is gone.

### **B. Plan of Salvation Breaks Cycle of Worthlessness**

We observed in chapter two that the development of Satan's kingdom meant the breaking of our *value* or *treasure* as being centred in God. The lie of the serpent shifted the centre of life to ourselves and our *value* then came from *performance-based-thinking*. We noted in chapter four that this shift locks us into a cycle of pride and depression based on the level of our success. Any attempts by God to talk to us while we are in this state will cause us to twist and pervert His words. Therefore the cycle of worthlessness must first be broken before we can correctly hear what God is trying to say to us. Notice carefully:

**If Jesus was to break that power, He must break that sense of worthlessness, He must reconnect our sense of *identity* as children of God and overcome the false *identity* conceived by *performance-based-thinking*. Then and only then will our centre begin to shift back to God rather than centering in ourselves.**

The life of Jesus can be summed up in the words of John 8:29 (NIV) "The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him". It did not matter what Satan did, he could not break that sense of dignity and confidence. Christ clung to his Sonship with a tenacity that even awed the prince of darkness. Satan must have been enraged at his futile efforts to move Christ to sin. At last, someone who could resist Satan. After four thousand years

of success with every single person, Satan slams into the rock-solid wall of a human soul that is confident in his sonship to God. Sonship was the key to victory, Sonship was the surest fortification against that torrent of worthlessness that was drowning the human race and therefore sonship must be the focal point of the war between the two rivals.

The town of Nazareth is pulsed with excitement. News of the Baptist spreads rapidly. The forerunner to the Messiah had come and as the message reaches the lowly carpenter's shop, Jesus knew that the time for battle had come. He lays down his chisel and saw, embraces his mother and heads towards the Jordan.

Jesus is confident in his Sonship but the coming battle in the wilderness will test him like no man has been tested before. The gates of human woe will be released upon him like a bursting dam. Jesus must face the full force of human worthlessness and remain like the rock of Gibraltar. If he can stand firm, then for the first time someone will have broken the chains of *performance-based-thinking*. The spoils of this victory would become the inheritance of those who believe on Him.

### **C. Conflict in Wilderness Foundational to the Work of the Cross**

The battle in the wilderness was foundational to the work of the cross. What use is the offer of pardon if the human soul cannot break the chains of his nothingness? What use the most powerful demonstration of love if no man, woman or child had the power to embrace that gift? The worthlessness and nothingness of *performance-based-thinking* must first be overcome and the spoils of victory placed in the hands of the human race so that all can be empowered to embrace the matchless gift of the cross.

The Father knows what is coming and he will strengthen the hand of His Son for the battle, not by a powerful display, not by some supernatural force or weapon, because none of these things would meet the coming foe. God offers His best weapon – the empowerment that comes from their *relationship* to one another. As Jesus comes up out of the water and the dove descends, the heavens open and Jesus hears audibly the voice of His Father: “THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED.” These words are the sharpest sword that the Father could have handed to his Son to do battle. They comforted Him with the thought of where His centre and *treasure* were. Safe in the WORD of His father, he will battle the wily foe and break those chains on our behalf that we could never break.

The significance of this statement goes far deeper than most would imagine. The fact that God is accepting a member of the human race offers incredible hope to the rest of us. Through Jesus, God reaches out to each one of us and tells us that we are His beloved children. If we ever hope to accept the gift of the cross we must first hear those precious words “You are my beloved child in whom I am well pleased” It is impossible to accept a gift from an enemy without wondering if it is booby trapped or has strings attached, but a gift from a loving family member can be accepted for what it is – a gift, pure and simple.

**There is no way to approach the cross other than across the bridge of a solid belief in our sonship or daughtership to God. Any other path will cause us to twist the gospel, with our human-centred thinking, into legalism or license to sin.**

Those words from heaven must have enraged Satan. A reminder of something that he was but now is not – a son! It was a reminder of his nothingness and futility. Yet pride does not die easily and so Satan prepares to unleash his barrage of temptations upon Jesus in the wilderness.

The Bible record says that Jesus “was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan” (Mark 1:13). I think most people would find 10 minutes of constant temptation overpowering, let alone 40 days! Satan had had 4000 years of testing practise to get it right and you can be assured that Jesus was made the mark of every weapon of hell. Who can comprehend the depth of this conflict? The whole universe held their collective breath as Satan laid blow after blow upon the Son of God. As for us, we were fast asleep, oblivious to the heroic stand made by Jesus to set us free. If Jesus failed here, we would have all been crushed by the chains of our nothingness. Jesus was our one and only hope to pierce the darkness.

You know, I get to a point like this and I just have to stop and think about Him. I mean what can I say? My heart just brims with grateful joy at the determined unrelenting attacks of this God-man upon our helpless situation. Just like a father or mother who would run through a burning house to save their child. He was mentally bashed senseless by Satan, but he would not let go. As I meditate on Jesus in the wilderness and realize what He is doing for me, the foundations of my self-centredness begin to crack, an immense tide of love begins to lift my *value* from myself back to my Father in heaven.

#### **D. The Belief in Sonship Restores Identity and Breaks the Cycle of Worthlessness**

When Jesus is at his most vulnerable point, tired, hungry and lonely – all the things that drive humanity into compromise – Satan comes to the crux of the issue. “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread” (Matthew 4:3 NIV). What else would the test be except on the nature of His Sonship? Was His Sonship based on His *inherent power* to do miracles, was it based on an inherent Divinity that made him worthy to be a Son, or was it based in His heavenly Father’s word, based on His *relationship* to the Father? How Jesus answers this question directly impacts us. He is our example in everything. His *relationship* with the Father is the Way and the Truth and the Life. If we misunderstand the nature of Christ’s Sonship, we will misunderstand the very heart of removing *performance-based-thinking*.

Satan used the medium of appetite to try and break the faith of Jesus in His Father’s Word. Forty days earlier, God said “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”. If Jesus turns stones into bread then he is effectively doubting the word of God and that doubt would be enough to confuse His *identity*. If He had responded to Satan, he would have acknowledged that who I am is determined by what I can perform, who I am, is determined by the power that is in me. Such a demonstration would destroy our understanding of sonship to God. Thankfully Jesus clung to His Sonship and thus secured the relational identity system.<sup>77</sup>

Is it possible that Satan could tempt us to ask Jesus to turn stones into bread? When we are examining who He is, do we ask Him to define His Sonship by His inherited *relationship* to His Father or by His own inherent Divinity? This question is critical and we will come back to this later in the book.

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<sup>77</sup> “Armed with faith in his Heavenly Father, bearing in his mind the precious memory of the words spoken from Heaven at his baptism, Jesus stood unmoved in the lonely wilderness, before the mighty enemy of souls.” 2SP 93

How many of us have not fallen for this trap of proving our *worth* by what we achieve? Driven to show that you have what it takes to reach the top, ignoring sleep and relaxation and most of all prayer time and Bible study, staying late at the office and missing vital family time – just to get that promotion or bonus. Why do we push ourselves so hard? In many cases I believe we are responding to that question “If you are a son or daughter of God, perform some great act to prove it. Show me the power that is centred inside of you”.

Do you find that when you awake in the morning and you want to spend some time to meditate and be with God that your head just begins to fill up with all the things that need to be done that day, until you can't take it any more and you just compromise with a 5 minute prayer and then you are off into the day. Does this happen to you? Why? If you get to the end of the day and find that you have not achieved very much, are you still content and happy or do you feel disappointed and a bit depressed? Do you get agitated at “wasting time” lying in a sick bed, when you could be crossing things off your “to-do” list? All of these things point to the fact that without exception all of us fall for Satan's temptations to prove our *identity* and *worth* by what we do. Due to the fact that deep down inside we carry that insecurity factor passed down to us by Adam and Eve, we are easy targets for needing to create spiritual and mental fig leaves to cover ourselves. A person centred in themselves will always respond to a challenge to their *identity* by displaying what is in them whereas a secure person centred in their heavenly Father will cling to their *identity* as a son or daughter.

It is for this very reason that Jesus had to enter the wilderness of temptation. The human family needed a person who could demonstrate that he believed he was a child of God simply because God said it rather than through proving it by what he did.

The apostle Paul picks up this reality by contrasting the identities of a son and a servant.

**Gal 4:1** Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a servant, though he is master of all.

Paul explains to us how we can be released from many of the perplexities of life and questions about God's dealings with us. When we truly comprehend that God is our Father and that He is preparing us to enter His kingdom and that He loves us intensely, then our *relationship* to God starts to make sense. The rules and regulations are no longer seen as opportunities to prove to God we are His children, instead they become doors of freedom that reveal God's tender regard for us and His yearning desire for us to receive our full inheritance as children of God. Paul explains it this way:

**Gal 4:3-7** So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba, Father.*” So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. (NIV)

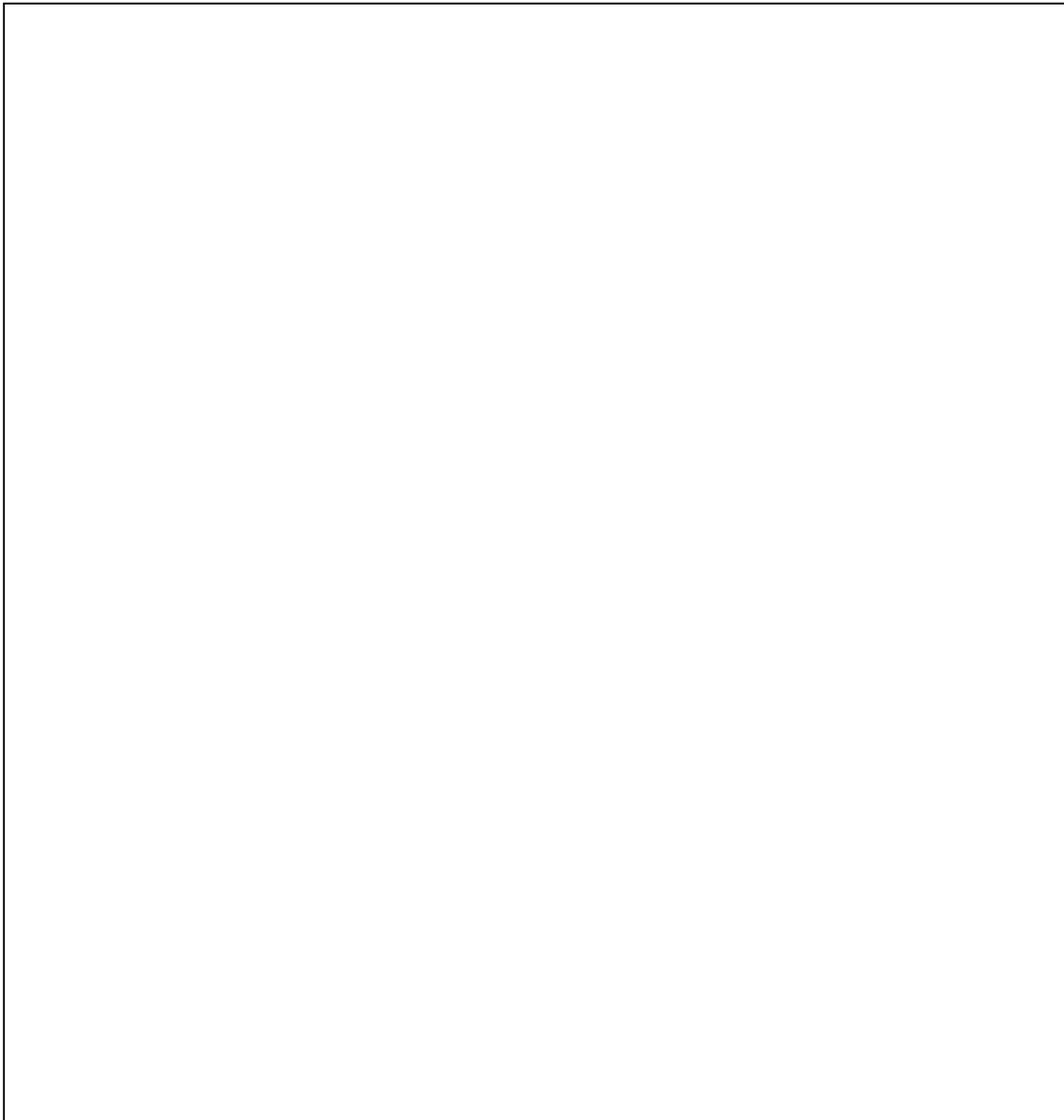
These are some of the most beautiful words in Scripture. As we recognise the sacrifice of Jesus in securing our adoption as God's children, we are released from the slavery of Satan's kingdom. We break free from the tyranny of the *performance-based-thinking* and we stand strong and noble as sons and daughters of God, knowing that because Jesus will always be accepted as a Son, in Him, we will always be His beloved children.

## Chapter 7 – No Longer a Servant

Has the spirit of God cried out in your heart “Abba Father” – Daddy, Daddy? Do you feel so secure in His love that you can run into His arms and know you are not only welcome but deeply desired by Him? Have you returned to the childish adoration of your Father that beams when He is near? Until you experience this freedom, you will always remain a servant that lives with the uncertainty of what God is really trying to say in His Word. The servant’s *relationship* is based alone on his ability to work for God and this *relationship* will wrest the Scriptures to destruction.

As God’s children, our inheritance is sure. We can boldly come to Him and make our requests, we can confidently trust Him that He knows what is best for us and that everything that happens to us in life is to help us grow into a deeper understanding of the values of God’s kingdom. We can then break the slavery of *performance-based-thinking*.

In our next chapter we want to look at the impact of reading the Scripture only as a servant of God as opposed to being a son of God.



## Section 3 – Doctrinal Implications of Performance-Based Thinking

### 8. Impact on Doctrines

In this section we will look at a number of teachings that have been twisted or distorted by *performance-based-thinking*. This list is not exhaustive but will cover some key areas.<sup>78</sup>

#### A. The Central Pillar and Foundation of our Faith: The Sanctuary

Our Adventist Pioneers considered the teaching of the sanctuary to be the central hub of understanding our faith. Listen to what Uriah Smith says:

“As it is perhaps natural, the enemy of truth seems most persistent in trying to trouble and unsettle minds in reference to the sanctuary; for it is the citadel of our strength.” RH August 5, 1875

Ellen White wrote:

“The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary, is the foundation of our faith.” 8MR 245

“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.’” GC 409

Just as Delilah was determined to find the secret of Samson’s strength, so Babylon was determined to find the source of our strength and cut off our beautiful locks of hair and leave us miserable, poor, blind and naked (Bald?!). This indeed she has done. The daughters of Babylon can never understand the true teaching on the sanctuary because of her foundational pillars of the immortality of the soul and Sunday observance which intensify *performance-based-thinking*. The daughters of Babylon while professing righteousness by faith cannot live in the gap between the altar of sacrifice and the Ark of the Covenant, trusting in the priestly ministry of Christ to carry them all the way between the two points. They cannot live with the teachings of final atonement, investigative judgment, character perfection and close of probation. All of these teachings, rooted in the sanctuary doctrine, require *relational-based* or *covenant-based-thinking* for them to stand. Let us now look at each of these teachings and see why Babylon can’t live with them.

#### B. Atonement/Final Atonement/Investigative Judgment

When the prodigal son realised his lost condition, he determined to return to his father. He glimpsed enough of the father’s heart to think he could return but not enough to grasp that he would be accepted as a son, for he said he would ask his father to hire him as one of his servants (Luke 15:19). He had not the faith to believe he could be a son but felt he could be accepted as a servant. The prodigal was still a legalist at heart, he still was diseased by *performance-based-thinking*.

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<sup>78</sup> At a later time I wish to address the mechanics of righteousness by faith more fully by defining and addressing the subjects of law, sin, justification and sanctification.

When he returns to the father, the father allows him to express his unworthiness but before the son offers his “Hagar”,<sup>79</sup> solution, the father throws his arms around him and welcomes him as his son. He is forgiven and reconciled to the father. They throw a party and the fatted calf provides the symbol of sacrifice to make atonement for the sin of the son.

The story does not tell us whether the son willingly accepted his position as a reinstated son. He came with the intent of being a servant. It is possible that even though the father accepted him as a son, the same principle that led him reject his father’s pleas to stay the first time, could also have caused him to reject his father’s acceptance as a son. The situation could have been that the Father saw his son *as* a son, while the son sees himself *as* a servant because of the shameful things he did. He still might not have accepted sonship in his heart. How can this situation be resolved?

As a Jewish family, they would have observed the Day of Atonement at Jerusalem each year where a final atonement is made for sins and blotted out. While the son was forgiven when he first came home, his sin was not blotted out until the Day of Atonement. The time gap between forgiveness (daily atonement) and blotting out (final atonement) provided the son the opportunity to see if he really believed the father’s words that he was indeed a son. If the son’s sin had been forgiven and blotted at the same time, he would not have to face a time of soul searching to see if all sins had been confessed.

If the son had not truly believed the fathers words then in the gap between initial forgiveness and the Day of Atonement, his invisible *performance-based-thinking* would begin to surface. He would be plagued with doubts about whether the father really loved him. He would be fearful or resentful of his brother’s sarcasm. The time between forgiveness and blotting gives time for the *performance-based-thinking* to surface and realise that he had not truly believed the father. During that time, he would have the opportunity to learn what his father is really like. As he learns to love his father he would obtain the courage to really believe he was his son again despite the wicked thing he had done to his father. The Day of Atonement provides an opportunity to search the invisible layers of *performance-thinking* and be rid of them. Thank God for the Day of Atonement!

A "son" who has in the past become habituated in having his way and serving his father as a servant, unless he truly accepted his relationship as a son, he would be disturbed by the Day of Atonement. Acting as a servant, seeking to please his father and still carrying the guilt of his sin, he would surface these fears through further sinning. With no assurance of sonship he must create some concept that would give him a sense of security -- security which is truly provided only in a sonship relation.

A doctrine of predestination<sup>80</sup> which destroys the need for and meaning of the concept of the Day of Atonement, thus seeming to offer the security he sought. Indeed, he might expand this approach with a forensic justification concept of having been justified at the cross, which goes so far as to make a future judgment appear a blasphemous denial of the cross. Or he might simply create the less radical doctrine of forensic<sup>81</sup> justification that reduces the Day of Atonement to

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<sup>79</sup> Hagar is symbolized by an inappropriate relationship that leads to old covenant legalism.

<sup>80</sup> The doctrine of predestination teaches that when we accept Christ, we give evidence that we were pre-selected to be saved by God and that nothing we can do can change that. For Christians this is supposed to give them assurance of salvation.

<sup>81</sup> Forensic or legal justification. Declared righteous objectively completely outside of you. Has no subjective or relational component and has nothing to do with a change of heart.

simply an extension of his original forgiveness. Then he can quiet his conscience and never have to face the searching scrutiny. He can stay a servant.

But how sad for the son not to be able to simply accept the father's love and rest in its assurance. Then, having searched his heart to assure his heart regarding his relationship, he could humbly and thankfully go up to the temple on the Day of Atonement, believing in the love and forgiveness of His father and assured of having his sins blotted out. The gap between daily and final atonement is an essential part of God's plan to write his law on our hearts. It not only tests but provides us opportunity to learn how to rest in the Father's arms in the face of scrutiny and believe that we are indeed forgiven at all layers of our thinking.

God does not test us to terrorise us but because he loves us and wants us to realise the depths of our *performance-based-thinking*. Why? Because He can only receive sons into His eternal kingdom. For servants are always seeking to prove their worth and in doing so, their focus upon self blocks the flow of God's love and results in anxiety, fear, and self-defence that reflect the principles of Satan's kingdom.

As Seventh-day Adventists our foundations were laid on the belief that the gospel of the new covenant is based squarely on the shadows and types of the Old Testament sanctuary service. Notice the statement of belief on the Sanctuary made in 1872:

“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.” (A Declaration of Fundamental Principles taught and practiced by Seventh-day Adventists. belief #10).

In 1887 Uriah Smith wrote a five point summary of the sanctuary as understood by Seventh-day Adventists:

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.

## Chapter 8 – Impact on Doctrines

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

It is clear from these statements that our foundations were laid on a belief that an atonement was carried out in 1844 for the blotting out of sins. Ellen White states it simply as follows:

“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.” PP 357

“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 to cleanse the sanctuary. His work as high priest completes the Divine plan of redemption by making the final atonement for sin.” 10MR 157

Statements such as these have confused other churches in the past and led them to believe that we did not believe in the atonement of the cross. This is completely false. Note what Ellen White wrote:

“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.” YI June 14, 1900

Why is there such a difficulty in seeing atonement as a process that encompasses the Cross and the work of Christ in the Sanctuary? The word “atonement” *at-one-ment* was a word coined by William Tyndale for reconciliation. Atonement is the process of restoring the relationship between God and man. It is vitally important when considering the concept of atonement that we ask ourselves “Is our view of the atonement performance-based or relationally based?” What do I mean by this?

We might look at the sacrifice of Christ as a deed that God required to be paid to simply fix what man had done, to cover for his wrong doing. A performance-based concept of atonement could very easily focus on the *act* of Christ on the Cross as a ritualistic process to make satisfaction to the Father for the sins of mankind. A deed to be done and completed and once done, then it is all completed. Some aspects of protestant theology give you the impression that atonement is essentially that, a deed to be completed for the satisfaction of the Divine Will.

But Atonement placed in the context of a relationally based system focuses on the entire process of a restored relationship from beginning to end. How does the cross restore this relationship? The cross reveals the immense love of God and exposes the lies of Satan about God. It also reveals the wickednesses of the heart of man in killing the Saviour of the World. The basis of reconciliation involves the restitution of correct identities for both God and man. The cross is the most powerful demonstration of the Father's heart for His children. It tells us He was willing to give up everything to get us back, even His own Son. The revelation of such love is the powerhouse of the atonement. It confronts the human race with the reality of God's true character.

The atonement made on the cross is the objective demonstration of God's acceptance of us, just as the father ran to his prodigal son and embraced him. The atonement in the sanctuary involves the subjective process of fully embracing that acceptance and truly believing we are sons and daughters of God. A performance-based view of atonement through a protestant lens sees no need for the subjective element of atonement. It is content to accept the ritualistic view of acceptance with God. It feels no need of such subjective heart searching and therefore rejects sanctuary based atonement.

Our pioneers laid a solid platform for the atonement doctrine. While there were some who tried to push the atonement towards the most holy place ministry only, the leadership embraced both cross and sanctuary aspects of the atonement.<sup>82</sup>

While the church laid a solid platform, living the realities of this doctrine in a relational context has been a struggle. During the period from 1852<sup>83</sup> up to 1888<sup>84</sup>, Ellen White had expressed the view that the Church was in Laodicea and lost its first love. A spirit of debating prevailed amongst many ministers and sermons were often as dry as the hills of Gilboa.<sup>85</sup>

The 1888 message challenged the church to engage the relational reality of the atonement and be reconciled to God and fully embrace His righteousness. The church struggled to accept the message<sup>86</sup> and by the time of the 1920's the church became influenced by the rise of

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<sup>82</sup> See Questions on Doctrine Revisited Chapter 13 "Pioneers avoid Crosier's Error" by Leroy Moore.

<sup>83</sup> As I have of late looked around to find the humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, my mind has been much exercised. Many who profess to be looking for the speedy coming of Christ are becoming conformed to this world and seek more earnestly the applause of those around them than the approbation of God. They are cold and formal, like the nominal churches from which they but a short time since separated. The words addressed to the Laodicean church describe their present condition perfectly. EW 107 (RH June 10, 1852)

<sup>84</sup> In the Laodicean state of the church at the present time, how little evidence is given of the direct, personal guidance of God! Men place themselves in positions of temptation, where they see and hear much that is contrary to God, and detrimental to spirituality. RH June 19, 1888

<sup>85</sup> RH March 11, 1890

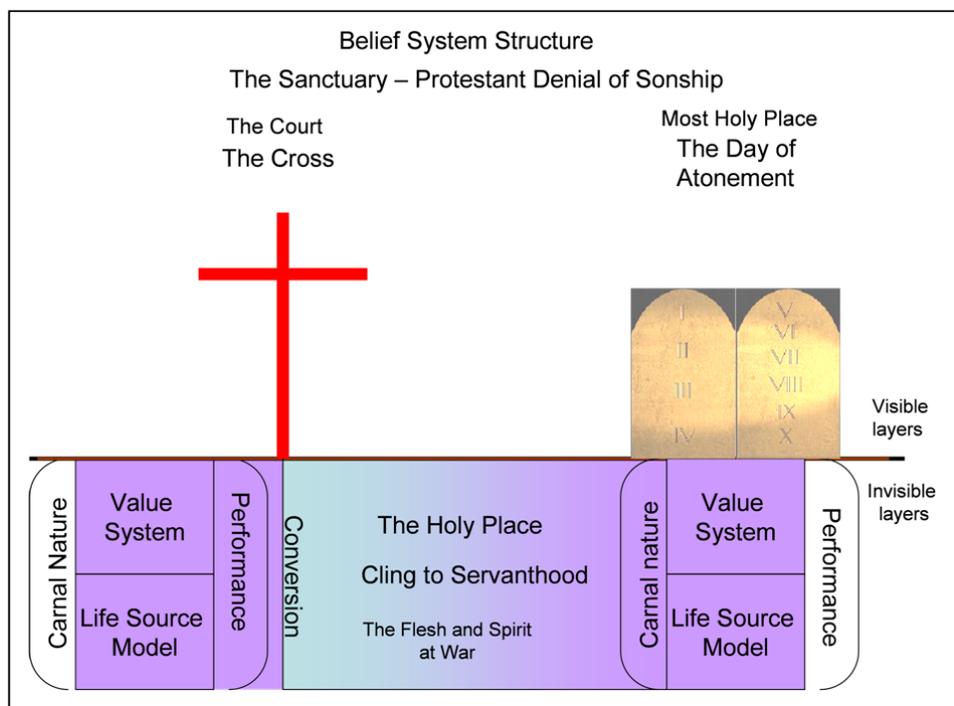
<sup>86</sup> "Those who realize their need of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, will have contrition of soul, will repent for their resistance of the Spirit of the Lord. They will confess their sin in refusing the light that Heaven has so graciously sent them." RH August 26, 1890

Dear Bro. Olsen: The enclosed testimony I sent to the Ohio Conference especially, but the Lord has shown me that the very same evils which are reprov'd in that conference exist in other conferences. Churches are in need of personal piety and a deeper, far deeper experience in the truth and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The spirit of resistance that has been exhibited in presenting the righteousness of Christ as our only hope has grieved the Spirit of God, and the result of this opposition has required the delivery of this matter the more earnestly and decidedly, causing deeper searching into the subject and calling out an array of arguments that the messenger himself did not know was so firm, so full, so thorough upon this subject of justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ as our only hope. The subject has been brought before many minds. The sad part of the matter is that some who ought to have stood in the clear light on this subject were working on the enemy's side of the question. 1888 Study Materials 703. 1890

fundamentalism that was sweeping protestant churches across America.<sup>87</sup> During the era of the 1930's and 1940's Andreasen developed his final generation concepts in the context of the Day of Atonement. Andreasen's emphasis on overcoming sin and the perfection of the saints in the context of the day of atonement increased the danger of a performance-based thinking in relation to the investigative judgement.<sup>88</sup> Andreasen's views moved the church heavily to the right and tension mounted until the release of the book Questions on Doctrine. While Questions of Doctrine did re-centre the church on the question of the atonement, the conditions upon which the book was created embroiled the church in controversy, a controversy that has not as yet been resolved by the church.<sup>89</sup>

Andreasen's heavy final atonement focus placed such tension on the church that in an attempted correction, the doctrinal platform developed by men like Desmond Ford overcorrected to the point of a complete denial of the investigative judgment message. Ford's message was heavily influenced by Evangelical thinking, but Evangelical thinking will always struggle with a sanctuary atonement concept.

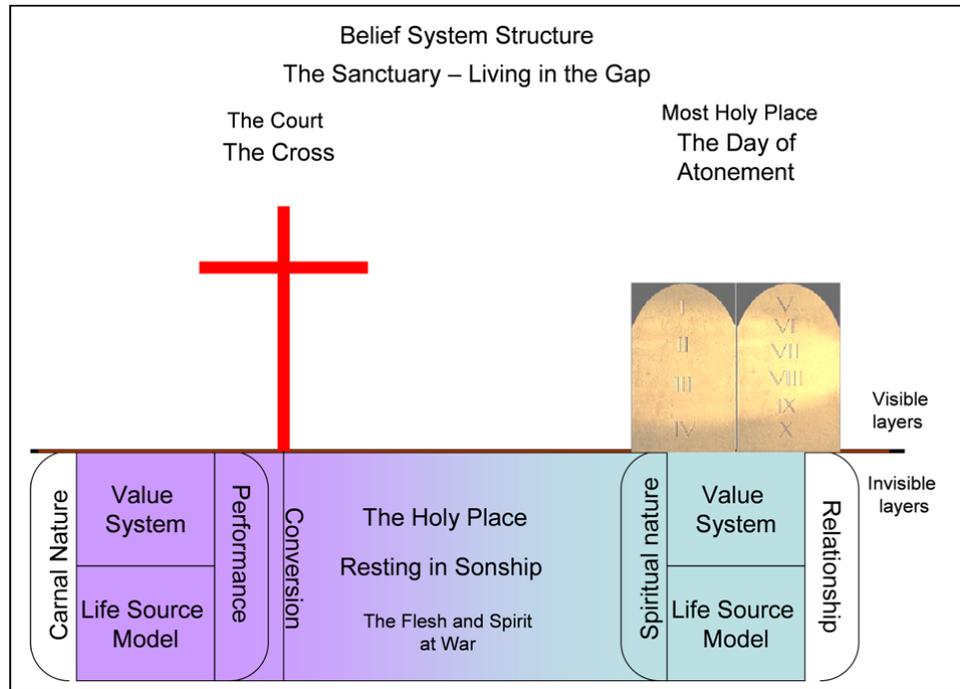
The doctrine of righteousness by faith as expressed by Protestant faith is underpinned by the immortality of the soul and reinforces the lie of the serpent of an internal *life source*. Such righteousness cannot abide the scrutiny of the Most Holy Place. They can't go into that apartment. Their Scripture level of penetration is not deep enough to grasp these doctrines in a logical framework. The false life source system of Protestants inadvertently causes a rejection the testing of full sonship through investigation, they unknowingly remain a legalist prodigal in their hearts and change the gospel so that they can remain a servant and unwittingly seek to earn their salvation even while protesting efforts to obey as attempts to earn salvation, which they correctly declare cannot be earned.



<sup>87</sup> Graeme Bradford, *People are Human* (Signs Publishing Company, Victoria, 2006) 45.

<sup>88</sup> Leroy Moore, *Questions on Doctrine Revisited*, page 256-260

<sup>89</sup> Evidence of this can be seen by the fact that Andrews University held a conference on QOD in Oct of 2007 to try and work through the many issues still remaining.



During my theology training, I was told that the final atonement/investigative judgment was something that would essentially be a five minute ritual as the focus of the atonement was all in the cross. I appreciate the fact my lecturer tried to hold onto some sense of the doctrine of the Investigative judgment, but it appears to me that such a view is a reaction to the performance-based thinking developed by Andreasen’s final generation emphasis. I feel an immense sense of sadness for our church. A relational focus on the atonement as expressed through the lens of the prodigal story we discussed earlier, sees no conflict between cross and sanctuary atonement. I believe that a relational emphasis would have saved the right and left distortions of men such as Andreasen and Ford.

The legacy for our church is that today many people in our church have little or no idea of the difference between forgiveness and blotting of sins. Many Adventists sadly sing with other evangelicals that when Jesus died, he threw our sins into the depths of the sea, rather than transferring them to heaven, taking away the precious soul searching of the Day of Atonement that could surface faulty *performance-thinking* and get rid of it.

Many Seventh-day Adventists rejected this change and the current list of fundamentals does indicate that there is a work of atonement in the context of an investigative judgment. The fundamental is quite vague though about the work of judgment. Here is the statement:

“23. Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

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. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all

sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have a part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who, among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the second advent. (Heb. 1:3; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Mal. 3:1; Leviticus 16; Rev. 14:12; 22:12.)”

This statement is quite vague as to whether judgment commenced in 1844 or simply revealed to heavenly intelligences, something that already had been done. It does not mention explicitly the books of record and the work that takes place going through the records, although it lists Daniel 7:9-27 which includes the concept. Why the vagueness? Note the following crystal clear statement from *Great Controversy* appears in *Questions on Doctrine* under the chapter on the Remnant:<sup>90</sup>

“As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance. The Lord declared to Moses: "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." Exodus 32:33. And says the prophet Ezekiel: "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, . . . all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned." Ezekiel 18:24.” GC 483

This statement clearly indicates that God commences the work of judgment when the books are opened in 1844. God does not reveal or manifest something he already has done.

If the work of judgment commences in 1844 then the cases of every man and woman is not decided until that point forward. This fact creates incredible uncertainty for those who wish to remain servants and are not truly believing they are sons of God. It has been stated by many that this teaching takes away the certainty of salvation. It sure does! For those who are not secure in their son or daughtership to God! That is the whole point, to help them discover if they truly believe that they are children of God and are accepted. Several Adventist theologians have attacked the investigative judgment for undermining of the certainty of salvation. Why can't they say with David “The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is

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<sup>90</sup> *Questions on Doctrine*, Page 174, PDF Edition found in [www.maranathamedia.com](http://www.maranathamedia.com)

judged.” (Psalms 37:33)? When will we realise that for many people in our church the central pillar is missing. Such is the result of *performance-based-thinking*.

### C. The Nature of Christ

The doctrine of the nature of Christ has been a source of great controversy in the Adventist church especially since the release of the book *Questions on Doctrine*. As so many books have been written on the subject I will refer you to those books for further research. Here is a list of recommended reading:

- *Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection* by A.T Jones
- *General Conference Bulletin 1895 Sermons* by A.T Jones
- *Christ and His Righteousness* by E.J Waggoner
- *The Theology Crisis*<sup>91</sup> by Leroy Moore
- *Questions on Doctrine Revisited* by Leroy Moore
- *Touched with our feelings* by J.R Zurcher

I will mention briefly from Scripture, Spirit of Prophecy and our pioneers, the following:

**Heb 2:14-18** 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. 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 succour them that are tempted.

**Rom 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:

**1Jo 4:2,3** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

“Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His Divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect."” DA 311

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<sup>91</sup> The books: *Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, *General Conference Bulletin 1895 Sermons*, *Christ and His Righteousness* and *The Theology Crisis* are available for download at [www.maranathamedia.com](http://www.maranathamedia.com)

“He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor those that are tempted.” MM 181

“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 by E.J Waggoner)

“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."” (*Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 25 by A.T. Jones)

The human nature of Christ was the very centre of the message of righteousness by faith given by Jones and Waggoner. Ellen White says this about their message:

“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.” TM 91

In 1957 with the release of *Questions on Doctrine*, the Adventist church without adequate discussion or vote, presented a view on the nature of Christ inconsistent with the view held since the churches foundational pillars were laid. Notice this statement:

“He sojourned on earth, was tempted and tried and was touched with the feelings of our human infirmities, yet He lived a life wholly free from sin. His was a real and genuine humanity, one that must pass through the various stages of growth, like any other member of the race. He was subject to Joseph and Mary, and was a worshiper in the synagogue and Temple. He wept over the guilty city of Jerusalem, and at the grave of a loved one. He expressed His dependence upon God by prayer. Yet all the while He retained His deity—the one and only God-man. He was the second Adam, coming in the "likeness" of sinful human flesh (Rom. 8:3), but without a taint of its sinful propensities and passions.”<sup>92</sup>

You will notice the word *likeness* is put in quotes. Here is the inception of the proverbial “likeness is not sameness”. He is introduced as humanity that took body weaknesses but not our moral degeneracy in human nature. Then is listed many EGW quotes to show his sinlessness. There is no doubt Christ was sinless, that is our only hope. But if he did not take our (yours and my) nature then he really did not reach us where we are.

But Ellen White states:

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<sup>92</sup> Questions on Doctrine, Page 20, PDF Version found at [www.maranathamedia.com](http://www.maranathamedia.com)

“For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.” DA 117

Note that Ellen White declares that the moral degeneracy Christ took (not spiritual degeneracy, but the impact of generations of sin upon the higher faculties) included moral worth. Why did we have to change our teaching on the nature of Christ? What changed in our church before 1957 to cause a need to change the nature of Christ? We will look at this in depth in a later chapter but for now I want us to consider how *performance-based-thinking* will not allow it.

As we have stated many times already, humanity is infected with the lie of the serpent – you shall not surely die. This lie has embedded in the heart of man a belief that he has power or life in himself. The truth is we have no power at all<sup>93</sup>. All power and life come from God, but when we receive it, it passes through the lie of the serpent in our mind and we are unwittingly beguiled into thinking it is our power and strength.

A clear example of this is our constant tendency to compare with others. When others do well are we able to rejoice in what God has done in them without the feeling that we are not doing enough for the Lord? If we preach or sing well and no one makes a positive comment, why are we tempted to feel discouraged? If we were inspired by the Lord and gifted by Him and did it for Him, why should we be tempted to feel discouraged? These are all subtle implications of the lie “you shall not surely die” that while we might mentally reject, our behaviour gives evidence that we are still being affected by it.

This lie actually gives an active power to human nature. It unwittingly guides our thinking to believe that when we do evil, it is actually something that has been created by us. It makes our nature active.

**The reality is that darkness is the absence of light. It is not a creative principle but a *passive principle*.<sup>94</sup> This means that human nature in its fallen state is passive, not active and generative.**

The diagram below shows that those who hold a view that Christ took our sinful human nature and still hold *performance-based-thinking*, do indeed make Christ a sinner, which is impossible. If human sinful nature were active – meaning it creates evil inherently – then Christ could never have taken that kind of nature. But if human sinful nature is passive state, then it is quite possible to do so. We have shown again and again that we as a church have not eliminated *performance-based-thinking*; thus, to remain consistent either we had to remove it or change our view of the nature of Christ. So instead of us changing, we changed Christ.

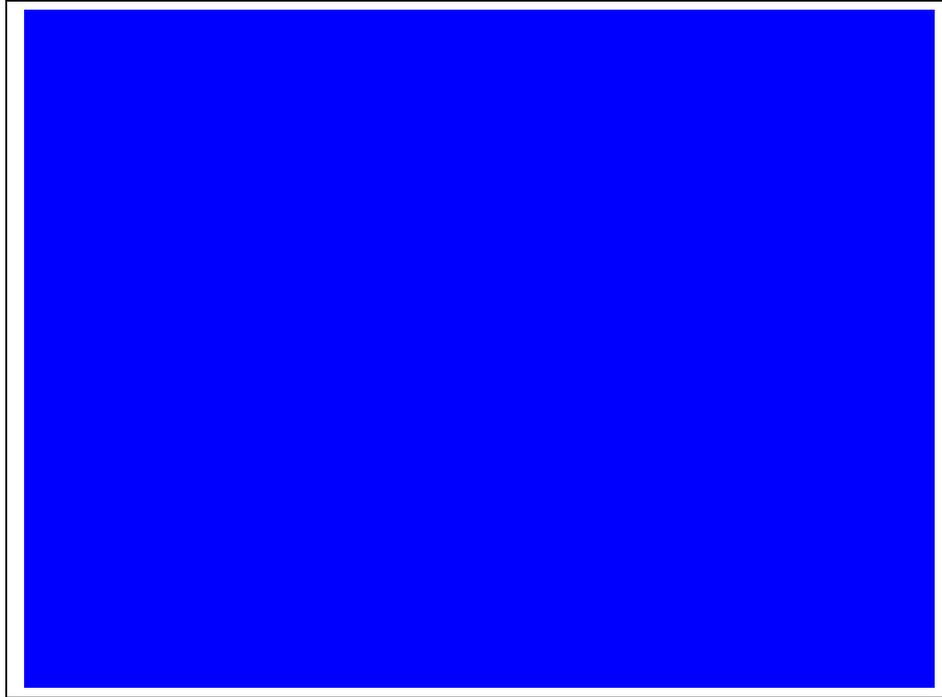
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<sup>93</sup> As a point of clarification, man does not have generative power, the power to create from himself. Man does have the power of the will, the power to choose, but this ability should not be confused with the power of life.

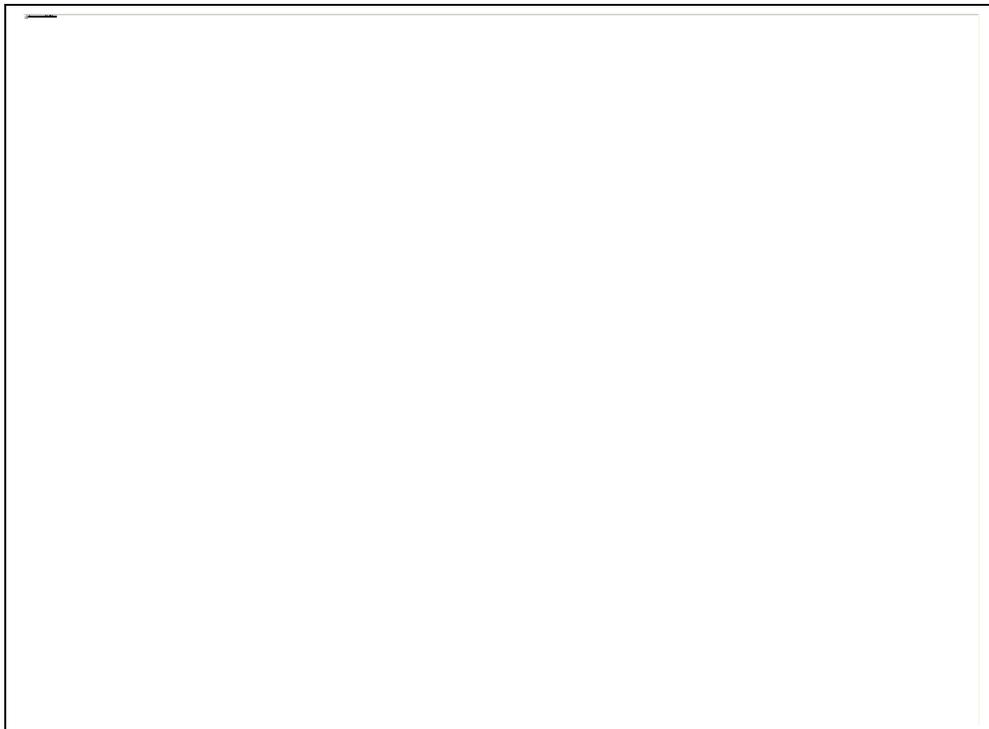
<sup>94</sup> Based on the definition of sin given by Ellen White: “Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is “the transgression of the law;” it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.” GC 492 Sin is the *outworking* of a principle at war with the great law of love. Human nature contains the *principle* at war (the principle being created by the lie “you shall not surely die” thus providing the basis for the deception of human independence) not the *outworking of the principle* at war with the great law of love.

## Chapter 8 – Impact on Doctrines

But here those conservative Adventists who hold the fallen nature of Christ and protest the change made by QOD authors, which became quasi official despite the fact that no representative body made it, need also beware. For Conservative Adventism is notorious for performance-based-thinking. And a fallen nature theology in that context does imply that Christ was a sinner. So either way, performance-based-thinking changes the truth about the nature of Christ.

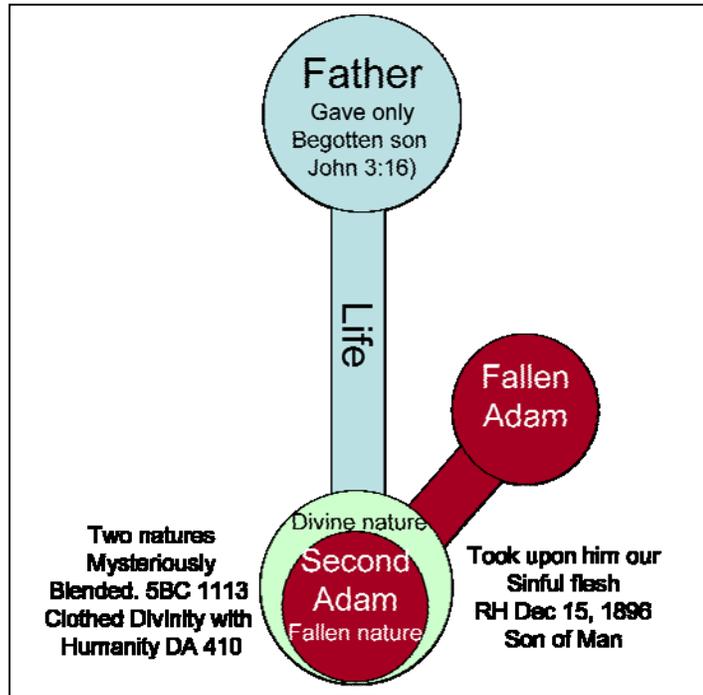


Meanwhile, it was necessary for QOD authors to change the nature of Christ teaching to a sinless nature to maintain their kind of performance-based-thinking.



Having talked to many people on the subject, I find it consistent that those who hold the view of the unfallen nature of Christ are placed in a position where they cannot distinguish between sinful tendencies and sinful propensities.<sup>95</sup> The first is a passive principle, the second is an active principle, but *performance-based-thinking* does not allow for any passive principle. In the past I wondered why they could not see the difference but it is quite logical to me now.

In the past my thinking has been just as *performance-based* and therefore taking a fallen nature view of Christ drove me to focus more on Christ as my example than my substitute. One of my lecturers lovingly and kindly tried to warn me as he obviously could see the spec in my eye but I could not see the log. So *performance-based-thinking* in conservative ranks will unwittingly push a person towards legalism, a legalism that I personally have tasted and lived amongst and it is awful. The liberal elements of the church can clearly see this and rightly reject it. The truth is that the nature of Christ will never be truly sweet to us while we hold *performance-based-thinking*. As Christ is truly God, so He is truly man who is touched with our feelings.



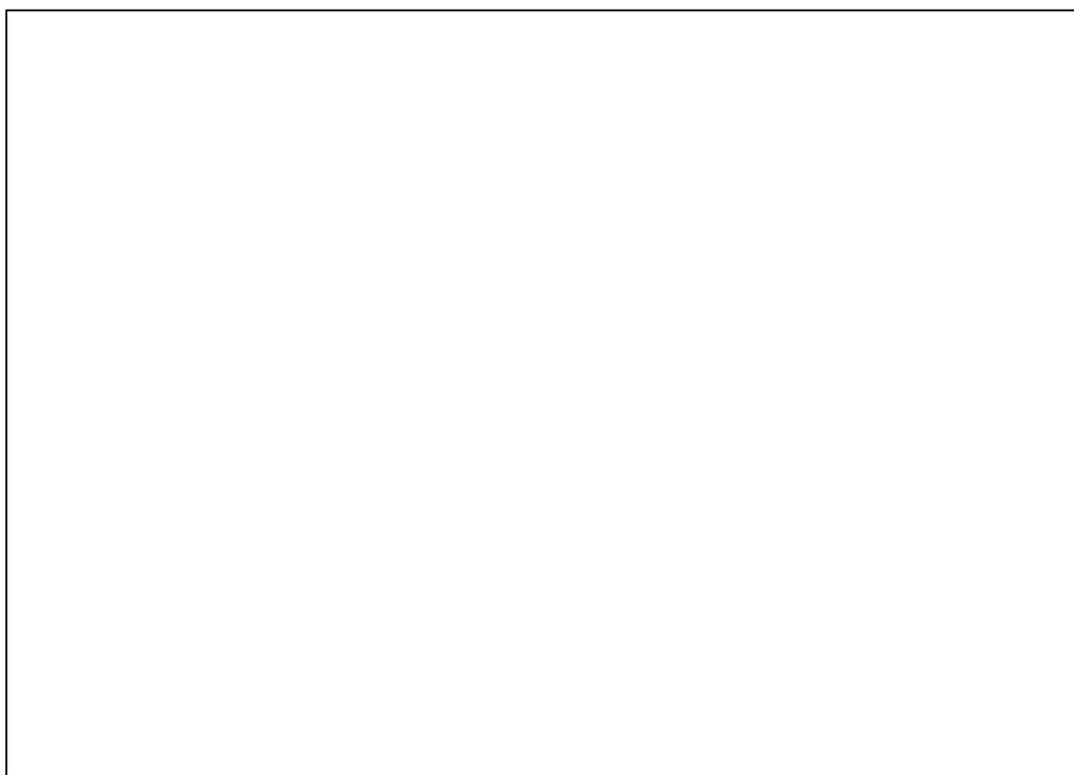
<sup>95</sup> “Those only who through faith in Christ obey all of God’s commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression” MS122 1901. This statement would seem to indicate that through faith in Christ, it is possible to be like Adam before he fell. An incredible promise indeed!

#### **D. Character Perfection**

It should be quite clear by now that character perfection is complete anathema to Protestant *performance-based-thinking*. The whole concept of character perfection screams *performance* and as we noted previously, the Protestant premise is: trying to keep the law is legalism. In the next section I will examine the concepts of legalism more fully. For now let's look again at the five levels of thinking typical of Protestant thought.

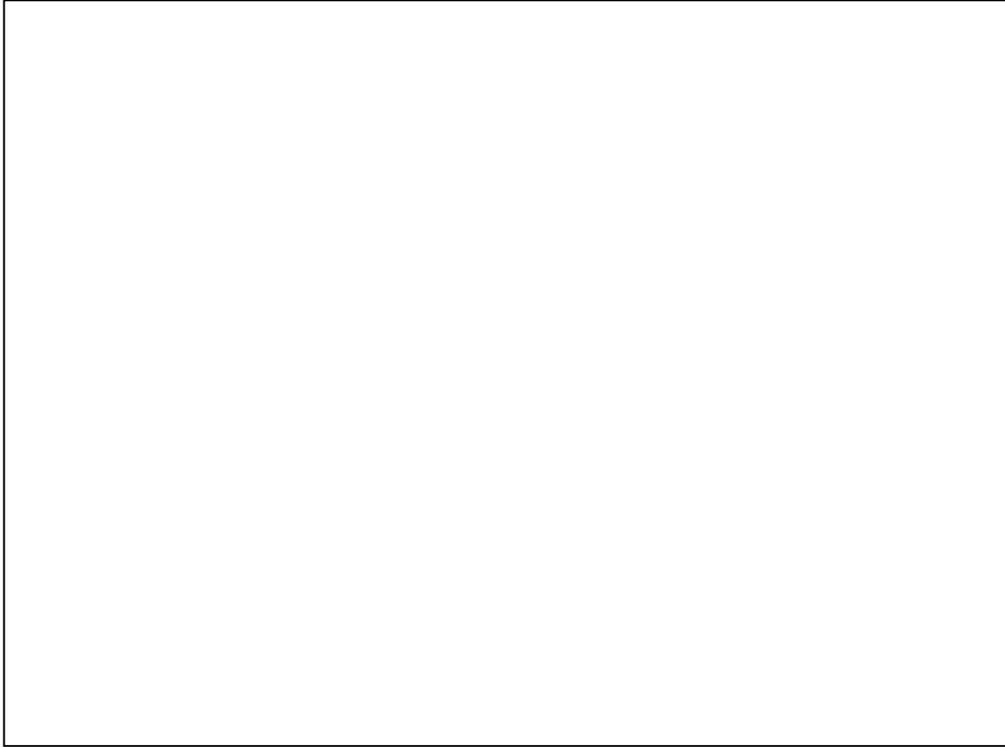
This belief structure will have to twist every statement in Scripture regarding victory over sin. The *inherent life source* and *value system* demand it. None of the main Protestant churches that I know of, teach that we can have a victorious Christian life in this world. They simply don't have the doctrinal framework to support it.

From my personal experience and study the Adventist church is confused on this issue. Our typical belief structure looks like this:



We have previously discussed the underlying issues of perfection through the concepts of righteousness by faith. The undetected layers prevent the total freedom of victory in Christ. Currently we either change the doctrine of perfection to maturity and encourage ourselves that we do our best and “Christ makes up the rest” or we focus on other people's sins to avoid thinking about our own. Again in terms of history this is a pendulum swing. Fifty years ago, the press for perfection was much higher and so was the despair level and fear. These traits don't make for happy holy Christians.

But since we capitulated to the evangelicals on the atonement and investigative judgment, it is inevitable that we would sooner or later do the same with this teaching also and swing the other way.



During my theology training, one of the lecturers asked people to stand who believed in victory over sin. Out of a class of 16, two of us stood. The lecturer spent the rest of the class showing how absurd the idea was. The concepts of character perfection have not been taught at our theological schools for many decades. There would only be a small number of ministers who teach it these days.

It is so sad that it has to be this way. A correct understanding of *life source* and *value system* makes it not only a possibility but a joyous certainty. Christ in you the hope of glory, what a wonderful thought. For the many times I have heard people tell me they will sin until Jesus comes, I wonder if they are comfortable about living apart from a close *relationship* with Jesus and whether it bothers them at all the pain it causes their Saviour. We may stumble and fall along the way, but to justify sin by saying, “we will sin until Jesus comes, you can’t be perfect” is so very sad.

A plain reading of the Bible is clear:

**1 Jo 4:17** Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

**Gal 2:20** 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.

**Tit 2:12** Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

**2Co 10:5** Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

**Jud 1:24** Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

**1Pe 4:1** Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

**2Pe 1:3-4** According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We could list more, but to any candid reader it is fairly plain. Those who still hold *performance-based-thinking* will twist these texts into the objective work of Christ only and this is how God sees you through Jesus. But I would rather believe God's prophets:

"The prince of this world cometh," said Jesus, "and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with Divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the Divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the Divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character." DA 123

"None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through co-operation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory." AA 531

Isn't it wonderful to know that when I embrace *relational-based-thinking*, God's commandments are 10 promises and that Christ's victory is mine. I can commune with Him as Enoch and Daniel did of old. What a wonderful hope to know I can stop hurting my friends and family through Christ who strengthens me.

## **E. Eldership and Ordination**

With regard to the issues of the investigative judgment, the nature of Christ and character perfection, the church has wrestled with spiritual realities that are not observed by the human eye; none of them can be seen and handled by the church. But when it comes to the issues of church leadership and the roles of men and women, we move into a very literal and tangible

arena. Since its inception the leadership of the church had been led and administrated by men, but in the last few decades this practice is coming under serious fire and in fact now is being overturned under the demands of equality.

I will come back to this issue in Chapter 23 with a much broader stroke, but for now we want to touch on the issues of *performance-based-thinking* and the roles of men and women.

*Performance-based-thinking* demands advancement through human ranks. The question of who holds key positions of authority have been with the Christian Church since its inception.

**Mar 10:37** They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

*Performance-based-thinking* places *value* in position. The higher the position, the higher the *value* a person obtains. Satan himself expresses this key principle himself when he states:

**Isa 14:13-14** For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Human thinking does not naturally entertain a downward path of position; it is usually the upward drive to make it to the top. The higher you go the greater the sense of *value* is obtained. In many cases the net effect of this is: those who are the most insecure and the most lacking in *value* and the most determined, get to the top. In the world of *performance-based-thinking* the most insecure individuals will often hold the reigns of power. This is why it says in Daniel 4:17 that God sets over the kingdoms the basest or lowest of men.

This drive to be in top position is not limited to church and business structures. This striving occurs in many marriages; the subtle struggle for control; who will lead and who makes the final decision? All of us have experienced or been exposed to this type of struggle. This struggle is the natural effect of *performance-based-thinking*.

The Biblical principle of headship cannot be grasped or appreciated by *performance-based-thinking*. The Biblical view of headship is based on the concept of a fountain and a channel. God is the fountain and He has structured human families and communities in a way to allow the flow of His blessings be shared in a *relational* context.

The Biblical principle of submission is the placing of oneself in the stream of blessing. God has created within humanity the two principles of seed (generation) and nurture (growth). The masculine principle is generative and the feminine is nurturing. Both work together to create and nurture children in a family context. As the Father is the generative principle, he holds the headship position as a source or spring of blessing.

It is this principle that caused the patriarchs to bless their children. The Father not only imparts physical seed but spiritual. The words of his mouth under the inspiration of God seed the mind of his children with a sense of meaning, purpose and *value*. This is why the Bible says that the glory of children is their father (Prov 17:6).

This stream of blessing that flows from the fountain of God will only operate properly when people see God as the only *life source*. If the serpent's lie infects our thinking, the channel of blessing will be choked.

The Bible instruction on Church leadership is self-evident and quite simple:

**1Ti 3:1-5** This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

An Elder in the church is to be the husband of one wife. The scoffers say this should read an elder should be married to one spouse and of course *performance-based-equality* demands such a response. The text also says that he should rule his house well. Here Paul alludes to the text in Gen 18:19 where the spiritual blessings promised to Abraham were dependant on the right ordering of his family and his responsible leadership. As man represents the generative principle or spring/ source of God's blessing to his family, we would naturally expect that he occupy the leadership role to shower those blessings on his family. If a wife becomes the leader of the home then the source of the spring is placed under the nurturer and this distorts the channel of blessing. The qualifications for an elder must be that he rules his home. If a wife rules her home then the channel of blessing is cut off. Notice:

**1Co 11:3** 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.

This text establishes the flow of the blessing. This fountain and channel principle makes it urgent that eldership be reserved for the male or generative principle, for the church is an expansion of the home. For more on these issues refer to chapter 23.

In summary the push to make women elders and pastors is based purely on the principle of *performance-equality*. If positions do hold power and *value* then it would be wrong to withhold the positions from women but God does not base equality on *performance*, He bases it on a structured series of *relationships* that preserve a channel of His blessing.

The fact that a majority of church leadership today feel it is vital to right the injustice of not allowing women to be pastors and elders, simply says that these men and women are blinded by *performance-based-thinking*. From a worldly context I totally agree with their desires for equality but God's ways are not our ways. His kingdom does not operate on such principles.

The commissioning and eldership of women to leadership positions will take the glory of children away and de-stabilise the future prosperity of the church. In Isa 3:1-12<sup>96</sup> we see the emergence of female leadership as a mark of apostasy. Many people say we can't find men to fill positions in the church. This is all part of what God told us he would do if we try to rearrange his blessing structures. In Isa 3:1-2 God says he will take away all the good men and replace them with weak male leadership and then finally women would rule over them.

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<sup>96</sup> For more on this topic, download my sermon "The Downward Path" found on [www.maranathamedia.com](http://www.maranathamedia.com)

Some people will read what I have said and just laugh or boil with anger at such crazy ramblings. But I would rather stay in the company of Elijah:

**Mal 4:5-6** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The restoration of male leadership is a key piece of the foundation to see the spiritual promises to Abraham fulfilled (Gen 18:19). Such a restoration will restore the fathers we need to seed resilient children to face and drive back the forces of the enemy.

## F. The Word of God and Education

At its most simple level, the Bible tells us that knowledge puffs up (1 Cor 8:2). The Bible has the greatest source of knowledge of any book on the planet. This book can be used via *performance-thinking* to make one very powerful. I think we all have seen plenty of examples of teachers and preachers who have used the power of their knowledge to advance themselves. Every ecclesiastical institution is overrun with these types of people.

The study of the Word of God is a process of education and when you combine *performance-based-thinking* in education with *performance-based-thinking* of the Bible, you get a deadly cocktail. While there are many people that go through the ranks of educational institutions and maintain their sense of humility, there are others who succumb to the intoxicating power of education. The entire western world uses education as a *performance-measure*. The very concept of grading and degrees is inherently *performance-based*. Again I state, many people are aware of the dangers and remain humble but many are not.

Men and women are often referred to as having great intellect and insight but it is usually expressed in a way that honours them rather than the God who gives these abilities. Ellen White makes an amazing statement concerning the focus on intellectual greatness of a person that bears careful consideration.

In the estimation of Heaven, what is it that constitutes greatness? Not that which the world accounts greatness; not wealth, or rank, or noble descent, or intellectual gifts, in themselves considered. If intellectual greatness, apart from any higher consideration, is worthy of honor, then our homage is due to Satan, whose intellectual power no man has ever equaled. But when perverted to self-serving, the greater the gift, the greater curse it becomes. It is moral worth that God values. Love and purity are the attributes He prizes most.<sup>97</sup>

As we stated before, it is often the most insecure individuals – who feel their need to obtain *value* – that are the most determined to hold positions of high rank in the church. If as a church we hold our highest positions in the church for degreed individuals then we have created a weakness to allow the most needy and most insecure to get there. God has placed his humble servants in positions also but the more we structure our church around *performance-recognition*, the more susceptible we become to *performance-based-thinkers* leading our church and making

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<sup>97</sup> Desire of Ages Page 219

many decisions about the direction of institutions and policies. Again many people will scoff at such a notion, but my experience in our colleges and schools indicate that there are many who are intoxicated with the power of education. I certainly have not been exempt from this power. It has been a challenge to become sober, that is for sure.

There are many in the church that recognize these dangers and actually espouse the virtue of non-education. However, this is simply the reverse side of the coin. We want educated people; we want the best thinkers that are not merely the reflectors of other men's thoughts.

**It all comes down to the kingdom principles we operate by. Will we take our Bible as it reads and be converted by it or will we convert the Bible into a tool to make ourselves powerful?**

### **G. The Sabbath**

One of the most misunderstood institutions in the church. From a *performance* perspective this teaching is a minefield. One example I love to bring up when discussing a person's understanding of the Sabbath is to ask them "Is it wrong to swim at the beach on Sabbath?" There is an immediate chorus supporting both for and against, but more against. Then I like to add "sometimes it is safer for me to be in the water with the fish than to be on the beach with all the barely clothed people around me." For many people they have a list of what is right or wrong based on an artificial *performance* standard. When there is nothing specific in Scripture on the issue I like to ask one question "Does it draw me closer to Jesus or not?" The Sabbath is a *relational* institution, therefore the questions asked of it must be *relational*. We don't want to make the Sabbath a burden for our children with extensive restrictions. This is a difficult issue and requires much prayer and wisdom, but I am sure the Lord can help us.

As in many cases, the pendulum has swung for many on this issue too. The excessive Sabbath restrictions and *performance-thinking* of the 50's and 60's has driven many people to be very lax about the Sabbath and totally lose its sanctity.

One of the areas of laxness we see is in the operation of some of our institutions on the Sabbath. I also question the links between our health food company and the sponsorship of cricket players and football players who play on Sabbath. We promote these people as role models and these role models play sport on Sabbath, let alone the morality of some of these players. Is the Lord really pleased with these things??

It is very hard to see how, when the Sabbath message goes forward with great power in the future, people will be willing to sacrifice all for a day that holds little sanctity.

There are many other areas we could address but I think the point is made that *performance-based-thinking* has affected many doctrines and practices of the church. In our next chapter I want to look at the process of determining beliefs and the process of how we prove positions, this will then lead us into our discussion on the Godhead

## Section 4 – Performance-Based Impact on Methodology

One of the greatest tests of what *value system* we operate by is the process by which we arrive at or defend our conclusions. For many of us who have been raised in a church environment, Bible teachings have been embraced uncritically, meaning we have not thoroughly tested them for ourselves. If we have held a belief for many years uncritically we become susceptible to using Scripture to reinforce our beliefs so we can continue to enjoy the comforts of orthodoxy<sup>98</sup> rather than test everything we believe by Scripture. *Performance-based-thinking* will tend to subordinate Scripture to our own thinking. The Scripture becomes subject to us rather than we to it.<sup>99</sup>

The temptation to subordinate Scripture to our thinking is highest when we encounter passages and texts that seem to conflict with our established views. Will we truly become open to all of Scripture and be diligent to harmonise every passage of inspiration and let every passage have its proper weight? *Performance-based-thinking* makes it very hard in the face of tradition long standing. For the purposes of our next section, I thought it would be helpful to work through the typical process of forcing a premise without testing underlying layers.

I also wanted to include this section to raise awareness that everyone operates by a value system or world view when they approach scripture. I have found at times that people will honestly say they just take the Bible at face value but it is apparent that they are not even aware they are operating through a value system that skews the texts of the Bible. To approach the Bible without being aware of the world view used renders dialog impossible with those of a differing model.

### 9. “Proving” that Sabbath Keeping is Legalism

Many Christians believe that proving that Sabbath keeping is legalism is quite simple. It just requires three simple steps:

1. A premise.
2. Prove your premise from the Bible.
3. Apply your proven premise to difficult passages that appear to disagree with your premise.

1. With reference to Sabbath keeping, we can apply the following premise:

Law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel.

2. Now let’s see if we can find evidence for this premise in the Bible.

**Rom 3:20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

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<sup>98</sup> The power of orthodoxy on our thinking is often much greater than we could imagine. It raises questions like “How could Pr X, who is such a loving Christian, be wrong?” “How could the whole church be wrong?” “What would happen to me if I accepted this view now?” When it is right, Orthodoxy can accomplish great good, but when it is wrong it proves a deadly barrier to truth.

<sup>99</sup> “We are not to set our stakes, and then interpret everything to reach this set point. Here is where some of our great reformers have failed, and this is the reason that men who today might be mighty champions for God and the truth, are warring against the truth.” {1888 44.1}

**Rom 10:4** For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

**Eph 2:8,9** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

**Gal 3:1-3** 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?

**Rom 4:14** For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

Listed above are just a few of the wonderful texts that many Christians use to prove that law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel. If law keeping is legalism as it would appear that we have so “eloquently” proved from the above texts, then it only follows that if the Sabbath is a part of the law then any attempts to keep the Sabbath is an attempt to keep the law which is anti-gospel. The gospel is the good news of freedom from having to offer works to God to be accepted. We are saved by the works of Jesus not our own.

3. Many would conclude that we have easily proven that law keeping is legalism so that “even a child can understand it”, let us now look at some difficult passages that may suggest otherwise.

**Mat 5:17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Since it appears that we have already proven from the Bible that law keeping is legalism, we need to examine this passage closely. Once a person is locked on the premise then there is no possible way that the above verse could teach that the law is still in force otherwise Jesus would be encouraging legalism and “we know” He does not teach that. So, as many suggest, “the answer must lie in His word *fulfill*. To fulfill something is to complete it, and since Jesus fulfilled all the requirements of the law, then this text is saying that Jesus fulfilled the law for us and therefore we don’t need to keep it.” I have heard this argument many times. Locking in the premise prevents the text from being understood any other way, than Christ fulfilled or removed the law. Let us look at another problem text.

**1Co 7:19** Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

An immediate response sequence could go as follows: “since we have proven from other passages that law keeping is legalism, this text cannot teach the keeping of the law.” “There must be another explanation.” “Jesus gave his followers a new commandment in John 13:34 to love one another.” “Since this commandment fulfills the law, as stated in Rom 13:8, then the keeping of the commandments here is the commandment to love one another.”

Once again, the premise determines the outcome of the meaning. The meaning of the text is predetermined by something that is considered immovable. Notice another “problem” text.

**Luk 10:25** And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

Again, a response sequence could go as follows: “Since we have proven that law keeping is legalism, this text must mean something else.” “Since Jesus was speaking to a Jew before He died on the cross, the law was still in force for the Jews and applied to them at that time.” “Once Jesus died the gospel went to the Gentiles who were not required to keep the law. So this text does not apply to us.”

I have heard this exact argument a number of times. It is a classic premise forcing response to the text. The Word of God becomes subject to the will of man. Consider another example.

**1Jo 2:4** He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

What is the typical response? “Since we have proven that law keeping is legalism, this text is obviously referring to the new law that Jesus mentioned in John 13:34.”

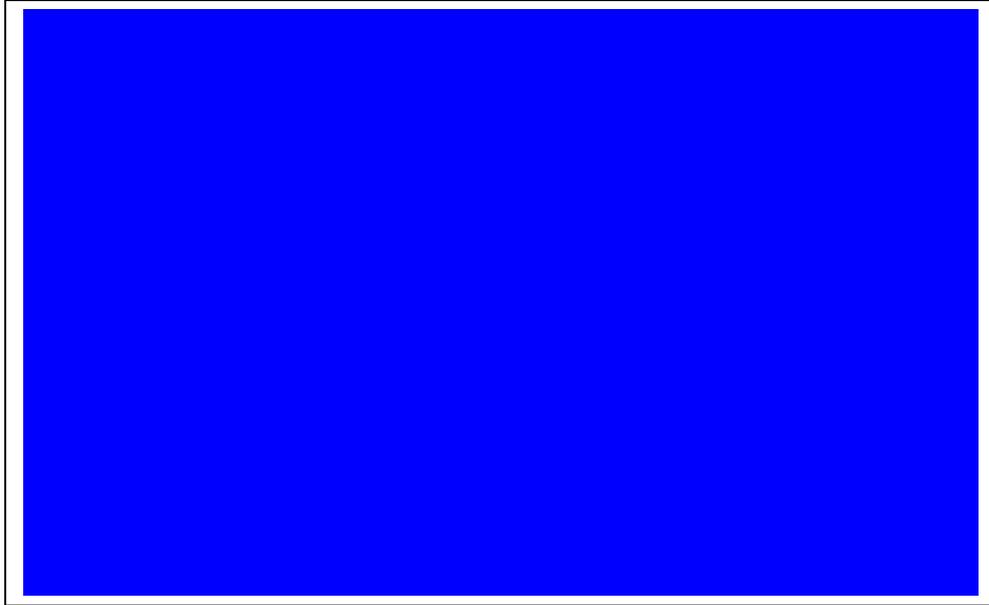
**Mat 12:8** For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

I have heard some very creative responses to this text. Here is one of my favourites. “Since we have proven that law keeping is legalism and the Sabbath is a part of the law then this text cannot be a defense of the Sabbath. The word Lord means ‘master over.’ Since Jesus is master over the Sabbath, he has power to change it or do whatever he wants with it.”

I want us to notice a crucial point as to how the clear thrust of Bible passages concerning the law are able to be altered in their meaning. The key to removing the binding nature of the law is to segment it. I mean by this, the law given to the Jews is different to the law given to the New Testament Christians.

**When the law is segmented or changeable it is no longer the universal reflection of God’s character, identity and government, but a transitory tool needed for a specific purpose for a certain length of time. Therefore one of the key elements of premise forcing is segmentation of universal subjects revealed in Scripture.**

If something revealed in scripture is understood to be constant in relation to humanity then it will be binding, it defines our limits. If something in Scripture is broken up across time, its identification is fractured or segmented and then we (humanity) must determine its application and limits.



Returning to our premise forcing exercise, we see that it is possible to “prove” from the Bible that law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel and that any texts that seem to indicate we should keep the law fall into one of the following categories:

1. The law keeping mentioned applies to Jews and not to Gentiles.
2. The law mentioned is the new commandment Jesus gave us, not the old Jewish law.
3. The law mentioned was fulfilled by Christ and therefore completed. As the Bible states, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness Rom 10:4.

Notice the limiting and segmentation of the law occurring in the points above. This process is fairly water-tight for millions of Christians and while the responses to difficult texts vary, the logic sequence is the same:

1. A premise.
2. Prove your premise from the Bible.
3. Apply your proven premise to difficult passages that appear to disagree with your premise.

## 10. “Proving” that the Sabbath is not Legalism Using the Same Logic Sequence

One of the major problems with the previous logic sequence is that the premise is supported by a select series of passages, but not tested by a fair cross-section of Scriptural evidence. Because the selected texts seem to provide overwhelming "proof," the premise is seen as self-evident and logical therefore it is never really tested by a full range of passages relating to the issue. Let us look a little more closely at this premise we have used.

Law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel.

What if we changed our premise to the opposite and used the same three-step process. Let us look at this premise:

Law keeping is obedience to God and is the object of the gospel.

Now let's apply step two to find some texts to support this premise. Many of these will be the problem texts for the previous premise we used.

**Mat 5:17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

**1Co 7:19** Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

**Luk 10:25** And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

**1Jo 2:4** He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

**Jam 2:8-12** If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

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

**Mat 12:8** For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Listed above are just a few of the wonderful texts that prove that law keeping is obedience to God and the object of the gospel. If law keeping is obedience to God, as we have “so eloquently proved” from the above texts, then it only follows that if the Sabbath is a part of the law, then any attempts to ignore the Sabbath is an attempt to ignore the law, which is the object of the

gospel. The gospel is the good news of restoring the image of God in man as revealed in the new covenant of Heb 8:10. The creative power of the Lord (of which the Sabbath is a memorial) is revealed in our lives and remakes us in the image of God.

Now that we have easily proven that law keeping is obedience to God so that even a child can understand it, let us now look at some difficult passages that may suggest otherwise.

**Rom 3:20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Since we have proven that the keeping of the law is obedience to God and the object of the gospel, then this text is not a negation of the law but simply means that we can't keep the law in our own strength. The law brings us to Christ (Gal 3:24) and since we are crucified with Christ (Gal 2:20) it is Christ who does the work in us (Col 1:27) and therefore a fulfillment of the new covenant of Heb 8:10.

**Rom 10:4** For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Since we have proven that the keeping of the law is obedience to God and the object of the gospel, then we need to closely examine this text. The word *end* in Greek here is *telos* which means goal or definite point. So we can say Christ is the goal of the law for righteousness which is exactly what we stated in our premise.

**Eph 2:8,9** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

The Bible says that Sabbath is a sign between us and God that He sanctifies us (Ezek 20:12,20). The Sabbath is a memorial of the power God uses to transform our lives. Grace is the power of God received by man through the exercise of faith as it says in Phil 2:13.

**Eph 2:15** Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

The law mentioned here is not the ten commandment law that Jesus said Matt 5:17-20 would not pass away. This is the ceremonial law of Moses that was a shadow of things to come (Col 2:17). The law which James calls the royal law of liberty cannot be same law that was added because of transgression (Gal 3:19) and yoke that Israel could not bear (Acts 15:10).

**Gal 3:1-3** 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?

**Rom 4:14** For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

These texts are stating the same thing as Rom 3:20 and we offer the same answer here. No one is saved by their own law keeping but by Christ keeping the law through us.

## Chapter 10 – Proving that Sabbath Keeping is not Legalism

So in summary, we have proven from the Bible that law keeping is obedience to God and therefore the object of the gospel. Therefore any texts that seem to indicate we should ignore or dispense with the law fall into one of the following categories:

1. A reference to the ceremonial law of Moses which pointed to the plan of salvation.
2. A confusion over how the work is done. God does the works through us; It is His power combined with our will. we do not do the works in and of ourselves.

## 11. Comparing the Two Premises

A fair minded and candid person on examining this series of responses would be led to agree that the premise used in the second sequence more clearly represents all the texts of the Bible than the first premise. It provides a much better argument and is a much better reflection of the truth. Observe the two premises once again:

Premise 1: Law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel.

Premise 2: Law keeping is obedience to God and is the object of the gospel.

The first premise is correct on the assumption that it is the individual that is trying to do the works. In fact this system of logic pre-supposes that all effort is legalism and against the gospel. The difficulty with the premise is that the underlying assumption is hidden and assumed to be naturally understood. The visual part of the premise is supported by Scripture but (and a big BUT) the underlying and hidden assumption is not tested by Scripture and is indeed false. It makes no allowance for the fact that God can by His power keep His law in and through us. This truth is revealed over and over in Scripture. But sadly these truths are negated by a premise that has an underlying assumption that is false. So let us summarise the first premise again.

**Premise:** Law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel (Partially True).

**Based on Underlying Assumption:** All effort is legalism (Totally False).

The falseness of the hidden assumption has a disastrous effect on the object of the Gospel in that it supports lawlessness and takes the hope of a victorious Christian life out of the grasp of a sinner. Therefore it is a premise that will lead to death and not the fulfillment of the new covenant where God states He will write His law on our hearts.

Let us now examine the second premise again:

Law keeping is obedience to God and is the object of the gospel.

This premise is correct on the assumption that the individual recognizes that the works come from God and not the individual. If the underlying assumption is understood then this statement is entirely true and will lead to a correct understanding of the gospel. If the underlying assumption is not understood it will indeed lead to legalism that all that non-Sabbatarians accuse Sabbath keepers of; trying to work their way to heaven. Let us summarise once again:

**Premise:** Law keeping is obedience to God and is the object of the gospel (Partially True).

**Hidden Assumption:** It is God who does the work through you, not you yourself (Totally True).

In this case if both the premise and the assumption are understood then we have found the joy of the new covenant. But the great danger here is that the hidden assumption is not something that is naturally entertained. Learning to allow God to work in you is a process that is practiced and understood by mature Christians through a continual process of learning **NOT** to try and do things themselves. As humans we are so prone to try and do things ourselves as revealed in Sarah seeking to fill God's promise of a child through Hagar, and Israel promising God they would keep His commandments without any sense that it was impossible for them.

## Chapter 11 – Comparing the Two Premises

So the above premise is actually very dangerous because the hidden assumption should not be hidden but clearly spelled out. It is for this reason that many Sabbath keepers are in fact legalists as is clearly seen by non-Sabbath keeping Christians. Legalism is indeed anti-gospel and will lead to death. Due to the natural inclinations of man, this second logic process will lead to the same conclusion for the sinner as the first – DEATH.

## 12. The Common Denominator.

Let us look more closely at the underlying assumption of the first premise:

**Underlying or Hidden Assumption:** All effort is legalism.

Why is this assumption hidden? Something is hidden from view when it is assumed that it is completely obvious. We don't need to mention it because it is so obvious. This principle is quite true in regard to texts referring to the Sabbath in the New Testament. Why would you keep telling people to keep the Sabbath when it was so plainly understood by everyone? This fact is easily proved by the fact that when Paul began to teach that circumcision didn't mean anything (1 Cor 7:19) – it put the Jews into an uproar. We see many places where Paul is explaining no need for circumcision. See Rom 2:28-31 for example. If Paul had said the Sabbath was no longer an issue, the New Testament would have been littered with hundreds of texts making the case, but we do not find a single text that supports this. The Sabbath is a legitimate hidden assumption of the New Testament because it should be totally obvious it was always meant to be observed.

So what causes people (Protestants mainly) to think that it is completely obvious that all effort is legalism. It all relates to the universal lie stated by the serpent to Eve in Gen 3:5 "You shall not surely die." The assertion that man would not surely die forms the basis of the immortality of man and that man has life in himself. This concept was developed and expanded by Nimrod the founder of Babylon. Quoting Josephus:

"Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. **He persuaded them not to ascribe it [Strength] to God, as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness.** He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power..." *Antiquities Book 1 Chapter 4 Para. 2*

This is the wine of Babylon, the concept that man has a *life/power source* either apart from God or given to man by God so that he can live and move and have his being without the need of being in an intimate *relationship* with God.

**Jer 51:7** Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

We see the self-power/effort manifested in the words of Nebuchadnezzar in the following verse:

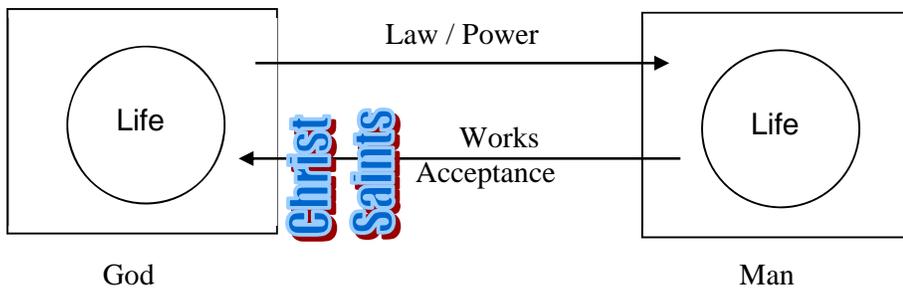
**Dan 4:30** The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

The wine of Babylon consists in the drunkenness of reveling in the works of your own hands; based upon the belief that the power of life originates within you, or secondly that God gave it to

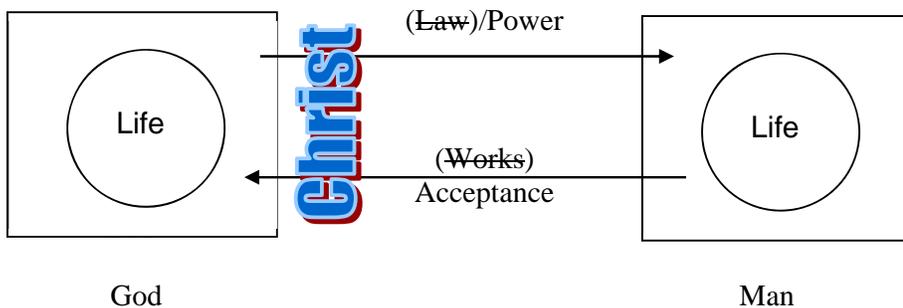
you and you attribute that gift to yourself and for your purposes, as we see Israel did to God in Ezekiel 16:8-17.

We see that both spiritual Babylon and spiritual Israel experience the same problem in the last days. Babylon is mighty through her riches and wealth (Rev 18:7, 12-13) and Laodicea trusts in her riches and goods and attributes them to herself (Rev 3:14-17). The really sad thing for spiritual Israel is that even though she is a virgin and holds the truth that the soul is not immortal, she still is affected by the wine that she should glory in her own works – this indeed is a great mystery. Somebody must have spiked her drink! Indeed, as we shall see later, her drink has been laced with a mystery. A high price to pay for visiting a Babylonian pub and feeling safe in just drinking her grape juice, never dreaming her drink would be spiked while her back was turned.

So how does this logic process cause Protestants to see all work as legalism? To answer this question let us first look at the Catholic view of works. Let's remember that those who express a belief in God will naturally dedicate their inbuilt power to winning the favour of God, rather than choosing the atheist life of just pleasing themselves. While Catholics and Protestants both believe in the immortality of the soul, they differ on their view of works. The following diagram gives a basic outline of a Catholic model of works.



In this system God gives to man his law to be obeyed. Since man has immortality in himself, he attempts to keep and follow that law. Good works flow from man towards God and these are accepted through Christ and the saints who make them more acceptable to God. Such acceptance with God causes Him to give us more power to perform more works until we also can become a saint or at least escape hell. Since man has a life or power source, all power given to man by God cycles through man's power source and is seen as his own power and effort. This is completely acceptable in a Catholic model of grace. From a Biblical stand point it is indeed legalism (righteousness by works). But Protestants have placed their foundation on faith alone without works. Notice the following diagram.

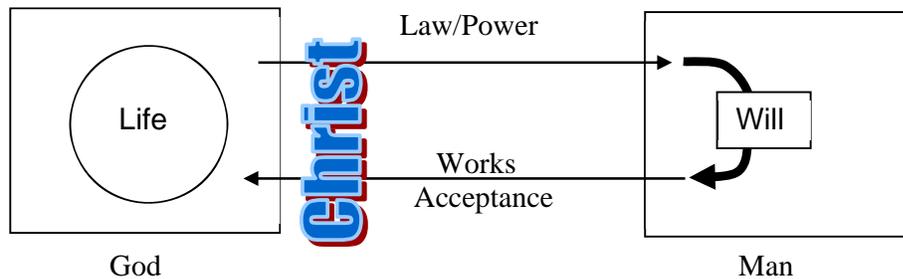


Any attempt by man to respond to the law will be seen as an attempt to gain merit. Since Nimrod’s system promotes displays of power and effort to gain *value* or merit, then in a Protestant system any attempt to keep the law will be seen as seeking merit. There are two ways to deal with this:

1. Change your view of man.
2. Change your view of God’s requirements.

These are the only two options. Since Protestants would not change their belief that the soul is immortal, they changed God’s requirements. For many the law is removed thus ensuring no possibility of legalism. For others they say “Christ keeps the law for me and that is enough.” “He covers me and will always cover me.” “I know that I will always sin but because Jesus loves me it does not matter.” “He knows I can’t keep the law, so he just asks me to love everyone as he loved us.”

Rather than take the bold step of changing God’s requirements, we can change our view of man and reject the serpent’s lie that man is immortal. This will then remove the *life source* as being inherent in man. Notice the following:



In this system, works are not man’s works (legalism) but God’s works revealed in man. God’s power engages man through his will by a *relationship* that is then manifested in good works. In this model, a person understands that they have no power to do anything, and therefore any display of good works will automatically be understood as God’s works and not their own legalistic efforts.

So the hidden assumption in the first premise; “trying to keep the law is legalism”, is based on the serpent’s lie that “you shall not surely die”. In other words the doctrine of righteousness by faith is distorted by a belief that the soul is immortal and that any good works attract merit.

The problem for the second premise; “Law keeping is obedience to God” is that when a person begins to see the valid requirements of the law, his natural tendency will be to try and keep them. Even if we mentally understand that works do not grant us merit with God (hidden assumption of the second premise), when God’s requirements are presented to us, many of us will naturally seek to keep those requirements in what we falsely understand is our own strength because of the universal principle of *inherent life source*.

So in conclusion the danger linked with both premises is the concept of life being inherent in man that attracts merit for the soul, which is based on the serpent’s lie “you shall not surely die.”

### **13. Build Your House on Rock of Truth**

One thing that should be clear now is that when you hold a premise that appears to be partially supported by Scripture, but at the same time there are several texts that appear to oppose your premise, look for underlying or hidden assumptions. The underlying assumptions are the foundations upon which you make your premise.

**1Co 3:11-13** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

We must lay our foundation on the Rock, which is Christ the Truth (John 14:6). If our foundation is made of hay or stubble, it will be burned up in the fire of examination. The house we build may be built with the materials of truth but if we build it on a swamp or on the sand, then all will be lost. We will become victims to a fatal assumption.

We cannot assume anything. We must prove all things and hold fast to that which is good (1 Thess 5:21).

***Instead of bending the problem texts to your premise, first look for hidden assumptions and bend the framework of your premise to the texts.***

Finding a hidden assumption can be difficult because it is often assumed to be so obvious that it is not mentioned. Here is the test of seeking the Truth with all your heart. The experience of the disciples understanding of the Messiah's coming kingdom is an important warning to us. Notice the following:

**Premise:** When Messiah comes He will establish His kingdom (Partially True).  
**Hidden Assumption:** This kingdom will be a visible earthly kingdom (Totally False).

Their premise was partially correct but it needed the word *spiritual* added to it. Christ was going to establish His spiritual kingdom. It was assumed as totally obvious that the kingdom was going to be earthly and literal. The belief that the kingdom would be earthly and literal was fueled by the pride of the Jewish people. This pride was fueled by a desire to be *valued* by their position in the world above their *relationship* to God. And this desire of course was fueled by the lie "You shall not surely die". Error flows from the point where error begins.

This false assumption caused the disciples bitter disappointment and ended in the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. The assumption proved fatal.

## Section 5 –Performance-Based-Thinking and the Doctrine of God

### 14. The Trinity

I want to now look at the subject of the Trinity because our view of God affects the way we view every other doctrine.<sup>100</sup> Also, this subject is directly related to the Sabbath/Law/Righteousness debate as we shall see. Notice the following premise:

**Premise:** There are three Persons of the Godhead.

**Hidden/Underlying Assumption:** Position of Divinity is only ascribed to beings of highest *inherent power*.

The above combination of premise and underlying assumption will demand that if there is more than one Divine Being (as our premise states), then those Beings must be co-equal and co-eternal, otherwise they would lose the title of Divine.

Even though at this point we should examine the hidden or underlying assumption, for the sake of the exercise let us follow along in the same sequence as our Sabbath discussion and seek to find texts that will support our premise.

**Mat 3:16,17** 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.

Here we see (1) The Son being baptized (2) The Holy Spirit descending as a dove and (3) The Father's voice calling from heaven.

**Mat 28:19** 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 appears to give very direct evidence of three Persons in the Godhead.

**1Pe 1:2** Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Here we see all members of the Godhead active in our salvation – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Rev 1:4** 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,

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<sup>100</sup> Review and Herald, Feb 13, 1919, *The Personality of God* page 4. "The greatest truths of Christianity are all bound up in the doctrine of the personality of God."

Here we find a greeting from the Father (was and is and is to come) and the Holy Spirit (Seven or complete Spirit of God) and Jesus Christ. Three greetings indicate three Persons.

**1Jo 5:7** For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

This text appears quite explanatory – there are definitely three Persons.

Let us add some supporting evidence from the writings of Ellen White.

“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.” Ev 616

“The eternal heavenly dignitaries--God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit--arming them [the disciples] with more than mortal energy, . . . would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin.” Ev 616

“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.” 7MR 267

“Just call upon the three great Worthies, and say; You know I cannot do this work in my own strength. You must work in me, and by me and through me, sanctifying my tongue, sanctifying my spirit, sanctifying my words, and bringing me into a position where my spirit shall be susceptible to the movings of the Holy Spirit of God upon my mind and character.” 7MR 268

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption.” CH 222

I think that to any candid mind we have fairly conclusively proved the premise that there are three Persons of the Godhead. Let us now look at some potential problem passages. I will list a number of them in sequence.

**Deu 6:4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:

**Prov 8:22-30** 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; when *there were* no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: 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;

**Mic 5:2** 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 everlasting.

**Joh 3:16** 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.

**Joh 5:19** 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.

**Joh 5:26** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

**Joh 8:42** 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.

**Joh 15:26** But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

**Joh 14:16** 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.

**Gal 1:3** Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

Note: Nearly every letter of Paul in the New Testament is stated with this formula. He offers grace on behalf of the Father and the Son. He does not mention the Holy Spirit.

**1Co 8:6** 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.

**1Co 15:28** 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.

**Heb 1:1-4** 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.

Each of these texts propose potential problems for a Trinitarian concept. Since we have clearly proven that there are three Persons of the Godhead then it would be natural at this point to begin

to apply the premise that we have already established. Before we do that lets look at some Ellen White statements that also may cause a problem to a standard Trinitarian view.

“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.” PP 34

“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.” ... 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. PP 36

“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.” 1SP 17

“Christ had been taken into the special counsel of God in regard to his plans, while Satan was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was

## Chapter 14 – The Trinity

he permitted to know, the purposes of God. But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of Heaven, his power and authority to be the same as that of God himself.” 1SP 18

“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.’” 1SP 24

“God, in counsel with his Son, formed the plan of creating man in their own image.” RH 24 Feb 1874.

“In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father’s life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

“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.” 14 MR 23.

Each of these statements pose serious problems to a candid reader if we accept them at face value. Again for the purpose of the exercise let us follow the logic sequence of enforcing the premise without questioning its hidden assumption.

## 15. Applying the Trinitarian Premise

Here is our premise and underlying assumption again:

**Premise:** There are three Persons in the Godhead.

**Hidden/Underlying Assumption:** Position of Divinity is only ascribed to beings of highest *inherent power*.

Let's apply this premise to the problematic passages of Scripture.

**Deu 6:4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:

Because we have clearly proved there are three Persons of the Godhead based on the premise I would suggest the following. The Lord (Singular) our God (Plural) is One (Singular) Lord. The plural indicates the trinity and the word *one* "Echad" is the same word used as for Adam and Eve being one flesh. So this text is indicating that there are three beings who are one in purpose and fellowship.

**Prov 8:22-30** 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; when *there were* no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: 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;

This passage refers to wisdom (Prov 8:1). Some people combine this passage with 1 Cor 1:24,30 where Paul refers to Christ as Wisdom. Based on our premise that there are three Persons of the Godhead, applying this passage to Christ would appear to make Him inferior to the Father. So this passage must be restricted to simply the personification of wisdom.

**Joh 3:16** 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.

The word *begotten* (birth, begat) is limited to when Jesus was incarnated as a human being. The word *begat* can also be used to mean unique or one and only rather than born or begat.

**Joh 5:19** 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.

Since Jesus is the second person of the Godhead and equal with the Father, this passage cannot apply to the time before Christ came as a man. Christ has power to do whatever He wishes but He chooses to use His power in conjunction with the Father. When He came to earth He determined not to use His own power but His Father's power to be an example to all mankind.

Here is another view on this by Adam Clarke: “The Son can do nothing of himself - Because of his inseparable union with the Father: nor can the Father do any thing of himself, because of his infinite unity with the Son.”<sup>101</sup>

**Joh 5:26** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

Since Jesus is equal with the Father this cannot be a blanket statement regarding the person of Christ. Christ has in Himself life original, unborrowed and underived. He is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace. This statement must be referring to His work as Messiah, the actual use of the Father’s life to work miracles, teach etc.

**Joh 8:42** 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.

**Joh 15:26** But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

The word *proceed* can mean ‘come out of’. Again, if we infer Christ came out of the Father at some point, then we make Him inferior to the Father and therefore not Divine. So *proceeded* simply means proceeded forth from the heavenly presence of the Father.

**Joh 14:16-18** 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.

On the basis of our premise, the word *another* must be speaking of another separate person – the Holy Spirit. When Jesus says He will not leave us comfortless, He is saying He will send the Holy Spirit as His representative and the Holy Spirit as a separate Person brings the Person of Christ to us. If we favour an Athanasian creed-based view as Pr Max Hatton<sup>102</sup> does for example, then since Father, Son and Spirit are three Persons in one substance, the Spirit can easily represent the Son because He is part of the same substance. If we take the more common Adventist approach – three separate Beings who are one in purpose and fellowship as defended in Vance Ferrell’s – *Defending the Godhead*,<sup>103</sup> the Spirit represents Christ because He knows Him so well and can reflect the person of Christ.

**Gal 1:3** Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

Since we know there are three Persons, this statement is reflecting the source of grace: from the Father and Son. It must be clearly evident that such grace comes to us through the Spirit. This is apparently so obvious that Paul does not need to mention it.

**1Co 8:6** 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.

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<sup>101</sup> Adam Clarke Bible Commentary used from E-sword.

<sup>102</sup> Max Hatton, *Understanding the Trinity*, Autumn House, Alma Park, Grantham, England, 2001.

<sup>103</sup> Vance Ferrell, *Defending the Godhead*, Harvestime Books, Altamont, Tennessee, USA, 2005.

Since we know there are three equal Persons, this statement simply reflects the roles of the Father and the Son in the plan of salvation. The Father acts as the source and the Son acts as the channel. These roles are the work of Father and Son but this does not reflect the Person of Father and Son in their equality.

**1Co 15:28** 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.

Here is what Adam Clarke comments on this passage: “*The Son also himself be subject* - When the administration of the kingdom of grace is finally closed; when there shall be no longer any state of probation, and consequently no longer need of a distinction between the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory; then the Son, as being man and Messiah, shall cease to exercise any distinct dominion and God be all in all: there remaining no longer any distinction in the Persons of the glorious Trinity, as acting any distinct or separate parts in either the kingdom of grace, or the kingdom of glory, and so the one infinite essence shall appear undivided and eternal. And yet, as there appears to be a personality essentially in the infinite Godhead, that personality must exist eternally; but how this shall be we can neither tell nor know till that time comes in which we shall See Him as He Is. 1Jo\_3:2.”<sup>104</sup>

This view obviously reflects three Persons in one substance who only divided for the plan of salvation. When the plan of salvation is finished, then there will be no more separate roles and it will be only one substance again. Jesus will no longer exist as a separate Being.

The Adventist commentary reflects the ‘three Beings in unity’ concept. “In the Divine plan for the redemption of the world the Father committed everything into the hands of the Son (see on Matt. 11:27; Col. 1:19). When Christ’s mission is completed and the enemies of God subdued, then the Son will deliver “up the kingdom to God, even the Father” (1 Cor. 15:24). This act implies no inferiority of the Son compared with the Father. It is a demonstration of the unity of purpose among the members of the Godhead, whereby the activities of one are seen to be but the carrying out of the united will.”

In essence this appears to be saying that Christ will maintain a subordinated role throughout eternity even though they both possess equal power.

**Heb 1:1-4** 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.

With reference to the concept of inheritance the Adventist Bible Commentary says briefly “*By inheritance*. Christ has been “appointed heir of all things” (see on v. 2). With this inheritance He was also given “a name which is above every name””.

The inheritance here is perceived through the appointment or role taking. So it is a symbolic inheritance rather than a literal inheritance.

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<sup>104</sup> Adam Clarke Bible Commentary found on E-Sword

## Chapter 15 – Applying the Trinitarian Premise

In summary, when we encounter problematic texts, they apply to one of the following situations:

1. They apply only to the incarnation of Christ in this world.
2. They are a literary device as in the case of the personification of wisdom.
3. They are symbolic in nature.
4. They apply to roles rather than the actual Person of the Godhead mentioned.

Let us have a look at some of the Ellen G White Statements that are problematic.

“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." PP 34

This paragraph presents Christ as the following:

1. As begotten before His incarnation.
2. As the only Being that could enter into the purposes of God.
3. That Christ is described in Prov 8:22-30 and therefore was *set up* from everlasting.

Personally at this point I find it quite hard to answer this paragraph and maintain the premise with its underlying assumption. There are some possibilities that have been suggested such as Christ was the only Person who could enter into the purposes of God because the Holy Spirit operates on a different level and also was not visible to the angels. Suggestions have also been made that Ellen White has grown in her understanding of the Trinity and her later statements are a lot clearer while earlier statements are less specific; but this idea opens the door to choosing what statements of inspiration you want to believe. Even so, this statement is very specific and the concept is repeated in several places.

At this point, if you accept the writings of Ellen White on face value you should be faced with a serious dilemma. Personally, this dilemma was so great for me that it has taken 14 years to begin to come to terms with it. If I begin to open my mind to the possibility that the three Persons of the Godhead are not equal in the sense of a Trinity then a number of emotional barriers immediately confront me. I could face isolation from my friends, or “I could be faced with removal from the church.” These emotional realities can place incredible stress upon a person’s mind especially for someone who has been a part of the church all their life. So there has to be an answer but we just can’t see it, so we leave it unanswered and just keep applying the premise and find other passages to reinforce our thinking. I have heard many people simply respond “there are too many three’s statements” or “it’s a mystery” or “why are you focusing on this, we have to

get the message out, you are just causing confusion with these questions” or simply quote a passage like this:

“Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God.... In speaking of his pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him.--Signs of the Times, Aug. 29, 1900. He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. . . . He is the eternal, self-existent Son. --Manuscript 101, 1897.” Ev 615.3

Placing these two statements side by side, based on our premise with its underlying assumption, it will be impossible to the candid mind to harmonize them. We must either re-examine the foundation of the premise or simply wait for God to reveal the unresolved contradictions.

Let us look at a few more statements from EGW.

“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.” PP 36

Ellen White makes this comment in a few places that Lucifer was next in honour to Christ. The only way to make sense of that in terms of the Godhead is to assume that the angels did not know about the Holy Spirit or that he acted in a separate line of command. This is possible but it makes one wonder why did Ellen White make such problematic statements?

Let us look at another statement.

“In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

Ellen White explains that life flows out of the Father, through the Son, out to the universe and then returns through Christ to the Father. She states it is the law of life for the universe. Why is this the law for the universe? Why does she not say the law for this world because of the plan of salvation? Why is it all created beings and not just human beings? If God is a Trinity, then is he portraying himself in the roles of Father, Son and Spirit to all created beings and not just to humanity? And if so why? Why do unfallen beings need to receive life through Christ in the same way that fallen beings do? We might answer that, this is just the way they decided to do it, but nonetheless it is an interesting passage if we are willing to really engage it.

Finally let's look at this passage:

“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.” 14 MR 23.

The most important section of this statement is:

“The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity”

Who is the *Himself*, is it Christ or the Holy Spirit? Does it make sense to say that the Holy Spirit is divested of the personality of humanity? How can He be divested of something He never possessed? Only Christ possessed humanity and only Christ could possibly be divested of it. If we say the *Himself* is the Holy Spirit, then the passage does not really make sense. If we say that it is Christ then it is stating that the Holy Spirit is simply Christ in a different form. But this would completely destroy the premise of the Trinity. This statement leaves no option but to question our underlying premise. This only makes sense, as every statement and assumption we embrace must harmonise with Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. Let us look at the premise again.

**Premise:** There are three Persons of the Godhead.

**Hidden/Underlying Assumption:** Position of Divinity is only ascribed to beings of highest *inherent power*.

I believe that we can say that our premise is true but without testing the underlying assumption by Scripture we cannot say it conclusively and we are in danger of building on the sand. It is a partial conclusion. From the above statements, there must be a high degree of uncertainty with our underlying assumption. So at this stage we have the following.

**Premise:** There are three Persons of the Godhead (Partially True).

**Hidden/Underlying Assumption:** Position of Divinity is only ascribed to beings of highest *inherent power* (Uncertain).

## 16. Brief Examination of the Arian Position

Arius was the opponent of Athanasius during the great Trinity debate of the 4<sup>th</sup> century within the Catholic Church. Both men were from Alexandria, a place renowned for the experimentation with allegorical views of Scripture. Athanasius held a Trinitarian view based on the principle of *inherent power* of co-equal, co-eternal beings. Arius took the logical opposite based upon the same principle of *inherent power* and held that the position of Christ was created and He had a beginning whereas the Father did not have a beginning and was the one true God. Here is a section of a letter he wrote stating his position.

“But what we say and think we both have taught and continue to teach; that the Son is not unbegotten, nor part of the unbegotten in any way, nor is he derived from any substance; but that by his own will and counsel he existed before times and ages fully God, only-begotten, unchangeable.

And before he was begotten or created or appointed or established, he did not exist; for he was not unbegotten. We are persecuted because we say the Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning.” (*Documents of the Christian Church*, Selected and Edited by Henry Bettenson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 1963. p.39. Oxford University Press.)

We might represent Arius’s position as follows:

**Premise:** There is one true God (Partially True).

**Hidden/Underlying Assumption:** Position of Divinity is only ascribed to Beings of highest *inherent power* (Uncertain).

The Arian position holds a different premise but it is based upon the same underlying assumption. Since Christ is “begotten”<sup>105</sup> or created and has a beginning, He does not have the same level of *inherent power* that the Father does and therefore the quality of His Divinity is less. He is a lesser Being. This view is characterized by movements such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

While it would be interesting to try and prove the premise and deal with difficult texts, this position clearly denies the Divinity of the Son of God. The Bible is very clear that Christ is not a created Being.

From a Trinitarian position – any view that is less than co-equal or co-eternal must be seen as a form of Arianism. Is there any possible ground between Trinitarianism and Arianism that could better harmonise statements of Spirit of Prophecy and Scripture? The only place we could find this is in examining the underlying assumption.

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<sup>105</sup> The Arian use of the word begotten appears to be equivalent to the word created. Ellen White and the pioneers certainly did not see it this way. ““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.” ST, May 30, 1895 par. 3 Emphasis mine.

## **17. Using a Power-Based Underlying Assumption**

Taking the Trinitarian premise that there are three Persons of the Godhead, the underlying assumption places the focal point upon the question of the nature of equality. From a Trinitarian view, equality is presupposed to be that of *inherent power*.

As we have seen above, the process of securing the premise to a Trinitarian view is the process of proving the Son and Holy Spirit as inherently equal to the Father. Every statement will be interpreted in that light. But is this totally Biblical?

The same issue that caused confusion over the Sabbath keeping is at play here. That old lie told to our parents in the Garden of Eden is the driving force behind the desire to determine equality by inherency. Let me explain.

The statement “you shall not surely die” told Adam and Eve in effect that “you possess your own *life source* inherently.” “Maybe God gave it to you but now it is yours to do with as you wish.” “You can survive without being in an intimate *relationship* with God because you are immortal.”

***The shift of power source caused a shift in value system.*** If man can only have life through a *relationship* with God then his *value* and purpose as a person is bound up in the *relationship* with God. Whereas if man possesses life in himself, his *value* and purpose as a person is bound up in that power found in himself and he will project this view onto the God that he worships. This means the *value* of the God we worship is measured only by the power He possesses.

The contrast of these two systems is found in Jeremiah 9:23,24.

**Jer 9:23,24** Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

We see here a clear contrast between a man seeking glory (*value*) in the things he does or performs as opposed to seeking glory (*value*) in knowing his Creator. The key point we are making here is that the lie embraced in Eden shifted humanity’s perception of *value* from *relationship*, to *value* by *inherent power*. Notice the following passages:

**Mat 18:1** 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.

**Luk 12:15** And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

**Luk 22:25,26** And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called

## Chapter 17 – Using a Power-Based Underlying Assumption

benefactors. But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

Again and again in Scripture you will discover the principle that true greatness comes through a *relationship* with God, not through your own efforts and abilities.

## 18. The Core Issue

This brings us to the core issue of determining equality. When we seek to prove that Christ is inherently equal to the Father, whose methodology are we using? Who is the one that introduced such a concept of ascertaining *value*? Was it not Satan in the Garden of Eden?

God tells us clearly:

**Isa 55:8,9** For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

It is not God's thoughts that drives man to attribute His Son with divinity and consequent *value* by *inherent power*, but the thoughts of His enemy. Since God's kingdom is *relational*, should we not *value* Christ in respect of His *relationship* to His Father rather than seeking to prove His *value* and Divinity by His *inherent power*? Does not the Bible tell us clearly that Christ received all things through a *relationship*?

**Heb 1:1-4** 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.

The Bible clearly tells us that Christ's excellent name is by inheritance – meaning through a *relationship* with His Father. For him who has ears to hear, let him hear.

The Son of God was begotten by the Father in eternity (John 3:16; John 1:1). He proceeded and came forth from the Father (John 8:42). He is the express image of His Person (Heb 1:2) and therefore was given to have life in Himself as the Father has life in Himself (John 5:26).<sup>106</sup>

At this point many say “You are saying Christ is not eternal!” Christ certainly is eternal because He was set up from everlasting. The word everlasting means veiled, vanishing point or time out of mind. He has come forth from the *time* of eternity – the time that is out of mind. So there never was a time that Christ was not in close communion with the Father, because the only time we have in our mind is the time that starts “In the Beginning”, beyond that we have no concept of time. *At any rate, this is not what makes Christ valuable to us or Divine. It is simply that He is the express image of the Father and has received all things by inheritance.*

Having been released from the enslaving principle of trying to prove Divinity by *inherent power* we are free to allow Bible passages and Spirit of Prophecy statements to read plainly.

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<sup>106</sup> “The controversy between Christ and Satan began in heaven (Rev. 12:7) in a face-to-face combat. Satan was not content with the position which he held as Lucifer (Isa. 14:12), or light-bearer, as the name signifies; but he indulged the ambition to “be like the Most High,” and thus to be light itself (1 John 1:5) and the source of light. Since light is only a manifestation of life (John 1:4), this was the demand of a created being (Eze. 28:15) to be a source or fountain of life, which could only be granted to the begotten Son (John 5:26), one with the Father, the real Fountain (Ps. 36:9). SDA Sabbath School Lesson 1902 April 19 Page 13,14

Notice the following:

“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.” 1SP 17

It is important to note, what exactly transpired in this meeting. Did God at this meeting confer special honour upon His Son? Was this the point where He was exalted? Notice again:

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. PP 36

And then a little further down it states:

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. PP 38

This being the case, in the meeting assembled by the Father, it was made known to the heavenly host what the Father had ordained from the beginning.

The key point here is that the power and authority that Christ possessed was given to Him by His Father. ***It was the equality that the Son possessed in relationship that enabled Him to possess equality of power and position – not the other way around.***<sup>107</sup> Christ does not have to prove His pedigree to be considered equal. His *relationship* with His Father and His Father’s Word is enough.

This battle between Christ being the Son of God by *relationship* as opposed to being the Son by *inherent power* is clearly revealed in the Baptism of Jesus and the Temptation in the Wilderness.

The Father says in Matt 3:17 “This is my Son in whom I am well pleased.” Christ was approved by His Father simply by His *relationship*. When Satan came to Him in the wilderness he demanded that Christ prove His Divinity by His *inherent power*. Christ absolutely refused to do so and yet every time we seek to prove that Christ is equal with God by His *inherent power* it is as if we would seek to turn stones into bread for Jesus to satisfy Satan’s request!

We could spend much more time on this, but I assert that to seek to prove the underlying assumption that position of Divinity is only ascribed to Beings of highest *inherent power* is false.

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<sup>107</sup> One point that I believe is important to distinguish here, is that Christ’s ability to have equality of relationship with the Father; meaning that He could fully understand Him, required Him to possess, the Father’s divine nature. I suggest that this is why Christ was begotten and not created. The divine nature was essential to the equality of the relationship, but the divine nature possessed by Christ was not the basis of equality but the provided the ingredients for relational equality.

## 19. Using a Relational-Based Underlying Assumption

So let us return to our original Trinitarian premise with a realization that the underlying assumption is false, and actually based on human reasoning flowing from the lie “you shall not surely die”.

**Premise:** There are three Persons of the Godhead (Partially True).

**Hidden/Underlying Assumption:** Position of Divinity is only ascribed to Beings of highest *inherent power* (Totally False).

Since the underlying assumption is totally false this will make the understanding of the premise false and turn the truth of God into a lie. Such a lie will lead us to worshipping the creature more than the Creator (Rom 1:25).

Let us restate the case with a *relational* underlying assumption:

**Premise:** There are three Persons of the Godhead (Partially True).

**Hidden/Underlying Assumption:** Positions of Divinity are only ascribed by the Father through *relational inheritance* (True).

In this scenario it is God who determines who and how someone or something is Divine. It is His right alone to determine this, man has no right to impose his ideas of Divinity onto God. Such imposition is suggestive of idolatry.

Notice the following statement:

“In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father’s life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

This statement makes complete sense based on our new underlying assumption. The Father is the fountain of life (Jer 2:13). This life flows out of the Father and through the Son and out to the universe. This is clearly revealed in 1 Cor 8:6.

**1Co 8:6** 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.

When we compare the above passage with another in Ephesians, the picture is even clearer

**Eph 4:4-6** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

The one God is clearly the Father and the one Lord is Jesus Christ. Some have tried to refute this by claiming that if Jesus is the one Lord, then the Father is excluded from being Lord. Again this reasoning is based on independent inherent life source thinking. Jesus is Lord because Lordship came from the Father. The Son inherited this Lordship and executes this office on behalf of the Father. To try and show a co-eternal Trinity from the above verses creates confusion and unfaithfulness to the text.

A passage that is often used to show Christ is completely separate from the Father is this:

“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. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). This is the open fountain of life for the world.”  
ISM 296

My previous understanding of the passage above was that Christ had life separate from the Father. The terms “life original, unborrowed and underived” seemed quite conclusive, but in the past my underlying assumption was hidden. I interpreted this passage through the lens of *self-originating inherent power* rather than *relational inherent power*.

Notice how it says that IN Christ WAS life original, unborrowed and underived but it does not say how that Life got there. Since it does not tell us how it got there, our underlying assumption is immediately revealed as to how we will understand it came to be there. Putting it another way, the words “original, unborrowed and underived” will either have a performance-based or a relationship-based assumption attached to them. If we adopt a performance-based approach then this passage will certainly demand that Christ has originated a second and separate life source to the Father. If we adopt a relational model then the life flowing from Father to Son is maintained as original, unborrowed and underived because they share it in the intimacy and oneness of their relationship. This becomes a statement of the closeness of the relationship of Father and Son and the fullness with which the Father has given the Son. Again, remember that Ellen White did not say “Christ originated in and of Himself, separate to the Father, life original, unborrowed and underived, it simply says that “IN Christ was Life original, unborrowed and underived” We must not read into the passage a false underlying assumption.

John 5:26 tells us – As the Father has life (original, unborrowed and underived) so He gave to the Son to have life (original, unborrowed and underived) in Himself. So it is inherent in Christ, but the Father gave it to Him as part of His inheritance. We don’t have it inherently, but we can receive it from the fountain of life through a *relationship* with Christ. This is exactly what Ellen White says. What a wonderful statement.<sup>108</sup>

Again this truth is brought forth in the following statement:

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

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<sup>108</sup> This same principle applies to the concept of wisdom. Some argue that if Christ is begotten and that Christ is wisdom then God was not wise until Christ was begotten. This argument denies the flow of blessing from the Father to the Son. To bring forth wisdom requires the one who brings it forth to possess it Himself. The Son is the pinnacle of wisdom because He is the highest expression of the wisdom of God in establishing His kingdom.

Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both.  
PP 36

This statement speaks of the Father *setting forth the true position of His Son* and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. This must surely then present who the Son of God really is. Here is the point where Ellen White must mention the counsel of the three members and the roles that they took to display the love of God. But none of this is mentioned. Rather, Ellen White makes the unmistakable comment that “*The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both.*” Surely the self-existent One must refer to the Father and that the glory of the Father encircled the Son, meaning, that to the Son was given Life as the Father has Life. There is no other possible way to read these statements.

But in this context Ellen White makes more statements that cannot possible align with a co-equal Trinity. She continues:

Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. PP 36

Christ is referred to as the Only Begotten of God in the context of what transpired before the creation of the world. She then states that Christ alone could fully enter into His purposes. These statements were penned in 1890. They are post 1888 and are clearly not Trinitarian. There never has been an attempt to correct or alter them or confess that these statements are wrong. The honest and candid reader cannot honestly read these statements and believe that Ellen was moving towards a Trinitarian belief. Such a view is ignorant at best and deceitful at worst.

Returning to the statement concerning life unborrowed and underived; some have claimed, as I have in the past, that because this statement converted M.L. Andreasen from being a Pioneer-based Godhead believer to a Trinitarian, it must indeed be a Trinitarian statement. Andreasen went all the way to visit her to check if she actually wrote this statement and spent three weeks in her home checking its truthfulness. But can we use Andreasen's conversion as the basis of what Ellen White meant. If she did tell Andreasen that she meant it in a Trinitarian context and was herself a Trinitarian then she must have forgotten to tell her son (who spent much more time with his mother than Andreasen) that she thought this way. In 1935 Willie White wrote:

“In your letter you request me to tell you what I understand to be my mother's position in reference to the personality of the Holy Spirit. 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. I have often regretted that I did not possess that keenness of mind that could solve this and similar perplexities, and then remembering what Sister White wrote in ‘Acts of the Apostles,’ pages 51 and 52, ‘regarding such mysteries which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden,’ I have thought best to refrain from discussion and have endeavored to direct my mind to matters easy to be understood. As I read the Bible, I find that the risen Saviour breathed on the disciples ‘and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’ The conception received from this Scripture, seems to be in harmony with the statement in ‘Desire of Ages’,

page 669, also Gen. 1:2; with Luke 1:4; with Acts 2:4 and also 8:15 and 10:44. Many other texts might be referred to which seem to be in harmony with this statement in ‘Desire of Ages.’ **The statements and the arguments of some of our ministers, in their effort to prove that the Holy Spirit is an individual as are God the Father and Christ, the eternal Son, have perplexed me, and sometimes they have made me sad.** One popular teacher said ‘We may regard Him, as the fellow who is down here running things.’ 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. **There are many Scriptures which speak of the Father and the Son and the absence of Scripture making similar reference to the united work of the Father and the Holy Spirit or of Christ and the Holy Spirit, has led me to believe that the spirit without individuality was the representative of the Father and the Son throughout the universe, and it was through the Holy Spirit that they dwell in our hearts and make us one with the Father and with the Son.** {Letter, W. C. White to H. W. Carr, April 30, 1935 }

Clearly Willie White did not believe in the Trinity of three co-equal and three co-eternal beings. To use Andreasen’s conversion to Trinitarianism as a proof that Ellen White meant the statement “original, unborrowed and underived” to be seen as a Trinitarian statement would be unwise, as there is no place where Andreasen states that “Ellen White told me she was a Trinitarian and so I converted”.

As we have done above, when we look at statements that appear to place Christ as co-equal and co-eternal with a separate *life source*, **we need to question “what is our underlying assumption?” Is it *self-originating-inherent-power-based* or *relational-inheritance-based*?**

Most of our problem passages of Scripture and E.G.W. quotes are solved when we do this, and we can read them in the plainest and most universal context. This in itself is a principle of Bible study that all should remember.

The framework of understanding that allows for the plainest reading of Scripture and most universal application is the more correct position.

The Trinitarian position requires us to narrow passages and regularly assign symbolic meanings to texts to make them fit. Some examples:

1. Restricting Prov 8 to the personification of wisdom.
2. Restricting the term *begotten* to the incarnation.
3. Restricting the passage John 5:26 that Christ was given life in Himself to the incarnation.
4. Using the term *one* in a symbolic rather than literal sense.
5. Seeing the roles of Father and Son as more symbolic than a more literal sense.

The same principles are used by Sunday keepers in refuting the Sabbath:

1. Restricting the keeping of the Ten Commandments to the Old Testament.
2. Seeing the Sabbath rest as merely symbolic rather than including the literal sense.
3. Limiting grace to forgiveness and denying the victorious Christian life.

Can we not have the whole Bible without all these limits and restrictions being placed upon it because of the lie of the serpent? Man can only live by EVERY WORD OF GOD, not small sections of it based on fatal assumptions.

When we allow the Bible to read plainly in a relationship-based context, it is quite natural to allow the Son to literally be the only begotten Son of God. It is such an understanding that can only make sense of the following statement from Ellen White:

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality." UL 367

This statement cannot be understood in performance-based context. To do so is to believe that Jesus Christ is not truly God. A performance-based context demands that Christ is equal to the Father in every facet and in every sense. A relational-based system does not require this and frees us from the twisting of scripture required to maintain co-equality.

Having accepted that the Son is the only-begotten of the Father leads us to the question of how we then understand the Holy Spirit, how would He fit into a view where Christ is literally the only-begotten Son of the Father? We will examine this in detail in chapter 21, but before that I want to examine some of the reasons why a literally begotten Son is not easy for human beings to accept.

## **20. We will not Have this Man to Reign Over Us**

### **A. The Son of God, the Centre of Great Controversy**

**Luk 19:12-14** He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

In this parable Jesus tells the story of a nobleman who went to receive a kingdom. The nobleman of course is Christ. The citizens of the kingdom sent him a message saying – we will not have this man to reign over us.

This story accurately reflects the attitude of the Christian world. We will not have the Son of God reign over us if He is any less powerful in His own right than the Father. This message is simply the echo of the core of the Great Controversy. Notice the following:

“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. If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all. But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage. Such were the subtle deceptions that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts.” PP 37

This whole controversy could have been avoided if (from a Trinitarian view) God had explained to Lucifer that Jesus was simply playing the role of the Son and that they were inherently equal in and of themselves. But if that were the case the whole controversy could be blamed on God due to poor communication skills.

The above statement clearly states that Lucifer saw the exaltation of the Son of God as an injustice to himself. But that which was considered an injustice by Satan was not considered robbery by Christ (Phil 2:6). For Christ accepted His Father’s Word and believed Himself to be equal to the Father simply because God said it. He accepted His Father’s inheritance. He had no need to turn stones into bread. Lucifer reasoned that if Christ could be exalted as equal in authority with God, then so could he. When God revealed that this was impossible, he refused to worship Christ as the Son of God. He said in effect I will not have this person rule over me as He is not fully Divine *of himself*.

“Rejecting with disdain the arguments and entreaties of the loyal angels, he denounced them as deluded slaves. The preference shown to Christ he declared an act of injustice both to himself and to all the heavenly host, and announced that he would no longer submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs. He would never again acknowledge the supremacy of Christ.” PP 40

Satan never disputed the supremacy of the Father, he said “I will be like the Most High”, not above Him. He could see that the Father possessed power in and of Himself, but because God

gave this to His Son without measure and in all its fullness, he saw that this was unfair. He refused to submit to it.

Satan unblushingly makes known to all the heavenly family, his discontent, that Christ should be preferred before him, to be in such close conference with God, and he be uninformed as to the result of their frequent consultations. God informs Satan that this he can never know. That to his Son will he reveal his secret purposes, and that all the family of Heaven, Satan not excepted, were required to yield implicit obedience. Satan boldly speaks out his rebellion, and points to a large company who think God is unjust in not exalting him to be equal with God, and in not giving him command above Christ. He declares he cannot submit to be under Christ's command, that God's commands alone will he obey. 3SG 37,38

### **B. The Lie of Eden Disconnects Us from True Son of God**

When Satan tempted Adam and Eve, he attacked on the very point he considered to be an injustice. He told them that they would not surely die, that they possessed life in themselves. In essence he was saying they had *performance-based* equality with Christ.

This concept of *inherent life source*, as we noticed before, shifts our notions of Divinity from those of inheritance to those of self-origination. Since man now almost universally believes that he is immortal as Christ is immortal, then to consider Christ to be God He must have a greater position than man. The only place that man can place Christ is inherently equal with the Father. Due to the distortions of the teaching of the immortality of the human soul, Christianity is left with no option but to cry “We will not have this man reign over us. He is not truly Divine.” By insisting that Christ came into possession of power by Himself, we are in effect destroying the personality of Christ. His true position is obscured. As we noted earlier, Trinitarianism and Arianism both arose out of the assumption that Divinity is only ascribed to self-originating Beings. *Arianism destroys the Divinity of Christ while Trinitarianism destroys the personality of Christ.* Satan does not care which side you choose, in either case the Person of Christ is lost and He ceases to be the Son of God as revealed in Scripture. And if the true Christ is lost then we can lament with Philip when he said to Christ “How can we know the way” – the true way is lost.

We know that our forefathers did not believe in the Trinity; that they saw it as part of the wine of Babylon. Why do we imagine that our forefathers were so ignorant? If we are willing to research we will find that many of our pioneers had well reasoned positions and did not just happen to pick it up via the Christian Connection. We do our forefathers a great dishonour to insinuate that they were not diligent to search out this issue and pass on to their spiritual children the most blessed heritage. The foundation was not laid wrong. God laid it right.

Notice this statement:

“Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men. They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor.” MR760 p.9

### C. Personalities of Father and Son are Landmark Doctrines

This statement leaves us in no doubt that the Personalities of God and Christ were part of the old landmarks. By accepting the Trinity we have destroyed the Personality of God and the Son of God exactly as our forefather James White said:

““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, 4) ...The exhortation to contend for the faith delivered to the saints, is to us alone. And it is very important for us to know what for and how to contend. In the 4th verse he gives us the reason why we should contend for THE faith, a particular faith; “for there are certain men,” or a certain class who deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. ... The way spiritualizers 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.” {J. S. White, The Day Star, January 24, 1846}

James White knew exactly what the issues were, that an exaltation of Jesus to the position of the Eternal God – meaning possessing life in Himself separate from the Father – is a denial of the only Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**If the Trinity is a denial of the Father and the Son then we have lost Their true *identity* and as we expressed in chapter 3, keeping the commandments requires us to know the *identity* of the God we worship otherwise we can't keep His commandments. Therefore, the Trinity doctrine, if truly believed, makes it impossible to keep the commandments. Is not this the Spirit of Antichrist? Little children keep yourself from idols.**

### D. Relationship Between Father and Son Defines all Kingdom Relationships

The reason we struggle to allow a begotten Christ to rule over us is because we are asking the wrong question of Him. We ask the *performance* question “Are you equal with the Father in power and existence?” This question will always give us the wrong answer but it is our thoughts and not God's thoughts. The Scriptures ask the right question “What think ye of Christ? *Whose Son is He?*” Matt 22:41. This is a *relational* question with reference to the Father. Let's compare the two views:

Who is Christ?	Way to the Father
1. The Co-equal, Co-eternal with the Father	Performance Identity
2. The Son of the living God (The Father)	Relational Identity

Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). No one comes to the Father but through Him. He is the very key to the kingdom of God. If we see that Christ finds His way to the Father by a *performance-identity*, then this is the WAY in which we will try to respond to the Father. If Christ finds His way to the Father through a *relational-identity* then – praise God – so can we. I pray earnestly you can see the precious light that flows from this reality. It has brought me comfort and joy to the point where my cup runs over.

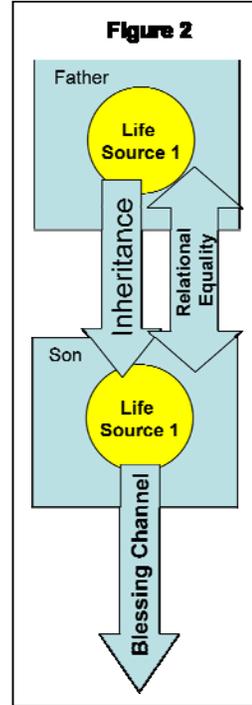
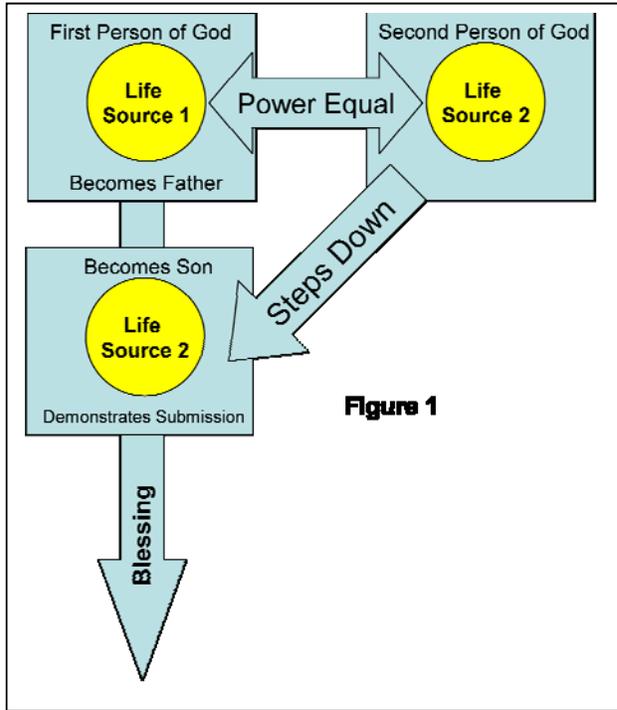
This truth can only be grasped in realization that Christ's very *identity* has its equality to the Father based in a *relational inheritance*. Note carefully:

**The *relationship* between the Father and Son defines the concept of *relationship* for the entire universe: that being equality by relationship. If their *relationship* is defined by co-equality of power then our *relationships* will be defined by exactly the same principle. Dear Lord, open our eyes to this vital truth.**

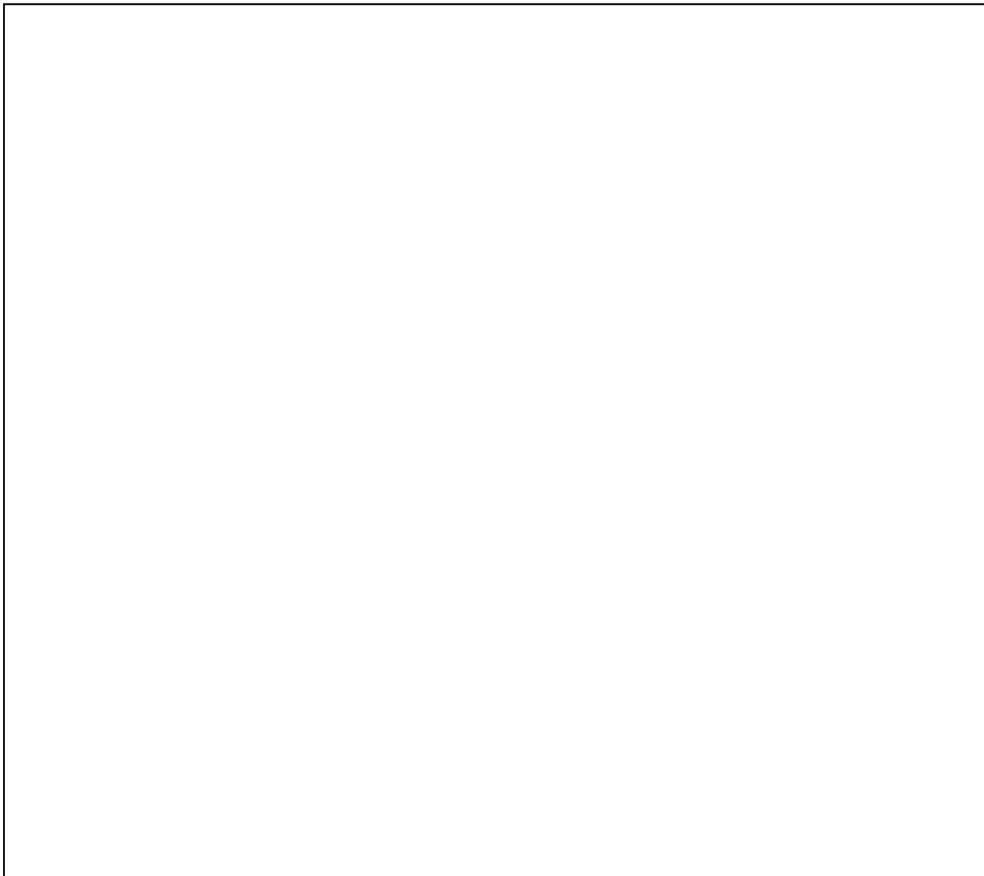
### **E. Relational Equality of Father and Son Through One Life Source Establishes Channel of Blessing**

When we see that Christ is equal to the Father in Relationship and His pedigree and value is the same as the Father, then we can allow Christ to truly be begotten. His Sonship and begotten state do not denigrate His Divinity in any way. This principle becomes vital in the husband and wife relationship. This will be discussed in detail later on, but it is important to state that if we see a power equality relationship between Father and Son we will be unwittingly influenced towards this kind of relationship in a marriage. The concept of submission becomes misunderstood and seen as a denigrated state. This is indeed the situation in the church today. The submission of the wife is seen as degrading and to be avoided.

Some have tried to suggest that Christ *literally* stepped into the role of a son to demonstrate the principle of submission. But this creates confusion as to the true identity of Christ. The stepping down concept involves a belief that Christ possessed a power equality with the Father and truly is exactly the same as Him in a power context, but has taken a role as a Son for the purpose of submission. (See Figure 1 below). This concept while addressing the issue of being begotten at some level, does not address the fact that this retains the equality of Father and Son in a power-based context. It also leaves the impression that Father and Son have separate original life sources that have always been independent yet together in love. This underlying belief obscures the channel of blessing that flows from the Father through His Son. (See Figure 2). The multiple life source channels confuse the mind in regard to the river that flows from the throne of God.



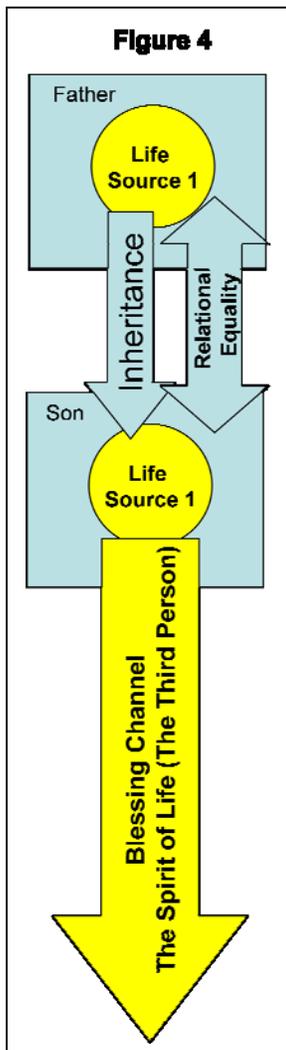
The issue of multiple life sources confusing the channel of blessing is further complicated with the subject of the Holy Spirit. The notion of 3 independent life sources united in love greatly confuses the mind when trying to conceive one God and yet avoid believing in three Gods.



The channel is now a concoction of 3 different life sources role playing identities that are not their true identity. The channel is not clearly perceived nor understood, because there is not a clear conception of the flow of life as expressed in Desire of Ages 21.

...through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.

Let us observe what the Bible actually portrays



In figure 4, we see the one life source of the Father, given to the Son and through the Son flowing out to the universe in the third person. All the relational attributes of the Father and Son are present in the Spirit because it is their omnipresence which means it is not simply a force but the personality of God in omnipresent form. The need to see the Holy Spirit as a person in exactly the same way as Father and Son comes from the misconception of the belief of the need for a separate life source. This is neither needful nor Biblical. Figure 4 shows a very clear channel of blessing and life flow and does not confuse the identities of Father, Son or Spirit.

The confusion that arises from three life sources is most clearly demonstrated in the example of the creation of this world. The Bible states that God created everything through Jesus Christ.

**Eph 3:9** And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

In figure 4, it is easy to see how God created the world through His Son but in figure three this becomes confused. Through the notion of three life sources the one who actually used his power to create the world is the Holy Spirit because He was the one that hovered over the waters in Genesis 1:2. So the concept of three life sources makes the Bible text hard to read.

The response comes, but Father, Son and Spirit are in a mysterious union! This makes the Bible text even more confusing by trying to state who was the actual agent of creation. The Bible should just read they all did it rather than the Father creating through the Son.

## F. Key to Understanding Son of Man Based on Understanding of Son of God

Back to our discussion on the true identity of Christ. If Christ only became dependent on the Father in the incarnation then He is modeling for us a *relationship* with God that He Himself does not hold nor can speak with authority on because this is not who He really is. Saying that

Christ took the role of Son and played the part of *relational* access to the Father means this is not the true *identity* of Christ. It means a *relationship* with Christ in this context is a *relationship* with someone who in fact does not exist. It would turn the truth of God into a lie. If Christ were in actuality the self-originating 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Godhead, then He cannot in reality be the WAY to the Father. He could only represent or pretend to be that. And as such a Christ is pretending or role playing dependence on the Father, He also can role play taking human nature. The essence of the 1888 message is that Christ is truly God and truly man through a *relational-based* lens not a *performance-based* one. Just as He inherited everything from His Father to be God, so He inherited everything from man to become man.<sup>109</sup>

**Heb 2:14** 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;

SON OF GOD = RECEIVED THE FULL INHERITANCE OF GOD  
SON OF MAN = RECEIVED THE FULL INHERITANCE OF MAN

**The doctrine of the Trinity gives us a second Person in the Godhead who is made in likeness of the Son of God but who in fact is not the Son of God. So it stands to reason that such a Person can be in the likeness of sinful flesh but not actually take sinful flesh. The Doctrine of the Trinity is logically inconsistent with Christ taking our fallen nature. It logically follows that Christ then cannot in reality be the Son of God or in reality be the Son of Man.**

Notice this logic in *Question on Doctrine* where the view on the nature of Christ was first changed:

Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity and glory, and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity and humanity, were mysteriously combined,- and man and God became one. It is in this union that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in humanity, we look upon God, and see in Him the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person- Signs of the Times, July 30, 1896. In both His natures, the Divine, and the human, He was perfect; He was sinless. That this was true of His Divine nature there can be no question. That it was so of His humanity is also true.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> A.T Jones. Consecrated Way Page 12 “**Therefore it is certain that an understanding of the position and nature of Christ as He was in heaven is essential to a proper understanding of His position and nature as He was on earth.**”; Page 14 “Therefore it is further written of Him that He was "made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." This more excellent name is the name "God," which, in the eighth verse, is given by the Father to the Son: "Unto the Son He [God] saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. Thus, He is "so much" better than the angels as God is better than the angels. And it is because of this that He has that more excellent name --the name expressing only what He is in His very nature. And this name "He hath by inheritance." **It is not a name that was bestowed but a name that is inherited.** Now it lies in the nature of things, as an everlasting truth, that the only name any person can possibly inherit is his father's name. **This name, then, of Christ's, which is more excellent than that of the angels, is the name of His Father, and His Father's name is God. The Son's name, therefore, which He has by inheritance, is God.**”; Page 17 “His likeness to God, as in the first chapter of Hebrews, is the only basis of true understanding of His likeness to men, as in the second chapter of Hebrews.”

<sup>110</sup> *Questions on Doctrine*, Page 21. PDF Version found on [www.maranathamedia.com](http://www.maranathamedia.com)

In this quote we see the equality of Christ to the Father is seen through a *performance-based* lens when quoting Ellen White. It then makes the connection on that basis that both human and Divine natures were sinless. Here is clear evidence of *performance-based-thinking* through the Trinity denying the truth on the nature of Christ. It is only logical.

“He also Himself took part of the same,” does not mean that He also himself pretended to be man through an immaculate conception. For Christ to be subject to death, He must take a body that is subject to death. The body of Adam before the fall was not subject to death. The Son of man inherited all the fullness of the manhood bodily in the same way that he inherited all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col 2:9).

### **G. Father-Son Relationship Key to Righteousness by Faith**

Christ is the WAY which is the TRUTH which is LIFE – praise God.

*How we view Christ’s relationship to the Father is how we will understand His relationship to us and is how we understand righteousness by faith.*

The reality of this truth makes me want to shout “O how I love Him, I love Him and I see in Him such matchless charms. In Him I have found the pearl of great price for which I will gladly suffer the loss of all things for they are but dung compared to the truth of His Person.”

If Christ’s *relationship* is *performance-based*, then by beholding this we will be changed into that image, we will conduct our *relationships* in the same manner. If His *relationship* is *relationally-based* on inheritance then we will be changed into that image even by the glory of the LORD.

After having discussed these concepts with a number of people, the question comes back, “what do you mean the Trinity is performance-based, they are three beings that love each other in intimate relationship. Their relationship is so close they are called one. How can you call this performance-based?” When I refer to performance-based relationship, I am referring to the qualifications required to enter that relationship; the basis upon which a person gains admittance to the realm of Divinity. Once the members of the Godhead are admitted we can certainly place them in to the most intimate and loving relationship imaginable, but we must determine the basis of acceptance.

<b>Godhead Model</b>	<b>Access Qualifications</b>	<b>Access Mode</b>	<b>Quality of relationship</b>
Trinitarian	Self-originated life, Inherent power, Eternal existence	Performance	Intimate and personal
Fountarian <sup>111</sup>	Inheritance through Sonship	Relationship	Intimate and personal

We see that both models of the Godhead experience intimate and loving relationships, but they are accessed by diametrically opposed methods. From a human perspective this concept is easy to understand. If a man marries a woman just because she looks beautiful, the relationship was

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<sup>111</sup> I like to use the term fountarian to express the concept of life source flow from one fountain point as opposed to the term Non-Trinitarian which speaks of that which is outside orthodoxy. Such a concept I repudiate.

accessed through the performance mode of beauty. If a woman marries a man because he is wealthy, the relationship is accessed through the performance base of wealth.

Please don't let Satan destroy the true personality of Christ in your mind. This understanding is our only hope of truly understanding how to find our way to God. If we do not allow Christ to have a *relationship* to the Father by inheritance, then we will find it very hard to understand the Law, the Sabbath and the investigative judgment, the nature of Christ and character perfection, because we will ask the wrong questions of these teachings also. Our view of God, and especially Christ, affects all of these teachings; and a shift to the Trinity by our church would eventually lead to a change in attitude or actual teaching on these other doctrines, as history has certainly borne out.

Here is the source of the split in our Church in the 1980's. The view of Christ introduced in the 1930's demanded a *performance* understanding of access to the Father. By the 1960's many members were ready to despair because the WAY to the Father was now placed in a *performance* context. Some of the church leaders brought them relief by changing views on justification that released the *performance* pressure. It was a logical consequence of the new view of Christ introduced in the 1930's in the context of a Trinity.

We may accuse some of the church leaders in the early 1980's for bringing in New Theology but this was the only way they could see to relieve the pressure of *performance* access to God. I cannot blame them for that. If only we could have reclaimed a correct view of Jesus as the Son of the Living God, how much pain would have been saved.

Is it possible that we have fallen victim to a very subtle form of idolatry that has caused us to actually be worshipping a god that is not in the Bible? The immediate response is "that is completely absurd!" The thought that it is so absurd is what makes it so easy to lay hidden within our church.

**Jer 2:11-13** Has a nation changed its gods, Which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory For what does not profit. (12) Be astonished, O heavens, at this, And be horribly afraid; Be very desolate," says the Lord. (13) "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Have we forsaken the fountain of living waters? Since this issue of equality of the Son to the Father is so critical to understand, I want to address it from another standpoint in the next chapter.

## **21. What Type of Measuring Rod is that in your Hand?**

### **A. Credentials for Worship**

When Jesus was here on earth, He made some very bold claims regarding Himself. One of these amazing statements occurs in John 5:18-27.

**Joh 5:18-27** Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. (19) Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. (20) For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. (21) For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. (22) For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, (23) that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. (24) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (25) Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. (26) For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, (27) and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

Jesus claims that God is His Father and therefore equal with God. He also claims that all judgment has been given to Him, meaning that He is the judge of the whole world. He also makes the important claim that all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Jesus claims that He is entitled to our worship.

If someone came to you and said I am worthy of your worship, I guess the polite thing we would ask is, "What is your claim to worship?" "Upon what basis are you asking me to worship you?" "What are your credentials?" It would be natural for us to pull out our measuring rod and begin to size up this person who is making such a bold claim and see if they qualify. The question is what type of measuring rod are you going to use?

When the Father introduces Jesus to the world, He tells us why we should listen to Him? And in the explanation of the Father is the key to which measuring rod we should use. Notice:

**Mat 17:5** While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

Notice carefully what the Father says. What is the reason why we should listen to Jesus, His teachings and claims? God gives one simple reason: This is my Son whom I love (or am well pleased with). The measuring tool therefore must be a *relational* one. It must be based upon the type of relationship that Jesus has with the Father.

The Father did not say, “This is the all powerful creator of the universe” as the basis of why we should listen to Jesus, even though Jesus was indeed all of this.<sup>112</sup> The Father points us to the relationship that the Son has with Himself as the reason why we should listen to Him and follow Him.

### B. Regarding Christ From a Worldly Point of View

But are we willing to listen to Jesus and follow Him based on His relation to the Father or do we naturally pick up another measuring rod to measure Jesus: a measuring rod that we were born with; a measuring rod by which all men measure true greatness; a measuring rod that is based on *power, position* and *performance*. Does the lie of the serpent naturally guide our hands to the wrong measuring rod to determine whether Jesus is worthy of worship? When we say measure, we are meaning our searching of the Scriptures. Is it possible to try and measure Christ in a worldly or carnal way, meaning employing a measuring rod that God has not asked us to use? Notice what Paul says in 2 Cor 5:16

**2Co 5:16** So from now on we regard no-one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. (NIV)

Paul states that he once regarded (or known NKJV) Christ from a worldly point of view. The key point is that if we use the wrong measuring rod on Christ through the Scripture then we might demand the wrong things of Him.

Over and over again we read scholars in their efforts to present Christ, the words “full deity” and “Christ is God in the fullest sense” and that anything less than “total equality” is a depreciation of the deity of Christ. What kind of measuring rod is being used in these cases? Why is Christ continually subjected to this process of proving His inherent Divinity? A process that is really responding to the question – do you measure up to our standard? Is this the measuring rod the Father asks us to use? Are we sure that when we come to examine Christ that we do it in a way that the Father asks us to? As we noticed in the previous chapter that if we make Christ equal to the Father in the way the world always does – by inherent power then we could actually deny the real Christ by using a faulty measuring rod.

### C. Relational Versus Performance Based Measurement

Let us compare the measuring rods of *relationship* and *performance*:

<b>Relational Based Measurement</b>	<b>Performance Based Measurement<sup>113</sup></b>
Word of the Father concerning Christ	Length of Existence
Knowledge of the Father’s Character	Source of power
Knowledge of living with the Father	Amount of power
Inheritance from the Father	Position to the Father

<sup>112</sup> Notice the relational basis of worship found in the following passage by EGW. “It is not the manifestation of His great and awful majesty and unparalleled power that will leave us without excuse if we refuse Him our love and obedience. It is the love, the compassion, the patience, the long-suffering that He has shown which will witness against those who do not offer Him the willing service of their lives.” SD 19.

<sup>113</sup> See Nov 1964 Ministry article Page 7 on the Trinity for example “The second fact is that all the Persons are coeternal. That is, all of them have always existed, and the Father cannot be said to have been in existence before the Son or the Spirit. All are timeless (see Col. 1:17; John 1:1, Rev. 22:13; compare Isa. 41:4). All three Persons are coequal. That is, they all have equal rank and dignity”

If we use a *performance-based* measurement system then we will refer to all the texts in the Bible that talk of Christ's power and abilities *as the basis* of why Jesus is worthy of worship. But the Father does not introduce any of these things as a reason or basis to listen to Him. Certainly, Christ's power and inherent attributes tell us what Jesus is like, but all these things are immediately understood when we say that Christ has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than the angels.

If we say that believing Christ is begotten actually denigrates the Divinity of Christ, then we are inadvertently suggesting that the inheritance which the Father gave was not sufficient. The inheritance and commands of the Father are actually not enough to settle the question of Christ's Divinity. Could we be saying in effect, "You might tell us that He is equal, but we are going to prove it for ourselves to make sure." Obviously once we are convinced that Christ is God, we will seek to ensure that his inherent powers and abilities are of the highest order. At this point we are faced with the danger of trying to prove too much and focusing on things that are not essential.

If we take a *relational* measuring rod, then issues of existence and power source are secondary to issues of the relationship of the Son to the Father. In essence we worship the Son because the Father tells us to. We honour the Son because the Father tells us to. We believe He is Divine because He is the express image of His Father. Is this not enough? Is the Father's Word and bestowed inheritance not enough for us to worship Jesus? Obviously it wasn't for Lucifer. He demanded more than simply the Father's word; he wanted hard core *performance-based* evidence.

**If we understand that the flow of the Father's blessing opens to us in submission or obedience to His Word, can it be that in not accepting the only-begotten Son of God as equal with the Father based on His Word alone, that we are preventing His complete blessing from being released. Could the Father's ability to pour out greater measures of His Spirit be directly linked to the manner in which we consider His Son?**

#### **D. Enslaved to Performance-based Measurement**

Our church has unwittingly become obsessed with *performance-based* measurement of Christ as a basis of considering Him fully Divine. Is this not evidence of our Laodicean condition? That is why there are two key passages in the Spirit of Prophecy that are always quoted *as a basis* to accept the full Deity of Christ. They are:

1. In Christ was life original, unborrowed and underived. DA 530 (Power source)
2. There never was a time when Christ was not in fellowship with the Father. Ev 615 (Length of existence)

Because the *performance-based* measuring rod is never questioned, if anyone suggests that Christ was begotten of the Father in eternity, this automatically means that the person is saying "there was a time when Christ did not exist." The conclusion is drawn directly from the measuring rod used. The Father has never told us to use this measuring rod on His Son and so the conclusion is irrelevant. Those who are enslaved to *performance-based* measurement can't allow Christ to be begotten because this would cause Christ not to measure up *to their standard*.

Notice the Performance based logic in the following statement.

“If  
Christ is fully God and the Holy Spirit is fully God,  
then  
the Godhead must be a trinity.”

(J. R. Spangler, Review and Herald, October 21st 1971, I believe in the triune God)

The logic process is clear. The only way the above statement can form a concept of equality is through means of a Trinity. The nature of equality is assumed automatically to be power and performance based.

The need for this logic process did not seem apparent to W.W Prescott when he stated:

“The Son is equal to the Father in everything except that which is conveyed by the terms *Father and Son*. He is equal to the Father in that he shares to the full the Father’s existence from eternity and his infinite power and wisdom and love. But inasmuch as the Father possesses these divine attributes from himself alone, whereas the Son possesses them as derived from the Father, in this real sense and in this sense only, the Father is greater than the Son.

“Evidently in an eternal Father and an Eternal Son the ideas of older and younger can have no place. As we lift up the conception of sonship out of time into eternity, these elements of it, ever present in human fathers and sons, at once disappear.” *The Doctrine of Christ*, Page 20 (1920).

Just as the disciples believed that the question of “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” was critical, so we as Adventists have mistakenly believed that answering the question of the “age” of the Son is vital. Notice what Ellen White says:

“Here Christ shows them that, although they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet ***His Divine life could not be reckoned by human computation***. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures.” {E. G. White, Signs of the Times, May 3, 1899 par. 4}

Human computation is taking the measurement of time and placing it against Christ to see whether He is eternal by our understanding. This is a human computation and not one that God has asked us to do.

Again notice what Ellen White says:

“...although we may try to reason in regard to our Creator, how long He has had existence, where evil first entered into our world, and all these things, we may reason about them until we fall down faint and exhausted with the research when there is yet an infinity beyond.” {E. G. White, S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7, p. 919}

Those who are eager to use a *performance-based* measuring system will seek to use this statement to prove Christ's eternity, but the point is that it is useless to make any attempt to work out the length of His existence either way, whether begotten or unbegotten. But this is exactly what we must do in trying to use time measurement *as a basis* of Christ's Divinity. Such attempts are a clear indication that, like Israel of old, we are held fast by Babylon in slavery.

At times Ellen White felt frustrated that things she had said were taken and expressed in totally the opposite meaning from what she intended. Could this be true concerning some of the statements she penned concerning Christ. Notice:

“It seems impossible for me to be understood by those who have had the light but have not walked in it. What I might say in private conversations would be so repeated as to make it mean exactly opposite to what it would have meant had the hearers been sanctified in mind and spirit. I am afraid to speak even to my friends; for afterwards I hear, Sister White said this, or Sister White said that. My words are so wrested and misinterpreted that I am coming to the conclusion that the Lord desires me to keep out of large assemblies and refuse private interviews. What I say is reported in such a perverted light that it is new and strange to me. It is mixed with words spoken by men to sustain their own theories.”--Letter 139, 1900. 3SM 82

Is it possible that the same has occurred today? This argument obviously works both ways, but I raise it so that all of us might consider carefully, “Am I reading this as it was intended?”

### **E. Excluding Alternate Measurement from Orthodoxy**

The Catholic deacon Arius stated that “there was a time when Christ was not”. He stated it because he was just as obsessed with *performance-based* measurement as were the Trinitarians. The conclusion is important to those who refuse to simply accept the Word of the Father concerning His Son but it is irrelevant to those who simply trust the Father's Word.

For Adventists to call people Arian because they believe the simple words of Scripture that Jesus is the only-begotten of the Father, is to force their own measuring system onto those they label by a standard that is not necessarily believed by the accused.

The other amazing thing about calling people Arian and Semi-Arian is that these terms drive the Godhead issue back to the issues the Catholic church were wrestling with in the fourth century. Let me state categorically that I do not acknowledge the issues and reasoning of the debate of the Catholic Church in the fourth century, it was not based on Scripture alone, it was using a *performance-based* measuring system and therefore the term Arian belongs to that system but not to those who use a different measuring rod. It is also premature and misguided to assign the label of Arian or Semi-Arian to our forefathers. These terms are completely irrelevant to a proper Biblical discussion of the Godhead and are terms derived from an obsession with *performance* measurement. Brethren let Babylon fall and come into the light!

I choose to obey the Father and use His measuring rod. Christ is equal with the Father because the Father says so. He is equal in that He knows the mind of the Father as no one else does. He knows the Father as the Father knows the Son. This is what is important in the Kingdom of God. Equality is in the *relational* not in the inherent power.

## Chapter 21 What Type of Ruler is that in your Hand?

I appeal to you in the words of Christ “How do you read?” (Luke 10:26) Do you read or measure with a *performance-based* or *relational* measuring rod. The measuring rod you use determines the kingdom that rules you.

## **22. The Spirit of God**

The subject of the Holy Spirit is a mystery to us in many ways. Jesus indicated the mysterious nature of the Spirit when speaking to Nicodemus.

**Joh 3:8** The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Perhaps it would be good to remind ourselves of the care needed when discussing such a subject as this. When discussing the personality of God we are on Holy Ground and must approach it reverently taking great care to stay within the limits of inspiration with our understanding but also be wary of entering into a controversial attitude when discussing such subjects. Notice what Ellen White says in this regard:

"I say, and have ever said, that I will not engage in controversy with any one in regard to the nature and personality of God. Let those who try to describe God know that on such a subject silence is eloquence. Let the Scriptures be read in simple faith, and let each one form his conceptions of God from his inspired word." Spalding and Magan collection p. 329

This is an important key to this whole discussion. When trying to describe God, silence is eloquence. In reference to the Holy Spirit this is especially true as we can be in danger of using modes of thought outside of Scripture to describe Him. Ellen White gives a strong Protestant principle in regard to the subject of God, that each person should take their Bibles and develop their own conception of God from the Bible alone. To force a position onto another person is a violation of this principle. This being the case, it would be wrong for either Trinitarian or Non-Trinitarian to force their views onto others in a controversial manner. Let each go to God on their knees and learn the truth for themselves.

To reasonable minded people, it is clear that both Trinitarian and Pioneer-based Godhead believers believe in the heavenly trio of Father, Son and Holy Spirit but it is the nature and personality of these three that are in question. It is unfortunate that our fundamental statement has codified the personality of the Godhead based on the key Athanasian terms of co-equal and co-eternal. This codification into our fundamentals no longer allows each person to decide for themselves from the Bible, the nature and personality of the Godhead.<sup>114</sup> Those who through the Word, see the Father and Son as intrinsically Father and Son are placed in a position where to remain a Seventh-day Adventist they must surrender this belief to the will of another. Is this a true protestant mode of thought and process? Is it Biblical for a group of men in their efforts to preserve the Divinity of the Godhead to frame it in terms that they themselves understand and not allow other minds to preserve that Divinity based on a different framework? It is my firm belief, regardless of what a man believes on this subject, no person has the right to force onto others their mode of thought on this subject. The codification of Athanasian terms into our fundamentals has exposed our church to the same controversy that rocked the Catholic Church for over two centuries. The question is will we as a church be dragged down the same path? Will

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<sup>114</sup> It is possible for Pioneer based Godhead believers to say that they believe Christ is co-equal because he was given this equality by the Father and that makes Him co-equal and it is possible to say that Christ is Co-eternal because Christ came forth In eternity but of course they have very different meanings from what co-equal and co-eternal actually really means. It is equivalent to a liberal Seventh-day Adventist who does not accept 1844 saying they do believe in the investigative judgment like Dr Ford did at Glacier view.

our position be decided by “counsels” or symposiums driven by our most learned scholars, or will we open the parameters of our fundamentals to allow each man to decide for himself what is truth? Ponder well this question for the time will come and appears to have come in some quarters where those who raise questions will have their “goods”<sup>115</sup> proscribed for speaking against the perceived holy order of present day Adventism.

Due to the level of mystery surrounding the Spirit, our efforts to understand it will reveal more readily our underlying assumptions when seeking to interpret His role. In other words, the Spirit will quickly reveal either our *performance-base* or *relational-base* thinking on the subject in respect to how we define His identity in the Godhead.

Let us observe again the underlying assumption girding the Trinity view:

**Premise:** There are three Persons of the Godhead.

**Hidden/Underlying Assumption:** Position of Divinity is only ascribed to Beings of highest *inherent power*.

The Bible clearly reveals that the Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of Deity. If we come to the Bible with the underlying assumption that positions of Divinity are only ascribed to beings of highest inherent power then there is no option but to consider the Holy Spirit as a being that has its own inherent life source. It is the logical outcome. As we have previously indicated, such an underlying assumption causes great difficulty when trying to harmonise all inspired statements in regard to the nature and personality of God.

## A. The River of Life

In our first chapter we looked at the subject of life source and that God is the fountain of life. A careful observation of this life<sup>116</sup> flow from the Bible and Spirit of prophecy reveals how Father, Son and Spirit work together. Let us notice some passages

**Rev 22:1-2** And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

The above passage lays a basic framework for the flow of life. Life flows from the throne of God (the Father) and the lamb (Christ). This life is expressed as a river which flows from the Father and the Son. Notice how Christ expresses this concept in John

**Joh 7:37-39** In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

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<sup>115</sup> As Prov 22:1 states: “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold.” It is evident that some who have raised questions have had their names and reputations taken and damaged and consequently their goods proscribed.

<sup>116</sup> This is life spiritual, mental and physical, not just physical.

Jesus spoke of rivers of living waters flowing forth. This water can be received from Christ and then in turn be passed onto others. This river John refers to as the Holy Spirit. This concept of water flowing forth from Christ is also expressed in the story of Moses when He struck the rock. The rock was a symbol of Christ and the water was a symbol of the life giving spirit. (Ex 17:5-7, Ps 78:20, 1 Cor 10:4). David expresses this fountain and river concept as follows:

**Psa 36:7-9** How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee *is* the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

David combines the concepts of a fountain with flowing water and then parallels that concept to light. David also gives an indication that the presence of God is actually flowing in the river that flows from the throne:

**Psa 46:4,5** *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High. God *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.

David indicates that God is in the midst or centre of the city by means of the river. With these thoughts in mind, let us observe some statements from the Spirit of Prophecy regarding this framework.

The aged leader urged the people to consider, in all its bearings, what he had set before them, and to decide if they really desired to live as did the degraded idolatrous nations around them. If it seemed evil to them to serve ***Jehovah, the source of power, the fountain of blessing***, let them that day choose whom they would serve--"the gods which your fathers served," from whom Abraham was called out, "or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell." PP 523

The Following statement in Desire of Ages gives a clear picture of how this life flows.

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. ***In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.*** And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life. DA 21

The above statement is not only the law of life for humanity, it is the law of life for the universe. The life of the Father, the great source of all flows through the Son, out to the entire universe. Since the created beings of the unfallen worlds did not need a Saviour, this flow of life is a universal law that operates beyond the realms of the plan of salvation. This is a critical point.

This means that the personalities of Father and Son have not been assumed purely for the purpose of demonstrating to a lost world the character of God. These personalities are operating for all created beings both within and without the plan of salvation.

M.C Wilcox reflects these thoughts perfectly when asked about whom or what is the Holy Spirit:

“What is the difference between the Holy Spirit and the ministering spirits (angels), or are they the same?”

“The Holy Spirit is the mighty energy of the Godhead, the life and power of God flowing out from Him to all parts of the universe, and thus making a living connection between His throne and all creation.” (M. C. Wilcox, Questions And Answers, Pacific Press, 1911 p.181)

Further down he illustrates:

“To use a crude illustration, just as a telephone carries the voice of a man, and so makes that voice present miles away, so the Holy Spirit carries with it all the potency in Christ making Him everywhere present with all His power, and revealing Him to those in harmony with His law.” (Ibid)

And on page 182 he states further:

“Thus the Spirit is personified in Christ and God, but never revealed as a separate person.”

This book was reprinted in 1919 and again in 1938, but the 1938 version appears to have had some editing done to it after Wilcox died in 1935.

## **B. The Breath that Proceeds from Christ**

Let us have a look at another example of life flow from the throne of God, this time in the context of the plan of salvation and how God answers our prayers and strengthens us:

Those who were bowed before the throne would offer up their prayers and look to Jesus; then He would look to His Father, and appear 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.* EW 54,55

The book Early Writings was published in 1858 but this vision was given to Ellen White in 1846 and published in the Day Star. Notice carefully the framework and how it fits into the fountain and life flow model. The above statement is expressed through the symbol of light rather than water, but Psalms 36:7-9 parallels the symbols of water and light. We see that Light comes

1. from the Father
2. to the Son
3. and from the Son
4. to the praying company

Notice the points through which the light flows; From Father to Son to praying company. This vision does not express the Holy Spirit as a point through which the light flows. This concept is only possible if we remove the assumption that persons of Divinity must have their own inherent power. Clearly Ellen White is expressing that the light is the power of the Holy Spirit. At the bottom of page 55 of Early Writings we get a little more clarification on this process.

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. EW 55

We notice here that believers would pray to the Father and then Jesus would breathe upon God's people the Holy Spirit. In that Breathe or Spirit was light, love, joy and peace. If the breath contained love joy and peace, then that breath had to contain personality. Ellen White puts it this way in Desire of Ages.

The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. *The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ.* It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. DA 805

Here Ellen White states that the impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. This is not another party simulating the life of Christ or in their own way trying to represent the person of Christ, it is the life of Christ directly. The simplicity of this cannot be overlooked. The Spirit in fact is the Spirit of Christ Himself through the agency of an omnipresent Spirit. This principle is also demonstrated in the symbol of the manna.

The giver of the manna was standing among them. It was Christ Himself who had led the Hebrews through the wilderness, and had daily fed them with the bread from heaven. That food was a type of the real bread from heaven. *The life-giving Spirit, flowing from the infinite fullness of God, is the true manna.* Jesus said, "The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world." John 6:33, R. V. DA 385

Notice how Paul uses the terms Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ and Spirit interchangeably in Romans 8:9,10

**Rom 8:9-10** But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. **10** And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Paul uses the terms Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Christ and Spirit all interchangeably as representing the same thing.<sup>117</sup> In the framework of a river flowing forth from God and the Lamb, this makes complete sense. If the above verse is three separate self originated beings each with their own separate Spirit, it becomes very confusing. In Ephesians Paul uses a parallel between the Spirit of the Father being in the inner man and Christ dwelling in your hearts.

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<sup>117</sup> E.J Waggoner. Christ and His Righteousness, Page 23. "Here we find that the Holy Spirit is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ". Stated in equation form. HOLY SPIRIT = SPIRIT OF FATHER + SPIRIT OF SON.

**Eph 3:14-17** For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **15** from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, **16** that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, **17** that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

In another place Paul uses an interesting expression that clearly supports the life flow concept we have been addressing above.

**Php 1:19** For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ...

Paul clearly states that the Spirit of Christ is supplied. It is the Spirit OF Christ and it is supplied. The natural reading of this is obvious in light of the other evidence presented.

### C. The Mystic Ladder

Let us consider another example of this process. Jesus made a very profound statement to Nathaniel that helps to explain this flow of spiritual water from God the Father to His Son and to us. In this example, the role of the angels is given sharper focus.

**Joh 1:51** And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

This is a very interesting statement. It presents Christ as a ladder that reaches from heaven to earth. Upon this ladder the angels are ascending and descending. Let us notice what Ellen White says about this statement.

The angels of God are ever passing from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth. The miracles of Christ for the afflicted and suffering were wrought by the power of God through the ministration of the angels. **And it is through Christ, by the ministration of His heavenly messengers, that every blessing comes from God to us.** In taking upon Himself humanity, our Saviour unites His interests with those of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam, while through His divinity He grasps the throne of God. **And thus Christ is the medium of communication of men with God, and of God with men.** {DA 143.1}

This is a fascinating statement. Christ is presented here as the medium of communication between God and man. Through this medium the angels bring to us every blessing of God. Christ is the one that is revealed as connecting earth to heaven not just in a legal sense but in a real and tangible sense. The blessings of God pass through the medium of Christ by the ministration of Angels. This is in perfect harmony with John 7:37-39

**Joh 7:37-39** In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

As human agents can act as willing channels for God's love and blessing to flow to others, the angels also can act as willing channels of blessing to the human race. The angels filled with the presence of Christ in their hearts, influence human hearts towards God. As Christ is in us the hope of Glory, so Christ is in the angels enabling them to be ministering spirits and strengthens them with His power. The Spirit of Christ is the connection and the ladder and the angels are the willing agents that minister the Spirit of Christ as agents of God.

“Hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

Christ virtually says, On the bank of Jordan the heavens were opened before me, and the Spirit descended like a dove upon me. That scene at Jordan was but a token to evidence that I was the Son of God. If you believe in me as such, your faith shall be quickened, and you shall see that the heavens will be opened, and shall never be closed. I have opened them for you, and the angels of God, that are united with me in the reconciliation between earth and Heaven, uniting the believers on the earth with the Father above, will be ascending, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed from the earth to the Father above, and descending, bringing blessings of hope, courage, health, and life, for the children of men.

**The angels of God are ever moving up and down from earth to Heaven, and from Heaven to earth. All the miracles of Christ performed for the afflicted and suffering were, by the power of God, through the ministration of angels.** Christ condescended to take humanity, and thus he unites his interests with the fallen sons and daughters of Adam here below, while his divinity grasps the throne of God. And thus **Christ opens the communication of man with God, and God with man. All the blessings from God to man are through the ministration of holy angels.** {2SP 67.2}

Again we see how the channel of blessing flows. Christ is the ladder and connection between heaven and earth. The angels are the agents that bring blessings of hope, courage, health and life to us and send our prayers and requests back to heaven.

If we assume that the Holy Spirit is a separate person, the above statements don't really make sense. It would be assumed that the Holy Spirit is the medium of communication between God and Man; the Holy Spirit (as a separate person) is the agent through which God works His miracles. But this is not what inspiration tells us. It tells us that Christ is the medium, symbolized by the ladder and the angels are willing agents that work through that medium.

When speaking of Jacob's experience, Ellen White says the following:

Jacob's experience as a wanderer from his home, when he was shown the mystic ladder, . . . was designed to teach a great truth in regard to the plan of salvation. . . . **The ladder represented Christ. He is the channel of communication between heaven and earth, and angels go to and fro in continual intercourse with the fallen race.** TMK 21.5

Ellen White calls it the Mystic ladder. There is a mystery that surrounds this process of communication between heaven and earth. Again we are told that Christ is the channel of communication. Please note, THE CHANNEL of communication. Christ is not only the source and fountain (received from the Father) but is also the channel or river or ladder of

communication. These are vital truths that are simply explained. The mystic ladder tells us how the Spirit of Christ which is the Spirit of Truth operates. If the Holy Spirit is a separate person then He, in distinction with Christ would be designated as the channel and the work of the angels would be secondary to the work of the Spirit. Yet the Spirit of Prophecy indicates that the work of the angels is central and primary to helping the human race.

#### D. The Comforting Omnipresence of Christ

With these thoughts in mind notice this text:

**Joh 15:26** But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

And notice this comment in regard to Christ sending the Holy Spirit:

“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.” 14 MR 23

The Holy Spirit is *Himself* (meaning Christ)<sup>118</sup> divested of humanity. The word divested in Webster’s dictionary means “stripped or undressed”, it does not mean simply “without”. Ellen White clearly states here that **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CHRIST STRIPPED OF THE PERSONALITY OF HUMANITY**. The river flows out of Christ the Rock. Since we are no longer bound to this principle of proving that the Spirit is a Divine Being by its own *inherent power*, then we can read these passages naturally. The Holy Spirit is the omnipresence of Christ. There are some that suggest that Christ gave up His personal omnipresence when He took on humanity. I have never read this from inspiration. The omnipresence that Christ possessed in Heaven was the Holy Spirit.<sup>119</sup> Notice the following statement that reaffirms this.

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*. Again Jesus says, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" [John 16:12, 13].

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<sup>118</sup> Consistency of the use of “He”, “His” and “Himself” through the paragraph indicate that Christ is the person indicated. The addition of the word “himself” in the phrase “The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of...” introduces redundancy when it would make more sense to simply say “The Holy Spirit is divested of...”.

<sup>119</sup> It is important to point out that when Christ was incarnated and cumbered with human flesh, He surrendered the ability to be omnipresent through the Spirit of God.

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. Piety, devotion, sanctification of soul, body, and spirit--this is essential for us all. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" 14MR 179

This statement is very clear; she calls the Holy Spirit "The omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ" which is the comforter. If this is the case then we should find statements that refer to Christ as the comforter. Notice the following:

Notice these statements:

**Joh 14:16-18** 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.

Christ says He will send another Comforter. Then he says I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. It is another Comforter (of the same type) because it is Christ divested of the personality of humanity. It is Christ that comforts us Himself through the agency of the Spirit. How wonderful to know that Jesus is my Comforter!

"The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be." 8MR p. 49

Let them study the seventeenth of John, and learn how to pray and how to live the prayer of Christ. He is the Comforter. He will abide in their hearts, making their joy full. His words will be to them as the bread of life... RH Jan 27, 1903

"As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving Jesus the Comforter." 19MR 297

"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 reproveth, who warns, who admonishes them..." RH August 26 1890.

"The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul." RH, October 26, 1897

"The teacher must be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Then the mind and spirit of Christ will be in him, and he will confess Christ in a spiritual and holy life." RH, February 9, 1892

Why is it so important to see that it is actually Jesus that comes directly to us as our comforter? Imagine the scenario of a person going to visit a friend who has just lost a close family member. During the visit the friend declares. "It must be hard for you at the moment, I know of another friend who went through the same thing recently, so I can imagine that it is very hard." While we can appreciate the friend's efforts to comfort us, how different would it be if the other friend

came who actually lost the family member to come and sit with us and *share* their experience with us. How much more comforting would that be.

Jesus has experienced rejection; he has suffered; He has been tempted in all points like us. (Heb 4:15; Heb 2:17,18) He knows by *experience* the trials of human life.<sup>120</sup> Can we say this of the Holy Spirit as a separate person? Does the Holy Spirit (as a separate person) know *by experience* what it is like to be tempted? Does it make sense for Jesus to tell the Holy Spirit about how difficult life is and then send one who has not actually experienced it to comfort us? Is this logical? From a Trinitarian view, the Holy Spirit could comfort us with strength and peace and power, but could he comfort us with understanding and experience? Only Jesus can do this. As Ellen White states, “The Saviour is our Comforter, this I have proved Him to be.” Just knowing that the person we are directly communicating with understands what a certain difficulty is like is immensely comforting, because we have the realization that we are not facing it alone. Here is the relational power of Christ being our comforter divested of the personality of humanity. Comfort is much more than just power, it is a shared understanding and experience.

Once again when we remove human determination that only *inherent power* makes a Being Divine, these statements release Jesus to us as our Comforter, he is no longer shut from our view. It is not a separate Person, it is Jesus! Jesus is our Comforter.

Gaining a clear picture of the Holy Spirit can be quite difficult. As we stated in the beginning, each person should be free to understand the details of this for themselves. When we talk of the Holy Spirit as “the third person” or that he is just as much a person as God is a person, it is easy to see why we usually see the Spirit as a separate person. Making the Spirit a separate person removes the fear of just making the Spirit a force, and I totally agree with the need to do that. But how else does one explain omnipresence? If the Father is a being but is also omnipresent, how do we express that? God is in heaven at the centre of the universe but He is also here with us through the power of omnipresence and we can feel Him near. His presence is not a divine emanation or simply a force, it is our Father, through the agency of His Spirit. This is exactly what the Holy Spirit is, the omnipresence of God. The concept of a first person in heaven and a third person as the omnipresence of the first person protects us from seeing God through the lens of pantheism. I believe it gives us a simple explanation of the mystery of omnipresence. How exactly does God do this? I have no idea and I believe silence is golden.<sup>121</sup> But I believe that when you weigh up the weight of evidence from all the inspired statements and the unfolding of Adventist history, that the Holy Spirit is not a separate person but the omnipresence of the Father and Son in the third person. The Spirit is the river of Life. Some will say “so you don’t believe in the Holy Spirit”, I would answer “probably not on the basis of your assumptions, but I certainly believe in the Holy Spirit and that He is a person and is my comforter for He is the omnipresence of God.

## **E. False Assumptions and Accusations**

Many people make the mistake that if they simply can prove that there are three personalities in the Godhead that this enough to support a co-equal, co-eternal Trinity. Nothing could be further

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<sup>120</sup> The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is turning his face toward Him as the Saviour. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. DA 329

<sup>121</sup> See AA 51

from the truth. It is only the faulty assumption that divine beings need to be understood as having their own self originating life source and that equality is based on inherent power rather than inheritance, that creates this kind of thinking.

I often see people turn to Evangelism page 615 and read all the “three” statements and say “there, you see, there are three persons” My response is “yes, but this says nothing of co-equal and co-eternal role playing deity.” This is a simple case of premise forcing without taking into account all that inspiration says on the subject and placing this on the faulty platform of performance-based thinking born of the lie given to Eve in the Garden “You shall not surely die”

I have also heard the completely absurd statement that denying that the Holy Spirit is a person in the context of a co-equal co-eternal Trinity is in fact denying the Holy Spirit and places a person in danger of committing the unpardonable sin. Notice the Following

“Christ told them plainly that in attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, they were cutting themselves off from the fountain of blessing... It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul. Thus it had been with these Jewish leaders. They were convinced that a divine power attended Christ, but in order to resist the truth, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. In doing this they deliberately chose deception; they yielded themselves to Satan, and henceforth they were controlled by his power.” DA 322-323

If you read this passage carefully you will discern that the unpardonable sin is attributing truth to be error, it is a rejection of light. It cuts people off from the fountain of blessing. Could there be a warning here for people who attack their brethren for trying to harmonise inspired statements and seeking for light, that the very sin they accuse others of, they themselves might be in danger of? Consider well these things.

Dear friend, it is a hard thing to admit that the structure of the Godhead laid in Adventism may not be as solid as we all thought. I know how hard it is to have to admit this, but loyalty to the truth demands such an admission. Let us prove all things and hold fast to what is good.

Are you beginning to see that the Godhead is far less mysterious than what the Trinity makes it out to be? The Sovereign of the universe has a co-worker, an associate, His Son made in His Own image and from the Father to the Son and then to the universe flows the river of life, which is the Holy Spirit. It is so wonderfully simple. Jesus is fully Divine and possesses all the fullness of the Godhead through His *relationship* to His Father. If you still do not believe this then please explain this statement:

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality." UL 367

## Chapter 22 – The Spirit of God

This statement utterly destroys any possibility of a performance-based view of Christ's equality with the Father. Read the statements, compare the texts, do the research, get the solid evidence.

The Spirit is just as much a Person as God is a Person because God's Spirit is not bound to His form and is indeed the omnipresence of God. Flesh and blood cannot reveal this precious truth to you, but I pray that indeed your eyes may be opened because there is much light and truth in the true *relationship* between God and His Son.<sup>122</sup>

When we allow the Father, Son and Spirit occupy a relational framework that reflects a fountain that flows forth from ONE (singular) source point, immense blessings are open to us.

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<sup>122</sup> “There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible.” ISM 248

## **23. Knowing God**

### **A. Character Identification**

As a young person growing up, I had the misfortune of being exposed to endless hours of television. One of the programs I watched on a regular basis was a program called “Happy Days”. For some of you, there will be an immediate knowledge of the program I am talking about. The program traced the lives of one particular family and their friends living in the late 1950’s. One of the main characters was Richard Cunningham. After watching many episodes of this program I developed quite a connection with this character. I was familiar with his habits and character and some respects I began to emulate them. This was also true for the main character “the Fonz”. He was the cool guy with the leather jacket that always got the girls and could fix most situations. I developed quite a relationship with both of these characters.

If I had never bothered to look beyond the edges of my TV screen, I may to this day have maintained some kind of connection to these characters. But all this changed when I learned that Richard Cunningham was actually Ron Howard. I had known Ron as Richard, but I did not know Ron. Each time I look at Ron Howard, I think of Richard Cunningham and while there are personality traits that shine through Ron into Richard, the fact remains that Richard is not really a person. He is an expression or form of a person. He demonstrates the joys and struggles of a typical teenage youth growing up in the fifties. But in reality he is not real.

This is the kind of dilemma we encounter when we entertain the idea of a co-equal and co-eternal Trinity. We have been told that the three persons of the Godhead chose to manifest themselves to us in the form of Father, Son and Spirit, so that we could understand the character of God. As many people read the Bible and encounter the characters of Father and Son, we develop a close relationship to these characters. All this could be fine if we did not venture outside the edges of the Bible screen and just stayed in a relationship to the characters we see on the screen. But for others who are curious, they might begin to look at and wonder, “who are these three co-eternal beings that manifest themselves in this way?” The simple answer is that this is a mystery and that we can’t understand it. But the Trinity creates a door in the mind of man that can open at any time and raise this question.

### **B. Greek Thought Makes God Ultimately Unknowable**

This whole discussion raises the question of core knowable identity versus a core unknowable identity that can be glimpsed through forms or expressions. Put simply, in a literal understanding of Father and Son, the description of Richard Cunningham gives to us the core identity of Ron Howard, because they are one and the same as opposed to Richard Cunningham being just one mode of expression of Ron Howard that allows us to glimpse him and get a feel for Him, but not really know him.

The concept that God is an unknowable essence that manifests Himself in various forms to express who He is derives directly from Greek thought and was embraced by elements of Christianity through Justin Martyr and more robustly through Augustine.

Early Christians regarded Greek religion as holding views unworthy of God, but they were divided as to Greek philosophy. Christian philosopher Justin Martyr (c. 100-c. 165) saw Christianity as compatible with the highest and

best Greek thought, whereas Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225) dismissed philosophy, saying that Jerusalem (faith) could have nothing to do with Athens (philosophy).

Consistent with theism, Augustine (354-430) regarded God as omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, morally good, the creator (*ex nihilo*) and sustainer of the universe. Despite these multiple descriptors, God is uniquely simple. Being entirely free, he did not have to create, but did so as an act of love. As his creation, it reflects his mind. Time and space began at creation, and everything in creation is good.

Augustine developed a theme found as early as Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno of Citium, that God is a perfect being. After enumerating a hierarchy of excellencies (things to be "preferred") Augustine affirms that God "lives in the highest sense" and is "the most powerful, most righteous, most beautiful, most good, most blessed" (*On the Trinity*, XV, 4).

But where Aristotle concluded that the greatest being must be aware only of himself, Augustine emphasized an opposite and distinctly Christian theme: God loves creatures supremely to the point of becoming incarnate in Christ in order to be revealed to them and to reconcile them to himself. Moreover, God is providentially active in history, from an individual level (*Confessions*) on up to dealings with entire nations (*City of God*). So as to the important subject of God's relationship to the world, Christian thought could not be more opposite Aristotle's view of a Being who contemplates only himself.

John Scotus Erigena (c. 810-c.877) who based his work largely on Augustine<sup>123</sup> had stronger affinities for Neo-Platonic thought. God created the universe according to eternal patterns in his mind and it is an expression of his thought, however incomplete an expression the cosmos may be...God is ultimately unknowable, being beyond all language and categories. Aristotle's predicates and categories cannot apply to God because they assume some type of substance. Nevertheless God can be described, albeit inadequately, using both positive and negative statements. Positive statements are only approximate but can be made more exact by adding negative statements. For example, it can be said that God *is* good (positive), but also that he *is not* good (negative) in that he is above goodness. These can be combined in the statement that he is "supergood." In spite of these approximations, God must be reached by mystical experience.<sup>124</sup>

We might list several other scholars and theologians, but the above quotes give enough evidence that Christianity has to some degree been influenced by Greek thoughts of Theism. This influence has to some degree made God ultimately unknowable. We can glimpse Him but not really know Him. This lack of our ability to know God is certainly minimized in the Protestant tradition of basing what is known about God on the revelation of Scripture, but regardless of this, the doctrine of the Trinity is inherently subject to the charge of being influenced by Greek thought, which in turn makes God ultimately unknowable at the core level.

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<sup>123</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Scotus\\_Erigena](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Scotus_Erigena)

<sup>124</sup> Internet Encyclopedia. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/g/god-west.htm>

### C. Bible Presents Father and Son as Knowable Identities

As we have noted, the Bible presents God to us as a Father and Son fellowshiping with us through their Omnipresent Spirit. If we accept what the Bible says on face value. The Core identity of God is revealed in the personality of Father and Son. This is who they are at the core of their being. Notice:

**1Co 8:6** yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

**Joh 17:3** And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

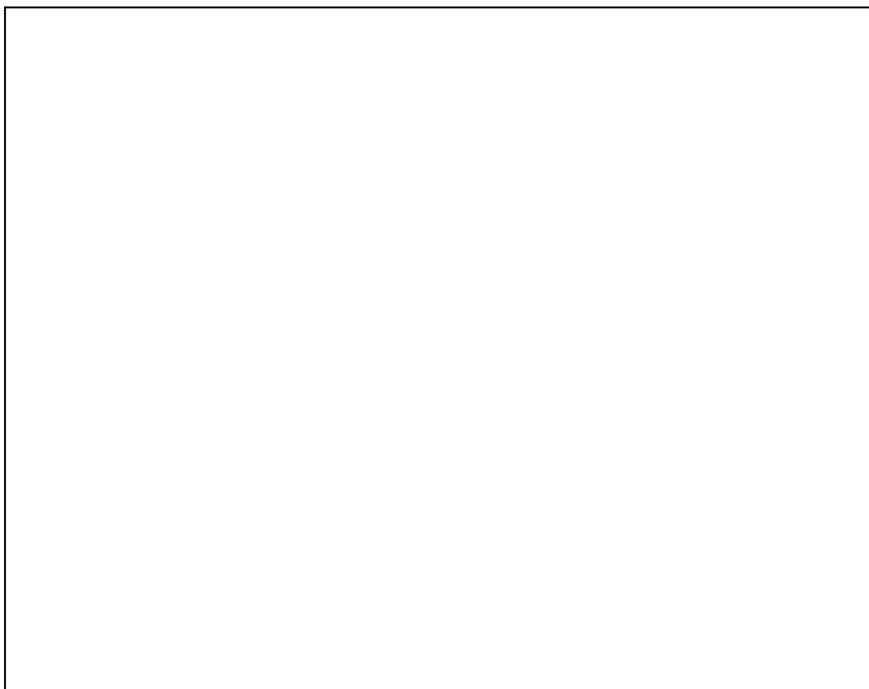
Notice how Ellen White states this:

God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son. 8T 268

Hear the emphatic nature of these statements. God IS the Father of Christ; this is who He is at His core identity. Christ IS the son of God. This is who He is at His core identity.

This issue is extremely vital to grasp. The Bible and Spirit of prophecy reveal to us a Father and Son as real persons who are not role playing or expressing forms but simply being themselves. Being yourself is critical to having any sense of intimacy with someone. If the Father is not truly the Father, then using our example, we have a relationship with Richard Cunningham but this relationship is only a glimpse of the reality of Ron Howard. Such a relationship will suffer a lack of intimacy in real terms, because it is not real!

In respect of the mystery of God, when we allow the core identity of God to be literally Father and Son, then the mystery of God is contained within these personalities. The mystery lies within the actual person and the process of knowing them. If God is not literally Father and Son and these are simply modes of expression, then the mystery is not contained within these personalities and God



is ultimately unknowable.

#### **D. Trinity Presents all Members of Godhead as Representative – But of Who?**

The Trinity gives us a frame of reference that does not house the mystery of the person of God and indeed leaves open the door for other possible frames of reference. Since the mystery is not contained, it makes God not truly knowable. The terms “Father”, “Son” and “Spirit” are roles assumed by the members of the Godhead to represent who? God? But which member of the Godhead? Well all of them represent God. If we believe that God as three persons assumed roles to demonstrate for humanity what the One God is really like, then it is not true to say that two individuals represent another, but that all represent the one God, but who is that God? Well it is three in one and one in three. It is a mystery, that can't fully be known. So in essence God at His core identity can not really be known. Father, Son and Spirit assume roles to express what is in the mind and heart of the one true God. They are only modes of expression and not intrinsic points of knowability. Here is contained the seeds of Greek heresy, an unknowable essence that is expressed in various forms, but those forms are not intrinsic in themselves. This is the inevitable result of seeing God as a three person committee with assigned roles formed in eternity.

It would appear that the doctrine of the Trinity in which ever form you express it, is a stroke of Satanic genius that presents a picture of God that is not really knowable but gives us a sense that He is. Note the following:

“A prayerful study of the Bible would show Protestants the real character of the papacy and would cause them to abhor and to shun it; but many are so wise in their own conceit that they feel no need of humbly seeking God that they may be led into the truth. Although priding themselves on their enlightenment, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. They must have some means of quieting their consciences, and they seek that which is least spiritual and humiliating. *What they desire is a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him. The papacy is well adapted to meet the wants of all these.* It is prepared for two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world--those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins. *Here is the secret of its power.*” GC 572

What is the base doctrine that generates this power for the Papacy?

“The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church. . . . The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarifications, 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, 1977. pg. 12.)

Catholics clearly recognise that their entire faith system is based upon the doctrine of the Trinity.

While Seventh-day Adventists will deny that our understanding of the Trinity is the same as Catholicism, no one can deny that the key ingredients are present.<sup>125</sup> Certainly we must agree that our view of God forms the basis upon which all other doctrines are based. J.O Corliss understood this fact when in 1911 he stated:

It is of general understanding that the unity of God is the one doctrine upon which revelation lays the greatest stress. To guard this point was the principal object of the Jewish religion. This doctrine prefaces every important utterance of the Old Testament, from the speaking of the ten commandments to the outlines of minute ceremonials. Every prophetic warning kept this particular aspect in mind. The Lord Jesus always presented his Father in the forefront of all his teachings. The apostle Paul was careful to say that while there were in his day lords many and gods many, to him and his associates there was but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in him. 1 Cor. 8:5,6.<sup>126</sup>

The concept of Trinity confuses the personalities of Father, Son and Spirit. It makes it impossible to combine oneness and three-ness with Scriptural integrity. The concept of mystical oneness, the metaphorical use of the terms Father and Son and the conception of the Spirit as a completely separate being yet unified to the others raises a multitude of questions all of which are very confusing to answer. The spiritualizing or metaphorical use of the terms Father and Son, essentially destroy their personality as Father and Son. Notice what Ellen says in the following:

We are now to be on guard, and not drawn away from the all-important message given of God for this time. Satan is not ignorant of the result of trying to define God and Jesus Christ in a spiritualistic [USED HERE IN REFERENCE TO A SYSTEM OF INTERPRETATION, NOT SPIRITISM POPULARLY CALLED SPIRITUALISM.] way that sets God and Christ as a nonentity. The moments occupied in this kind of science are, in the place of preparing the way of the Lord, making a way for Satan to come in and confuse the minds with mysticisms of his own devising. Although they are dressed up in angel robes they have made our God and our Christ a nonentity. Why?-- because Satan sees the minds are all fitted for his working. Men have lost tract of Christ and the Lord God, and have been obtaining an experience that is Omega to one of the most subtle delusions that will ever captivate the minds of men. We are forbidden to . . . set the imagination in a train of conjecture.-- Diary, #48, pp. 153, 163, Aug. 25 and Aug. 28, 1904.

The above is a reference to the Kellogg crisis and the specifics of the issues then are different to what they are now, but the principles are the same: a metaphorical application to the terms Father and Son that alter the reality of their personalities. The current Adventist understanding of the Trinity is tantamount to denying the Father and the Son, because their personalities are altered under this metaphorical or spiritualized system.

### **E. The Trinity is a Drama that Denies the Plain Reading of Scripture**

In reference to methodology, the Trinity doctrine attacks the heart of a plain reading of Scripture. God is in essence performing a drama, He is assuming a form that represents Him but is not actually Him. This subtle shift completely changes possibilities of how we read Scripture. It

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<sup>125</sup> See next chapter for more detail

<sup>126</sup> J.O Corliss. RH Sep 7, 1911, *Tracings of the Prophetic Gift*. See Appendix I for entire article.

opens the door for subtle higher critical forms of thinking. For example, the Bible calls Christ “the Son of God”, yet I have heard preachers say in defence of the Trinity that Jesus is not “really” the son of God. The Scripture loses its plain reading ability and at every point Satan can infect us with the question, “Yea hath God said” or did God mean this literally.

Note the following example.

“A plan of salvation was encompassed in the covenant made by the Three Persons of the Godhead, who possessed the attributes of Deity equally. In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, **one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered into, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son. The remaining divine Being, the Holy Spirit, was also to participate in effecting the plan of salvation. All of this took place before sin and rebellion transpired in heaven.**

“**By accepting the roles that the plan entailed, the divine Beings lost none of the powers of Deity.** With regard to their eternal existence and other attributes, they were one and equal. But with regard to the plan of salvation, there was, in a sense, a submission on the part of the Son to the Father.”<sup>127</sup>

This is pure speculation without one shred of Biblical support. It also makes the members of the Godhead actors in a play and takes the metaphorical road of interpretation.

The direct result of Adventism embracing a Trinity view is an attack on the literal sanctuary in heaven. The enemy knows this is the secret power of Adventism. When Kellogg embraced a Trinitarian view<sup>128</sup> it was not long before Ballenger was attacking the Sanctuary teaching. The literal view of Father and Son is our only defence in protecting the Sanctuary. Note carefully what Ellen White says:

“Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. *Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men.* They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor.” MR760 9.5

Notice this statement in Questions on Doctrine that indeed sets the people of God adrift without an anchor of plain Bible reading:

“In the interdenominational Millerite movement to which the early Seventh-day Adventists had belonged, a few of the leaders were members of a denomination known as “Christians.” This group had sounded their no-creed, Bible-and-Bible-only rallying cry in the early nineteenth century Arminian revolt against the dominant ecclesiastico-political New England Calvinism, in which assent to the Westminster Confession of Faith was a sine qua non. *In their zeal to reject everything not found in the Bible, the “Christians” were betrayed by over literalism into interpreting the Godhead in terms of the*

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<sup>127</sup> Gordon Jensen, RH, 31-10-1996

<sup>128</sup> See Appendix F

*human relationships suggested by the words "Son," "Father," and "begotten," that is, into a tendency to disparage the non-Biblical word "Trinity" Questions on Doctrine p. 46,47*

It is logically inconsistent to have a non literal Father and Son in a literal Sanctuary. My theological training provided many examples of how this inconsistency cannot stand. Such inconsistency would guarantee the rise of men like Desmond Ford who directly attacked the literal sanctuary doctrine. If God is not literally revealed in the persons of Father and Son, then nothing in the Bible needs to be considered literal. While many would not go to extremes, the Trinity doctrine makes it convenient to symbolise plain statements that may cut across carnal desire.

### **F. Make Us a King, So we can be Like the Other Churches**

One of those carnal desires was for Seventh-day Adventists to be accepted by other churches and lift the label of being called a cult. It is certainly apparent that names can hurt as much as sticks and stones if not more! After the book questions on Doctrine was produced, Eternity magazine made the following comment about Adventists

“I should like to say that we are delighted to do justice to a much-maligned group of sincere believers, and in our minds and hearts take them out of the group of utter heretics like the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, and Christian Scientists, to acknowledge them as redeemed brethren and members of the Body of Christ.....” <sup>129</sup>

We delude ourselves to think that we as Adventists started using the word Trinity only as a convenient way of expressing the Godhead. The use of this term opened to us the fellowship of other Protestant communions and removed from us the cult label. Such fellowship has seen in the past few decades a wholesale embracing of Pentecostal modes of thought and worship that are dragging us to the heart of spiritual Baal worship.

The bottom line is that an acceptance that God is a co-equal, co-eternal Trinity denies the ability of Father and Son to literally be Father and Son and such a denial destroys our ability to remain faithful to the belief of sola scriptura.

Now I am certain that there will be many people who have expressed a belief in the co-equal, co-eternal Trinity that will enjoy the blessings of God’s company in heaven. Martin Luther is a perfect example. There are millions who have enjoyed an intimate walk with their Saviour and Lord while still holding a Trinitarian view, for there are many who look at the forms of expression of Father, Son and Spirit and seek to look no further than this into the flawed base of this doctrine. But to face the challenges and pressures of the last days, we need a more perfect revelation of God’s Son to be enabled to hold fast. The heart of this doctrine will ultimately strip away everything that is Seventh-day Adventist, because Adventism is based upon the foundation of a Father and Son that at their core are knowable identities. The slow demise of Adventist faith and practice that we have seen over the last 80 years or so can trace its roots to this very doctrine. The attacks on the sanctuary, the investigative judgment, the nature of Christ, on Christian perfection, on worship styles, on roles of men and women in the church, on views of inspiration,

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<sup>129</sup> ‘Eternity’ magazine ‘Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?’ by Donald Grey Barnhouse. September 1956.

on use of drama and everything else we might care to mention is traced to this unknowable God in a performance-based context called the Trinity.

### **G. No Condemnation But Rather Personal Conviction**

In reading these words, you might feel quite upset with me. I can understand that. I will still love you by God's grace. I pray that you can still do the same for me. But I will testify that in being released from this teaching I have found a freedom in Christ that I have longed for all my life. That is why I have a burden to share it with you. My God is now knowable, the mysteries are housed within the personalities of Father and Son revealed to me by the quiet working of the Spirit.

As we noted at the beginning of the previous chapter:

“I say, and have ever said, that I will not engage in controversy with any one in regard to the nature and personality of God. Let those who try to describe God know that on such a subject silence is eloquence. Let the Scriptures be read in simple faith, and let each one form his conceptions of God from his inspired word. Spalding and Magan collection.” p. 329

I will not condemn anyone else for what they believe or are seeking to express in terms of their understanding. But I have the right to study and believe freely with my own Bible, just as you do. Let's study together and get the Scripture truth rather than seek to defend systems of belief that cannot stand the scrutiny of inspiration.

Let each of us study God's inspired word, seeking the truth about Him who promises that we will find Him when we seek for Him with all our heart. Jer 23:13

## **24. The Same Yesterday, Today and Forever**

### **A. Relational Frame of Reference Crucial for Relationships**

Reading through the first chapter of Matthew and the third chapter of Luke we find a very significant method of identification for Christ. The use of a genealogy to identify someone is clearly a relational frame of reference.

The use of genealogy was critical in Israel to prove rights to inheritance and land ownership.<sup>130</sup> Genealogy was the key reference point for any person living in Israel. In most cases when a new person is introduced in scripture, they are introduced by a relational reference. Notice:

**Isa 1:1** The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz

**Jer 1:1** The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah

**Eze 1:3** The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi,

It is interesting to note that in the earliest genealogies listed in Genesis, the first person that makes a transition in their point of reference is Nimrod.

**Gen 10:8-10** And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. (9) He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. (10) And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

It is significant that Gen 10:9 says “wherefore it is said, Even Nimrod the mighty hunter” It does not say “Even Nimrod, the Son of Cush.” Even though he was formerly known this way.

**The frame of reference for Nimrod was the deeds that he performed, not the dependent relationship that he originated from. Here is the heart and confusion of Babylon.**

Nimrod determined to be known by what he did rather than who he belonged to. In light of what we have observed in the first 7 chapters on this book, this is entirely consistent with a relational versus performance based kingdom. In a relational kingdom, you are identified by who you belong to. In a performance based kingdom you are identified by what you do. I find it significant that it has become the practice of Christians (those who represent a relational kingdom) to usually introduce themselves by what they have done and achieved rather than simply who they belong to. “And now I would like to introduce to you Dr Christian. Dr Christian has a PHD in New Testament Languages, he has served as pastor for 25 years in 15 countries and authored 35 books on many critical Christian topics.” How many times have we heard this kind of introduction as a reason why we should listen to a speaker? What drives this kind of an introduction? Is this a small hint of the wine of Babylon influencing Christian minds? Why can't a person be introduced as simply “This is Pr Christian, a son of God that has been captured by the love of Christ.” Is this not sufficient identification for why we should listen to a speaker?

It is important to point out that people in the Bible have certainly been remembered for their deeds. But this remembrance is secondary to their relational identification.

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<sup>130</sup> See Numbers 36

**2Sa 23:1** Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel...

The great King David is noted in the final chapters of 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel firstly as the Son of Jesse, then by some of his achievements, such as being a psalmist.

As we noted in chapter 3, effective communication between two or more persons requires a clear identification of who that person is. If there is no system for a consistent point of reference to a person, then ultimately that person is unknowable, because the points of reference keep changing. The Jewish system of genealogies provided a consistent reference point for individuals and guaranteed the identity of each individual.

If a person is known primarily by their roles or deeds, the point of reference will become confused, for a person is always involved in multiple roles and deeds at different times and in different places. For instance, during my career I have served as an office clerk, a farm hand, a storeman, a management accountant and a minister, not to mention a number of other jobs. I have also worked as a computer programmer, a graphic artist and web designer, a composer and song writer, a choir leader and a book author. I can elect to present myself through any one of these roles at any given time, but without a consistent point of reference my desire to be known primarily through these roles will ultimately destroy the core of my identity, because the consistent point of reference is lost. My consistent point of reference is that I am the Son of Abel Ebens, the Son of Hank Ebens, all the way back to the Son of Adam who was the Son of God. This is the only thing about me that does not change. Family relationships do not change, but roles and career positions are constantly changing.

When Nimrod elected to be known by his deeds as his primary frame of reference, he lost the one thing that would safeguard his identity.

The second reason why a relational frame of reference is so critical is that it not only provides identity, it also provides a channel through which blessing can be received. The deeds we perform mean nothing without the blessing and approval of those that we look towards. Here is the heart of the Words of the Father to Jesus, This my Son – Identity, in whom I love – Blessing. These are the two ingredients required for consistent identity with a sense of purpose and meaning. There is nothing else that can provide this.

## **B. Trinity Confuses/Destroys Relational Frame of Reference**

Turning to the subject of the Godhead, these issues become critical. Vance Ferrell in his book defending the Godhead makes a very significant point about the members of the Godhead.

Here is the primary cause of this seeming confusion in human minds: People confuse the nature of the Godhead with Their work. Learning about the individual mission of each member to save mankind, we are tempted to imagine that Their individual activities and work for mankind explain the nature and inner attributes of each of them.<sup>131</sup>

Here is one of the most critical points of the whole debate concerning the Godhead. From a Trinitarian point of view, the terms Father, Son and Holy Spirit denote the WORK of the

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<sup>131</sup> Vance Ferrell, (Defending the Godhead, Harvest time books, 2005) page 7

members of the Godhead, this is not their TRUE IDENTITY. These are roles assumed by Father, Son and Spirit for the WORK of Salvation. In making these claims, the Trinitarian position destroys the consistent point of reference for knowing the Father and the Son. By turning these relational terms into job descriptions we are placed in the same position as the Greeks at Mars Hill, the God we claim to worship becomes the unknown God, He is truly unknowable because there is no consistent frame of reference. This why Ellen White is emphatic when she says:

“God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” 8T 268 (1909)

The relational referencing in this quote is vital to us being able to respond to John 17:3.

**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**

To know God, we must have a consistent frame of reference. The doctrine of the Trinity removes this frame of reference and makes God truly unknowable. Ellen White appeals for the consistent frame of reference when she says

“He who denies the personality of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, is denying God and Christ. "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." **If you continue to believe and obey the truths you first embraced regarding the personality of the Father and the Son, you will be joined together with him in love.**” Review and Herald 8<sup>th</sup> March 1906

Note carefully that Ellen White appeals to Adventists in 1906 to cling to a view of the Personality of the Father and Son which they first embraced. This statement cuts clear across the conjecture that Ellen helped shift the denominational position. She appeals for a consistent position that they had held from the beginning. If there had been a shift that she was pushing for, she would have said after her release of *Desire of Ages* – “let us hold fast the increased light we have received in recent years regarding the Father and the Son.” But she says to hold fast that which they had believed in the beginning.

### **C. Everlasting Gospel requires Unchangeable Frame of Reference for God, Law and Gospel**

The issue of consistent reference points running through Scripture is essential to our understanding of the gospel. This is why Paul says there is one Lord, One Faith and One Baptism. Eph 4:5. This is why Paul says that there is no other gospel than the one he has preached. Gal 1:8,9. This is why Paul said the same gospel that was preached to Israel was preached to the Christians of his day, Heb 4:2. Consistent points of reference in relationship to:

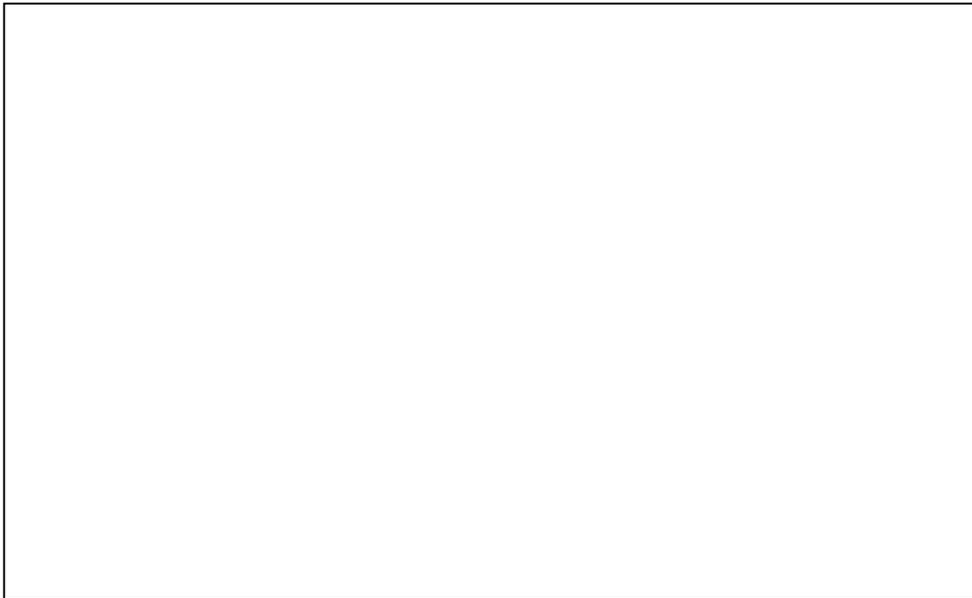
1. The Person of God
2. The Law of God
3. The Gospel

are vital for us to be subject to the Bible and its revealed plan of salvation rather than the Bible and the plan of salvation be subject to us. A Seventh-day Adventist defense of the Sabbath

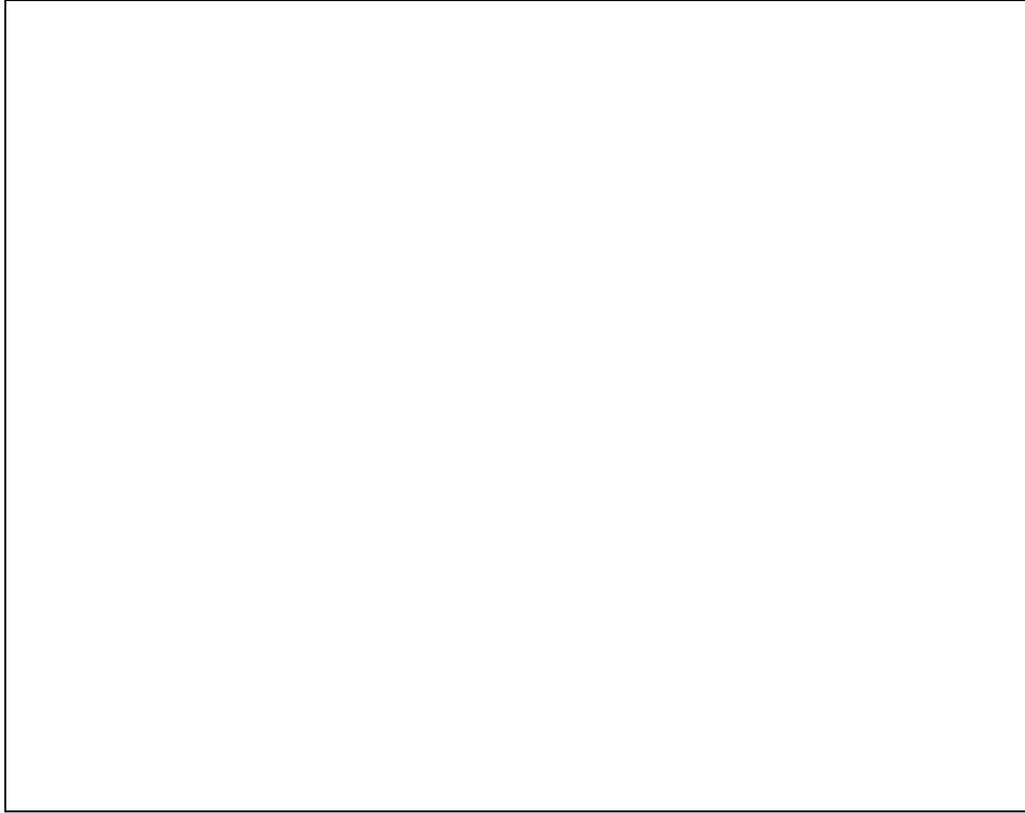
depends entirely upon a consistent point of reference with respect to the Law. If the law is changeable then so is the Sabbath. A Seventh-day Adventist defense of the sanctuary and the investigative judgement depends on a consistency with respect to the gospel. This is why we call it the everlasting gospel. The gospel has not changed. Its expression has changed from type to anti-type but the plan itself has never changed.

The consistency of the Law and the consistency of the Gospel depend on a consistency of the person of God. If our reference points for God are changeable, then so is the law, the Sabbath and the Sanctuary. The Trinity doctrine makes the reference points for God changeable, especially the reference points for Christ. The second person of the Godhead becomes the Son of God, which means His relational reference point changes. In his incarnation, many claim that Christ changed his relationship again and when He went back to heaven, it changed again.

By changing the reference points of Christ's relationship to the Father, we lose a consistent point of reference. This changeability makes the definition of Christ subject to us rather than us being subject to Him. Let me explain. Take the example of the law of God. The Protestant churches divide the law into three segments: The law before Moses, the law from Moses to the Cross and the New Testament law of love. By segmenting the law, the consistent point of reference is lost and the law becomes subject to human interpretation as to which verses apply to which segments. Is it the Papacy alone that changes times and laws?



knowing that the Law of God is a transcript of God's character, then the same process by which the law is segmented will also allow the segmentation of the person of God Himself. As I have stated earlier this segmentation flows directly from a determination from man to be known by his deeds and roles rather than by His relational frame of reference.



By referring to the terms Father and Son as roles and the work of God rather than these titles actually being God himself, God in fact becomes subject to man. Any references concerning Himself are boxed into various segments and can be used to deny the statements made are actually about the person rather than simply His work.

The classic case for this is the segmentation of the incarnation. Look at the following verse.

**Joh 5:26** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

This verse uses the reference points of Father and Son. If these reference points are not consistent as displayed in a Trinitarian framework, then it becomes easy to deny that this statement is a universal reference. The reference above becomes known as “an incarnational reference” This means it is no longer a statement concerning the PERSON of Christ, it is only a statement concerning the WORK of Christ. Through this method of segmentation we can in fact unwittingly take control of the person of Christ and make Him to be what we want him to be. As we have created a segmented framework, we decide which Bible texts fit into which segment. The segmented view of Trinitarianism does not align itself with the fact that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever.

#### **D. No Relational Changes in the Incarnation**

The book of John presents several references to the person of Christ that from a consistent reference point tell us exactly who Jesus is. Notice the following example.

**Joh 5:18** Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

This verse is used consistently in Trinitarian contexts to refer to the pre-existent divinity of Christ and a reference proving that He is the second person of the Godhead.<sup>132</sup>

But what about the next verse?

**Joh 5:19** 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.

This verse is consistently referred to as an *incarnational* reference. But what makes John 5:18 a reference to Christ's true existence and the next verse a reference to his incarnational work? Who decides? Without a consistent point of reference, everyone decides for themselves what verse refers to what segment.

Lets look at another example in John 5.

**Joh 5:28,29** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [Christ's] voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Christ is telling us that He possesses power to raise people from the dead, and that He will do it at the end of human history. Clearly, this is a reference to the power that Christ possesses, the power to give life. But the immediate verse following says this:

**Joh 5:30** 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.

Is John 5:30 simply an *incarnational* reference? If we would allow the terms Father and Son to be our consistent point of reference, we would not even have to ask this question, because no segmentation is required, because any references to Father and Son, reveal exactly who they are, not just what they do.

It is true that when Jesus came to this earth, he clothed his divinity with humanity, but if we assume that Christ changed his actual relation to the Father in the incarnation, then our consistent point of reference is lost. If we say that Christ demonstrated dependence on God only in the incarnation, then the nature of the relationship has changed.<sup>133</sup> This is a vital point. Throughout the New Testament we are asked as to whether we believe that Jesus IS the Son of God. But if we accept a Trinitarian model, we can only say that we accept that Jesus is the Son of God for the purpose of the plan of salvation or for the purpose of representation of the Godhead. In

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<sup>132</sup> Whidden, Moon and Reeve., *The Trinity*, Review and Herald, 2002) Page 55

<sup>133</sup> "The work of redemption is called a mystery, and it is indeed the mystery by which everlasting righteousness is brought to all who believe. The race in consequence of sin was at enmity with God. Christ, at an infinite cost, by a painful process, mysterious to angels as well as to men, assumed humanity. Hiding His divinity, laying aside His glory, He was born a babe in Bethlehem. (Ellen G. White, MS 29, 1899.) There is no indication in this passage of a change in identity or a change in relationship to the Father

effect, this is a denial that Jesus truly IS the Son of God. This is the very heart of the controversy. Do we accept the words of the Father, that Jesus is His Son or do we not?

If you study the references in John 5 in the Spirit of Prophecy, you will see there is no segmentation that takes place. The person of Christ is consistent all the way through. Notice the following passage.

**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.**

Jesus said to the Jews: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. . . . **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. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth."** John 5:17-20.

**Here again is brought to view the personality of the Father and the Son, showing the unity that exists between them.** This unity is expressed also in the seventeenth chapter of John, in the prayer of Christ for His disciples:

"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 17:20-23.

**Wonderful statement! 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.** {8T 269.4}

Notice carefully that Ellen White opens this passage with a clear statement that the relation of Father and Son is clearly revealed in their relation to each other and their personality. She then refers to Heb 1:1-4 and then moves directly to John 5:17-20 where Christ says he can do nothing of himself and again restates that this is the relation of the Father and the Son. There is no segmenting of the verses, it is consistent all the way through. Study for yourself and you will see

that all references to Christ used by Ellen White are consistent, there are no exceptions or segmenting that takes place.

**All references to Christ in the Bible when speaking in Father and Son relationship reveal that this is exactly who Christ the Son of God is. The notion of incarnational referencing as opposed to pre-existent referencing segments the person of Christ and makes Him subject to our will and discretion as to which verses reveal the second person and which verses are simply part of His work.**

Notice what Ellen White says of the entire discourse of John chapter 5, not just parts of it.

Jesus knew that the Jews were determined to take his life, yet in this discourse [John 5] he fully explained to them his Sonship, the relation he bore to the Father and his equality with him. 2SP 172

Jesus Christ is certainly the same yesterday, today and forever, but only through the relational reference to His Father. If Jesus is not indeed the Son of the Father then there is not a clearly identifiable consistent point of reference for us to know Christ. Christ simply becomes a chameleon that evolves and changes into different forms and roles for whatever purpose just like the actors in Hollywood. If ever you wanted a definition of confused identity, simply look to the lives of those who live on the silver screen.

The only way we can know Christ and consequently His Father is by believing that Jesus is indeed the only begotten Son. It is the only consistent frame of reference we have to know Him and identify Him. Once we can be assured of the consistent point of reference for God and His Son, then we can be assured of a consistent frame of reference for His Law and His Gospel. They all stand and fall together. Let us not change times and laws or persons, but let us submit to the One Lord, the One Law and One Gospel and be saved.

## **25. Building a Solid Platform**

### **A. Questioning the Plain Statements of Scripture**

From the beginning of time Satan has tried to confuse the human race about the meaning of God's statements. Satan's first statement to Eve was not a direct attack on what God had said but rather an insertion of doubt as to what God really meant. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" The implication and manner of question assumes a completely different framework of understanding. Satan's question suggests that there must be some kind of mistake here.<sup>134</sup> Satan does not seek to establish any reason why he thinks there is a mistake in what Eve thinks God has said, he just assumes it is a mistake based on his own frame of reference. That frame of reference of course is that everyone has an independent life source as we outlined in the first few chapters. This assumption is never stated but is simply assumed.

God's word was plain enough:

**Gen 2:17** 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 thou shalt surely die.

The plain and literal meaning, accepted and embraced by Adam and Eve would have prevented the untold misery that the human race now suffers.

What is the point of this illustration? A key element of Satan's attack on truth is to infer doubt concerning the literalness of God's plain statements. Once the doubt is sustained, then the direct attack takes place. This is what Satan did when he boldly stated "You shall not surely die" – This was the direct attack after the initial insertion of doubt.

The fact that Eve had to restate what God had said suggests that she needed to reassure herself. She could have simply said "YES!" and offered no explanation. The justification offered suggests that the seed of doubt was already growing in her mind. Empirical and scientific evidence further embellished this doubt. The fact that the serpent was eating the fruit, was still alive, and could talk added weight to the serpent's underlying suggestion that there must be some mistake either about her understanding of what God said or that God was simply wrong.

Paul warns us regarding this:

**Col 2:8** 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.

The rudiments or first principles of the world stem from the first lie – you shall not surely die. It suggests inherent life and power are possessed by mankind and consequently that the display of such power reveals the value of the man. These principles are constantly at war with the plain statements of Scripture which continually remind us that God created us and we are responsible to him every moment of every day.

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<sup>134</sup> JFB Bible Commentary on Gen 3:1 (E-sword edition)

## B. Development of Every Key Adventist Doctrine was Literal and Real

If you survey the various denominations with reference to the key pillars of the Christian faith, you will find that none of them hold a consistently plain and literal view. This is where Seventh-day Adventism has differed.<sup>135</sup> From beginning to end Adventism has held a plain reading of Scripture. Notice the following chart:

<b>Doctrine</b>	<b>SDA Belief</b>
Father and Son	Literal and Personal Beings
Heaven	Heaven is a literal place
Creation	The earth was created in six literal days
The Devil	A literal Devil called Satan that tempts us
Nature of Man	Mortal, Death is literal – return to the dust. Wages of sin is death not eternal life in hell.
Age of the Earth	A literal 6000 years according to the literal genealogy of the Old Testament
The Flood	The flood literally covered the entire earth after 40 days of rain
Old Testament Stories	All considered true
The Commandments	To be literally followed
The Sabbath	A literal weekly rest and is a memorial of a literal six day creation
The Daily, Host and Stars Persecuted. Sanctuary Cast Down	Literal events of Rome persecuting God’s people (host) their leaders (the stars) <sup>136</sup> Magnification against the Prince – the Crucifixion. Casting down of the Sanctuary – the literal place of Rome taken over by the Papacy
Virgin Birth	Literal
Nature of Christ	Christ literally took our nature, not the nature of Adam before the fall. <sup>137</sup>
Miracles of Jesus	All literally took place
Death of Christ	Literally took place – The whole person of Jesus died.
Resurrection	Literal and real. The central hope of Christianity
Heavenly Sanctuary	Literal and real. Administered by the real priest Jesus
Elder	Literal male husband of literal female wife
Christian Perfection	Literal and real through the faith of Christ
Investigative Judgment	Literal and real. Daniel Seven’s books being opened are literal and real. The Ancient of days and Son of man are real and literal persons and all are literal antitypical fulfilments of the Most Holy Place ministry of the literal heavenly Sanctuary
Second Coming	A literal, audible and real event

No other denomination holds a consistent and literal view of these Bible doctrines. Many churches are simply not able to hold these doctrines because of a spiritualizing of other doctrines. For instance, most churches believe in the immortality of the soul and that the

<sup>135</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving The Word* (Berean Books, Berrien Springs, Michigan 1996) Page 32.

<sup>136</sup> Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation* (Review and Herald, 1944) Page 159; William Miller, *Views of Prophecy* Page 28. J.N Andrews, *The Sanctuary and the 2300 Days*, Page 34. James White, *Bible Adventism*, Page 127

<sup>137</sup> The view of the nature of Christ has altered widely in Adventism. The view that Christ took a pre-fall nature demands a spiritualized view of texts in Hebrews and Romans. Heb 2:16 states that Christ took on Him the seed of Abraham, not the seed of Adam before the fall. Rom 1:3 states that He was made of the seed of David **according to the flesh**. The statements are simple and unambiguous. Taking a pre-fall view of the nature of Christ forces these passages to be figurative in some sense.

righteous go straight to heaven. Such a belief makes null and void the concept of an investigative judgement. For some it also negates the need for a literal second coming. For others a belief in evolution renders useless a belief in the Sabbath, it simply has no meaning. Also a spiritualizing of the nature of Christ renders meaningless the concept of a real Christian perfection. If Christ did not literally take our nature then we can not literally have victory over sin. The cause and effect is simple if not obvious to the discerning Bible student.

### **C. Pioneers Hammered out a Literal View of Salvation Surrounded by and Attacked by Spiritualized Views**

The Adventist Pioneers had to pick their way through many spiritualized views to build their platform. The Advent doctrine was built upon a clear system of interpretation that allowed the Bible to explain itself clearly and simply. William Miller wrote out a 14 point list called rules of interpretation.<sup>138</sup> Let us notice some of these rules.

1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible. Matt 5:18
4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence, and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in an error. Isa.28:7-29, 35:8. Prov.29:27. Luke 24:27,44,45. Rom.16:26. James 5:19. 2Pet.1:19,20.
5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound it to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed or wisdom is my rule, not the Bible. Ps.19:7-11, 119:97-105. Matt.23:8-10. 1Cor.2.12-16. Eze.34:18,19. Luke 11:52. Mal.2:7,8.
6. God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables, and in this way the same things are oftentime revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures, and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one. Ps.89:19. Hos.12:10. Hab.2:2. Acts 2:17. 1Cor.10:6. Heb.9:9,24. Ps.78:2. Matt.13:13,34. Gen.41:1-32. Dan.2. 7. and 8. Acts 10:9-16.
11. How to know when a word is used figuratively. If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally, if not, figuratively. Rev 12:1,2. 17:3-7
12. To learn the true meaning of figures, trace your figurative word through your Bible, and where you find it explained, put it on your figure, and if it makes good sense you need look no further, if not, look again.

Giving a summary of his thoughts William Miller stated:

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<sup>138</sup> Go to Appendix E to see the entire list

I believe the Bible is the revealed will of God to man, and all therein is necessary to be understood by Christians in the several ages and circumstances to which they may refer; - for instance, what may be understood to-day might not have been necessary to have been understood 1000 years ago. For its object is to reveal things new and old, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished for, and perfected in, every good word and work, for the age in which he lives. I believe it is revealed in the best possible manner for all people in every age and under every circumstance to understand, and that it is to be understood as literal as it can be and make good sense; - and that in every case where the language is figurative, we must let the Bible explain its own figures. We are in no case allowed to speculate on the Scriptures, and suppose things which are not clearly expressed, nor reject things which are plainly taught.<sup>139</sup>

These rules were and are the benchmark of the Advent movement. In summary

1. Every Scripture passage must have its weight on a subject and then those passages must be harmonised.
2. Passages are to be understood literally unless there is good reason to see them figuratively.
3. The meaning of figures are found else where in the Bible.

Here is Ellen's Testimony concerning these rules of interpretation. NOTE IT WELL.

Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures **upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted**. In the little book entitled "Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology," Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation:--

"1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible; 2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study; 3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering; 4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error; 5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible."

**The above is a portion of these rules; and in our study of the Bible we shall all do well to heed the principles set forth.**<sup>140</sup>

Uriah Smith expressed it this way:

All Scripture language is to be taken literally, unless there exists some good reason for supposing it to be figurative; and all that is figurative is to be interpreted by that which is literal.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Miller's Works Volume 1 Page 33.

<sup>140</sup> RH, November 25, 1884

<sup>141</sup> Uriah Smith. *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation* (Review and Herald, 1897) Page 123

J.N Loughborough makes this perceptive comment:

The beauty of Divine Revelation has been shut away from the minds of the common people, by their being taught, and supposing that the Bible does not mean what it says, or that the sense of the scripture writers is not contained in the scriptures themselves, but that they are mystical and have a hidden meaning. If this be a fact, we inquire, How shall we arrive at just conceptions of that word and its true interpretation? Oh, says one of the proud professors of our day, you go to Rev. Mr. A., Doctor of Divinity, he will enlighten your mind in regard to the matter. The second says, A. will not inform you aright; you must go to one of our Divines, and so all direct our attention to a different direction for an understanding of the word. They disagree among themselves, and thus are produced upward of 600 different sentiments of the present time. This grows out of the principle that the Bible does not mean what it says, but means something which is not conveyed to our minds by the literal reading of the text. If the position be true that the student of the Bible must first have a thorough knowledge of the popular theology of the age, before he can understand that book, then it would seem to the inquiring mind that the Bible, after all, was not the revelation of God's will, as it does not convey the idea of the author, but his meaning is to be found by the learning of the schools.

If the Bible is the revelation of God's will to man, then his will is found in the book, and the book means what it says. We admit that figures are there used, and explained, but claim that a plain statement should be understood the same as when made in any other book. We can form no just conceptions of God's character as revealed in the word, if this be not the truth of the matter. If God had revealed his will in such a manner that man cannot understand it, and then pronounced in that word condemnation and death to those who did not obey his will, we should at once conclude that he manifested none of the character the word represents him as possessing.

If the Bible is not a literal book, then we need another book, proceeding from the author of the Bible, explaining the revelation we now have, that we may have the will of God.<sup>142</sup>

George Storrs pin points the efforts of Satan to destroy the church by bringing in mystical meanings to the Bible text:

It sustains the mischievous practice of mystifying, or making the Scriptures to have a secret or hidden meaning, in the plainest texts.

This mischievous practice was brought into the church, almost as soon as the Apostles had left the world. The converts from heathenism seemed intent on uniting heathen philosophy with christianity. Hence they must find an abundance of mysteries in the Scriptures: and the practice of allegorizing, i.e. making the language to contain something that does not appear in the words, commenced and generally prevailed, before the third century. This was done, doubtless, with a view to lead heathen philosophers to embrace christianity, as affording them a fruitful field for their researches. But it led

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<sup>142</sup> J.N Loughborough. *Man's Present Condition and His Future Reward or Punishment* (Advent Review Office, 1855) Page 7.

the church astray into the wild fields of conjecture; and every lively imagination could find hidden wonders in the Bible; while the plain literal meaning of the text was disregarded. That fatal practice increased from age to age, till the simplicity of the gospel was totally eclipsed, and the obscuration has not wholly disappeared to this day.<sup>143</sup>

It is exactly this plan Satan has brought to bear upon the Adventist church. The fight that our pioneers had against spiritualism coming to our ranks was relentless. But our pioneers resisted it. Notice Ellen Whites comments:

As we were about to journey to New Bedford, a special message came from Sister M. for me to come and relate what the Lord had shown me. Brother Nichols took my sister and myself to the house where quite a number were collected. There were individuals present whom I had been shown were strong fanatics. They dealt in a human or Satanic influence, and called it the spirit of God. I had not seen them before with my natural eyes, yet their countenances were familiar; for their errors and corrupting influence had been shown me, and I felt forbidden to relate my vision in such a company. There were some present that we loved; but they had been led away in this deception. The leading ones considered this a favorable opportunity to exert their influence over me, and cause me to yield to their views.

*“I knew their only object was to mangle the visions, spiritualize away their literal meaning, throw a Satanic influence upon me, and call it the power of God. {LS88 229.2}*

Spurious scientific theories are coming in as a thief in the night, stealing away the landmarks and undermining the pillars of our faith. God has shown me that the medical students are not to be educated in such theories, because God will not endorse these theories. The most specious temptations of the enemy are coming in, and they are coming in on the highest, most elevated plane. *These spiritualize the doctrines of present truth until there is no distinction between the substance and the shadow.* MM 87.4

Ellen White warns us in Acts of the Apostles

**The follower of Christ will meet with the "enticing words" against which the apostle warned the Colossian believers. He will meet with spiritualistic interpretations of the Scriptures, but he is not to accept them.** His voice is to be heard in clear affirmation of the eternal truths of the Scriptures. Keeping his eyes fixed on Christ, he is to move steadily forward in the path marked out, discarding all ideas that are not in harmony with His teaching. The truth of God is to be the subject for his contemplation and meditation. He is to regard the Bible as the voice of God speaking directly to him. Thus he will find the wisdom which is divine. AA 474, 475

The Adventist platform of truth stands upon a plain reading of Scripture from beginning to end. To loosen one plank of a literal view on these doctrines is to open a flood gate of spiritualised views. Again we have been warned:

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<sup>143</sup> George Storrs, On the Enquiry Is there Immortality in Sin and Suffering. Page 131

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. I saw individuals approach the platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. *Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect,* and the people much happier. *Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it to be laid wrong.* EW 259

The key thrust of Satan's attack against God's people after 1844 was trying to introduce spiritualized views. The rejection of the 1888 message by the church which left the church more vulnerable to satanic attack, combined with a dying off of some of the older pioneers opened a door to these theories coming in. Kellogg was the first obvious case. In dealing with the Kellogg crisis Ellen White makes the critical point that the errors of Kellogg were the same as that she met after 1844.

After the passing of the time, [1844] we were opposed and cruelly falsified. Erroneous theories were pressed in upon us by men and women who had gone into fanaticism. I was directed to go to the places where these people were advocating these erroneous theories, and as I went, the power of the Spirit was wonderfully displayed in rebuking the errors that were creeping in. Satan himself, in the person of a man, was working to make of no effect my testimony regarding the position that we now know to be substantiated by Scripture. *Just such theories as you have presented in Living Temple were presented then.* These subtle, deceiving sophistries have again and again sought to find place among us. But I have ever had the same testimony to bear which I now bear regarding the personality of God. . . . 4MR 57

The defense of Adventists against these spiritualized views was a view that the Father and Son were literal persons. The literal views of the pioneers were NOT simply unfortunate imported ideas from the Christian Connexion as is claimed,<sup>144</sup> they were the cornerstone of guarding against spiritualized views. But Kellogg was only the first to fall; other leaders would succumb.

#### **D. Spiritualized Assault During the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

There were a flood of apostasies from the church during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Jones, Waggoner, Conradi and Ballenger just to name a few. But other figures who remained in the church also fell under the spell of spiritualized view.

At this stage of our experience we are not to have our minds drawn away from the special light given [us] to consider at the important gathering of our conference. And there was Brother Daniells, whose mind the enemy was working; and your mind and Elder Prescott's mind were being worked by the angels that were expelled from heaven. Satan's work was to divert your minds that jots and tittles should be brought in which the Lord did not inspire you to bring in...

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<sup>144</sup> George Knight. A Search For Identity (Review and Herald, 2000) page 32.

And I was shown from the first that the Lord had given neither Elders Daniells nor Prescott the burden of this work. Should Satan's wiles be brought in, should this "Daily"<sup>145</sup> be such a great matter as to be brought in to confuse minds and hinder the advancement of the work at this important period of time? It should not, whatever may be. This subject should not be introduced, for the spirit that would be brought in would be forbidding, and Lucifer is watching every movement...

...you had no moral right to blaze out as you did upon the subject of the "Daily" and suppose your influence would decide the question. There was Elder Haskell, who has carried the heavy responsibilities, and there is Elder Irwin and several men I might mention who have the heavy responsibilities.

Where was your respect for the men of age? What authority could you exercise without taking all the responsible men to weigh the matter?

...If any change is essential, God will have the harmony in that change consistent, but when a message has been entrusted to men with the large responsibilities involved, [God] demands faithfulness that will work by love and purify the soul. Elders Daniells and Prescott both need reconversion. A strange work has come in, and it is not in harmony with the work Christ came to our world to do; and all who are truly converted will work the works of Christ...

...A world-wide work is before us. I was given representations of John Kellogg. A very attractive personage was representing the ideas of the specious arguments that he was presenting, sentiments different from the genuine Bible truth. And those who are hungering and thirsting after something new were advancing ideas [so specious] that Elder Prescott was in great danger. Elder Daniells was in great danger [of] becoming wrapped in a delusion that if these sentiments could be spoken everywhere it would be as a new world.

Yes, it would, but while their minds were thus **absorbed I was shown that Brother Daniells and Brother Prescott were weaving into their experience sentiments of a spiritualistic appearance and drawing our people to beautiful sentiments that would deceive, if possible, the very elect.** 20 MR 17-22

Ellen White clearly reveals that Daniells and Prescott were being attacked by Satan and in their warfare against Kellogg's theories, they unwittingly succumbed to spiritualistic sentiments that would if possible deceive the very elect. The issue at hand was the subject of the Daily of Daniel. Prescott and Daniels embraced the view that the Daily is the ministry of Christ in Heaven, but such a view demands a spiritualized view that presents an attack on the Sanctuary in Heaven. The pioneers held the view that Daniel reveals two desolating powers: paganism and papalism. The daily is seen as paganism and the transgression of desolation seen as papalism. We do not want to engage the whole topic of the "Daily" controversy but simply to make the point that a shift to a spiritualized methodology is required to sustain the heavenly Daily.

### 1. The Pagan View of the Daily

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<sup>145</sup> Prescott and Daniells had embraced the "new view" of the Daily that had come from Conradi and Waggoner. The new view demands that the phrase "casting down the place of his sanctuary" is not a literal event but rather a spiritual casting down in the minds of men. This shift dismantled several planks in the pioneer presentation of Daniel and Revelation.

And [*Pagan Rome*] waxed great, *even* to the host of heaven; and [he] cast down some of the host [**People – Literal**] and of the stars [**Leaders – Literal**] to the ground, and stamped upon them. [**Literal**] Yea he [*Pagan Rome*] magnified himself even to the Prince of the host,<sup>146</sup> [**Literal**] and by him [*Papal Rome*] the daily [Paganism] was taken away [**Literal**] and the place [Rome] of his [*Pagan Rome's*] sanctuary [miqdash]<sup>147</sup> was cast down<sup>148</sup> [**Literal**] And an host [army] [Literal] was given him [**Papal Rome**] against the daily<sup>149</sup> by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered. Daniel 8:10-12

## 2. The Heavenly View of the Daily

And [*Papal Rome*] waxed great, *even* to the host of heaven; and [he] cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.<sup>150</sup> [**Literal**] Yea [he; *Papacy*] magnified himself even to the Prince of the host,<sup>151</sup> [**Spiritual**] and [from Him, Christ] the daily [His continual ministry] was taken away,<sup>152</sup> [**Spiritual and metaphorical but not in reality**] and the place [Heaven] of His [heavenly] sanctuary [miqdash] was cast down [**Spiritual and supposed but not in reality, also does not address inference that heaven is cast down**]. And an host [army] was given him [**Papal Rome**] against the daily<sup>153</sup> by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered. Daniel 8:10-12

If we allow the “Daily” to mean Christ’s ministry, then we must spiritualize the terms “taken away” and “Place of his sanctuary cast down.” The actual place of the heavenly sanctuary is heaven itself, which the Papacy certainly did not cast down. It is evident that the obscuring of the work of Christ took place by the work of the Papacy<sup>154</sup> but this is not reflected in the text of Daniel 8:11. Apart from the gaps in this theory, there does not appear any compelling evidence to accept this view except that as Ellen White states it presents beautiful sentiments that can deceive the very elect. It is this very point where our test of clinging to Scripture is tested most. It sounds pleasing to present Christ the Son of God as being God the Son and God in the same right as the Father in terms of power and position, but Satan takes advantage of our eagerness<sup>155</sup> to exalt Christ and leads us to a spiritualized view of the terms Father and Son. The same is done with the “Daily.” In our eagerness to exalt Christ in the book of Daniel and show Christ as the central figure of the controversy (as we should) Satan takes advantage of this eagerness and introduces a small wedge that allows for a spiritualized view of reading the Bible and once the

<sup>146</sup> Rome tried to kill Christ as his birth and crucified Him in 31AD on the cross

<sup>147</sup> Miqdash can be used for God’s or pagan sacred place.

<sup>148</sup> The Captial of Rome was moved to Constantinople in 330AD fulfilling Daniel 11:24’s prophecy of a 360 year rule from Rome. Start date is 31BC with the Battle of Actium.

<sup>149</sup> The conversion of the Barbarian tribes to Catholicism between 496 A.D and 508 A.D – See Daniel and Revelation by Uriah Smith page 177, 1897 edition.

<sup>150</sup> Papacy persecuted and killed more than 50 million of God’s people during 1260 years between 538-1798 AD.

<sup>151</sup> Claimed to be God on earth

<sup>152</sup> The priesthood of the Papacy obscured the priesthood of Christ by pointing people to earthly priests.

<sup>153</sup> Same as Pagan view

<sup>154</sup> Daniel 8:13 speaks of the treading down of the [qodesh] sanctuary and finds legitimacy in Hebrews 10:28 where Paul states the Son of God is trodden under foot. See Bible Adventism Sermon 8 “Trodden Under Foot” by James White for more detail.

<sup>155</sup> Eve was eager to point out the command of God in not eating from the tree and she added you shall not touch it which God did not say. She added to God’s Word. “In Eve’s controversy with the serpent, she added “Neither shall ye touch it.” Here the subtlety of the serpent appeared. *This statement of Eve gave him advantage*; he plucked the fruit and placed it in her hand, using her own words, He hath said, If ye touch it, ye shall die. You see no harm comes to you from touching the fruit, neither will you receive any harm by eating it. Con 14.2

seed is accepted, it soon bore fruit. This fruit was most clearly manifested in the release of Questions on Doctrine.

### **E. Seeds of Daniells and Prescott Spiritualized Daily Manifest in Q.O.D. regarding Father, Son and Nature of Christ.**

Only a completely ignorant person would suggest that Adventism has not been attacked with spiritualised views of Scripture. It is the chief weapon in Satan's arsenal to undermine truth. We have been attacked again and again. In 1971 *Newsweek* wrote an article on movements within the Adventist church to "rid itself of an exaggerated Biblical literalism." The article stated that according to the liberals "you will find few seminary professors who admit to the 6000 year theory, and many Adventists no longer believe that the days of creation were each 24 hours long." The liberals also charge that "Adventists traditionally have placed too literal an interpretation on the second coming-thinking it was just around the corner-and failed to recognize the power of that doctrine to motivate Christians to change the world around them."<sup>156</sup>

In my theological studies at Avondale, a literal six day creation was ridiculed, as was Christian perfection; the literal human nature of Christ; an emphasis on the nearness of Christ's coming; the references to the Remnant and Babylon, the significance of the Investigative Judgment; all were ridiculed, undermined and in some cases debunked. I know this to be fact because I was there and I witnessed it. Every last doctrine was attacked in some way.

Conservative Adventists look with horror at how liberalism is trying to pull out every pin of our faith. Yet it was conservative Adventism that set the precedent for spiritualized methodology and opened the flood gates. It is foolish for conservative Adventists to point the finger at liberals when conservative Adventism started the rot. Notice Froom's spiritualised methodology in the following statement:

"In their zeal to reject everything not found in the Bible, the "Christians" were betrayed by over literalism into interpreting the Godhead in terms of the human relationships suggested by the words "Son," "Father," and "begotten," that is, into a tendency to disparage the non-Biblical word "Trinity" and to contend that the Son must have had a beginning in the remote past." QOD Page 47<sup>157</sup>

The book Questions on Doctrine opened the flood gate of spiritualized views, both with the Godhead and the Nature of Christ. Once this door opened, there could be no stopping it. And it has not been stopped. I witnessed the overwhelming levels of the spiritualisation of Adventism in my training at Avondale College.

In seeking to address the spiritualisation of the Sanctuary doctrine, Pr George Burnside makes this observation:

One speaks of a "spiritual sanctuary of heaven rather than the literal visible one." He ridicules the idea of a temple in heaven having walls, or furniture. This raises a question. What is a temple? What is an immaterial temple? What are the "many mansion," Christ spoke about in John 14:1-3. Are the mansions only symbols too? What is the "holy city," New Jerusalem? Is that

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<sup>156</sup> Pipim, 75

<sup>157</sup> Questions on Doctrine Page 47

too but a symbol? The “great city, the Holy Jerusalem, has walls. If the temple does not have walls, does the holy city have walls? “The wall of the city had twelve foundations.” Revelation 21:14. Is this too, only a symbol, a mere airy fiction? If the “city, which hath foundations,” Hebrews 11:10, is real, why not the temple? How can you have a temple without walls? What is it? Away with such airy floating feathery fictions! Christ is real. Heaven is real. Our Lord’s return will be real. The resurrection of the saints will be real. The New Jerusalem is to be real. The temple of God is real. The redeemed will be real. They will eat and drink in the Father’s Kingdom. “They shall build houses, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.” Isaiah 65:21. Are these things too, mere “symbols” or shadows? Will these houses in the Glory land have walls? If so, why not a heavenly temple?<sup>158</sup>

How can we as conservative Adventists hold a literal view of every facet of Bible Doctrine and then turn around and say that the terms Father and Son are not literal or real, where is the consistency in this? The rejection of the literal terms of Father and Son in the Godhead has been a key driving factor in the spiritualising of Adventist faith. I have heard of conservative Adventists standing in the pulpit and proclaim that Jesus was not literally the Son of God. Such denials of Christ are denials of the Father and such statements place a soul’s salvation in danger.<sup>159</sup>

James White understood this significant point when he said:

It is said that the view that Adventists have fulfilled the parable of Matt.xxv,1-12, leads to spiritualism.<sup>160</sup> This may be true; but take notice, this is not our position. The coming of the bridegroom is in the history of the marriage. ***Our position is, that a change has taken place in the position and work of our literal High Priest in the literal Sanctuary in heaven, which is to be compared to the coming of the bridegroom in the marriage. This view is a perfect safeguard against spiritualism.*** We not only believe in a literal Jesus, who is a "Minister of the Sanctuary," but we also believe that the Sanctuary is literal. - And more, when John says that he saw "one like the Son of man" "in the midst of the seven candlesticks," that is, in the Holy Place, ***we know not how to make the candlestick spiritual, and the Son of man literal. We therefore believe that both are literal,*** and that John saw Jesus while a "Minister" in the Holy Place. John also had a view of another part of the Sanctuary, which view applies to the time of the sounding of the seventh angel.

...The Most Holy, containing the Ark of the ten commandments, was then opened for our Great High Priest to enter to make atonement for the cleansing of the Sanctuary. ***If we take the liberty to say there is not a literal Ark, containing the ten commandments in heaven, we may go only a step further and deny the literal City, and the literal Son of God. Certainly, Adventists should not choose the spiritual view, rather than the one we have presented. We see no middle ground to be taken.***<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> George Burnside - The Two Apartment Sanctuary in Heaven. Pamphlet

<sup>159</sup> I John 2:22,23

<sup>160</sup> Notice the use of the word spiritualism is the context of spiritualizing

<sup>161</sup> J. S. White, The Parable, p. 16

**THE REJECTION OF THE LITERAL FATHER AND SON RELATIONSHIP OPENS THE DOOR TO A SPIRITUALISED METHODOLOGY FOR READING SCRIPTURE THAT OPENS THE DOOR TO A TRAIN OF HERESIES.**

After the introduction of the book Questions on Doctrine, our Doctrinal platform shifted slightly as shown in the following table.

<b>Doctrine</b>	<b>SDA Belief Around Release of Questions on Doctrine</b>
Father and Son	<b>First and Second Person of Godhead take on the role of Father and Son but are not literally Father and Son. Terms such as the Spirit of God do not refer literally to the Father’s Spirit but to a separate person called the Holy Spirit</b>
Heaven	Heaven is a literal place
Creation	The earth was created in six literal days
The Devil	A literal Devil called Satan that tempts us
Nature of Man	Mortal, Death is literal – return to the dust. Wages of sin is death not eternal life in hell.
Age of the Earth	A literal 6000 years according to the literal genealogy of the Old Testament
The Flood	The Flood literally covered the entire earth after 40 days of rain
Old Testament Stories	All considered true
The Commandments	To be literally followed
The Sabbath	A literal weekly rest and is a memorial of a literal six day creation.
The Daily, Host and Stars Persecuted. Sanctuary Cast Down	Daily offered as both Paganism and Papacy. <sup>162</sup> <b>Under a Papal view, the taking away of the Daily is a spiritualized view that did not actually occur literally, but only in the minds of people. The Sanctuary was not literally cast down but spiritually in the minds of the people.</b> <sup>163</sup>
Virgin Birth	Literal
Nature of Christ	<b>Christ took the nature of Adam before the fall. The meaning of the verse “took on him the seed of Abraham” is no longer literal</b>
Miracles of Jesus	All literally took place
Death of Christ	<b>Confusion introduced over what part of Christ died or didn’t die</b>
Resurrection	Literal and real. The central hope of Christianity
Elder	Literal male husband of literal female wife
Heavenly Sanctuary	Literal and real. Administered by the real priest Jesus. <sup>164</sup>
Christian Perfection	Literal and real through the faith of Christ
Investigative Judgment	Literal and real. Daniel Seven’s books being opened are literal and

<sup>162</sup> Questions on Doctrine Page 256; RH July 14, 1927 Page 6.

<sup>163</sup> Ellen White Warned Daniells and Prescott about pushing their view of the Daily. She indicated that Satan was working their minds and that they were entertaining spiritualized views. MR 20 Page 21

<sup>164</sup> Anderson, R.A. Review and Herald Aug 3 1962, “The Ministry of Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary”: “It was “when he had by himself purged our sins” that He “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3). More than twenty times we read of Christ being “at the right hand of God.” For Christ is “not entered into the holy places made with hands . . . but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24). While some may seek to substitute a ministry *for* a place, we would emphasize a ministry *in* a place, and that place is the sanctuary in heaven. Since our Lord as the ministering High Priest is real, then the place where He ministers must also be real.”

	real. The Ancient of days and Son of man are real and literal persons and all are literal antitypical fulfilments of the Most Holy place ministry of the literal heavenly Sanctuary
Second Coming	A literal, audible and real event

For a good overview of the war on our church with a spiritualized view, I invite you to study the book *Receiving the Word* by Samuel Pipim. If we look at the inroads made by spiritual views especially in our colleges and schools today, we see the following

<b>Doctrine</b>	<b>SDA Belief Today in Many Places</b>
Father and Son	<b>First and Second Person of Godhead take on the role of Father and Son but are not literally Father and Son. Terms such as the Spirit of God do not refer literally to the Father’s Spirit but to a separate person called the Holy Spirit.</b>
Heaven	Heaven is a literal place
Creation	<b>Creation not in six literal days</b>
The Devil	A literal Devil called Satan <b>but many human issues are just psychological problems</b>
Nature of Man	Mortal, Death is literal – return to the dust. Wages of sin is death not eternal life in hell.
Age of the Earth	<b>Earth older than 6000 years</b>
The Flood	<b>Flood is debatable as to whether it was world wide</b>
Old Testament Stories	<b>Most Considered True</b>
The Commandments	<b>Commandments can’t be followed</b>
The Sabbath	A literal weekly rest <b>but not a memorial of a literal six day creation</b>
The Daily, Host and Stars Persecuted. Sanctuary Cast Down	<b>Papal view of Daily, the taking away of the Daily is a spiritualized view that did not actually occur literally, but only in the minds of people. The Sanctuary was not literally cast down but spiritually in the minds of the people.<sup>165</sup></b>
Virgin Birth	Literal
Nature of Christ	<b>Christ took the nature of Adam before the fall. The meaning of the verse “took on him the seed of Abraham” is no longer literal</b>
Miracles of Jesus	All literally took place
Death of Christ	<b>Confusion introduced over what part of Christ died or didn’t die</b>
Resurrection	Literal and real. The central hope of Christianity
Heavenly Sanctuary	<b>Heavenly Sanctuary not literal, but symbolic of Christ’s ministry. “God not contained in a box for 160 years”</b>
Elder	<b>Terms Husband and Wife and not literal but interchangeable</b>
Christian Perfection	<b>No Such Thing</b>
Investigative Judgment	<b>No Such Thing or token acknowledgement</b>
Second Coming	A literal, Audible and real event <b>but not focused on as much. Growing emphasis on liberation and feminist theology</b>

<sup>165</sup> C Maxwell, *God Cares* Vol 1 Page 172 – “Christ’s Priesthood obscured”; Daniel and Revelation Committee, Symposium on Daniel Page 399. “The author observes that no words are used that would denote a defilement of the heavenly sanctuary by the horn. What does appear instead is an attack-*in different forms*-(meaning a spiritualized view)-upon God’s people, the foundation of Christ’s Sanctuary and ministry...”

From the above list, you can see that our Adventist faith has been stripped bare. There is a weekly Sabbath and a virgin birth and a resurrection and a real second coming into a real heaven, but everything else is confused and spiritualized. The inroads of spiritualism are virtually complete. This type of Adventism will not survive the coming crisis. And those Conservative Adventists still clinging to the Questions of Doctrine version of Adventism or even conservative Adventism with just the acceptance of the Trinity, the door of spiritualised views are still open and such believers are vulnerable to Satan’s spiritualistic philosophies and are in great danger of receiving strong delusions.

## F. The Fall of Babylon

In his book *Modern Spiritualism*, Uriah Smith makes an extremely important point about why so much confusion abounds and false doctrine exists, it all comes back to one simple principle – the rejection of a literal interpretation of Scripture. This is what produces the doctrine of devils: Spiritualizing of the Bible text under the influence of or communication with evil spirits. Thus the communication with evil spirits – spiritualism, and their doctrine which is a spiritualizing of the text is also referred to as spiritualism. Both the communication and that which is communicated is spiritualism. If you read carefully Ellen White and other pioneers used the term spiritualism in both contexts – the communication and the method of Bible interpretation.<sup>166</sup> Before we look at Uriah Smith’s statement, we will look at some examples of how the term spiritualism can be used in the context of spiritualizing the text.

I have been thus particular in quoting the Scriptures, in answer to the questions proposed, to endeavor if possible to dispel some of the thick darkness and mist of Shakerism, Quakerism, Swedenborgianism, *and all the Spiritualisms that now seem to be settling down all over the moral world, and shutting out even the very light from the horizon. To my mind this spiritualizing system, when God's word admits of a literal interpretation, and - according to rule - the literal first*; is, to use a sailor phrase, like a ship groping her way into Boston Bay in the night, in a thick snow with the moon at full. Nothing could be more deceptive to the mariner; the flying clouds at one moment light up the firmament by the thinness of its vapor, (encouraging the mariner to believe that he shall now see the light house) the next moment it grows darker, and so it continues to deceive them, until of a sudden the breakers are roaring all around them - the ship is dashed upon the rocks - one general cry goes aloft for mercy! and all hope is forever gone - ship and mariners strewed all over the beach! Good God! help us to steer clear of these spiritual interpretations of Thy word, where it is made so clear that the second coming and kingdom of Christ will be as literal and real, as the events that transpired at the first Advent, now recorded in history.<sup>167</sup>

There are some with us who formerly run into the deceptive fog of spiritualism, and gave up the literal Jesus, and made his glorious appearing only spiritual. It is evident that they never would have been delivered from that snare of the devil, had they not heard our views of present truth. Nothing

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<sup>166</sup> Arthur White. *Biography of Ellen White* Vol 1. Page 80. “As one reads this he will note the use of the term spiritualism, which must be taken in the light of the work of the spiritualizers and not in the light of what today is understood to be spiritualism or spiritism, although both emanate from the same source.

<sup>167</sup> Joseph Bates. *The Opening of the Heavens* (Press of Benjamin Lindsey, 1846) Page 22

can be so well calculated to dispel the mischievous mists of spiritualism, as the clear, literal view of the Heavenly Sanctuary.<sup>168</sup>

James White clearly states that the literal sanctuary in heaven is our protection against spiritualism or spiritualized views. But now let us examine what Uriah Smith says about how Babylon Falls

The term "Babylon" is not intended nor used as a term of reproach, but rather as a descriptive word setting forth the very undesirable condition of "mixture" and "confusion" in the religious world. It is certainly not the Lord's will, who prayed that all his people should be one, that scores or hundreds of divisions and sects should exist within his church. That is owing, exclaims the Catholic, to the Protestant rule of private judgment. It is not. It is owing to that Pandora's box of mystical interpretation placed in the church by old Origen, that prince of mischief-makers. By this method, which has no method and no standard, the interpretations of God's word will ever be as various and numerous as the whims and fancies that may find a place in the minds of men.

But all this confusion must be remedied in that church which will be ready for the second advent; for no people will be prepared for translation but such as worship the Lord in both spirit and truth. To bring the Church to this point, a call has been sent to Christendom in the special truths for this time. Most turn away, but some are taking the stand to which these circumstances summon them. The process is simple. ***It is but to read and obey God's word in the light of what is called the literal rule of interpretation.*** No other rule would ever have been thought of, if the Devil had let the minds of men alone. By this rule the true Sabbath would always have been maintained, a perfect safeguard against idolatry in the earth; the law would have held its place as a perfect, immutable, and eternal rule of conduct, ***a safeguard against the antinomianism of all ages and the Spiritualism of to-day***, the view that the dead remain unconscious in the grave till the resurrection, would always have been held, and then there could have been no purgatory, no masses for the dead, no Mariolatry, no saint worship - in short, no Roman Catholicism, and no Universalism, nor Spiritualism; the true nature of the coming and kingdom of Christ would not have been lost sight of, and the peace and safety fable of a temporal millennium never could have existed.

To say nothing of others errors that would be corrected, suppose all Christendom stood together on those four simple truths, how much division could there have been in the Christian world? A second denomination could not have existed. And what would have been the condition of things? - As different from the present condition as one can well imagine - no paganism, no Roman Catholicism, no Protestantism, no multiplied sects, no Spiritualism, - but Christianity, broad, united, free, and glorious. ***Some are taking their stand on these truths, and so will be shielded from the delusions of these last days, for which the way, by ages of superstition and error has been so artfully prepared. Every one must stand upon them who is governed by the literal rule of interpretation; for they are read in so many words of the sacred volume itself. But the churches generally reject them, often with***

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<sup>168</sup> RH Feb 17, 1852

*bitterness, scorn, and contempt, and some even with persecution. And this is why Babylon has fallen.*<sup>169</sup>

Notice carefully in the following passage how the Ellen White associates the term spiritualism with a teaching and with a removal of literalness. The passage has to do with the realness of Jesus and His Father. Her remedy is to take the Bible simply as it reads and I agree.

I have frequently been falsely charged with teaching views peculiar to Spiritualism. But before the editor of the Day-Star ran into that delusion, the Lord gave me a view of the sad and desolating effects<sup>170</sup> that would be produced upon the flock by him and others in teaching the spiritual views. I have often seen the lovely Jesus, that He is a person. I asked Him if His Father was a person and had a form like Himself. Said Jesus, "I am in the express image of My Father's person."

I have often seen that the spiritual view took away all the glory of heaven, and that in many minds the throne of David and the lovely person of Jesus have been burned up in the fire of Spiritualism. I have seen that some who have been deceived and led into this error will be brought out into the light of truth, but it will be almost impossible for them to get entirely rid of the deceptive power of Spiritualism. Such should make thorough work in confessing their errors and leaving them forever.

I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice.<sup>171</sup>

Arthur White makes the point that Ellen White's fight against spiritualising God, Christ and heaven saved the emergent church.

The spiritualization of heaven, God, Christ, and the coming of Christ lay at the foundation of much of the fanatical teachings that 17-year-old Ellen Harmon was called upon by God to meet in those formative days. **The visions firmly established the personality of God and Christ**, the reality of heaven and the reward to the faithful, and the resurrection. This sound guidance saved the emerging church. 1BIO 81

Note very carefully that the early visions of Ellen White presented the persons of God and Christ as literal beings. Note also that their personalities are directly tied to the titles they carry; Father and Son. This process saved the emerging church and helped build a solid immovable platform. It cannot be denied that a literal understanding of Father and Son was at the heart of the pillars of our faith and as Arthur White clearly states "saved the emerging church."

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<sup>169</sup> Uriah Smith. *Modern Spiritualism*, Page 141,142

<sup>170</sup> Notice the use of the term "desolating" in connection to spiritualizing and spiritualism

<sup>171</sup> Early Writings Page 77,78

## **26. Growing on the Solid Platform**<sup>172</sup>

### **A. Pioneers Given Great Light Concerning Person of Christ**

Ellen White describes the Adventists experience as one that was lead step by step onto a solid immovable platform.

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. EW 259 (1882)

In another place Ellen recalls the intense study and prayer that took place to understand the truth.

“After the passing of the time in 1844 we searched for the truth as for hidden *treasure*. I met with the brethren, 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.” RH, May 25, 1905 par. 24

If we notice carefully, Ellen White clearly recalls that light was given regarding Christ, His mission and His priesthood. The line of truth that they received regarding Christ would extend right through to the city of God. There were several teachings<sup>173</sup> that were searched out into an interlocking system of truth. Part of that interlocking system was truth about the person of Christ and that truth was integrally locked into an understanding of the plan of salvation.

### **B. If Pioneer View of Christ was Essentially Flawed, the Whole System is Flawed**

The Bible clearly teaches that no other foundation can be laid than Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:11) If Adventism built an interlocking system of beliefs upon a view of Christ that was essentially incorrect, then the foundation is wrong and the entire system is wrong. This point can not be sidelined or overlooked.

IF THE FOUNDATION WAS WRONG CONCERNING CHRIST THEN  
THE ENTIRE SYSTEM WAS AND IS WRONG

Christ is the centre and circumference of all truth.<sup>174</sup> If that view hammered out by our pioneers gave a view of Christ that was essentially not who He was then the whole system is infected by

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<sup>172</sup> This chapter is an expansion of appendix E and F and has been included partly for the fact that appendices are often overlooked and not fully considered.

<sup>173</sup> See CW 30 for a description of old landmarks and pillar doctrines.

<sup>174</sup> RH August 15, 1893

the wrong framework. The entire system must be re-laid, renovated and changed. A new order of books would need to be written, a new system of education would need to be engaged to recover from such a tragic mistake.

### **C. Literal Sanctuary Mandates Literal Son of God**

One of the key elements of the Adventist Sanctuary Message was the connection between the literalness of the personalities of Father and Son and the literalness of the Sanctuary. James White expressed it thus:

The Most Holy, containing the Ark of the ten commandments, was then opened for our Great High Priest to enter to make atonement for the cleansing of the Sanctuary. If we take the liberty to say there is not a literal Ark, containing the ten commandments in heaven, we may go only a step further and deny the literal City, and the literal Son of God. Certainly, Adventists should not choose the spiritual view, rather than the one we have presented. We see no middle ground to be taken.<sup>175</sup>

“Here is positive testimony that there is a tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, and that this tabernacle is in the heavens, (not heaven itself,) and that of this sanctuary, Christ is the minister. That there are literal things in heaven the Scriptures abundantly testify. As the great offering for the world, made on Calvary was literal, and as our great High Priest, Jesus, the son of God, is a real and literal personage, so must he have a literal sanctuary in heaven, in which to perform his priestly office.”<sup>176</sup>

Says the prophet Daniel, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hairs of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." Chap.vii,9. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom." Verses 13, 14.

***Here is a sublime description of the action of two personages; viz, God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. Deny their personality, and there is not a distinct idea in these quotations from Daniel.*** In connection with this quotation read the apostle's declaration that the Son was in the express image of his Father's person. "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." Heb.i,1-3. The Personality of God Page 3 and 4<sup>177</sup>

James White states emphatically that there is no middle ground on this issue. The system of Adventism, its sanctuary and priestly system hang upon a literal understanding rather than a spiritual view. Ellen White States it this way:

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<sup>175</sup> J. S. White, The Parable, p. 16

<sup>176</sup> RH, 18-8-1863

<sup>177</sup> The full tract by James White is found in Appendix H

“Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. *Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men.* They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor.” MR760 9.5

Taking our Bibles as they read, the sanctuary teaching reveals two literal personages operating in the Sanctuary; the Father and the Son. This is clearly revealed in Daniel 7.

**Dan 7:9** 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.

**Dan 7:13** I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

In verse 9, the Father is described in the throne. In verse 13, the Son is brought to the Father in the Most Holy Place. Note the sequence Ellen White portrays in Early Writings describing the events of Daniel 7

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." EW Page 54

Under the title “End of the 2300 days” Ellen White pictures Father and Son seated on a throne and then she raises a question regarding the person of the Father. Jesus tells Ellen that the Father has a form like himself. The reality of the Father and Son personages is reinforced before moving on. Further down we read

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. EW 55

And thirdly we read

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. EW 55

In describing the events of the end of the 2300 days;

1. Father and Son are seating together on a Throne in the Holy Place
2. The Father rides a chariot into the Most Holy Place and sits down
3. The Son is brought on a chariot into the presence of the Father in the Most Holy Place.

These are real and literal events. We also note in this transaction the interaction of two personal beings. The Sanctuary presents two personal beings acting in the plan of salvation. It is certain that the Holy Spirit is revealed everywhere in the Sanctuary (in the fire, the water, the oil etc) but he is not revealed as a separate and distinct personal being. The question that must be asked is where do we see a three person (co-equal co-eternal) Trinity in the Sanctuary? You will find it nowhere.

This being the case, a shift from a literal Father and Son to a metaphorical representation of Father and Son will open the door to negate the literalness of the events of Daniel 7 and the Judgment. This door has been opened by Adventist theologians. At every time in my theological training, I was advised that the events of the investigative judgment were symbolic. It was suggested to me that God cannot be cooped up in a “box” for 150 years because God inhabits the whole universe. It was suggested the Sanctuary is not a literal building but rather a symbol of the two phases of Christ’s ministry. It was suggested to me that God does not need to examine literal books because God already knows everything and already knows who are His and who are not. In essence, the end of the 2300 days is a stage show for the universe – it is not real.

#### D. Growing in our Understanding of the Godhead

It has been suggested in several places that Seventh-day Adventists grew in their understanding of the Godhead and that in the refinement process we were led to an understanding of a co-equal and co-eternal Trinity. Examples are used in terms of the development of the Sabbath start and end times, the health message and the tithing system. All of these are indeed examples of refinement of a principle, but it can never be stated that a change in the view that Christ was indeed the Son of God literally can be refined into a view that Christ is not the Son of God in identity but only in function. This is a complete shift that cannot be simply categorised as a refining process.

In the book “The Trinity” by Whidden, Moon and Reeve it is suggested on page 181 that Adventism went through a process of anti-Trinitarianism in order to jettison the Greek philosophical basis of the Trinity that other Church communions included. This suggestion overlooks the fact that the entire movement would have been placed of a false platform in the process; a process that would infect every other doctrine. If the Lord wanted to remove the Greek philosophical platform and retain the Trinity purely on “Biblical grounds” I am sure it could have been done without dragging the name of Christ through a completely false view and laying a completely false foundation.

	<b>Catholicism</b>	<b>Protestantism</b>	<b>Pioneer Adventism</b>
<b>Doctrine</b>	Trinity	Trinity	Father, Son Spirit
<b>Authority</b>	Tradition	Bible	Bible
<b>Worldview</b>	Greek Philosophical Base: Dualism, Immortality	Greek Philosophical Base: Dualism, Immortality	Literal Bible Reading Base: Historicism, Non Immortality

### **E. Pioneer View of Christ Did Need Refinement as Evidenced by 1888 Message**

One thing that is evident and that is the pioneer position of the Godhead certainly needed refining. If it did not then the 1888 message would not need to have been given. Non-Trinitarians make a mistake if they say that we should believe exactly as the pioneers did. Such a statement could indicate a negation of the need for the 1888 message and a fuller view of the role and Deity of Christ.

My assessment is that while pioneers were correct to assert that Christ was the literal Son of God, their understanding of how central and how far reaching Christ is to every teaching of the Bible needed time to expand and be realised. The message of 1888 lifted Christ into a much more central position from which all truth radiates. It also clarified the process of keeping the commandments of God through the grace of Christ. This lack of refinement in understanding sometimes subtly and unwittingly downgraded the role of Christ. The shift in the 1888 message was that Christ was presented in all the fullness of the Godhead more clearly and in a more refined way. It was old light placed in its correct context. Probably the simplest way to show this unwitting downgrade is in the contrast of two pictures endorsed by James and Ellen White. Notice the picture that James endorsed called the “Way of Life”



In the above picture, we see all the key elements of the plan of salvation, the fall and the curse, the sacrifice and priesthood, the law and the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ and the founding of the Christian church that culminates in the celestial city. This picture certainly contains all the essential elements but the emphasis is quite different from the picture Ellen White Endorsed. The way that the law is presented and emphasised reflected a view of some pioneers of our efforts to keep the law of God. Notice the following:

“In the early years of this message the laborers had one specific objective - to herald to the world the great fact that the last proclamation of the advent of Christ, to be given previous to his appearing in the clouds of heaven, is now going to the world, and to lead souls to Christ through obedience to this closing testing truth. This was the one objective point of all their efforts; and

the end sought was not considered gained unless souls were converted to God, and led to seek through an enlightened obedience to all his commandments, a preparation for the Lord from Heaven”<sup>178</sup>

The above statement by Uriah Smith lacks refinement in expressing the principles of how obedience occurs. The emphasis is heavy on obedience and limited on grace. The very phrase “coming to Christ through obedience...” appears to completely negate the centrality of the gospel. Notice another example written in the *Review and Herald* curiously titled “Justified by Works”

“We have seen that to repent is .. to feel such sorrow for sin as to lead one to turn from it, and seek forgiveness. Then when Jesus and the apostles told the people that they must repent before they could believe or be converted, they must feel such sorrow for sin as would lead them to turn from it, and seek forgiveness, or, in other words, they must stop sinning before they could receive pardon or be justified...”

Let me say again, reader, do not get the idea that I am trying to lessen your obligation to believe in Christ. Let me define my position once more. To make satisfaction for past sins, faith is everything. Precious indeed is that blood that blots out all our sins, and makes a clean record of the past. Faith only can make the promises of God our own. But present duty is ours to perform. When God says, "To-day if ye hear his voice, harden not your heart," all depends upon how we hear. Justification or condemnation is ours to choose. Obey the voice of God and live, or disobey and die. The choice is ours to make. We have it in our own power to live or die.”<sup>179</sup>

The above statement is shocking in its strident tones of obedience. There is nothing of the saving power of Christ enabling us to obey and a complete reliance on Christ for Grace to overcome. Such statements clearly indicate a lack of understanding of the work of Christ in the plan of salvation. I contend that while the personality of Father and Son were basically understood, the significance of the work of Christ in Adventist Doctrine was still being confused by the lie of the serpent. The emphasis on works and obedience revealed a confused belief that man had some kind of personal power to keep the commandments of God that was aided by the work of Christ. This sentiment had to be changed or Adventism would be completely destroyed. This is why Ellen White wrote:

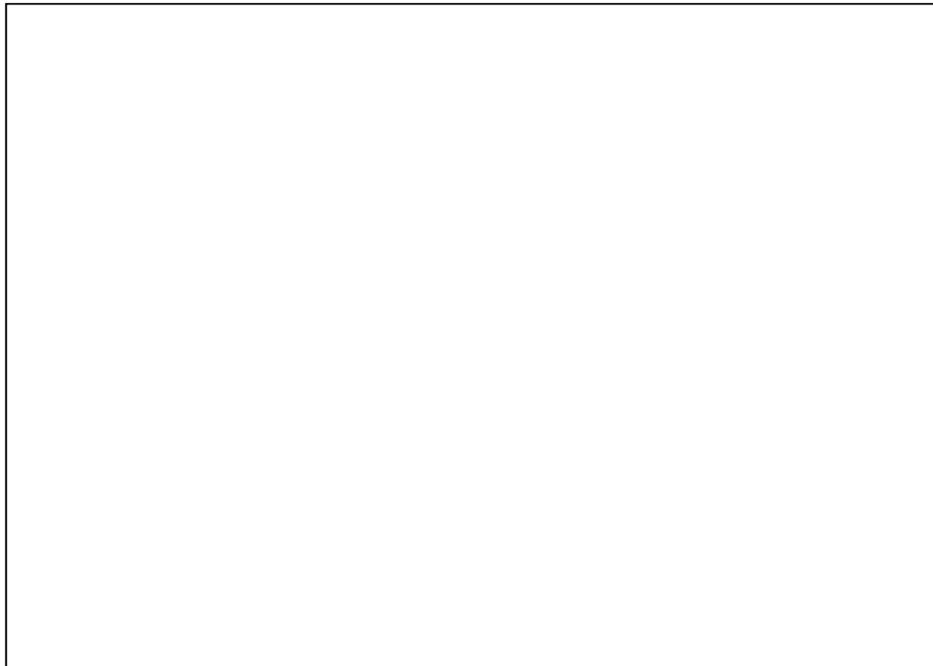
“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. 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

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<sup>178</sup> Uriah Smith, *Review and Herald* Jan 3, 1888 Page 8.

<sup>179</sup> J. F Ballenger, *Review and Herald*, Oct 20 1891 Page 642

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.” TM 91, 92



In Ellen White’s picture endorsed in 1883 we see even in the title a deeper recognition of the central role that Christ plays in the way of salvation. The cross of Christ towers above all other scenes along the way. The law is symbolised in the experience of Mt Sinai with the flashing lightning rather than the written code hanging upon the tree. Such a shift emphasises the living reality of Christ in you the hope of glory, rather than the acknowledgment of a written code. The shift in the picture emphasises a growing and refining awareness of the centrality of the person of Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life. All of these principles exploded into Adventist consciousness in the 1888 message. The 1888 message shifted our view of Christ and also ourselves that all power to obey comes through Christ and we are totally helpless with it.

### **F. Trinity Complete Reversal Not Refinement of Pioneer Platform**

It would seem natural for those who view the equality of Christ in intrinsic terms rather than inherited terms could view the shift of emphasis on the role Christ in an expanded Deity as the beginning of a shift to Trinitarianism. Such a view though, must ignore the platform that Adventism was laid upon and it must be called a complete reversal on the person of Christ, not simply a refinement.<sup>180</sup> Such leaps in logic are easy to understand in light of the urgency with which Adventism has struggled to embrace the relational view of the centrality of Christ and also the growing desire<sup>181</sup> to avoid the cult label from other Protestants.

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<sup>180</sup> Clear evidence for the complete inability for the Trinity to be a refinement of the Pioneer doctrine is the insightful article by George Knight that appeared in Ministry Magazine in Oct 1993. He states that very few Pioneers would be able to join the church today before of current views on the Godhead. This is clear evidence that this is not refinement but a complete change. A refinement would still allow our pioneers to join the church.

<sup>181</sup> This growing desire for unity with other Protestants was strengthened by the threatening rise of higher criticism in protestant circles and the consequent fundamentalist reaction on the 1920’s. Adventism in some ways was forced

Ellen White was quite clear that Jones and Waggoner presented Christ in all the fullness of the Godhead.

“Messages bearing divine credentials have been sent to God’s people; the glory, the majesty, the righteousness of Christ, full of goodness and truth, have been presented; the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ has been set forth among us with beauty and loveliness, to charm all whose hearts were not closed to prejudice. We know that God has wrought among us.” EGW 1888 materials page 673

If it is THE FULNESS then I think we can accept that IT WAS THE FULLNESS. Yet it is clearly evident to any candid student that Jones and Waggoner did not present Christ as the Co-Equal and Co-eternal God but rather the Son of God. The facts are there if we want to see them. Knowing that these messengers presented this view of the Godhead we must consider carefully this next quote.

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. For it is the work of every one to whom the message of warning has come, to lift up Jesus, to present him to the world as revealed in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelations of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to his disciples and in the wonderful miracles wrought for the sons of men. Search the Scriptures; for they are they that testify of him. {RH, November 22, 1892 par. 7}

This who reject the idea of Jesus being begotten of the Father and receiving His inheritance need to explain how such an erroneous view can be connected the Loud Cry of Revelation 18? If Jesus is the Truth (John 14:6) and Revelation 18 is a mighty revelation of truth, how can there be a mighty revelation of truth when the chief messengers have a wrong view of who Jesus is?

Holding a position that Christ came forth from the Father has sadly led some Adventists to accuse such believers as Catholic because the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity holds that Christ is both Co-eternal and Begotten at the same time, a devilish dialectic dilemma indeed! The point I would make is that to say someone holds a Catholic view because they believe Christ is brought forth from the Father is to suggest that our pioneers placed the platform of Adventism squarely upon a Catholic base. The absurdity of this need not be documented or expressed further.

I mentioned earlier that if the position hammered out by our pioneers gave a view of Christ that was essentially not who He was then the whole system is infected by the wrong framework. The entire system must be re-laid, renovated and changed. A new order of books would need to be written, a new system of education would need to be engaged to recover from such a tragic mistake.

The question is what has been taking place in Adventism? Exactly the above! A new order of books that downplay the literal sanctuary, shifts on justification and sanctification, shift on the

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to choose sides. As George W. Bush expressed it “either you are with us or you are with the terrorists” (Higher Critics)

## Chapter 26 – Growing on the Solid Platform

nature of Christ, shifts on the investigative judgement, shifts on Christian perfection, shifts on the role of the Spirit of Prophecy, shifts on the roles of men and women. This onward march of shifting and switching at such a scale does clearly indicate that either the pioneers did lay the foundations incorrectly or the current church has stepped off the original platform. As James White expressed it “There is no middle ground”

Ellen White speaks directly to this issue when she states:

History is repeating. With the open Bible before them, and professing to reverence its teachings, many of the religious leaders of our time are destroying faith in it as the word of God. They busy themselves with dissecting the word, and set their own opinions above its plainest statements. In their hands God's word loses its regenerating power. This is why infidelity runs riot, and iniquity is rife.

When Satan has undermined faith in the Bible, he directs men to other sources for light and power. Thus he insinuates himself. Those who turn from the plain teaching of Scripture and the convicting power of God's Holy Spirit are inviting the control of demons. Criticism and speculation concerning the Scriptures have opened the way for spiritism and theosophy--those modernized forms of ancient heathenism--to gain a foothold even in the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Side by side with the preaching of the gospel, agencies are at work which are but the medium of lying spirits. Many a man tampers with these merely from curiosity, but seeing evidence of the working of a more than human power, he is lured on and on, until he is controlled by a will stronger than his own. He cannot escape from its mysterious power. DA 258

## **27. Assumed as a Fact**

### **A. Trinity Foundation of All Other Doctrines**

The Roman Catholic Church states that the Trinity is the foundation of their faith from which all the rest of their teachings flow. She states:

“The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church. . . . The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarifications, 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*, 1977. pg. 12.)

Roman Catholicism has at its heart a system of righteousness by works. This system worships the performance based connection between the members of its Trinity. Catholicism understands clearly that the Trinity they worship forms the basis of all other doctrines. All their doctrines are an expression of works because the Trinity they worship defines its relationships through a process of works. The effort to prove that the Son is equal to the Father in inherent power lays the framework for all systems of righteousness by works or a counter movement of forensic justification in Protestant systems.

### **B. Link Between Trinity and Sunday**

As Sabbath keepers we remind our Protestant friends that there is no Scriptural basis for Sunday keeping and we even pull out quotes from the Roman Catholic church to show they agree with us. Just read *Rome's Challenge*.<sup>182</sup> Well the Catholic Church also has something to say about the Trinity.

“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... it is our claim that Tradition alone - founded on the Apostles' teaching, analyzed and reflected on through the ages by the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit promised by Christ - illumines the full and true meaning of the Scriptures.” (The Catholic Church's New Dogma: The Assumption Of Mary By Graham Green, *LIFE*, Oct.30, 1950, (emphasis in [brackets] supplied)).

Please observe the connection between Sunday observance and the Trinity in this Catholic statement quoted in the *Review and Herald*:

“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

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<sup>182</sup> To read *Rome's Challenge*, go to [www.tencommandments.com.au](http://www.tencommandments.com.au)

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 (RH, Aug 22, 1854; quoted from Doctrinal Catechism).”

### **C. Trinity is an Assumed Teaching**

In 1854, the Adventist Review exposed the non-Biblical position of the Trinity. In 1981 it agreed with Rome that this teaching is not explicitly revealed in Scripture but assumed to be true.

“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, 1981, P. 4) (Emphasis Supplied)

This is an amazing admission. It states “It is assumed as a fact.” Is it safe to assume facts to be true? In all my time as an Adventist, I have shown people that Sunday observance is not based on Scripture using the Catechism but never read further to find that the Trinity doctrine is exactly the same. Are you challenged like me to make sure our teachings are only from the Word of God?

As an Adventist I had always understood that our understanding of the Trinity was different to the Catholic one, and indeed our second fundamental belief would tend to suggest that:

“There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)”

### **D. Three Persons in One Mysterious Unity or in One Mysterious Substance?**

This view suggests three separate Persons that are one in unity and purpose. But to my surprise, I found recently that there are also statements in Adventist publications that do indeed appear to present a Catholic position. When we say Catholic position, we mean that which is based on the Athanasian creed. Here it is:

“...And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, ... neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, ... the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost

uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternal, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. .... So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be both God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the Catholic Religion, to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords. .... So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.....”<sup>183</sup>

This view presents three distinct Persons in one substance. The oneness is in substance not just in unity. Interestingly, a book produced by an Adventist Pastor and is available in the Adventist Book Centre states:

“What Trinitarians really do say is that what we can only describe as three Persons all exist within one substance.” *Understanding the Trinity*, p. 133

So some Adventists do express the Trinity in similar terms to the Catholics. And as we see below, some Catholic publications express the view close to the Adventist understanding:

“The Trinity is the term employed to signify the central doctrine of the Christian religion -the truth that in the unity of the Godhead there are Three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, these Three Persons being 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.'... Yet, notwithstanding this difference as to origin, the Persons are co-eternal and co-equal: all alike are uncreated and omnipotent. This, the Church teaches, is the revelation regarding God's nature which she proposes to man as the foundation of her whole dogmatic system.”  
(*The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1912 ed. vol. 15 p.47*)

This statement does not emphasize the one substance (although it would be implied by the reference to the Athanasian creed) but three beings that are distinct but co-equal and co-eternal.

## E. Different But Same

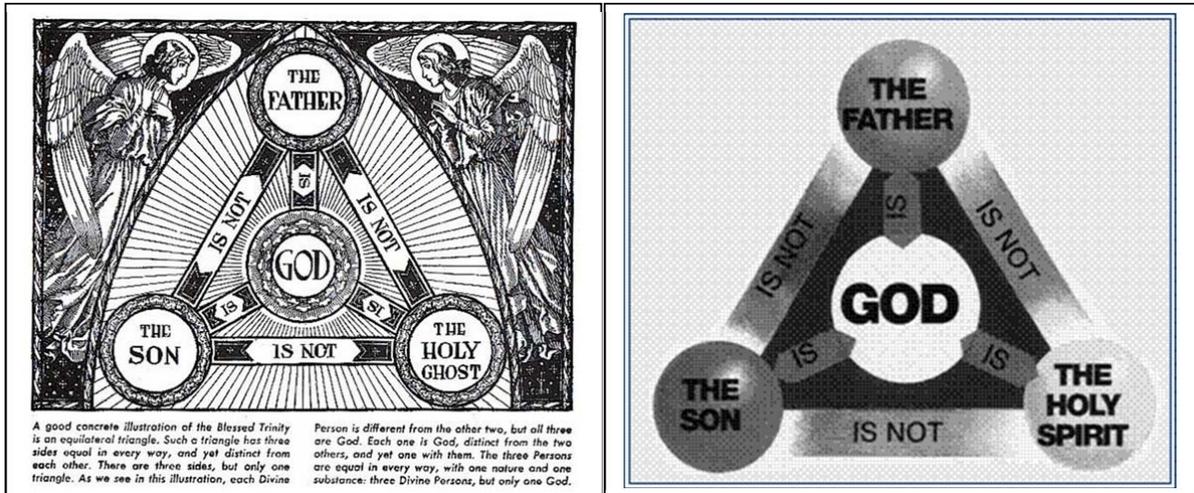
One thing that I found interesting was two illustrations used to explain the Trinity. The one on the left is Catholic<sup>184</sup> and the one on the right is Adventist.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Max Hatton, *Understanding the Trinity*, p. 13

<sup>184</sup> *My Catholic Faith* by Bishop Louis, LaRavoire Morrow, S.T.D

<sup>185</sup> *The New Pictorial Aid for Bible Study*, p. 75



These two diagrams have been sourced from what a Catholic and an Adventist understands from their creed or fundamental statement. The outcome appears to be the same.

In the end it is not the actual version of the Trinity that is the essential issue. It is the underlying assumption that a **“Position of Divinity is only ascribed to Beings of highest inherent power”**. The terms co-equal and co-eternal found in both statements clearly reflect this and that is all that is needed to destroy the personality of God and His Son and cause us to lose the WAY to God.<sup>186</sup>

I don’t know about you, but after having learned these things, I believe that we are not standing on solid ground on this issue.

- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, is not explicitly stated in Scripture.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, was introduced in the centuries after the first apostles.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance<sup>187</sup>, distorts our understanding of the personality of God and His Son. It altered their *relationship* from inheritance to co-equality.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, confuses righteousness by faith. The Trinity takes away the *relational* access to God and Sunday focuses on the event of the resurrection rather than the *relationship* we enter into on the Sabbath.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, is the heart and soul of Catholic faith.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, was rejected by our pioneers.

Do these things at all concern you? Are we sure that every part of our faith is based on Scripture and not tradition? What will we do when we are called to stand before the world and defend the Sabbath claiming that everything we believe as Seventh-day Adventists is from a ‘Thus says the

<sup>186</sup> The work of the papal church was to be of an exactly opposite character to that of Christ...The Papacy, claiming to be the vicegerent of the Son of God, is in truth the vicegerent of another power. ST Nov 19, 1894. A number of Adventists indicate that the doctrine of the Trinity formed by the Catholic Church was essentially correct with the need for some alterations, but how can a church that works in a character exactly opposite to Christ and ruled by a power opposite to that of God formulate a view of Christ that is anything close to correct. It can be nothing but entirely opposite.

<sup>187</sup> Sunday is a symbol of inherent power that stems back to Nimrod and his flight through the heavens protecting the inhabitants of the earth. Sunday in the Trinity also points to the power by which Christ raises Himself.

Lord' in the Bible? How will we reply when the spiritual descendents of the bishop of Reggio<sup>188</sup> come to us and say “You claim to follow the Bible with every teaching and yet you admit yourself in your own publications that the Trinity is nowhere explicitly taught in the Scriptures and is **ASSUMED AS A FACT!**” What answer will we give?

R.M Johnston sums up the Adventist dilemma well when he says:

“For while it is true that no formal statement of the doctrine can be found in the most reliable Biblical manuscripts, nevertheless a comparison of Scripture with Scripture makes any contrary teaching untenable.” (R. M. Johnston, Ministry, November 1964, What Can We Know About the Holy Trinity?)

The reasoning process here is that while the Trinity can't be found in Scripture, anything else would be untenable. Here is the heart of the issue. Adventism accepts the Trinity because it can't see any other way to preserve the Divinity of Christ and the Personality of the Spirit. I contend that in this manuscript is presented a clear alternative that preserves the Divinity of the Son and the Personality of the Spirit and yet avoids the dangers of speculation brought about by a false concept of equality.

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<sup>188</sup> The Bishop of Reggio was the man who withstood the reformers at the council of Trent and stalled the reformation by saying “If you claim to follow the Bible and the Bible alone then you should keep the Sabbath, because Sunday is nowhere found in Scripture.” The reformers Bible-stand was proved to be hollow and they capitulated and the integrity of the reformation was lost.

## **28. Seven Common Methods Used to Defend the Trinity**

### **1. A Spiritual view of Father and Son as opposed to Literal Position (Addressed in Chapters 23, 25, 26)**

One of the key arguments used against a true Father and Son relationship is that it is too literal and is a superimposing of human concepts onto God. A true Father and Son relationship is seen as diminishing the equality of the Son with the Father. The central flaw of this argument is to fail to define the basis of equality. Power based equality is naturally assumed in exactly the same manner as William Miller assumed the Sanctuary to be the earth. As I have endeavoured to show in this paper, the concept of equality reflected in power and position terms is a superimposing of human ideas onto the Godhead. I contend that Miller's failure to correctly define the term Sanctuary led to severe disappointment, so our failure to correctly determine the nature of equality will do the same. Based on a power-performance view of equality, I concur that it is impossible to hold a literal view of the Father-Son relationship. This is a natural consequence. The second consequence is an altering of hermeneutical principles from a plain reading to a spiritualized reading as we see evidenced below:

“Another important point involves how we interpret the Bible. Here the issue pertains to whether we should interpret some passages literally or whether we may treat them more figuratively. Maybe we could illustrate this way. While we often refer to Jesus as the Son and frequently call the first person of the Godhead the Father, do we really want to take such expressions in a totally literal way? Or would it be more appropriate to interpret them in a more metaphorical way that draws on selective aspects of sonship and fatherhood” “The Trinity” by Whidden, Moon and Reeve, Page 94

The authors question was, do we need to take things in a literal way? The question I pose is, what drives the inclination to a metaphorical understanding, is it not a predetermination that the Trinity is correct?

“It is not quite apparent that the problem texts become problems only when one assumes an exclusively literalistic interpretation of such expressions as “Father,” “Son,” “Firstborn,” “Only Begotten,” “Begotten” and so forth? Does such literalism go against the mainly figurative or metaphorical meaning that the Bible writers use when referring to the persons of the Godhead.” Ibid Page 106

The texts are only a problem if you pre-determine a Trinitarian view. The authors take incredible liberties to assume they know what the Bible writers were meaning and pronounce a figurative meaning. Once you use a metaphorical reasoning process to deal with Bible passages that don't suit your pre-determination, any Bible doctrine that stands in your way can be brought to the position you want. The needless assumption of the metaphorical makes certain man's triumph over that which he is required to believe. This is the method used by Evangelicals to escape the Sabbath, by making it a spiritual rest only rather than a literal one.

“In their zeal to reject everything not found in the Bible, the "Christians" were betrayed by over literalism into interpreting the Godhead in terms of the human relationships suggested by the words "Son," "Father," and "begotten," that is, into a tendency to disparage the non-Biblical word "Trinity" and to contend that the Son must have had a beginning in the remote past.” QOD Page 47

Froom accuses some of the pioneers of interpreting the Godhead in human relational terms while he fails to realise that the Trinity can be easily seem as a human construct to support power equality. The argument is completely flawed. Based on his metaphorical view of Scripture Froom goes a step further when he writes

“There is danger of limiting our idea of personality to bodily manifestations. It seems difficult to grasp the idea of personality apart from the tangible bodily form of humanity—existence with a limited, human, bodily shape. But personality and such corporeality are to be clearly distinguished, though they are often confused. Personality does not require the limitations of humanity.”<sup>189</sup>

No Scriptural evidence is given to support this view, it is a philosophical leap from a metaphorical mindset. Apart from this it expresses the very sentiments that Kellogg expressed.<sup>190</sup>

“The Doctrine of the Trinity. The word “begotten” *was* taken literally, [by the pioneers] which meant that Christ at some point in eternity proceeded from the Father, and was therefore subordinate to Him.” G Pfandl – The Doctrine of the Trinity among Seventh-day Adventists. Journal of the Adventist Theological Society Spring 2006. Page 165.

The assumption made that a begotten Son automatically demands a subordinate inferior Christ. When the assumption is corrected, subordination is no longer an issue.

Early Adventists strove to be true to Scripture. When they read “first-born of every creature,” they took it at face value. Other Bible phrases, such as “only begotten Son of God,” also were understood on a literal English level. – Merlin Burt, Journal of Adventist Theological Society page 128. Spring 2006.

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<sup>189</sup> L. E. Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter*, rev. ed., 1956

<sup>190</sup> For an expanded discussion on this see Brendan Knudson’s work, *the Alpha and Omega of Deadly Heresy*. Commenting on Froom, Knudson makes this important observation: “It is largely from Froom that the church has inherited its hermeneutic in interpreting the statements of Ellen White on the Father, Son and Spirit. He boasted at one time to R. A. Anderson, with whom he worked on the compilation *Evangelism*, “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.” (Letter dated 18-1-1966).” Here we see some of the political motivation of Froom to shift the Denomination to a Trinity position based on a metaphorical view of Father and Son and a view of personality apart from a form or body. Whatever Froom’s motivations, it is impossible for Froom to escape a comparison to Kellogg’s views.

Does the above author infer that early Adventists were naïve and that an informed face value reading of Scripture is a sign of weakness?

There is no direct Biblical reason to take a spiritual rather than a literal view of the Father and Son relationship except that it makes it impossible to believe in a power-equality Trinity. This is open to the charge of premise forcing, a putting of the cart before the horse. Notice the pioneer principles for interpretation

“How to know when a word is used figuratively. If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally, if not, figuratively.” Rev. xii. 1,2. xvii. 3-7. Millers rules of interpretation XI

I contend that it does make good sense to understand the terms Father and Son just as they read. The only reason I can see not to, is to defend a predetermined agenda. Opponents will create straw man arguments trying to push this into extreme literalism, such as Jesus is the true vine.<sup>191</sup> We can all laugh at this and say of course we don't take that to a literal extreme, because it does violence to the simple laws of nature. But comparing the term Son to Christ being the Vine or the door as a reason to avoid calling Jesus a literal Son is quite a poor argument and suggests desperation.

“The Most Holy, containing the Ark of the Ten Commandments, was then opened for our Great High Priest to enter to make atonement for the cleansing of the Sanctuary. If we take the liberty to say there is not a literal Ark, containing the Ten Commandments in heaven, we may go only a step further and deny the literal City, and the literal Son of God. Certainly, Adventists should not choose the spiritual view, rather than the one we have presented. We see no middle ground to be taken.” James White {J. S. White, The Parable, p. 16}

James understood the implications of a spiritual view on other doctrines. It is interesting that he contends that a spiritual view of the sanctuary could lead to a spiritual view of the literal Son of God and which he saw as a rejection of Adventism. Ellen White echoes her husbands view with a number of statements supporting a plain reading of scripture.

- A great work can be done by presenting to the people the Bible just as it reads. 5T 388
- If all would take the Scripture just as it reads, and open their hearts to understand the word... CS 92
- He is seeking to teach them that the Lord's way is always to be closely followed, that His word is to be taken as it reads, and that men are not to devise and plan according to their own judgment, irrespective of His counsel. {CT 353.1}
- Unaccustomed to accept God's Word exactly as it reads, or to allow it to be its own interpreter, they read it in the light of their maxims and traditions. So long had they neglected to study and contemplate the Bible that its pages were to them a mystery. They turned with aversion from the truth of God to the traditions of men. {CTr 226.3}

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<sup>191</sup> Whidden, Moon, Reeve. The Trinity Page 94

Dealing directly with the issue of a literal Father and Son, Ellen White is explicit on this issue.

- “God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” 8T 268 (1909)
- "The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality." UL 367

In summary, a failure to define the basis of equality and giving a strictly Biblical framework for that definition, forces a spiritualized method of interpreting scripture. Once this principle is established, the central principle of Protestantism (The Bible and the Bible Only) fails and tradition must triumph. It is important to remember that the breeding ground of the Trinity took place in Alexandria, a place well known for using a spiritualized method of interpretation. My appeal to my brethren is to examine the basis of equality in a scriptural context rather than assume the meaning of the term.

## **2. A Change in the Identity of Christ in the Incarnation (Addressed in Chapter 24)**

The centre of this debate usually revolves around a discussion on the meaning and timing of begotten. Once a person is committed to a power-equality Trinity using a spiritualized method of interpretation, then obviously it is impossible to believe that Christ was begotten in eternity. The spiritualized principle once started must continue and therefore not only must cause the terms Father and Son be spiritualized but also the term begotten. The flow on effect begins. The spiritual view allows for two alternatives, a spiritual begetting in eternity or a spiritual begetting at the incarnation. Most scholars favour the latter. In any event, it is a spiritual view that is presented. Notice the following sample statements.

- a. “Some passages that seem to point to the position of subordination that Christ takes in relation to the Father could very well be speaking from the perspective of His incarnate state rather than His glorified status. “The Trinity” by Whidden, Moon and Reeve. Page 94
- b. “However, as we will shortly find, there is no compelling evidence that the Son of God was “begotten” at any time before His incarnation.” Glyn Parfitt – The Trinity Book Page 45 in Manuscript.
- c. “I believe John 5:26 refers to the life given to the Son during the incarnation, not to Christ receiving life from the Father back in eternity.” Erwin Gane – Personal Email 3/10/07

A belief in a begetting at the incarnation ultimately involved a change in the nature of the relationship between Father and Son. Meaning, Christ was not a Son before the incarnation and He became a son after the incarnation. This method isolates passages of scripture that identify Christ as the Son of God. When people point to this as evidence of Sonship, the cry goes up – “yes but that is in the incarnation.” I addressed this issue in Chapter 24 but will raise a few points from John 5.

John 5:18 tells us:

## Chapter 28 – Seven Common Methods Used to Defend the Trinity

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

This verse is used consistently in Trinitarian contexts to refer to the pre-existent divinity of Christ and a reference proving that He is the second person of the Godhead.

But what about the next verse?

Joh 5:19 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.

This verse is consistently referred to as an incarnational reference. But what makes John 5:18 a reference to Christ's true existence and the next verse a reference to his incarnational work? Who decides? Without a consistent point of reference, everyone decides for themselves what verse refers to what segment.

Let's look at another example in John 5.

Joh 5:28,29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [Christ's] voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Christ is telling us that He possesses power to raise people from the dead, and that He will do it at the end of human history. Clearly, this is a reference to the power that Christ possesses, the power to give life. But the immediate verse following says this:

Joh 5:30 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.

Is John 5:30 simple an incarnational reference? If we would allow the terms Father and Son to be our consistent point of reference, we would not even have to ask this question, because no segmentation is required, because any references to Father and Son, reveal exactly who they are, not just what they do. Again the Spirit of Prophecy is reasonably clear on this issue:

**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.

Jesus said to the Jews: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. . . . 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. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." John 5:17-20.

Here again is brought to view the personality of the Father and the Son, showing the unity that exists between them. {8T 269.4}

Notice carefully that Ellen White opens this passage with a clear statement that the relation of Father and Son is clearly revealed in their relation to each other and their personality. She then refers to Heb 1:1-4 and then moves directly to John 5:17-20 where Christ says he can do nothing of himself and again restates that this is the relation of the Father and the Son. There is no segmenting of the verses, it is consistent all the way through. This shows that Ellen White uses a universal point of reference of Father and Son, not a segmented incarnational era verses pre-begotten era. The only reason I can see to divide the Scriptures in this way is due to a predetermined view of a power-equality Trinity. Once this predetermination is removed and Scripture is read plainly there is no issue here.

### 3. Confusion over the Term Mystery (Addressed in Chapter 23)

The use of the word mystery to describe God can lead to immediate conflict of ideas. The Bible clearly tells us that salvation is directly linked to knowing God.<sup>192</sup> Ellen White says that in order to be like God, we must know Him aright.<sup>193</sup> There is no question in Scripture that we must know God's character in order to know Him. No one would argue against this fact. When we come to discuss some aspects of God's nature, like, where does His power come from, or how does He speak things into existence, or what is the substance of His body, none of this is revealed to us, it is a mystery. But there are clearly some aspects of His nature that we do understand as Paul states in Rom 1:20

**Rom 1:20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. NIV

How then do we divide the need to know His Character from the inability to understand certain aspects of His nature? Where is the dividing line? There is obviously a tension here. There are two dangers present. If we try and seek to understand the mysterious aspects of God's nature, we can very quickly fall into idolatry and develop a false concept of God. On the other hand if we attribute parts of God's nature that have been revealed or all of His character and person that we need to know, as a mystery, we are in danger of not knowing the essential part of God that is critical to our salvation.

When we use the terms Father and Son, are these terms knowable and understandable? Do these terms reflect the respective characters of Father and Son that we must know or are they transient

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<sup>192</sup> John 17:3

<sup>193</sup> Ministry of Healing 409.

labels reflecting a Deity that we cannot really know? Secondly, is it important to know how the Father relates to the Son? Does their relationship have any bearing on how we should treat each other? Is not their relationship foundational to all relationships and how they should be conducted?

It is common knowledge for Bible students, that names of individuals in the Bible were attached to their character. Ellen White reflects this view when she states:

Great significance was attached to the names given by Hebrew parents to their children. Often these stood for traits of character that the parent desired to see developed in the child. PK 481

Is it possible that this principle established by God and representative of His kingdom could apply to the terms Father and Son. Are these terms reflective of Character, personality and person or are they simply functional, workable labels and metaphors to help us scratch the surface of a great mystery?

There certainly are mysteries concerning God that we do not understand, but a Trinity model creates extra-biblical mysteries that force a retreat to the mystery as an only defense. The things that are revealed are for us and our children and it is our duty to study them out and get the Bible answer. I think Raoul Dederen sums it up quite well:

“The difficulty is evident enough. A doctrine that affirms that God is one, and yet that there are three persons in God, must often bewilder the mind in its attempt to find a relevant and intelligible framework in which that seeming contradiction can be expressed and at the same time meet the average person's religious needs. No wonder that the reference to the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible has encouraged sardonic remarks to the effect that the whole doctrine is incomprehensible.” Raoul Dederen. ‘Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity,’ 1970. Andrews University.

And sometimes these remarks are not always sardonic but simply a cry of confusion and sadness that the doctrine of God has been made so hard to understand.

In dialogue with Erwin Gane, he expressed to me the following:

The problem arises, I believe because of a misunderstanding of Jesus' teaching. John 14:9 says "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." Then He proceeded to say, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." Here is a very mysterious relationship. There is a unity of existence between the Father and the Son which is infinitely mysterious. ***They are One in a sense that human minds cannot grasp.*** So much so that Isa. 9:6 can refer to the Son as "Mighty God, Everlasting Father." And Col. 2:9 tells us that "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."

Gerhard Pfandl expresses it this way:

“God himself is a mystery, how much more the incarnation or the Trinity. However, that should not trouble us as long as the different aspects of these

mysteries are clearly taught in Scripture. Even though we may not be able to comprehend logically the various aspects of the trinity, we need to try and understand as best as we can the scriptural teaching regarding it. All attempts to explain the Trinity will fall short, “especially when we reflect on the relation of the three persons to the divine essence ... all analogies fail us and we become deeply conscious of the fact that the Trinity is a mystery far beyond our comprehension. It is the incomprehensible glory of the Godhead.” Therefore, we do well to admit that “man cannot comprehend it and make it intelligible. It is intelligible in some of its relations and modes of manifestations, but unintelligible in its essential nature.” G. Pfandl. *The Trinity in Scripture*, 1999.

If all attempts to explain the Trinity will fall short and is far beyond our comprehension, why do we even have fundamentals about it? If we can't explain it, then we are bound to mislead people when we try to explain it. If we can't explain it should there not be a measure of restraint against attacking those who might see this mystery from a different perspective? It's hard to be dogmatic about a mystery. Isn't it? I believe this is why Ellen White says that each person should study this subject for themselves and come to their own conclusions.<sup>194</sup>

I can certainly see how this could be a mystery from a Trinitarian point of view, but if the Father-Son relationship is beyond the comprehension of the human mind, where do we turn for a model of a perfect relationship to pattern after? Is the oneness of the Father, Son relationship so hard to understand? Again it must be conceded that there are aspects of this relationship we certainly don't understand but is it mysterious to the point where we can't even identify with them. Ellen White states clearly that the oneness between Father and Son can be understood because it is the same as the oneness between Christ as the disciples.

“Christ is one with the Father, but Christ and God are two distinct personages. Read the prayer of Christ in the seventeenth chapter of John, and you will find this point clearly brought out. How earnestly the Saviour prayed that His disciples might be one with Him as He is one with the Father. But the unity that is to exist between Christ and His followers does not destroy the personality of either. They are to be one with Him as He is one with the Father.” *Review and Herald*, 1-6-1905.

So when Dr Gane says that God is one in a sense that we can't understand, he may have overlooked the above statement and sentiments of John 17. Only the Trinity makes it mysteriously complex and yet it does not need to be this complex. Nothing in the Bible demands such complexity except we demand to superimpose our presuppositions upon it. Roman 1:20 states quite clearly that:

**Rom 1:20** Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse;

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<sup>194</sup> “I say, and have ever said, that I will not engage in controversy with any one in regard to the nature and personality of God. Let those who try to describe God know that on such a subject silence is eloquence. Let the Scriptures be read in simple faith, and let each one form his conceptions of God from his inspired word.” Spalding and Magan collection p. 329

Paul says, that His invisible attributes are clearly perceived in the things that are made. I think that makes it fairly plain. If not, the John 17:3 formula for salvation becomes very problematic.

In the Sabbath School Lesson of April 10, 2008 Roy Adams states the following:

In John 10:30, for example, He declared: 'I and the Father are one' (NIV). The neuter form of the Greek used here for 'one' implies a union as close as our minds can conceive. Jesus and the Father are of one substance, one nature, yet not one and the same Person (in which case He would have used the masculine gender). If you have trouble plumbing the depths of all this, you have lots of company. The deeper you probe the subject, the more keenly you understand the depths of your ignorance.

Again, from a power equality point of view in the Trinity, this concept of oneness is indeed a mind boggling mystery. But from a perspective of the Son being in the image of the Father and receiving everything from Him and a sharing of a very close relationship, certainly we can say that the eternal Godhead can be understood by the things that are made.<sup>195</sup> It is the doctrine of the Trinity that creates the impossibilities to the point where I am asked to believe in something that I can't even comprehend nor understand. God says. Let us reason together.<sup>196</sup> Again I state there is much we do not know about God, it has not been revealed, but what has been revealed clearly states that there is a Father: the source of all and His only begotten Son, who received an inheritance from the Father, so in Him dwells all the fullness and that God is present with us as a person through the omnipresent Spirit. This is not complicated, it is rather simple and all of this is revealed in Scripture and is for us and our children.<sup>197</sup>

My main concerns about the use of mystery language is its impact of the identity of God and our ability to relate to Him. Again in the Sabbath School Lesson of April 10 2008, Roy Adams highlights the potential confusion of identity that can arise when we believe in the Trinity.

But imagine a situation in which the being we have come to know as God the Father came to die for us, and the one we have come to know as Jesus stayed back in heaven (we are speaking in human terms to make a point). Nothing would have changed, except that we would have been calling each by the name we now use for the other. That is what equality in the Deity means.

The point here is that the identity of the person is irrelevant, only the job matters. This must be the inevitable result of power equality.<sup>198</sup> It is also the inevitable result of a spiritualized view of God. Speaking in human terms, it would not matter if you called your father, mother or your mother, father, the only thing that matters is what role they fulfill at the time. But this cuts across the heart of relational identity and the point of knowing someone. If a person changes as in Son and Father, then they cease to exist as they were, the connection is lost, and so is the blessing. I cannot accept such speculation and reject it as an attack on my personal relationship with the Father and Son I have come to love and know through the Scriptures.

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<sup>195</sup> Romans 1:20

<sup>196</sup> Isa 1:18

<sup>197</sup> Deut 29:29

<sup>198</sup> We see this principle reflected in the human sphere with the drive for women's eldership and ordination. Identity as a woman is irrelevant only the job matters and is completely interchangeable. The result will be utter identity and relational confusion. This is exactly what Satan wants.

#### 4. Performance Based Measuring of Deity (Addressed in Chapter 21)

This is the key issue in my mind and yet I have not found in any of the literature I have read that the word equal or equality means anything else than performance based equality. No alternatives seem to have been perceived let alone entertained.

In reading through Whidden, Moon and Reeve's book, the terms "Full Deity" of Christ are presented again and again in terms of the power that Christ possesses of himself.<sup>199</sup> It is his own powers that qualify Him as divine. No where is the idea entertained that such power could be inherited and equality is in the relationship. I contend that equality can be seen differently and the Deity of Christ preserved and actually enhanced in this model.

This power based equality is clearly stated in Questions on Doctrine.

(1) Christ is one with the Eternal Father—one in nature, equal in power and authority, God in the highest sense, eternal and self-existent, with life original, unborrowed, underived; and (2) that Christ existed from all eternity, distinct from, but united with, the Father, possessing the same glory, and all the divine attributes. QOD 14 web edition on MaranathaMedia.com

QOD makes it clear that Christ's Divinity is unequivocally from His own resources and not in any way inherited from the Father. In personal discussions with some scholars I have been told exactly the same – Deity can only be recognized through self originated inherent power and position. I contend that such a belief does not arise from Scripture but is rather forced onto Scripture. It is Lucifer not Christ who seeks equality through power and position. Christ's equality is assured in His relationship to the Father, He didn't need to prove it to Satan in the Temptation in the Wilderness and He doesn't need to prove it to us. We all can just accept the Word of the Father that Christ is His Beloved Son and it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell.<sup>200</sup>

I quoted this before, but this statement provides the best example of identity destruction.

But imagine a situation in which the being we have come to know as God the Father came to die for us, and the one we have come to know as Jesus stayed back in heaven (we are speaking in human terms to make a point). Nothing would have changed, except that we would have been calling each by the name we now use for the other. *That is what equality in the Deity means.* [Emphasis mine] Sabbath School Lesson April 10 2008.

If we accept power-based equality, this statement must indeed be correct. But what are the implications? Identifications of individuals become meaningless, they can no longer represent who that person is. This principle can open the door to role identity neutering and confusion of how we relate to each member of the Godhead.

Vance Ferrell continues this principle in the following statement:

People confuse the nature of the Godhead with Their work. Learning about the individual mission of each member to save mankind, we are tempted to

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<sup>199</sup> Whidden, Moon and Reeve, Pages 23-30

<sup>200</sup> Col 1:19

imagine that Their individual activities and work for mankind explain the nature and inner attributes of each of Them. Yet we are limited by our language. So in identifying each member of the Godhead, in this book we will speak of Them as the Father, the Son or Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The problem here is that these names identify Their work, not Their nature. (Defending the Godhead Page 7)

Vance Ferrell indicates like Roy Adams that the terms Father and Son do not reflect their identity but their work. Can it not be seen that this is identity destruction, that this actually makes it impossible to know the members of the Godhead. The answer comes, but God is a mystery beyond our comprehension. This must make God ultimately unknowable and this is the genius of the Trinity doctrine; to make a doctrine that passes a means of remembering God that actually leads to forgetting Him. It is my observation that while those of us who have grown in the modern era and simply ask the question “Is it right?” for those of us brought up in a post modern environment where relational elements have become increasingly important, the Trinity is going to continue to come under fire as not meeting the relational needs of people apart from the fact it is not explicitly stated in the Bible.

I could cite several more examples but it appears to be commonly accepted as a universal principle of determining Deity. I reject this principle on the basis that this methodology is not supported in Scripture.

### **5. Conducting the Discussion in Terms of Nicean and Athanasian Creeds.**

It is quite amazing to me that many in our church would accept the Nicea and Athanasian Creedal statements as a point to work forward from and a legitimate context for a discussion of the Godhead. These creeds were introduced in a period of wholesale apostasy and as these creeds were formulated in the period of Pergamos, I find them highly suspect. In his book “Understanding the Trinity”, Max Hatton begins chapter one with quoting the Athanasian Creed.<sup>201</sup> While he modifies some aspects of it, it is his starting point. For anyone who studies the history of the development of these creeds it must be understood that God had no hand in formulating them.

There is a more subtle form of dragging the Godhead debate back to the apostasy of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries and that is the continuing use of labels such as Arian and Semi-Arian. Whether one believes the creeds or not, to invoke these terms is to immediately set the stage of orthodoxy and non-orthodoxy in the context of the Nicean and Athanasian creeds. It seems quite odd to me that on the one hand some Adventists will claim they reject the Catholic Trinity and yet will still employ the labels that arose out of the Catholic formulation of the Trinity. Why not use the term semi-Trinitarian? It makes as much sense as semi-Arian.

A third issue that I find interesting is that many Adventist scholars will favourably quote works from contemporary protestant authors concerning the Godhead. I find it difficult to conceive that someone who believes that the human soul is immortal and who also believes that God burns sinners in hell forever could have any right conception of God.<sup>202</sup> To my mind, these authors worship and speak of a god that I do not acknowledge, nor will worship, therefore to favourably

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<sup>201</sup> Max Hatton, Understanding the Trinity, Page 13

<sup>202</sup> This is not a cause for blame or to attack individual authors, it is simply the legacy they have been handed from earlier church fathers.

quote their works and echo their sentiments might seem like good scholarship but it is dangerous and can lead to the wrong conclusions.

## 6. Making Assumptions. (Addressed in Chapter 27)

When it comes to truth, is it wise to assume things not stated in Scripture? The Church does admit that the doctrine of the Trinity is exactly that – an assumption.

“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, 1981, P. 4) (Emphasis Supplied)

“Although the Old Testament does not explicitly teach that God is triune, it alludes to a plurality within the Godhead.” Seventh-day Adventists Believe ... A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines, 1988. R & H Publishing Assoc. p.22.

Fernando Canale is correct when he states:

“Because human philosophy is called to be subject to the Bible, and since divine philosophy is already available in the Scriptures, our understanding of God must stand free from human speculations.” (Fernando L. Canale, the Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia Volume 12, page 105, ‘Doctrine of God.’)

But later he appears to make a statement that completely denies his previous statement:

“The concept of the Trinity, namely the idea that the three are one, is not explicitly stated but only assumed.” (Ibid, page 138)

Many would agree that it is a calculated human assumption based on what appears to be correct, but in the end it must be conceded that it is human speculation. H. Maldwyn Hughes, the very first principal of Wesley House, a Methodist theological College acknowledges this speculation when he states:

“The doctrine of the Trinity is not primarily a speculative doctrine. It is a speculative construction of materials provided by revelation and Christian experience. The definition has stood the test of time, mainly because it is believed that the Church was divinely guided in framing it.” (H. Maldwyn Hughes, M. A., D. D. Christian foundations, An introduction to Christian doctrine, page 141, fourth edition, July 1933)

Some may quibble about this being a Methodist perspective, but Adventist Scholars freely quote evangelical scholars to make their points concerning the Trinity. Many of these scholars freely admit that the Trinity is not a Bible based doctrine:

“Exegetes and theologians today are in agreement that the Hebrew Bible does not contain a doctrine of the Trinity, even though it was customary in past dogmatic tracts on the Trinity to cite texts like Genesis 1:26, “Let us make humanity in our image, after our likeness”(see also Gn. 3:22, 11:7, Is. 62-3) as

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proof of plurality in God.” (Encyclopedia of Religion, Trinity, Volume 15, page 54, 1987)

It also says later;

“Further, exegetes and theologians agree that the New Testament also does not contain an explicit doctrine of the trinity.” (Ibid)

While some scholars might disagree with this assessment, they majority appear to admit it. The question must be asked – Is this the way we should form Bible doctrine?

Again, Whidden, Moon and Reeve, rely on strong clues rather than explicit statements when they say:

“Probably the strongest clues to such a divine triunity occur in the famous gospel commission that Jesus gave the church in its baptismal formula: ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Matt. 28:19).” The Trinity, by Jerry Moon, Woodrow Whidden, & John W. Reese, published by R & H 2002, p.32. (Chapter entitled “The Strongest Biblical Evidence for the Trinity”)

The strongest clues are of course not explicit statements. Using a methodology of strongest clues for that which you want to find can lead to statements like the following:

“But what about direct prayer to the Holy Spirit? While we have no clear example of or direct command to pray to the Holy Spirit in Scripture, doing so does have, in principle some implicit biblical support.... It only seems logical that God’s people can pray directly to and worship the Holy Spirit. (The Trinity. Page 273)

Wow, this is a big call. Even though the Bible does not command it, these men feel it is ok to pray directly to the Holy Spirit. Is this a safe Biblical principle? I think Richard Rice sums it up best when he says:

“The role of the trinity in a doctrine of God always raises questions. One reason is that the word itself does not appear in the Bible, nor is there any clear statement of the idea. But the Bible does set the stage for its formulation, and the concept represents a development of biblical claims and concepts. So even though the doctrine of the trinity is not part of what the Bible itself says about God, it is part of what the church must say to safeguard the biblical view of God.” The Reign of God, An Introduction to Christian Theology from a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective. by Richard Rice. 1985. Andrews Uni Press.

The admission is plain. The Trinity is a device that the church felt it must construct to safeguard what they believed the Bible tries to say about God. This is a fairly clear case of tradition over Scripture and the wisdom of men being wiser than God.

Another assumption:

No informed Trinitarian has ever said that 3 persons = 1 Person. What Trinitarians really do say is that what we can only describe as three Persons all exist within the one substance. The Three Persons are therefore, the One God. (Understanding the Trinity Page 133)

Again, this is a big call and no scriptural support for it. I think many thinking Trinitarians would cringe at the above statement and I do know of at least one who calls it Heresy.<sup>203</sup>

Here is another statement:

Although the word Trinity is not found in the Bible (neither is the word incarnation), the teaching it describes is clearly found there. Briefly defined, the doctrine of the Trinity stands for the concept that “God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.” The Trinity in Scripture by Gerhard Pfandl June 1999

Again, the admission that it is not explicitly stated and yet is found in Scripture. Is this a safe procedure for a key doctrine of the Adventist Church?

One of the most fascinating reads is Vance Ferrell’s description of the Heavenly Council and how each member of the Godhead decided on the roles and how the three of them worked everything out.:

Returning now to that distant past. The three members of the Godhead had to figure out a way to solve three inherent problems:

The first problem was that the Godhead had such immense power, authority, and intellect. —The angels, the inhabitants of the other worlds, and humans on earth would have a difficult time relating to Them and loving Them. Although I like the little wild animals which live around my country home, they live in constant fear of me. Recognizing that I seem to have immense abilities and power which they cannot begin to understand, they are apprehensive.

The Godhead recognized that They would later face this same problem when They created such greatly subordinate beings. How could They express the great depth of Their love for those creatures and convince them of it?

The second problem was the fact that there were three in the Godhead. It is difficult to identify with three leaders. Think about that for a moment. (For example, how would fallen man go about praying to three Gods?) There was need for a special pattern, so humans would look to one sovereign God as Lord of all in their lives.

The third problem was that each of the members of the Godhead needed a definite name by which Their creatures could identify and partly understand them. Keep in mind that each was fully divine with all the powers of the other two; yet They needed separate names.

While each member of the Godhead, being infinite, had all power, each maintained a position and did a work which was different than the others. This was not difficult to do, since one was already the supreme One. Another

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<sup>203</sup> Vance Ferrell, *Defending the Godhead*. Chapters 4 and 5

was the beloved Son. The third was the Holy Spirit. Their positions and actions would solve each of the three problems mentioned above.<sup>204</sup>

Highly speculative and of course not found in the Bible.<sup>205</sup> Once you are no longer bound to Scripture, it becomes very simple to defend your position and you also can become very creative. Are we really Sola Scriptura in our beliefs?

## **7. Premise Forcing EGW Statements to Support the Trinity. (Addressed in Chapter 15)**

This method is common and was first employed by Froom when putting Evangelism together. I find it interesting that while the church does not generally believe in using EGW for doctrinal purposes, in the History of the Trinity she is pointed out as the key figure that shifted the churches doctrine into a Trinitarian view of the Godhead. If the doctrine was not a popular one like the investigative judgment, outsiders looking at our history could accuse us of getting our belief of the Trinity from Ellen White rather than the Bible, an interesting thought.

Ellen White makes many statements. Some certainly seem to indicate a view that reflects the Trinity and these are regularly quoted, but what about the many that are completely contrary. The only person I have read that has made a serious attempt to defend the Trinity using every statement of EGW is Vance Ferrell. I commend him for his effort, but the twists and turns required to make it all fit makes for a very interesting read.

For others Ellen White is convenient, we can quote her when she agrees with us and call her human when she does not. I address this issue in detail throughout the manuscript because it was the conflicting statements of EGW that first raised my interest in this subject. Of course those who oppose the Trinity often use the similar process of using Ellen White to defend their position and negate statements that seem to support the Trinity, again I challenge the method used here.

Whether we like it or not, whether we call her human or a lesser light or not doctrinal, as long as we encourage people to read EGW, this issue is going to keep surfacing. It will not simply disappear. She makes too many statements that don't support the current view of the Godhead. So it appears the Prophet that launched us into the freedoms and respect of Evangelical Christianity through the revelations of her statements on the Trinity, is now like an old anchor that is a bit irritating. Will we let the anchor hold or cut it loose and let our spiritualized views smash us on the rocks of ecumenism?

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid, Page 10,11

<sup>205</sup> I found this high level of speculation from Vance Ferrell disappointing for I have found his work in other areas to be quite good.

## 29. Christ as Originator or Representative

There are a number of places in Scripture where the differences between a life source model (that reveals Christ as Begotten) and a Trinitarian model (that depicts Christ as unbegotten,<sup>206</sup> possessing His own resources and sharing them with the Father) become most apparent. Notice the following passages:

**Isa 43:10** 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. I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.

**Isa 44:6** 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.

**Isa 44:24** Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

**Isa 45:5,6** I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else.

These passages present a challenge to both views. Each passage presents as a single individual being mentioned. The terms

“beside me there is no saviour:”  
“besides me there is no God”  
“spreadeth abroad the earth by myself”  
“there is none beside me”

are unequivocal and isolationist, everything is excluded beyond the single individual speaking. The Bible references Father, Son and Spirit as possessing the attributes of Deity and worship of both Father and Son are directly mandated in Scripture. Whidden, Moon and Reeve reflect some of the challenges in grappling with these passages when they state concerning Isa 43:10,11

...if we are to take seriously the clear testimony of the New Testament writers that Jesus is God, is to conclude that whoever the Lord, YHWH, or Jehovah who speaks in Isaiah 43:10,11 is, His Identity must include that of Jesus of the New Testament who claimed to be in some sense the Jehovah of the Old Testament.<sup>207</sup> The Trinity, Page 48

This is an important point. If Jesus is not included in the passages of Isa 43:10,11; 44:6 and 45:5,6, then how can Christ's claim to being equal with God and worshipped as God be sustained?<sup>208</sup> <sup>209</sup> On the other hand if Christ is included, how do we account for the unequivocal

<sup>206</sup> Many Trinitarians would deny that they believe Christ is unbegotten. Many see Christ as spiritually begotten to be a Son for the purposes of the gospel while others see Christ as begotten in the incarnation. In either case, this is not a true state of being begotten. To be spiritually begotten is like saying you believe in the rest of the Sabbath without the need for keeping the weekly Sabbath. It is only something spiritual.

<sup>207</sup> Whidden, Moon and Reeve, The Trinity, Page 48

<sup>208</sup> Phil 2:6; Matt 28:17; John 5:18

isolationist language? Would it not have been a lot simpler for the passages to say “There is no God besides Father, Son and Spirit in one indissoluble union”?

### **A. Making “I” mean “We” and “Me” mean “Us”**

In respect of a Trinity model, one way to solve this problem is to make “I” mean “We”. One member of the Godhead speaks for all of them and there is in fact no differentiation between members. This is where we have three persons in one substance<sup>210</sup> or we have a blending of the three persons in a mysterious unity that can’t be fully comprehended.<sup>211</sup> The two concepts are very similar and the end result is the same: A blended indissoluble mysterious unity that allows one to speak for all without focus on who is actually speaking.

Firstly: To accept this, there must be a linguistic sacrifice: “I” nor longer means “I” in the sense of English (and Hebrew) but rather “We” and “Me” can’t mean “Me” it must mean “Us”

Secondly: There must also be a loss of importance as to which member of the Godhead is actually speaking. Could knowing who is actually speaking be important? Is there a potential through the blending process, that the individuality of each member could be lost in certain texts? I guess for some this is not an important point as they are all the same in character anyway, but for those of us that actually are interested in a personal relationship with the individual person Jesus and the individual person of the Father, it certainly is important. The difference could be akin to the receiving of the usual Christmas family letter. Usually one member of the family writes about the whole family and for some it is irrelevant who is writing as long as you get the information, but for others who know them well and are interested in more detail, they are actually interested to know who wrote the letter.

If the Isaiah texts speak only of the Father as many Non-Trinitarians claim then it does appear to make it impossible to harmonise such texts with the New Testament claims of Jesus that He is God. And it is clear that Jesus has full rights to be called God and is worshipped as God.<sup>212</sup>

Is there a way to read these passages simply without sacrificing linguistics or denying the full deity of Christ?

### **B. Power-Based Equality Causes Confusion**

I believe the key lies in our understanding of the equality of Godhead members and the life source flow from the Godhead. In chapter 21 we looked at the two different measuring rods used to determine Deity. A performance based measuring system determines Deity by inherent power and unlimited existence measured by time and eternity. In a reply to me concerning my earlier draft of this manuscript it was stated “Equality of the members of the Godhead is by virtue of their possession of inherent characteristics.”<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> It is interesting to note that the Adventist Bible Commentary completely by-passes the difficulties of identification in the Isaiah passages

<sup>210</sup> Max Hatton Understanding the Trinity Page 133

<sup>211</sup> Erwin Gane, Personal Email “Here is a very mysterious relationship. There is a unity of existence between the Father and the Son which is infinitely mysterious.”

<sup>212</sup> Heb 1:8; Rev 5:13.

<sup>213</sup> Barry Harker. A Response to “The Return of Elijah” Page 7

This natural line of reasoning creates the underlying assumption for how we should understand Ellen White when she states that Christ has life original (from himself) and unborrowed (from any source outside himself) and underived (from any source outside himself). This interpretation of the passage is mandated by the demand that quality be based on inherent characteristics regarding life, power and existence.

This type of equality demands that there is a Divine life source that the Father possesses and a Divine life source that the Son possesses and in the equality of these possessions we see the basis of a unity from which springs love, unity and oneness. The two life sources (or three when we include the Spirit) create the natural potential for autonomous and individual action. We see the fruit of this potential in the way some Adventist Scholars view the Creation.

On His own [Speaking of Christ] He stretched out the heavens and by Himself He spread out the earth. How can anyone claim that Yahweh had a foreman (or someone similar) as a helper? There is no contradiction for those who know the truth about the Trinity. Jesus is a member of the Godhead and as such is the Creator.<sup>214</sup>

The author of this statement believes that Christ performed the *work* of creation alone. This is an explanation for Isa 44:24 and is the natural fruit of power based equality. Did Christ *act* alone?

**Heb 1:2** 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;

The context of Heb 1:2 would indicate that the Father made the World's by His Son. But what about the following text further on:

**Heb 1:9** Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

This text reveals that the Father speaks of the Son laying the foundation of the Earth and the heavens were the work of Christ's hands. Do Hebrews 1:2 and 1:9 Contradict? Do we change the meaning of the word "made" to mean "plan with"? Do we strip the word "made" of action?

### **C. Father is Source and Christ is Actuator**

I contend that this apparent contradiction is created by the power equality required to deem a person of the Godhead Divine. Notice the Life source ideas in these passages:

"But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through

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<sup>214</sup> Max Hatton, Understanding the TrinityPage 63. Note the author does not deny the Father's part in the creation, but the action of Creation was alone performed by the Son.

the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life." DA 21

"God has sent his Son to communicate his own life [The Father's Life] to humanity. Christ declares, "I live by the Father," *my life and his being one*. (Ellen G. White, Home Missionary, 1st June 1897, 'A call to the work')

As legislator, Jesus exercised the authority of God; his commands and decisions were supported by the Sovereignty of the eternal throne. The glory of the Father was revealed in the Son; Christ made manifest the character of the Father. He was so perfectly connected with God, so completely embraced in his encircling light, that he who had seen the Son, had seen the Father. His voice was as the voice of God. {RH, January 7, 1890 par. 2}

These passages from Ellen White make it clear that it is the Father's life that flows through the Son. The Son shares the Father's life. This fact of course makes a power-based equality impossible, but I contend that such equality concepts originated in the mind of Satan, not God.

If we allow the Father to be the source and Christ to have received all the fullness of the life, then Christ can act as representative of the Father rather than be required to be the originator of action independently. So what about the texts in Isaiah?

**Isa 43:10,11** 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. I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.

Christ states in John 5:19,20 that he does nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do. And the Father shows him everything that He does and the Son follows through. In this light we see Christ as the representative of the Father speaking concerning the Father, who is the source of all things. Is Christ left out of this equation? No, because this text addresses source, not actuator. The texts of Isaiah make sense in the context of this very important passage from Ellen White

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality." UL 367 (1905)

Is Ellen White here saying that Jesus is not truly God? Of Course not, but she is saying he is not the source, the originator, this is the Father. Ellen Whites quote above is a reflection of what Paul says regarding Source and Actuator:

**1 Co 8:6** yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

The Father is presented as source – “of whom are all things” and Christ is presented as actuator – “through whom are all things”

This life source confusion is highlighted again regarding Isa 43:11 when it is claimed:

Furthermore, the case becomes even more compelling when the Lord goes on to say that “besides me there is no saviour”...it must mean that the Messiah Jesus of the New Testament is the Lord Jehovah of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah<sup>215</sup>

But the Scripture says:

**2Co 5:19** To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

This passage indicates that the Father is the Saviour, reconciling the world to himself through Christ. The Father is the Source, Christ is the Actuator.

Even the Revelation of Jesus Christ given to John was sourced from the Father. Everything finds its source in the Father. Everything that Christ does finds its source in the Father. Christ has received everything from the Father. The only reason the church rejects this is because it will not reject the false basis of equality. I state again this type of equality finds its source in the mind of Satan, not God. Satan was the one who stated that he would ascend, he would exalt his throne, he would sit upon the mount of the congregation, he would be like the most High. Clearly it is Satan who originated power based equality.

When we understand source and representative concepts, the Bible reads more plainly and simply. Take for instance the sending of the Angel to the Israelites.

**Exo 23:20-23** Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name *is* in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.

Christ is the one speaking here. He speaks of sending an angel and that His name is in Him. We also know that Christ is the angel mentioned.<sup>216</sup> Does Christ speak of Himself in another form? This makes things complicated. But if Christ is speaking as a representative of the Father and what the Father will do through His Son as the Angel that follows them, the passage is plain. We must remember that Christ speaks what He hears the Father speak and as the WORD of God, He communicates it to us.

So in the context of Life source coming from the Father all of these texts in Isaiah fall into place. These texts point to the Father as the source. Christ is not excluded as God because He shared/inherited the Father's Life and is worshipped as God and all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him. All this is possible once we let go of power-based equality concepts that find their origination in Isa 14:12-14

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<sup>215</sup> Whidden, Moon, Reeve, 48.

<sup>216</sup> 1 Cor 10:4 "...for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." The confusion of life source by evangelicals is also a possible reason why they reject Christ being Michael the Archangel.

### **30. Sealed with the Father’s Name**

#### **A. The Parable of the Virgins**

The parable of the ten virgins found in Matthew 25 reveals some interesting light on what distinguishes the wise from the foolish virgins. The obvious difference between the wise and the foolish is the supply of oil that the wise virgins had. The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit which sustained the wise virgins in following the Bridegroom to the marriage supper.

The second factor that distinguished the wise from the foolish virgins was the fact that the admittance to the marriage feast is determined by whether the Bridegroom knew the guests. Getting to know someone obviously takes time and the foolish virgins ran out of time to get to know the Bridegroom.

Is there a connection between having a supply of oil and knowing the Bridegroom? Jesus made it clear to the disciples the connection between Himself and the operation of the Spirit. We touched on this issue in chapter 22, but will revisit it again here.

**Joh 14:16-18** 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.

Jesus said, that He is the one that would come to us. Through the Spirit Christ abides with us. Notice again these statements:

“The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be.” 8MR p. 49

“Let them study the seventeenth of John, and learn how to pray and how to live the prayer of Christ. He is the Comforter. He will abide in their hearts, making their joy full. His words will be to them as the bread of life...” RH Jan 27, 1903

“As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving Jesus the Comforter.” 19MR 297

#### **B. Knowledge of the Bridegroom Comes through Jesus Our Comforter**

Jesus is clearly portrayed as the Comforter and it is clearly explained to us how this takes place.

“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.* 14MR 179

The Spirit referred to in John 14:16-18 is the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ. It is through the supply of oil that the virgins come to know Christ. It is claimed that the Holy Spirit as a third person facilitates this process of getting to know Christ, but such a belief contradicts the Bible, the Spirit of prophecy and common sense. The basic principle of intimacy and drawing close to someone does not occur in the context of a third party that is a separate and distinct personal being. In other words, a man cannot develop a strong sense of intimacy with his wife through his best man; that is adultery!

Satan has introduced theories to obscure Jesus from our view as our Comforter and it has left our church ready to die.

“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...” RH August 26 1890.

The reception of the Spirit comes from a true knowledge of the Father and the Son. In chapter 3, we made the point that receiving the life of God could only occur by a correct identification of both God and man<sup>217</sup> and that identification process was established through the Commandments of God.<sup>218</sup>

It must be self evident that a belief in a True Father, His Son and their omnipresent Spirit is a completely different God to a concept of a co-eternal Trinity. The ramifications of the different beliefs are tremendous and are mutually exclusive. Many people suggest this is a small issue. Such a statement reveals a lack of understanding of the issues involved and is completely reckless.

### C. Israel’s Striking Example of Worshipping False Gods

On the borders of Canaan, Israel was seduced into worshipping a false god.

**Num 25:1-3** And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

How could Israel, right on the borders of Canaan, suddenly turn around and become engaged in the worship of false gods? These things have been written for our admonition.

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<sup>217</sup> “This lie (Satan’s lie in the garden) also destroyed man’s concept of God as his fountain, his *treasure* and centre of his life. In this terrible state, man could no longer communicate effectively with God because man had lost the identity of both parties: himself and God.” Page 30

<sup>218</sup> “Romans 7:10 tell us that the commandments were ordained to life. 1 John 3:4 says that sin is the transgression of the Law and Rom 6:23 says the wages of sin is death. Therefore the commandments were given to protect our life. This means that if the commandments protect our life and our life comes through communion with God then the Commandments should reveal the true *identity* of both God and man and also indicate the boundaries of that communication.” Page 30

“At first there was little intercourse between the Israelites and their heathen neighbors, but after a time Midianitish women began to steal into the camp. Their appearance excited no alarm, and so quietly were their plans conducted that the attention of Moses was not called to the matter. It was the object of these women, in their association with the Hebrews, to seduce them into transgression of the law of God, to draw their attention to heathen rites and customs, and lead them into idolatry. These motives were studiously concealed under the garb of friendship, so that they were not suspected, even by the guardians of the people.” PP 454

The Adventist church for over 50 years from its inception had little intercourse with the daughter of Babylon. But after a time some of our men began to train in non-Adventist institutions. These institutions worshipped a Trinity God and believed in the immortality of man. How could such association enhance our standing? Added to this was the dialog between our church leaders and the evangelicals Martin and Barnhouse. In this association the church emerged with a strengthened view of the Trinity and a different view of the nature of Christ. Is it so difficult to see that Adventism has been influenced by Babylon on the borders of Canaan?

Many of our scholars would scoff at such “silly notions” but such men are usually trained in the same such institutions and many of our own institutions have adopted many of the poisonous influences of the evangelical world. I contend that Adventism has repeated the history of Israel and is now worshipping a false god after the manner of the daughters of Babylon that surround us.

#### **D. Can’t be Sealed in the Worship of a False God**

Note carefully the difference between what is written in the foreheads of the 144,000 and what is written on the forehead of the woman that rides the beast.

**Rev 14:1** And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

**Rev 17:4-5** And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

For any worshipper, that which is placed at the centre of their thinking is the God that they worship and serve. Why do the 144,000 have the name of the Lamb’s Father written into their foreheads? Why is not the Trinity, the triune God written into the foreheads of the believers?

In contrast, the woman who rides the beast has her mind filled with a mystery and with Babylon or confusion. The god she serves is a total mystery and causes great confusion and this confusion leads to great abomination as revealed in Romans chapter one. In contrast to a God who is known through the creation, the harlot’s God is a confusing mystery.

Whenever we stray from the worship of the true God, the mind is filled with a mystery, a false system of worship that is an abomination to God. Notice the following:

**Jer 2:11-13** Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which *are* yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for *that which* doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Israel was often seduced to the worship of false gods. What makes us think we are immune from such possibilities?

We notice in Jer 2:13, that when Israel forsook God, they were cut off from the fountain of living water. The Spirit of God no longer flowed to them because they had rejected the true knowledge of God. In the next chapter God states the following:

**Jer 3:3** Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.

A failure to recognize the true God, breaks our connection to the source of life and it prevents the latter rain from occurring. Notice the procedure that occurs during the time of the shaking when God’s people pray for the Spirit:

“Those who were bowed before the throne would offer up their prayers and look to Jesus; then He would look to His Father, and appear 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.*” EW 54,55

The light came to God’s people from the Father to the Son to the believers. If we don’t truly believe that God is the Father and He has a Son, but rather believe in a Trinity, then if he poured out his power to such individuals, God would confirm their belief in a false god. This will never happen. The latter rain can only come when we know the only true God and Jesus Christ. The mystery of the Trinity is a false God that causes God’s people to be charged with having a whore’s forehead. Israel was never considered Babylon but she was considered a whore when she forsook the worship of the true God.

### **E. False Worship Exposes Believers to Destruction.**

The blessing of God to Israel was always dependent on them keeping His commandments. A failure to observe the commandments brought a curse. The commandments are a hedge of protection and when that hedge is broken then God’s people are vulnerable to destruction.

**Deu 28:1** And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

**Deu 28:15** But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

The Co-eternal Trinity sourced from the daughters of Babylon is not the God of the Bible and as such is a violation of the first commandment. A violation of the commandments breaks the covenant that God’s people have with Him.

We noted earlier that God’s people are sealed with the Father’s name in their foreheads. God’s followers recognize the Father as the great source of all and recognize that His Son has inherited everything from Him. In recognizing the true God they have a correct connection with the source of life and can receive the much needed oil to go into the wedding feast. Those who do not worship this God are exposed to the slaughter of the avenging angels of Ezekiel 9.

**Eze 9:1-6** He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man *with* his destroying weapon in his hand. (2) And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them *was* clothed with linen, with a writer’s inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. (3) And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which *had* the writer’s inkhorn by his side; (4) And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. (5) And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: (6) Slay utterly old *and* young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom *is* the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which *were* before the house.

Those who refuse to worship the true God will be sent a strong delusion that they should believe a lie.

**2Th 2:11-12** And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Dear friend, these are extremely serious issues. We must have the Father’s name written in our foreheads, not the mark of the mysterious Trinity. To avert the danger our church has exposed itself to, we must confess our sin of breaking His commandments and denying His Son. We must plead for time before the avenging angels come and slaughter the faithless inhabitants of Jerusalem. We must sigh and cry for our city and our brothers and sisters that are engaged in false worship.

There are plenty who point out the sins of the church but it is usually with delight and enjoyment, but God’s true people love the church and are in anguish over its condition. They still love their leaders and plead with God to help them to see the great danger we are in. Notice that those who are sealed are still in the city, when the sealing takes place. They have not moved out of the city to a “holier” place. They stay in the city and sigh and cry and plead with God and anguish over their own sins as well as those of their brethren.

Let us acknowledge that we have all slumbered and slept. The whole church has been seduced by the Trinity delusion both the wise and foolish virgins. Let us return to the God of our fathers and plead to be sealed with the seal of the Father.

## Section 6 – Restoration of Relational-Based-Thinking by Elijah

### 31. Made in His Image and Likeness

#### A. Definitions of Image and Likeness

**Gen 1:26-27** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

God made man in His image. Let us unpack these two verses to see what more we can learn. The word *image* in the Hebrew is ‘tselem’ it means:

1. to *shade*; as in the shadow of a figure;
2. *resemblance*;
3. hence a representative *figure or idol*.

Man was made in the resemblance or figure of God. The other word that is used is *likeness*. This word in Hebrew is ‘d’muth’ it means:

1. *resemblance*;
2. *model*;
3. *shape*;
4. adverbially *like: fashion, like (-ness, as), manner, similitude*.

So man was made in the model, shape or same fashion as God. Let us look through Scripture to see how these two words are used. The word *image* is used 15 times in the Old Testament.

- The first two (Gen 1:26,27) refer to man made in God’s image.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> one (Gen 5:3) refers to Seth made in Adam’s image.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> text (Gen 9:6) points to man’s judicial authority being God’s image. The power to take life for life.
- The rest refer to idols.

With reference to the word *likeness*, it occurs 26 times in 23 verses.

- The first two (Gen 1:26, Gen 5:1) refer to man made in God’s likeness.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> (Gen 5:3) one refers to Seth made in Adam’s likeness.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> (2 King 16:10) refers to an altar that Ahaz copied from Tiglathpileser. He made it in the same likeness.
- The next (2 Chron 4:3) refers to the brass oxen that held the laver in Solomon’s temple. They were in the likeness or similitude of oxen.
- David uses it (Ps 58:4) to compare the lies of the wicked to the poison of serpents.

I think by now we get a fairly good idea about what image and likeness mean, although I think the English is fairly straight forward.

## B. “Our Likeness” – Father Speaking to Son

So when God said “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,” who was talking and who was listening? Notice the following statements:

“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.’” 1SP 24

“God, in counsel with his Son, formed the plan of creating man in their own image.” RH 24 Feb 1874.

These statements clearly tell us that The Father was talking to His Son.<sup>219</sup> So what do we know about the Father and the Son?

“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.”  
*Broadside 1 – 04-06-46*

So the Father and Son have a form. How does this relate to man?

“In the beginning man was created in the likeness of God not only in character but in form and feature”. GC 644

Notice in Gen 1:26 that when the Father said to His Son “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:” He then says “Let *them*” indicating that the image involved plurality and that plurality was two. God did not say “Let him” but “let *them*” This is significant and is expanded in verse 27.

**Gen 1:27** So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

This formula is telling us two things:

1. “In the image of God created he him”:

Adam was made in the same form or body type as God as well as in character and mind; the power to think, create, love and feel.

Notice what Ellen White includes in the description of the image:

“And now God says to his Son, “Let us make man in our image.” “As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of noble height, and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon

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<sup>219</sup> F.M Wilcox, RH May 27, 1915. *Misrepresenting the Father*, “God said to his Son at that time ‘let us make man in our image.’ They were then in the same image”

the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. His complexion was neither white, nor sallow, but ruddy, glowing with the rich tint of health.” 1SP 24

She describes his height, symmetry (form), complexion was ruddy glowing and healthy (features).

2. “Male and female created he them”:

Since in Gen 1:26 God was speaking to His Son, He was saying in effect, “Let Us (You and I) make man (Adam & Eve) in Our (Yours and Mine) image.” So we have two Divine Beings talking together and they agree to make two beings in their image.

Looking again at the statement in 1SP it goes on after saying that God speaks to His Son about making man in Their image, and describes both Adam AND Eve.

“And now God says to His Son, "Let us make man in our image."...[Description of Adam]. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She, too, was noble--perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful.” 1SP 24

**C. Husband/Wife Relation made in the Image of Father/Son Relationship**

So Genesis 1:27 tells us that man was made in God’s image in the singular (character, body type and thinking ability) as well as the image of both Father and Son. So Adam and Eve as a unit were made in the image of the Father and the Son. Notice carefully that the *relationship* between Adam and Eve was also part of what is the image of God.

So not only were Adam and Eve made in the image of God individually, their *relationship* was also a reflection, resemblance of the *relationship* between the Father and the Son. This being the case then indeed the *relationship* between Adam and Eve gives us a key to understanding the *relationship* between the Father and the Son.<sup>220</sup>

Father and Son	Adam and Eve
Son comes forth from the Father (John 8:42; Prov 8:22-30).	Eve comes forth from Adam (Gen 2:21-23).
Christ was the express image of the Father. and inherited everything He possessed from Him. A co-worker who could appreciate the Father’s purposes (Heb 1:2-4).	Eve was a help-meet and companion to Adam comparable to him. All that she had she inherited from Adam. She was made from his bone not from the ground (Gen 2:20-24).
Father is the head of Christ (1 Cor 11:3).	Man is the head of the woman (1 Cor 11:3).
Christ received the Father’s Name. (Heb 1:4)	Eve received Adam’s name. (Gen 5:2)
Christ is equal with the Father through the <i>relationship</i> (John 5:18; Phil 2:6).	Eve was equal with Adam through the <i>relationship</i> . They were one flesh (Gen 2:24).
Father made all things through Christ. The	Adam’s seed (life) was nurtured by Eve and

<sup>220</sup> “God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us.” SC 10

Father's <i>life source</i> was channeled (nurtured) by Christ and from Christ came the whole universe (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:17, Eph 3:9).	from Eve came the whole human race (Gen 4:1; Gen 5:3).
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The creation sequence opens for us a flow of life:

1. Christ comes forth from the Father and possesses His Life – the Father is His Head.
2. Adam comes forth from Christ and receives His Life – Christ is the Head.
3. Eve comes forth from Adam and receives his life – Adam is her Head.

This is exactly what Paul describes in 1 Cor 11:3.

**1Co 11:3** 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.

Without the serpent's lie of *inherent power*, the above text gives a beautiful flow of the life of God. It is not, I repeat NOT a list of who is superior to whom. This is serpent thinking.

#### **D. The Godhead Can Be Understood.**

The *relationship* between Father and Son is described by Paul in Romans 1:20:

**Rom 1:20** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

This passage indicates that the Godhead CAN be understood by the THINGS THAT ARE MADE FROM THE CREATION. As opposed to finding God by trying to search him out,<sup>221</sup> we can know the things of God by what is revealed to us.<sup>222</sup> Paul indicates that the Godhead can be understood through the creation. Please note part of the purpose of God's creation of Eden.

Adam had themes for contemplation in the works of God in Eden, which was Heaven in miniature. RH Feb 24 1874

The creation of Eden was heaven in **miniature**. It was to be a lesson book for the universe on how Heaven is ordered and organized. The most notable part of the creation that was "Heaven in miniature" was that which was made in God's own image. Please note that this image is far more than character, it was a unique creation made in God's image. Please note:

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made "in the image of God," RH Feb 11, 1902

God created man a superior being; he alone is formed in the image of God. RH April 21 1885.

The only means for accounting for this distinct order that "alone is formed in the image of God" is the pairing of Adam and Eve in a husband/wife oneness that reflects the Father/Son oneness relationship. The angels reflect God's character and they are closer to God individually in that they are spirit beings like God. The only characteristic that makes us "alone" like God is the

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<sup>221</sup> Job 11:7-9

<sup>222</sup> Deut 29:29

Husband/wife relationship, the dual authority – Man being a source authority and woman being a nurturing authority. No other creation has been made like this.

Further evidence of this thought is revealed in the following statement:

What his [Husband's] influence will be in the home will be determined by his knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. AH 213

This statement indicates that the ability of a husband to function correctly depends directly on His knowledge of the Father and the Son.

### **E. Husband/Wife Relationship a Response to Satan's Challenge to Christ**

A close examination of inspiration reveals that Satan's rebellion arose before the creation of this world.

Angels in Heaven mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in Heaven. The Father consulted Jesus in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. 1SP 23

The Great Controversy centered on the relationship that the Son of God had to the Father. The creation of the human race would be a lesson book to the universe not only of God's creativity but also better reveal important elements of the Godhead. Rom 1:20 states clearly that the Godhead was revealed in the creation.

We must ask the question of why God engaged in a curious method of creating man and woman. Why was Eve taken as a rib from Adam's side? Why did Eve receive all of her substance from Adam and why was Eve the only one in the garden that could understand Adam. Does this not teach us something of the relationship of the Father to the Son?

Apart from this, the role of the help meet that Eve played and the nurturing role in relation to Adam's leadership, was this not a lesson book to the universe? Does not the role of Eve teach everyone about the critical role of authority and submission structures? Notice carefully

**1Co 11:7-10** For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels.

These verses are intriguing to say the least. Paul uses not post-fall argumentation for the headship of the man, but rather a pre-fall position. The importance of a woman having power or authority on her head allows her to be the key agent for demonstrating how to respond to the source of authority – her husband. This illustration reveals to the angels and the universe the key role of Christ in establishing the authority of the Father by submitting to it.<sup>223</sup> Thus the woman

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<sup>223</sup> This is opposed to the concept of temporary subordination advanced by some Adventist scholars. See Ministry Magazine November 1964, *What Can We Know About the Holy Trinity*, "We must allow, however, that Christ voluntarily and temporarily subordinated Himself at His incarnation" Apart from the fact that this suggests Christ

has a symbol of authority on her head – *because of the angels*. This adds significantly to our understanding of the family based government of God and Satan’s hatred of the family.

## **F. Perversion of Godhead Reflected in Perversion of Male/Female Relationship Which Perverts Gospel.**

As we have just noted, the Godhead is understood through the things that are made, namely the creation of Adam and Eve. Further evidence of this comes from the fact that the rest of the chapter describes a refusal to glorify God which in turn perverted relations between men and women which leads to abominable behaviour.

**Rom 1:21-27** Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

Trace the above passage:

1. They knew God – the *relationship* of Father and Son. (verse 21)
2. Their imaginations became vain – they believed the serpent’s lie that individuals have an inherent power source and shifted their *value system* from *relational value* to *inherent power*. Thus the *relationship* between husband and wife became to be understood as two separate beings with separate *inherent power*. This broke the understanding of the flow of life and in the changed *relationship* of man and woman was lost the true *relationship* between the Father and Son. (verse 21)
3. Thus, they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into the image of what man perceived – equal power Beings in their own right. Inherent power being the ruling principle, it was not long before many men worshipped powerful beasts and powerful birds and other animals that display powerful characteristics. (verses 22,23)
4. This broke the right relations of men and women, which led men and women into gross sexual misconduct. The more the *relationship* between men and women were perverted, the greater the lie grew about God. (verses 24,25)
5. With the image of God broken in the lives of men and women, they became open to homosexuality which completely destroys the image of God. (verses 26-28)

The sequence of Romans chapter one is extremely significant.

1. A discussion on the gospel being the power of God unto salvation by faith (Rom 1:16-18)

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gave himself rather than the Father giving Him to the human race it also provides the basis for the temporary subordination of wives to their husbands until the sin problem was dealt with. If Christ’s subordination to the Father was due only to sin, then the same can be said for wives in respect of their husbands. This idea is extremely popular with Adventists today (See *A Woman’s Place* published by the Review and Herald 1992 page 20 as one example) and is quite logical if you follow that line of reasoning, but of course it is not Biblical.

2. A reference to the suppression of truth by ungodly men. (Rom 1:19)
3. Contrasted by the knowledge of truth about the true God revealed in the creation. The highest revelation being the creation of man in the image of God. (Rom 1:20)
4. A discussion of the perversion of God reflected in the perversion of the male female relationship, which is a perversion of the image of God. (Rom 1:21-27)
5. The resulting fruit being all manner of sinfulness and wickedness (Rom 1:28-31)

The above sequence supports the emphasis of the restoring of family relationships under the Elijah message of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers.

1. A Restoration of true family relationships will lead to the correct roles of men and women in marriage
2. The restoration of the image of God in the male/female relationship will lead to a correct understanding of the Father and Son relationship.
3. The true understanding of the Father and Son relationship will restore the blessing channel as revealed in 1 Cor 11:1-3 and DA 21.
4. The restoration will see the Father as the source “of whom are all things” and Christ as the actuator and nurturing authority “through whom are all things” 1 Cor 8:6
5. The restoration of the Father as the source of all blessings will prepare the way for God’s people to have the Father’s name sealed in their foreheads. Rev 14:1

All of these truths place crucial importance upon the male and female relationship that supports a true understanding of righteousness by faith. Therefore:

- Whenever the *relationship* between a man and his wife is described in terms of power equality, skill equality, intelligence equality rather than *relational* equality, we destroy the image of God and the channel of blessing is broken
- Whenever a husband refuses to provide for and protect his wife and children, the image of God in man is broken and the channel of blessing is broken
- Whenever a women gives orders to or seeks to dominate her husband, the image of God in man is broken and the channel of blessing is broken.

These are extremely serious issues. How many families truly reflect the image of God in their homes?

Do you see why Paul gave the following instructions?

**Tit 2:4-5** That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Have you ever wondered how teaching young women to love and obey their husbands and love their children and make their homes a pleasant place can prevent blasphemy?<sup>224</sup> If women do not learn to submit to their husband’s leadership but rather are taught to mother him and/or rule him, the flow of life is broken and the image of God in man is broken. The Father is never in a place

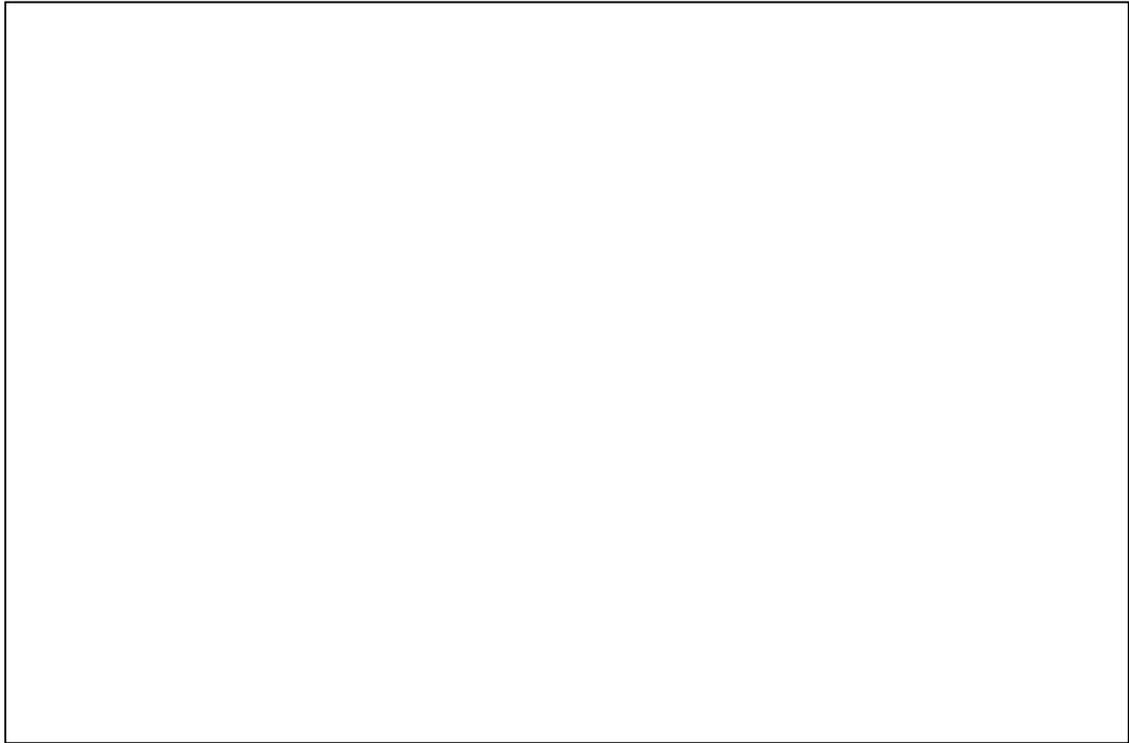
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<sup>224</sup> For more detail on this, see my sermon “Recipe for Blasphemy” found at [www.maranathamedia.com](http://www.maranathamedia.com)

of submission to the Son – He is the fountain, the seed which is nurtured in the womb of Christ – In Him[Christ] we live and move and have our being! (Acts 17:28) Can you see the seriousness of this issue?

### **G. Understanding Godhead Essential for True understanding of Equality, Authority and Basis of Relationships**

When we contrast the Father/Son Godhead structure with the Trinity we see significant changes in how we understand authority, equality and the nature of relationships.



In the Trinity, the primary authority of the Father is an *assumed* authority. By Trinitarian standards, the Son could just as easily have assumed the position the Father holds.<sup>225</sup> The Son assumes the role of secondary authority but he is not actually secondary because of his co-equal and co-eternal inherent power. This is contrasted to the absolute authority of the Father in the Father/Son model and the delegated authority of the Son. The authority structure is clear; is not assumed and establishes a direct channel of blessing structure. The Trinity model confuses authority and this confusion is evidenced in the image of God by the confusion experienced in the roles of men and women we see today.

In the Father/Son model, the nature of the relationship is very clear whereas in the Trinity, the nature of the oneness between the Father, Son and Spirit is a complete mystery. The Adventist church is in a difficult situation when it claims that one God exists in a unity of three co-eternal persons. A unity of persons creates a haze over the concept of oneness. Some scholars have

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<sup>225</sup> Dr Roy Adams expresses this view in the Sabbath School Lesson of April 10, 2008

already begun to embrace the one substance view to prevent the charge of tri-theism that we are subjected to, but the belief in one substance is even a greater mystery even though it would satisfy the demand for oneness more clearly than a unity of three co-eternal persons.

The conclusion of this matter though is that that nature of the relationship is a mystery and is not understood by the things that are made. Since the nature of the relationship is a complete mystery is it any wonder that human relations become so distorted and confused, resulting in a complete mystery?

The only thing that is quite clear in the Trinity model is the issue of equality; equality based on power and inherent characteristics. Issues of Authority and the nature of the relationship are confused and mysterious.

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Father/Son Model</b>	<b>Trinity Model</b>
Authority	Clear and Absolute	Assumed and Confused
Equality	Relationally based	Power Based
Nature of Relationship	Understood	Mystery

Once again we raise the question, why is it the Father of the Lamb's name that is in the foreheads of the 144000? The clarity that God's people receive concerning God leads to a view of the Father as the source of all things and the source of blessing which is then channeled and magnified through the Son. The woman riding the beast clings to power based equality and maintains a confused authority structure and mysterious relationship base, both of which will not fully release the power of God (the life source) unto salvation.

## **H. Protection of Life Source Depends on Correct Family Structure**

Notice again the law of life for the Universe.

“In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

The Father's life flows through the Son and out to the universe. In that life is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. It is the Spirit of God that flows out to us and gives us life both spiritual and physical; a continual flow of blessings for which we must return joy and thanks for all God does for us. The absence of thanks and praise to God breaks the law of life in the universe. The protection of this life flow depends on a right understanding of the structure of the Godhead and the structure of the family unit which was made in God's image.

If we hold a view that Christ possesses self-originated life apart from the Father, then the family unit is susceptible to gravitating towards the same understanding that men and women are co-equal based on their abilities. This view was recently expressed in the Record where the letter writer stated that the equality of a man and women is based on the equality we see in the Godhead. He stated:

“Prior to the Fall, Adam and Eve were co-equals and complementary to each other. (See Gen 1:26-30) Neither “ruled” over the other; their God-ordained role was to co-rule in their care of the natural world and to reflect within their marriage a taste of the unity and equality that exists within the Godhead.”<sup>226</sup>

This statement is most certainly reflecting a Trinitarian view with the terms co-equal. Can you see how the Trinitarian view of co-equality based on *performance measures* destroys the life flow of God’s blessing? Can you see how the Trinity is affecting marriages everywhere in Christian homes? Is it a coincidence that Adventist marriage (under confused authority and a mysterious understanding of relationships) breakdown statistics are almost the same as those in the world? There are certainly a number of influences that affect this statistic but when the flow of blessing as described in 1 Cor 11:3 is halted due to notions of *performance co-equality*, marriage can be a very desolate place.



*The diagram on the left protects the life flow by maintaining that man was made in the image of God. On the right we see that the life flow is broken and the relationship between man and woman is changed. If man was indeed made in the image of God in FORM and FEATURE then a Trinitarian view is rendered impossible. A third being of some description would need to have been created with man and woman to keep man in the image of God. Another point worth noting is that the diagram on the right shifts the emphasis of life creation as coming from the mother. This system allows the possibility of all kinds of feminine style worship.*

My prayer is that we will reclaim the image of God in our marriage *relationships* and restore the channel of blessing, the life flow of God. One of the central keys to doing this is restoring Father

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<sup>226</sup> *The Record*, April 14, page 29. “A Post Grace Rectification.”

## Chapter 31 – Made in His Image and Likeness

and Son to their true positions which in turn will restore true authority, true equality and true relationship systems.

In this chapter we have begun to see the importance of family structure and Godhead structure in securing the blessings of God. In the next chapter we will see how family, church and community structures can preserve the flow of God's blessing and safeguard the sense of self-worth in our children.

### **32. Restoring the Glory of Children by the Coming of Elijah**

In the previous chapter we noticed how the flow of life preserved as a channel of blessing from Father to Son to man to woman. The structure of the male/female relationship in the image of God – The Father and Son is vital to preserve the life flow. In this chapter we want to focus on the spiritual nature of this life flow.

#### **A. Physical and Spiritual Channel of Blessing**

Man has been created with two fountains reflective of the body plus breath formula of Gen 2:7. Man passes his physical seed through the sexual union but he passes his spiritual seed through the words that he speaks. As in the physical so in the spiritual<sup>227</sup>:

1. A man gives physical seed to his wife in loving intimacy and she nurtures it to form a body.
2. A man then fills that body with spiritual seed by blessing his children and his wife nurtures both body and spirit. Here is the wonder of both physical and spiritual birth.

This is how Adam begat a son in his image and likeness. He made the form through his wife and then filled it with his word and nurtured him through his wife, so that Seth resembled himself.

This is what Jesus meant when He said:

**Joh 3:6,7** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (from above)

The word in the Greek for *again* renders more directly *from above*. We must be born in the physical (the flesh) but also *from above* through the Word.

This principle of forming and filling is the process God used to create the world.

Forms		Fills	
Day 1	Light and Dark	Day 4	Sun, moon and stars
Day 2	Waters on earth and in the sky (atmosphere)	Day 5	Swimming and flying creatures
Day 3	Ground and vegetation	Day 6	Ground dwelling creatures - Adam and Eve

<sup>227</sup> It is interesting that man must maintain the paradox between his spiritual and physical fountains. If a man just focuses on passing physical seed, he will create bodies through the woman; but if he does not give attention to spiritual seed then those bodies will be dead or lifeless in the spiritual (not born from above). If a man focuses only on the spiritual, he will not create any bodies to fill with the spiritual.

## B. The Father's Role as Blessor

The process of filling the form or mind of a child and creating a robust sense of identity comes primarily in the form of a blessing. This is why Prov 17:6 says:

**Pro 17:6** Children's children *are* the crown of old men; and the glory of children *are* their fathers.

The word *glory* carries the meaning of *to boast* as in “let not the wise man glory in his wisdom” (Jeremiah 9:23,24); do not boast or find *value* or *worth* in your wisdom. In this sense, a child obtains a sense of *worth* or *value* and *identity* from their father. Some translations like the NIV change the word father to *parents*, but this is based on a *performance-view* of men and women<sup>228</sup>. The word in Hebrew is *ab* – Father. A child's father is his source and seed, and his mother nurtures that seed. To form and fill a child with body and (right) spirit requires both father and mother, but the father is the source of blessing as expressed in Prov 17:6.

Notice what Ellen White says about the Father's role:

“The husband and father is the head of the household. The wife looks to him for love and sympathy and for aid in the training of the children; and this is right.” AH 211

“All members of the family center in the father. He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues: energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness.” AH 213

“The father represents the Divine Lawgiver in his family. He is a laborer together with God, carrying out the gracious designs of God and establishing in his children upright principles, enabling them to form pure and virtuous characters.” AH 213

Please notice carefully this next statement, remembering all we have mentioned about life flow structure.

“God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love. "His glory is His children's good; His joy, His tender Fatherhood." He tells us to be perfect as He is, in the same manner. We are to be centers of light and blessing to our little circle, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness. "In His borrowed goodness good," we may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His. Jesus said, Be perfect as your Father is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God's children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest "in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:11). That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for "the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring

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<sup>228</sup> and is a perversion of Scripture by the way. Twisting the Bible to fit the fatal assumption.

the soul." Psalm 19:7, margin. Through love "the righteousness of the law" will be "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." MB 78

Summarising the above passage we notice:

1. God's life flows out in unselfish love to all His creatures.
2. We are to be centres of light and blessing in the same way. We are to be perfect in our sphere as He is in His.
3. Every child lives by the life of (or life that flows through) their father.
4. This life is the life of Jesus manifest in our mortal flesh.
5. It will produce the same character in us as it has in Him.

Can you see the power of understanding the structure and flow of the life of God? Here is the very heart of righteousness by faith.<sup>229</sup> A key part of understanding righteousness by faith involves understanding the structure and life flow of God.

So how does a Father pass this blessing to his children?

**Pro 18:21** Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

**Gen 12:2,3** And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

**Gen 28:1-4** And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

The Father's words give the *identity* and *value system* to the child. *Value* and *worth* flow from the *life source* and as the father represents the heavenly Father in the family structure, he carries the *life source*.

Notice the emphasis of the patriarchs on blessing their children. When a father says to his child, you are precious, you are important, you are special and you are a child of God, his words carry the blessing and life of God. The father carries the power to bless and the power to curse as expressed in Prov 18:21 – "death and life are in the power of the tongue".

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<sup>229</sup> We do not wish to infer that a person's personal salvation is dependent on another person. Each person receives the blessings of salvation directly from God. But just as a person can learn of salvation through a preacher or a person can receive food prepared from another person, so humans act as channels in receiving the blessings of salvation. As Rom 10:14 states: Rom 10:14 "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Do we as fathers realize how great is this power? Are we allowing our mouths to be the fountain which fills the minds of our children with the life of God? What a privilege to be made in God's image, what a gift to have the power to bless. We see Jesus express this principle of words giving life in the following verse:

**Joh 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.

### C. Attack on the Father's Role

The enemy of our souls understands this principle well. He knows that if he can either shut down the spring flowing from the father directly or choke it through altering the submissive role of the mother, he will greatly inhibit a child from being filled with the Spirit of God.

Satan knows that fathers are the source and hold the key to filling children with the Spirit of God by their blessing. For this reason, he has sought every device possible to destroy the role of the father to stop the source of the *life spring*. He can do it basically in three ways:

1. Take the father out of the home.
2. Cause the father to ignore his responsibility to bless his children.
3. Cause the mother to take the leadership role of the home.

I don't think anyone will disagree that these three things are happening everywhere in our church and society. When a couple divorce and the father has limited access to his children, it takes the blessing away from the child. The mother will of course continue to try and nurture her children but, without the seed and blessing of her husband, she will nurture in vain unless she can find some other means to restore the seed and blessing process. We will look at how God has made provision to restore the blessing shortly, but let us continue with Satan's attempt to extinguish the *life spring* through the father.

How does Satan cause men to ignore their responsibility to their children? When Adam and Eve fell and embraced the lie that 'you shall not surely die' – the fatal assumption, their *value system* was altered from *relationship value systems* to *performance-based* ones. Man was driven to worship the work of his own hands (Isa 2:8). The need to be successful in terms of education or career or business becomes so great that he neglects his children's needs. He is focused on becoming someone great and leaving his mark on history. Since his focus is on himself, children become a hindrance and Satan will encourage the father to curse his children, to tell them they are stupid and dumb or just as bad, ignoring them altogether. By getting the father to curse his children, he poisons the life stream and greatly wounds the child and destroys his sense of *worth* and *value*. Such poisoned children he knows will grow up to manifest the same restless striving, passing on the curse to the next generation. For some the pain is too great – the result is suicide of either mind or body or both.

The last tactic is to use role reversal or role interchangeability. If the father lacks the skills to be a leader, if he is less intelligent than his wife, or not as assertive, then it will be natural for the wife to take the leadership role. But as she is not the source of blessing, by taking his position, she (without realizing it) devalues his role and takes the glory of children away. Dear Mothers, there are some things I would like to say to you at this point. If you find yourself in this position, If you love your children, pray for wisdom as to how to give your husband back his position of leadership. By assuming or taking his role, you disrespect his position of authority, and by your

example, your children will do the same to both him and you. You may already be struggling because of the way your children refuse to acknowledge your authority over them. It may seem disastrous to you to allow your husband's decisions be the leader in the family, but the consequences of not doing so will be far, far worse.

Many mothers say, "But my husband won't lead. What do I do?" Well, for one thing don't tell him, "You are supposed to be the head, you must lead us!" You can never help him take up his responsibility by exposing his weakness. Instead, you will need to take a step of faith, to walk away from doing those things that your husband should be doing, and prayerfully support and edify your husband. You will need to forgive him for failing you and your children by avoiding his responsibilities. Helping a home regain its correct roles will be difficult – you will be tempted many times to think it impossible. However, the Lord has promised to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children." Claim that promise and allow the Lord to lead you through this difficult journey.

#### **D. Appeal to Wives and Mothers**

Mothers, you also need to know about some of the ways you can stop the Lord from fulfilling that promise in your own family. If you order your husband around, speak negatively about him to your friends, and try to force him to be the priest of the home (or worse, take the priesthood yourself), you will block the channel of blessing for your children. If you are in the habit of doing these things, I ask that you take a moment right now to ask God to forgive you for these things, and ask Him to guide you as you seek to be a woman after God's own heart.

I have seen this principle of submission open the door of blessing to a family. I once had a mother come to me all frustrated and tell me her unbelieving husband was upset with her and refused to allow her to go to an upcoming church event. She frowned and said "I am not going to be told what to do, I have the right to go." I made the suggestion to her: 'Go home to your husband and with a kind and smiling face, filled with love for your husband, tell him you have considered what he said and that if He felt she should not go then she would submit to his request and not go.' She wrestled with the idea, as I believe I would have because these things are not easy, but she agreed.

The following week she returned to me all smiles. She said "You will never believe what happened. I did as you said and my husband turned around and said 'I never said you couldn't go. If you want to go then go.'" Her son sitting nearby, who was not going to church, suddenly piped up and he said "I will go with you Mum". She was blessed beyond imagination. Her son went with her to the church event and gave his heart to Christ while he was there. In demonstrating the principle of submission to her husband, her son submitted to the Spirit of God and came to Christ.

Ladies, recognise your husband for who he is – made in the image of the Father. He holds the key to whether you will enjoy your children and grandchildren, or whether you will weep for them due to their misfortune.

#### **E. The Promise to Abraham Fulfilled in Family Structure**

The fact that the correct structure of the family unit is vital to allowing the flow of God's life into our children is expressed in the following verse:

**Gen 18:18,19** Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

This verse is a formula:

1. 'I know him' or more correctly have known him. This word *know* is the same as when Adam *knew* his wife. It symbolizes the transfer of the seed. God placed the seed in Abraham.
2. '(in order) that he will command his children and household after him'. Abraham would pass the seed to his family. He would command it, because he was the source of blessing to the family.
3. 'That they keep the way of the Lord'. The seed in point one combined with the structure in part two combines to allow the family to keep the way of the Lord.
4. 'To do justice (righteousness) and judgment' – when the life channel flows, righteousness will be demonstrated in the life.
5. 'That God may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken to him' – namely that Abraham would be a great and mighty nation and that all families of the earth would be blessed in Him.

Notice the promise to Abraham involved the commanding of his children and household. Take away the command of the father and the promise to Abraham is lost. Notice what Ellen White says:

“Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are "the issues of life"; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.” AH 15

We are told that the success of the church depends on home influences. Get the home influences wrong, get the roles wrong, cut the blessing and the church will fail.

## **F. Seed and Nurture Roles**

I mentioned earlier that we would look at God’s plan for the restoration of the blessing if a home circle was broken and the father was removed or left. The principle of *Seed* and *Nurture* actually occurs in three levels:

1. The Father (Seed) and the Son (Nurture) (John 5:19,20).
2. Christ (Seed) and the Church (Nurture) (Eph 5:24,25).
3. Husband (Seed) and Wife (Nurture) (Eph 5:22).

As the husband is the head of the wife, so Christ is the head of the church. The church is referred to as a woman, that takes the seed of Christ and nurtures it into a commandment keeping people made in the image of its Father Jesus, even as Seth was in the likeness and image of his father Adam, through Eve.

How does Christ give His seed to the Church? Firstly it comes to us directly through personal Bible study. It also comes through family worship, but in a community setting, it comes through

the eldership of the church. The apostles<sup>230</sup> gave themselves continually to the ministry of prayer and the Word (Acts 6:4). They were charged to feed the flock (John 21:17; Acts 20:28; I Pet 5:2). The elders of the church are the earthly representative of the *male seeding principle*. The Church membership represents the woman which nurtures the seed and bears the image of Christ in its offspring – those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus (Rev 14:12).

Seeing the connection between the home circle and the church, Paul, in giving his qualifications for elders in 1 Tim 3:4,5, alludes from Gen 18:19:

**1 Tim 3:4-5** One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

Elders must be selected from homes that rule their house well, having their children in subjection with all gravity. Do you grasp the implications of this?

1. Elders must be selected from homes that rule their houses well.<sup>231</sup>
2. In the image of God, man is the source of blessing to the family. He must be the leader of his home or the glory of his children will be lost.
3. Therefore women cannot be elders because it would be a disaster for them to rule their homes. If women are made elders or become the leading pastor of a church, then the flow of *life source* to the church will be cut off.

I know that what I have just stated could really upset some people, but only if you take your *value* and *worth* as a person from your *inherent power* and *position*. Ladies, you have the privilege of representing Christ as your part of the image of the Godhead, the joy and pleasure to nurture and cause Christ to be formed in the church, but not as the image of the Father/father, but in the image of the Son.

The principle of seed and nurture in the roles of men and women was clearly demonstrated in the gospel ministry of James and Ellen White. Notice the manner in which they worked together

Our meetings were usually conducted in a manner so that both of us took part. I would give a doctrinal discourse, then Mrs. W. would give an exhortation of considerable length melting her way into the tenderest feelings of the congregation. Was my part of the work important, hers was no less important. ***While I presented the evidences, and sowed the seed, hers was to water it. And God did give the increase.***<sup>232</sup>

James, in his male capacity seeded the people with doctrinal discourses and Ellen would exhort the people and appeal to their hearts to respond to the Spirit of the Lord. It was an effective combination that reflected the seed and nurture principle. I suggest that this means of work for male and female will prove the most effective.

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<sup>230</sup> One of the meanings of the word apostle is seed carrier.

<sup>231</sup> Mercedes H. Dyer, Prove all Things, Page 379 “We affirm that there exists a distinct correlation between the headship role of the father in the home and that of the Elder Pastor in the Church.”

<sup>232</sup> Life Sketches Page 127,128 (1880)

Sadly, performance-based thinking has affected the church on many levels, and in many different ways. By misunderstanding the relationship between the Father and the Son (the Trinity), it has made it inevitable that we confuse the roles of men and women (women as Pastors and Elders). One follows the other. I completely understand why many in the church wish to push for women's ordination; it is entirely consistent with a Trinitarian view of the Godhead. So to argue against women's ordination and argue for the Trinity is a logical inconsistency. The reason Rome is able to keep their priesthood male is they simply made Mary the mother of God and placed her right at the top to satisfy the need for feminine equality. But for Protestants who hold a stronger Biblical view, this option is not open to us. Female ordination appears to be the only solution.

### **G. Destructive Impact of Trinity Concept of Family Structure.**

I appeal to those who read this book, who hold leadership positions, to consider well the implications herein discussed:

1. A co-equal Trinity changes the structure of the Godhead from relational to performance equality.
2. We are made in the image of God as a family unit.
3. The Trinity shifts the family unit from a relational to a performance-based equality
4. This shift chokes the channel of blessing by distorting spiritual seed and nurture principles.
5. The choking of the blessings greatly impedes the flow of the Holy Spirit into the lives of our families and churches.
6. The choking of the blessing destroys the glory of children and breeds worthlessness and insecurity.
7. Worthlessness and insecurity intensifies *performance-based-thinking* and creates the mountains and valleys in our lives which further block the Holy Spirit from reaching us.

Is the fatal assumption worth it? Is it worth blocking the channel of God's *life source* – His Spirit, by dismantling the structures he has set up? Is this not grieving the Holy Spirit?

When we understand God's *relational-equality system* then the apparent injustice and inequality completely disappears and the fountain of life is opened again for us. This certainly gives us context for the following verses and their importance.

**Jam 1:27** Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

**Isa 1:17** Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

The heart of pure religion is to visit the fatherless and the widows; restore the spring to Israel; bring forth water from the rock that the church of God may drink.

If a family loses their father or the father is unwilling to nurture his children, it is the responsibility of the leadership of the church to step into the gap. If a child loses his mother, the church must feed him and care for him and nurture him. Let us take up our responsibilities and save the lost and dying souls that have no fountain at home. If the church loses its fountain because of the feminisation of its leadership then God promises us:

**Psa 27:10** When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

God will care for us and seek to bring us to a church that still has a spring, a place where men are the pastors and elders of the church.

## **H. An Appeal to restore the Family Blessing Structure**

At this point I would say to elders of churches, seek to include a practice in your church where you can bless the children; where they can come forward and have hands placed upon them and be blessed and told that God loves them. Our children need this *seed*. Fathers, bring your children to yourself and place your hands on them in an appropriate setting where their hearts are receptive and tell them they are precious and special, to restore their glory.

Our Father in heaven knew exactly what Jesus needed to hear before he faced Satan in the wilderness. He needed a simple blessing:

**Mat 3:16,17** 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.

This statement by the Father reveals the one thing that His Son can't live without and cannot produce from within Himself and that is value derived from the blessing of the Father. This would be no issue for an unbegotten Son. The blessing at the baptism while nice would not be vital, but a begotten Son must have that blessing. Jesus could not fulfill his mission without it. He, in this moment, reveals the very heart of God's kingdom. Just as the Son of God can't truly operate without His Father's blessing, neither can we.

How powerful are those words, *this is my beloved child in whom I am well pleased*. Accepted and received into the heart they can heal any wound, any pain, if you can believe it. Notice the following in *Desire of Ages*:

“And the word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative.... The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.” DA 113

When the Father spoke to Jesus His Son, the Word passed through Christ to every one of us. What wonderful news. Here is power to clear the mountains of pride and fill the valleys of depression. Here is the key placed in the hand of faith that will unlock heaven's power house. Will we not use it? Will we not believe His Word?

If you follow Isaiah Chapters 1 to 3 carefully, you will notice a steady decline in the leadership of Israel:<sup>233</sup>

1. A formalisation of worship (Isa 1:13-15).
2. The lowering of the standards of leaders (Isa 1:23).

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<sup>233</sup> See my sermon “The Downward Path” available at [www.maranathamedia.com](http://www.maranathamedia.com) for an expansion of this process.

3. The embracing of eastern/Babylonian ways (*performance* thinking) (Isa 2:6).
4. Taking away the good men – the water and bread are taken – the fountain is closed – the channel is cut off (Isa 3:1,2).
5. The rise of immature leaders because the children’s bodies were not filled with the fountain of life and so are *performance* rather than *relationally* based and therefore are insecure and controlling (Isa 3:3,4).
6. The disrespect of authority (Isa 3:5).
7. The feminisation of leadership (Isa 3:12) – Women shall rule over them.

**1Co 10:11-12** Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

The story of Israel is a story that we need to pay close attention to because we have followed in their footsteps. All of the above steps have taken place in our church at some level. We have reached the bottom and now it is time for Elijah to come and restore the true understanding of the God of Israel, so the Latter Rain might fall.

Notice the work of Elijah:

**Isa 40:3-7** The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the goodliness thereof *is* as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass.

Elijah will comfort God’s people. He will prepare the way of the Lord. The mountains of pride will be leveled by a sobering from the fatal assumption drunk from the word of the serpent in Eden, that *worth* and *value* are measured by *performance*. Elijah will raise every depressed soul by restoring the fountains to homes and churches and causing us to know that we are God’s beloved Children whom He loves.

**Luk 1:15-17** For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

When Elijah comes he will not be intoxicated by the wine of Babylon, where greatness is measured by the *performance* of *inherent power*. He will restore the family springs by turning children back to their fathers and see in them the channel of their glory.

Fathers: Do you have children that need to know you love them? Have your children grown and left home and there is a sad distance between you? Are you hurt or angered by your child’s lack of gratitude for all you have done? Rise in the power of Elijah and bless your children, let them know you love them.

## Chapter 32 – The Glory of Children and the Coming of Elijah

Husbands: Does your wife know you love her? Do you appreciate all her efforts? Do you show her the affection she deserves? Do you seek to control all the money in the house and leave none for her? Repent! Remember her birthday, don't be stingy, surprise her with kindness, do not be put off by any sarcasm she throws at you. Do not blame her for family difficulties – you are the man, arise in the name of Elijah and restore the spring to the heart of your wife. Love her as bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh.

Mothers: Is your husband the true head of your home? Do you submit to his leadership, do you pray for his wisdom, do you believe the Lord can guide him? Rise in the power of Elijah and give the scepter of power back to your husband, take your foot from his throat and ask forgiveness if you have laid your hands on the priesthood. Take blasphemy from your home by seeking spiritual strength to obey your husband and love your children and nurture them into the image of Christ according to the gift God has given you. Resist the charms of the evil one, that entice you to leave your place of duty. Trample the serpent under your feet and let your marriage relationship reflect the image of God and His Son.

Children: Obey your parents, respect their authority, for the fountain of life is with your father and the joy of growth and nurture is with your mother. Honour them, love them, seek to please them and do your best to resist Satan's efforts to trust your inclinations over the words of your parents. In submission you will find the fountain of blessing.

**Mal 4:5,6** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Will you remove the curse from your home and allow Elijah to prepare your hearts for the Spirit of God to come in and form the image of Christ in you?

### **33. Life Structures – Individual, Family, Church, Community<sup>234</sup>**

#### **A. Life/Blessing flow through the Individual Channel**

**Eze 14:14** Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness," says the Lord God.

People are saved as individuals and the ultimate responsibility for a person's salvation is themselves. The channel of blessing for the individual comes through personal prayer and Bible study. Through this process a person receives spiritual life directly from God and is blessed and guided. In terms of receiving instruction the only authority that the conscience can completely submit to is the Bible and the Bible alone. We may receive Biblical instruction from family and the church but all of this must be tested against the word of God by the individual.

The capacity to be connected to the individual channel is heavily dependent on the nuclear family and church family structures. Children seeded and nurtured into the fundamentals of the faith, prayer and reading the Bible from their parents. Those not brought up in a Christian home as spiritual children are seeded and nurtured with these principles in the church family. So the foundations of the individual channel are developed in the family and or church channels of blessings, but it is ultimately the individual channel that is the basis of salvation.

#### **B. Life/Blessing flow through the Family Channel Structure**

In the previous chapter we observed that spiritual life flows most powerfully through family structures. The death and life contained in the mouth of a father as a seeding agent and in the mouth of the mother as a nurturing agent, will lay the spiritual foundation of their children.

We also noticed that the headship of the father in the home is vital to preserving this spiritual life flow in the family. In this sense the father is the tangible spring for each family. This is why Ellen White states:

“All members of the family center in the father.” AH 213

We also noticed in the story of Abraham that God blessed Abraham in order that all families of the earth would be blessed through him. Here we see a complete irrigation system for spiritual life to flow through communities. This life flow is protected by the law which causes a person to be planted by the rivers of water (Psalms 1:1-4).

God created this spiritual irrigation system so that we would not only be relationally focused through our relationship to God but also relationally focused through our relationships with each other. As the Scripture says:

**Rom 14:7** For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

If we only needed to maintain a relationship with God and obtain life in all its aspects (physical, mental and spiritual) from Him, we would not need each other and we gravitate towards isolation rather than community.

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<sup>234</sup> “As in the natural, so in the spiritual world. Human life is preserved, moment by moment, by divine power; yet it is not sustained by a direct miracle, but through the use of blessings placed within our reach.” 3SP 418

**The life flow through human structures protects the relational system of society and the reflection of God's Kingdom.<sup>235</sup>**

As a child grows there can develop a spiritual paradox between the conscience of the individual and the authority of the family structure. As children, we are commanded to honour and obey our parents. This is an authority that must be respected. But in matters of faith we must regard the Word of God as a higher authority. Notice the paradox

**Exo 20:12** "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

**Mat 10:37** He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

When there is disagreement on what we understand truth to mean, we must both honour our parents and follow our conscience. This can be extremely difficult to do if your family ask you to do things directly contrary to the Bible. In such cases, the higher authority of the Word of God must decide the decision, but this does not mean that we cease to respect or disown our parents. To cease to respect our parents would cut a God ordained channel of blessing.

### **C. Church and Community Churches Depend on Family Structure**

A failure in family structure would lead to a community like Sodom and Gomorrah, which God had to destroy because they had so perverted the family structure that the spiritual life flow system could no longer operate in that society. This is why God warned Abraham in Genesis 18:

**Gen 18:17-18** And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

We see here a direct connection between God destroying Sodom and the ability of Abraham to become a great nation. If Abraham did not command his family and children after him, then he also would have his heritage destroyed like Sodom. So when God says "Will I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" He is indicating that Abraham learn the lesson of Sodom and makes sure his family structure is preserved.

The other point we would make about the blessing on Abraham flowing to all the families of the earth, is that it is the Spirit of Christ in Abraham that is passed to his descendents through the blessing. The Spirit of Christ is preserved in the remnant of Israel through the family structure. Here is the reason for Satan's venom against the family.

The family then is the key building block for the church, community and nation. Notice:

"Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are "the issues of life"; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences." Adventist Home p. 15.

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<sup>235</sup> God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven. He desires that the families below shall be a symbol of the great family above. COL 290

“God designs that the families of earth shall be a symbol of the family in heaven. Christian homes, established and conducted in accordance with God's plan, are among His most effective agencies for the formation of Christian character and for the advancement of His work.” Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 430.

“If we will open our hearts and homes to the divine principles of life, we shall become channels for currents of life-giving power. From our homes will flow streams of healing, bringing life, and beauty, and fruitfulness where now are barrenness and dearth.” The Ministry of Healing, p. 355.

“Christ designs that heaven's order, heaven's plan of government, heaven's divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth.” DA 680

The family is also the primary key to the making of the individual. The individual life channel is built from a platform of the nuclear family or if needed the church family.

But in terms of groups of people, the church, community and nation need a structure that reflects the seed and nurture principles of the family. This is the guarantee of God's relationship based kingdom principles.



The connection between family and church authority is clearly expressed in the words of Ellen White when she states:

“Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” Parents are entitled to a degree of love

and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God. The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. ***It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority.***” PP 308

For ministers and rulers to be included in the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment, church and community structures must clearly be extensions of a family government structure. The connection to receiving life through submission to established in the next paragraph:

This, says the apostle, "is the first commandment with promise." Ephesians 6:2. To Israel, expecting soon to enter Canaan, it was a pledge to the obedient, of long life in that good land; **but it has a wider meaning, including all the Israel of God, and promising eternal life upon the earth when it shall be freed from the curse of sin.** PP 308

The principles of *life flow* through the headship of the church to its members is vividly portrayed in the story of Moses in Exodus 17:8-13.<sup>236</sup>

**Exo 17:8-13** Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands *were* heavy; and they took a stone, and put *it* under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Using *performance-based-thinking* we might say that Moses was a coward to send Joshua to fight while he, his brother and Hur went and had a little prayer meeting. But here the channel is clearly portrayed. The success of Joshua and the soldiers depended on Moses' prayers. When Moses prayed, Joshua and the soldiers would gain the upper hand, but when he didn't the Amalekites would. We see Aaron and Hur assisting Moses to keep praying. As elders they played their part in keeping the channel of blessing operating.

One might ask, if Moses was tired, why couldn't Aaron or Hur take his place and start praying? If that had occurred it would have broken the important lesson of blessing flow through the authority structure.

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<sup>236</sup> For a more in-depth presentation on this, download the sermon "A Leader's Prayer" from [www.maranathamedia.com](http://www.maranathamedia.com)

When Joshua and the army placed themselves under the leadership of Moses and the elders, they were blessed in their warfare. What a lesson for leaders this is! If Moses had not faithfully prayed, many mothers and children would have had no father that night.

Jesus demonstrated this same principle in the New Testament with the feeding of the 5000. Jesus was the source who distributed the bread and flesh to the disciples and then to the multitude. The life-sustaining food was distributed through a structure of blessing. After the feeding of the 5000 Jesus declares Himself the ‘Bread of Life’.<sup>237</sup> He is the one that flows through the channel in the form of the Comforter. The point is there needs to be a structure for this system to work correctly.

#### **D. Blessing Received Through Submission to Headship**

It is exactly on this point where many people fail to receive a blessing. When as church members, we see leaders doing the wrong thing, we usually forget the position of authority they hold and present our complaints in the spirit of accusation and defiance. Such lack of submission to authority places members outside of the channel of blessing and evil will always result. At this present time we see our church is terribly fractured with in-fighting and disunity. I believe much of this disunity could have been avoided if both leadership and membership had more fully understood their respective roles of seed and nurture. If we are to have a remnant of believers that are in unity and love together, we must recognise that church structures of authority must be recognised and followed.

This is especially true in regard to the contention over the issue of the Godhead. Amongst non-Trinitarians there is a prevalent spirit of disrespect for authority and lack of submission. Such lack of submission often completely negates the effect of whatever they are trying to say and sad to say it completely negates the principle of submission we see demonstrated in the life of Jesus. I would appeal to all that while we surrender of conscience to no man, it is vital to work with God’s established structures to receive a full blessing.

But what if a leader is clearly doing the wrong thing? The key is to remind such a leader, through the submission process, that he is a source of blessing to the church and we urgently need the blessing that he has been granted power to bestow. Through the process of submission we remind our leader of his obligation to care for the flock. A spirit of defiance and rebellion will only create the possibility to stir up frustration or anger in our leader and guarantee we will not obtain what we are seeking.

As church members we must pray for our leaders. They are instruments of God to bless us, they are the spring of the church to give it life in an orderly fashion.

**1Th 5:12-13** And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.

Do we esteem our leaders highly in love? Do we pray for them or do we murmur and complain and spread reports about their faults and weaknesses? As a church we must come to terms with this issue.

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<sup>237</sup> **Psa 78:20** Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

*Performance-based-thinking* with its emphasis on the self-powered individual, feels no need nor can ever grasp the importance of such a structure. Structures are for exploiting for our own advancement, and become a means of control rather than blessing.

I am often asked but what happens if after you follow the process of submission, a leader continues to follow a course contrary to Scripture? We must remain in the channel of blessing and plead for patience, until the Lord addresses the issue either by correction or removal. It's easy to pray for the latter but if we truly love the brethren we must pray for the former and let God decide what will occur.

What if we have been removed from the church by leadership that have erred? Firstly examine our hearts to see if our faults and weaknesses contributed to the discipline. Ask God to show us where we can go to find a structure of authority to continue to be blessed. This is a difficult issue and requires much prayer and wisdom, but God will not remove from us the channel of blessing if we are humble in heart and seek to preserve the principles of God's kingdom.

### **E. When Leaders Fail**

But what if a leader is clearly doing the wrong thing? The key is to remind such a leader, through the submission process, that he is a source of blessing to the church and we urgently need the blessing that he has been granted power to bestow. Through the process of submission we remind our leader of his obligation to care for the flock. A spirit of defiance and rebellion will only create the possibility to stir up frustration or anger in our leader and guarantee we will not obtain what we are seeking. The principle of submission to God's delegated leaders will create a desire to pray for our leaders rather than immediately reject their authority and act on our own authority.

This principle is very difficult to carry out because all of us are stamped with the lie "You not surely die" It is natural that when someone in authority over us seems to contradict the Scriptures that we should immediately act independently off them so that we are free to do as we believe is right. But recognition of Biblical authority through channels of blessing remember that a leader has been granted the power to bless and that we who are under such authority must do everything we can to ask God to open that channel again through that leader.

As church members we must pray for our leaders. They are instruments of God to bless us, they are the spring of the church to give it life in an orderly fashion.

**1Th 5:12-13** And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.

Do we esteem our leaders highly in love? Do we pray for them or do we murmur and complain and spread reports about their faults and weaknesses? As a church we must come to terms with this issue.

*Performance-based-thinking* with its emphasis on the self-powered individual, feels no need nor can ever grasp the importance of such a structure. Structures are for exploiting for our own advancement, and become a means of control rather than blessing.

I am often asked but what happens if after you follow the process of submission, a leader continues to follow a course contrary to Scripture? Firstly, it must be determined if God still regards the channel structure or institution that is being appealed to. If this is clear then, we must remain in the channel of blessing and plead for patience, until the Lord addresses the issue either by correction or removal. It's easy to pray for the latter but if we truly love the brethren we must pray for the former and let God decide what will occur.

We spoke earlier about the paradox of the family and the individual. This paradox is widened between the individual and the church. No man can be conscience for another nor can any church leader be responsible for the salvation of another. No person can allow another person to decide what they read and believe, who they associate with and where a person worships. These are all matters of conscience. At the same time we must submit our findings in Scripture God's appointed leaders and pray that God will bless their counsel to us.. Holding this paradox requires a lot of wisdom and patience and most of all trust in our Heavenly Father.

Sadly, some believers will take the principles of submission of authority to an extreme and choose to remain quiet and say nothing for fear of loss of reputation or standing in the church. Submission principles do not mean silence, they mean appeal for a Biblical explanation and a continual and earnest prayer to be blessed through God's appointed channel. On the other hand, others take the individual element of the paradox to extreme and leave the church, thinking only of their individual channel and ignoring the family connection they have with the church. Leaving the church without regard for church family considerations is the same as a wife divorcing a husband she no longer agrees with nor can convince of her position.

Coming back to the paradox of individuality and submission, look at the following apparent contradiction:

**Mat 23:9** Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

Compare that with this verse

**1Ti 5:1** Rebuke not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men as brethren;

**1Co 4:15-17** For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. **(16)** Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. **(17)** For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

In Matthew Jesus is addressing the abuse of power by leadership and in that context, we should not implicitly trust any leader and trust their judgment without reference to the word of God. In contrast Paul is asking younger men to love and cherish the agencies of truth that God sends to them in the same way a son would love and respect a father. There is no discord here.

## **F. When We are Released From the Authority of Established Leadership**

What about the examples in the Bible where people have defied the commands of leaders and continued in what they believe to be right? Notice an example

**Act 4:18-20** And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. **(19)** But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. **(20)** For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

The Jewish leadership tried to silence the apostles from speaking in the name of Christ and proclaiming Him as God's Son. This is quite a relevant example for many who have come to see Christ as God's only Son. Is it not right for such people to quote this verse and go right ahead and present their views without regard to the current leaders of the church? This is a fair question and one that must be addressed.

For over three years Jesus prayed for and reached out to the Jewish leadership. At any point he could have taken their position and removed them but He did not. He continued to tell the people to report to the priest's when healed, He commended the woman for putting her two mites into the plate and he still attended their religious gathers and feasts while on earth. After His death he gave the leaders a little more time to acknowledge his death and resurrection. They had fifty days.

Before Jesus went back to heaven, He gave this important instruction.

**Act 1:8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The cue for the disciples to go forward and act upon their commission was a signal manifestation of the power of God as a stamp of approval and authority for their mission, independent from the previous human authority which God had ordained but had turned from using this position correctly and rejected the truth.

When the day of Pentecost came, the disciples had been praying and fasting for the power to proclaim Jesus as the true Son of God. There had been divisions among the disciples and disharmony, all this was confessed and forsaken. Then after ten days God demonstrated His power through Pentecost and the outpouring of the Spirit. The signal manifestation of the power of God was the green light to present Christ regardless of established authority.

After this Peter and the apostles began to proclaim boldly the name of Christ. Miracles also attended their preaching as well as the gift of prophecy. All of these evidences indicated that God was leading them directly.

What about the case of Jones and Waggoner. The old guard did not want their message presented. They even had a letter from Ellen White telling Jones and Waggoner that they were out of line by presenting their views without consulting their elder brethren.

After 1888 Jones, Waggoner and Prescott went everywhere presenting this most precious message. The fact was that they had the authority of a prophet attending them. Ellen White endorsed the message and eagerly tried to help move it forward. It was the authority of the prophet that allowed them to move as they did.

Without the direct authority of a prophet or a clear manifestation of God upon His people through revival or divine manifestation, God’s people have no authority to reject established leadership. The authority of the Adventist church was clearly validated by God and set up through the midnight cry revival of 1844, the prophetic gift of Ellen White and the experience of miracles in many cases in conjunction with the large revelation of Biblical truth. There is no indication that this organization has yet been rejected by God and therefore we have no right to act independently of it. It is God who decides when and if such an event should take place not man. I must concede that from the information presented in this manuscript, it is evident that the church has moved away from the platform given to us and that the fruit of this is manifested in many sad and terrible happenings in the church, but the Lord is long suffering to towards His church even as it was with Israel in the time of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Though the leaders had turned to false gods, there was a period of time given to Israel to repent and turn back to the true God. I believe that we are in this time and this is a test for those who wish to see change now.

The tarrying time ensures that God’s people wait for His direction. If every man felt at liberty to present to the church what he felt was the truth, there would be a perfect Babylon. Such a spirit of independence, self sufficiency and resistance is in complete contradiction to the person of Christ who is the complete example of submission and dependence upon His Father. Christ does nothing but what the Father directs. We would do well to do likewise. Many people ask, but why are things being revealed to many people. I would answer, so that we can submit them to our leaders and pray for them. The gift of truth is a test for the one who receives it. The temptation is to act independently and not follow through on the duty to appeal to our leaders and prayerfully ask for them to open the channel of blessing. Those who fail to wait and pray are in great danger of falling into error and rejecting the very heart of what Christ teaches us – a person under authority.

If we step out from under an established authority structure in a spirit of defiance and anger towards leadership, we will carry this spirit into any organization we become a part of. This spirit is then passed onto everyone that comes under its influence. Secondly, if we step out without the direct blessing of the Lord we become susceptible to a spirit of self-justification for our existence which manifests in proving the organization we have left is in apostasy. This process leads to self righteousness – “we are better than you” While it may never be intended, it will always be the inevitable result. We do well to remember the psalm which says

**Psa 127:1** Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain.

The Lord must build the house and lay the foundation in leadership that understands the vital principle of submission, love for leadership and the appeal process. Without these things “they labour in vain that build it.

### **G. A Suggested Process for Church Members**

If after our appeals have not met with scriptural answers and we have given sufficient time to listen and make sure we are not in error and we are engaged in a process of fervent prayer and love for our leaders, then it must be considered fair to declare our position, not by trying to win people to our view, but by stating the leadership that our conscience is bound by the Word of God and we cannot forsake it. It is my suggestion that those who hold membership advise the

leadership of their position and that appeal be made to the leaders to act in the best interest of the congregation.

This appeal is an invitation for leadership to make sure they are right by praying and carefully rereading your proposals. It is also a submission to them that if they wish to use their god given authority to dismiss you then you will accept it as God's will.

All the while you will be praying for a blessing through the leaders, pleading that God will bless you through those that you have come to love so dearly through your prayers for them. I believe that this places us in the best position for God to act on our behalf. If God's appointed leaders refuse to bless us while we are asking for a blessing from God, then our dear Father in heaven will certainly intervene. Either the leadership will respond to the Spirit and their eyes will be opened to the truth or God will remove them. Failing this if the leaders do remove you from membership, then they will have aroused the wrath of God and will face judgment for mishandling their flock. I would fear for any leader in that position and would pray that God have mercy on them. I personally believe that a process of submission will actually hasten a change in the current church situation. If we remain submissive to leadership and pray for a blessing, the need for leadership reform or change comes more powerfully before the Lord. But if we remove ourselves from the established channel and begin our own work then no pressure is brought to bear on the leadership and God's arm cannot be raised to act.

I believe that if we follow this procedure then if the time comes where we are forced into being in a different group, it will avoid bringing to the believers a spirit of self-sufficiency and rebellion and as the proverb states:

**Pro 24:13-14** My son, eat thou honey, because *it is* good; and the honeycomb, *which is* sweet to thy taste: (14) So *shall* the knowledge of wisdom *be* unto thy soul: when thou hast found *it*, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

If we cling to the principles of God's government, the sweet taste of honey which is found in the law of God will be ours. His blessing will remain upon us and our expectation will not be cut off.

For those who have left the church in disappointment and bitterness, I would appeal to you to consider that these feelings are seed that will be passed onto all that you teach and influence. As far as I can see the only cure is to ask for forgiveness of church leadership for any wrong attitudes manifested. This process itself opens a chance for potential dialog. It is very hard for a leader to dismiss a person who is gracious and submissive. It allows the spirit of Christ to speak to them in the night season. I would also ask those who have left the church to renew your prayers for the church leadership. Pray for them in love and pray for their families that God will be merciful to them. This spirit of love and grace protects the soul from pride and self-sufficiency. I would also strongly appeal to any in this case not to hand out material to members on church property or seek people out to present your view. If people ask what you believe you have a right to answer, but seek to be transparent with church leadership in all matters.

This is a difficult issue and requires much prayer and wisdom, but God will not remove from us the channel of blessing if we are humble in heart and seek to preserve the principles of God's kingdom.

## H. The Former Rain Rebuilds Family/Community Structures to Prepare for Latter Rain

With all these things in mind, the preparation for the Latter Rain involves the restoring of the *irrigation system* within families which then flows to churches and the community – such a restoration needs the coming of a teacher of righteousness (the former rain) to turn the hearts of family members into the correct family structure – a structure that reflects the image of God.

When our family structures are restored to the image of the structure of the Godhead by the removal of mountains and valleys by Elijah – then a highway will be made for our God, the *irrigation system* repaired and love will flow in its fullness and God will be revealed in the Latter Rain (Isa 40:1-12).

Preparation for the latter rain therefore is a response to the teacher of righteousness that does the following:

1. Teaches us that Christ has reclaimed our sonship through His baptism and victory in the wilderness.
2. Once in sonship we can fully appreciate the gift of God's beloved Son on the cross for us.
3. This gift shows our centre or heart *treasure* has moved from ourselves to the fountain of life – our heavenly Father.
4. We are then correctly instructed in the law, the law which restores the true *identity* of both God and ourselves and re-establishes the life flow system.
5. A correct view of God and His structure for the flow of life impacts our structures as we are made in His image and begins the restoration of the family unity.
6. All this work is part of the Elijah message. Elijah pointed people back to the law of God and exposed their false worship of God.
7. When our family structures are restored, the blessings will flow into our families and churches and remove the mountains of pride and the valleys of depression.
8. Then we will be prepared for the outpouring of the Latter Rain that will prepare us for translation.

Will we heed the voice of Elijah and turn our hearts to the fathers and fathers turn your hearts to your children? Will we seek to clarify the God we worship and see whether that God is built on a *performance-base* or on a *relational-base*?

My prayer is that you will prayerfully consider these things, take them to the Lord and prove all things, rightly dividing the word of God on a correct *value system* and *life source* view that is free from the serpent's lie – "You shall not surely die."

Like the prodigal will we come to the Father determined to be accepted back as a hired servant or will we under the blessing of the investigative judgment, allow the Word to penetrate our *performance-thinking* and truly believe the Word of God that says to us:

"You are my beloved son whom I love" (Matt 3:17).

### 34. Seed/Nurture Authority Structures.

#### A. Authority Structures Come in Twos

We noted in chapter 29 that Mankind has been made in the image of God not only individually but also relationally. We noted the following parallels of that image.

<b>Father and Son</b>	<b>Adam and Eve</b>
Son comes forth from the Father (John 8:42; Prov 8:22-30).	Eve comes forth from Adam (Gen 2:21-23).
Christ was the express image of the Father. and inherited everything He possessed from Him (Heb 1:2-4).	Eve was a help-meet and companion to Adam comparable to him. All that she had she inherited from Adam. She was made from his bone not from the ground (Gen 2:20-24).
Father is the head of Christ (1 Cor 11:3).	Man is the head of the woman (1 Cor 11:3).
Christ is equal with the Father through the <i>relationship</i> (John 5:18; Phil 2:6).	Eve was equal with Adam through the <i>relationship</i> . They were one flesh (Gen 2:24).
Father made all things through Christ. The Father's <i>life source</i> was channeled (nurtured) by Christ and from Christ came the whole universe (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:17).	Adam's seed (life) was nurtured by Eve and from Eve came the whole human race (Gen 4:1; Gen 5:3).

In Chapter 30 we looked at headship concepts associated with male leadership and the resulting authority structure that results in the family. In Chapter 31 we looked at how these authority structures ripple through the church and the community.

As we have stated earlier, our view of the Father and Son relationship has a direct impact on human relations both in terms of equality concepts and authority concepts. When equality is based on a performed-based understanding, the nature of the Father and Son as well as husband and wife relationship is altered to the point where roles can be potentially interchangeable and identity can no longer be attributed to the terms Father and Son or husband and wife. The terms are only functional and no longer an expression of core identity.

If we consider the direct authority areas of the Christians life, it is evident that God has authority as expressed in the first four commandments and our Parents have authority as expressed in commandment five. God's Authority is directly reflected in the Lordship of Both Father and Son. Parental authority is reflected in the leadership of both husband and wife. When we look at the authority of God's revelation of Himself we find it also follows a two part formula: The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. In each authority structure, there is a source authority and a nurturing authority. We could summarise this as follows:

Seed/Source	Father	Husband	Bible
Nurture	Son	Wife	Spirit of Prophecy

Shallow thinking could lead to the above chart by reciting texts that Christ is referred to as the Seed in Scripture. It is indeed true that Christ is the Seed in relation to the creation, but this seed

was given to Him by His Father, it comes through the channel of blessing. The emphasis of seed here is the point of origination and that always resides with the Father.

### **B. Seed/Nurture Relationship of Bible/Spirit of Prophecy**

It must be conceded that a shift in the relationship between Father and Son from relationship equality to power based equality will have a direct impact on husband/wife equality and also Bible/Spirit of Prophecy equality and authority.

For the last 30 years there has been an intensified concern as to how to express a Seventh-day Adventist belief in and support for the Spirit of Prophecy. This concern was raised in the 1919 Bible conference with legitimate questions as to how we should relate the Bible to the Spirit of Prophecy. It was not until the 1970's when the minutes for this conference was found that Adventist Consciousness began to seriously engage this question again.

It is my observation that the shift in equality between Father and Son (with the introduction of a power based equality Godhead) directly impacted our view of the relationship between the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

### **C. Shift to Trinity Impacts Authority of Spirit of Prophecy**

With the strong allegiance to the Spirit of prophecy from the 1930's to 1960's it was inevitable that the church would find it hard not to place the Spirit of Prophecy on the same authority base as the Bible, even though this would be denied in theory. In elevating Christ to the same power and source position as the Father, the natural result would be an elevating of the Spirit of Prophecy to the same power and source position as the Bible. The results are evident that during this era it was common practice to derive doctrine directly from the Spirit of Prophecy.

This dilemma was most painfully revealed in the early 1980's when Bill Johnson was questioned by Walter Martin on the John Ankerberg show about how Adventists viewed the Spirit of Prophecy. Dr Johnson did his best to give answers, but Martin pulled out several quotes from Adventist leaders clearly showing that the Spirit of Prophecy was effectively equivalent to the Bible. Walter Martin correctly exposed this flaw of thinking, but the consequential alternative that would rise in the coming decades would be equally wrong.

Of course, it must be acknowledged that if Adventism wished to remain true to Protestant principles of the Bible and the Bible Only and even support Ellen Whites admonition that we should go to our Bibles for our doctrine, then ultimately the Spirit of Prophecy would have to be shifted from its incorrect position of power equality with the Bible.

Sadly, without a shift in the equality concepts between Father and Son, the only way to remove the Spirit of prophecy from the position of equality is to in fact make it of none effect. The growing mantra of “lesser light” and the greater focus on Ellen White's humanness, her borrowing of sources and “growth in understanding” concepts, and the growing annoyance at the use of EGW in sermons and presentations all attest to the shift that Ellen Whites writings have taken towards being of “none effect”. Any Student of Adventist History would know how much Satan hates the Spirit of Prophecy and how many times he tried to kill Ellen White and prevent her work. It appears that the devils success has come in firstly elevating the Spirit of Prophecy to an incorrect position, then apply heat to this inconsistency, firstly through evangelicals and later internally and finally a muted or destroyed authority in the Spirit of Prophecy. A brilliant tactic, directly related to false equality concepts that find their inspiration in the Trinity.

I have struggled for years to know how to relate the Spirit of Prophecy to the Bible. I knew that the Spirit of prophecy was not the source of doctrine and yet I knew that to ignore its writings would be to ignore precious light. I have wrestled for years to know how to relate the Spirit of Prophecy to the Bible and still maintain the Protestant principle of Sola Scriptura. Lesser light is still light and light is to be followed and obeyed. It is not simply good advice, it is salvational. I see now that while my concepts of equality were clouded by the Trinity, it would be impossible to hold these two authorities in correct tension. Either I would become an “Ellen White Worshipper” as Walter Martin Called F.D Nichol or I would hypocritically espouse the virtues of writings while disregarding anything she said that did not suit me personally. Once correct Authority structures are established, the dilemma is solved. The Spirit of Prophecy is a nurturer of the Seed. It allows us to “prosper” and develop. It corrects false world views and assumptions and allows us to right the Bible in a correct light. Just as a son or daughter would obey his/her mother’s commands and the Mother would submit to the leadership and authority of her head; her husband; So should we submit to the authority of the Spirit of Prophecy even as it submits to the headship and Seed of the Bible. The concept is simple, the impact; profound, the effect; life transforming.

It should be pointed out that just as the Spirit of Prophecy is being made of “none effect” through a false elevation, so too the person of Christ will be made of none effect by a false elevation. This false elevation in a power equality context destroys Christ as the Way. The altering of His relationship to the Father blurs the way of salvation. Is it possible that in Satan’s efforts to “dispute the supremacy of Christ” that he found it easier to first falsely elevate Him and then make Him of none effect? Let us consider well these things as we ponder how we shall constitute our authority structures.

## Section 7 – How Shall We Respond?

### ***35. My Personal Experience***

It has been said that the acceptance of truth passes through three stages:

1. Intense resistance
2. Careful investigation
3. Accepted as totally obvious

This is exactly what has happened to me regarding the truth about God and His Son. I was first exposed to the idea that the Trinity was incorrect 14 years ago. It involved a seven hour discussion with friends of mine that left me quite disturbed. I could not comprehend how my friends, who were solid Bible students, could reject the obvious Bible teaching of the Trinity. There was a high level of emotion driving my responses. I was concerned for my friends, they were falling into heresy and I was desperate to save them. I also realized that accepting such beliefs would cost me highly. My high level of emotion caused me to twist things they were saying as evidence that they were wrong. This is a powerful self-defense mechanism when the heart of your faith is being challenged. I have shared the Sabbath truth with several people and I have often had people twist my words to try and destroy my credibility in their minds.

So when I first heard about the Godhead issue 14 years ago, I managed to successfully twist what they were saying or intentionally misunderstand what they were saying to preserve my position. I moved the discussion from the topic to the person. I began to observe their unbalanced mindset. I would reassure myself with my other Trinitarian friends as we laughed together about my Pioneer-based Godhead believer friend's crazy ideas and unbalanced minds.

Over the next seven years, the Lord worked on my attitude. Finally I was convicted that even if I disagreed with my friends who denied the Trinity, I was unchristian to mock them and scorn their ideas, especially when I had not thoroughly investigated the subject for myself.

I went to my friends and apologized for my attitude and began to look at some materials on the subject. I had now moved from intense resistance to the second stage of careful investigation.

After reading many books, I could see that there were at least two sides to this discussion. I saw merit in the plainness of the Father and His begotten Son. At one point I remember kneeling down and saying Lord if this is the truth then I am willing to accept it. But some of the material I read seemed to indeed depreciate the Divinity of Christ and there were the quotes in Evangelism and other places that clearly talked about three Persons. I could not resolve the issue. The issues against Pioneer-based Godheadism for me were:

1. The quote "Life original, unborrowed, underived."
2. The quote "There never was a time when Christ was not in close fellowship with the Father."
3. The issue of the equality of the Son and preserving His Divinity.
4. The issues of another Comforter.
5. The experience of M.L. Andreasen.
6. The appearance of Pioneer-based Godhead believers to suggest the Ellen White's writings were tampered with.

7. That James White near the end of his life stated that the view of the divinity of Christ held by evangelicals was so close to his that he saw no point in debating the subject. This point caused me to believe that Pioneer-based Godhead believers were making a big issue out of a small issue.
8. The disrespect for Church leaders shown by some Pioneer-based Godhead believers. Handing out books behind the Pastors back and targeting new converts.
9. I perceived that some Pioneer-based Godhead believers were saying there is no Holy Spirit.
10. The linking of the Omega issue to the Trinity. This appeared to me to be alarmist and sensational beyond belief. Especially when presented within the first contact with a Pioneer-based Godhead believer.
11. The emphasis of Pioneer-based Godhead believers on the personality of God, I saw as an over focus on the mechanics of the Godhead relationship. I could not see how this affected the character of God. It made little sense to me.

The issues that caused me to favour Pioneer-based Godheadism were:

1. John 3:16 and John 5:26 and the real identities of Father and Son. It seemed to make the Scripture read more simply.
2. The position of our pioneers.
3. The quotes of Ellen White from *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *Spirit of Prophecy Volume 1*, that spoke of Christ as the ONLY Being who could enter into the counsels of God and that Lucifer was next in honour to Christ.
4. Proverbs 8, referring to wisdom and 1 Cor 1:24,30 referring to Christ as wisdom and E.G.W. support that Proverbs 8 is describing Christ (PP 34).
5. The fact that Ellen White never used the word Trinity nor wrote against the Pioneers' beliefs on this subject.
6. The message of righteousness by faith given by Jones and Waggoner was set clearly in a Pioneer-based Godhead framework.
7. That Christ could have come just after 1888 when most of the Church still held a Pioneer-based Godhead view.
8. The Doctrine of the Trinity was the central doctrine of Rome.
9. The suggestion that God was role-playing was a concern to me.

The issue was split in my mind and I could not settle it. There were aspects of the Pioneer-based Godhead view that were attractive but there were still too many hurdles that I could not resolve. During the next seven years I determined to stay open on the subject. I favoured the Trinitarian view because I could see no other way to preserve the equality of Christ with the Father and safeguard the divine atonement. But I had become sympathetic to Pioneer-based Godhead thinking. During this time I noted that some Adventists were being disfellowshipped over the issue. On the one hand I could see that if people were being intentionally disruptive, handing out material, expressing anti-Conference views, constantly saying the Church was in apostasy and always carrying a frown, that they should move on for their own sake as well as the church. However, in cases where people were just expressing convictions, seeking answers and not getting aggressive, I felt that people disfellowshipped in this manner, made our statement of 27 fundamentals a creed and that made me extremely nervous.

Over the next seven years I believe the Lord opened my mind to how to understand the issues of equality. This indeed was the key issue. The concepts described in the first 7 chapters of this book began to come to me and I began to grasp the importance of sonship in relation to escaping a *performance-based* mindset. Apart from the incredible new sense of freedom from pride and

fear that I began to experience, I also began to see the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy through a completely new lens. My *treasure* and *value* was beginning to shift from myself to my Father. My mind then opened up to a deeper relational way of thinking. Chapter 3 in reference to the law is a perfect example. I could actually begin to see how I could love the law with my heart and not just my head. It was exciting.

I began to study the roles of men and women in the church due to the fact that some of the Church leadership have been encouraging the acceptance of women as ordained pastors. As I studied I pondered the relationship of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were said to be made in the image of God. I had always understood this as each individual was made in the image of God. I then noticed that Adam and Eve were in the image of God as a unit not just as individuals. Notice the following:

**Gen 1:27** So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

“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.’” 1SP 24

As Eve came forth from the man and Adam started the creation of all humankind through Eve. So Christ came forth from the Father and the Father made the entire universe through Him. Here we gain a glimpse of the invisible things of God from the creation of the world clearly seen, even His eternal power and Godhead (Romans 1:20).

I also began to see that the lie of Satan “You shall not surely die” had affected my thinking of how to determine equality. The lie of Satan caused me to see equality is a *power-equality* whereas I found the Bible teaches a *relational-equality*. I noticed that from an *inherent power* view Adam was superior to Eve.

1. He has formed first
2. He was stronger
3. He was larger
4. He named Eve

All of these things would prove Adam to be superior, but from heaven’s point of view, all that Adam had, Eve received. She was by inheritance, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Through their relationship she was equal to Adam and all the fullness of the human-head was in her. This reality opened my eyes to the flow of life as reflected in 1 Cor 11:3.

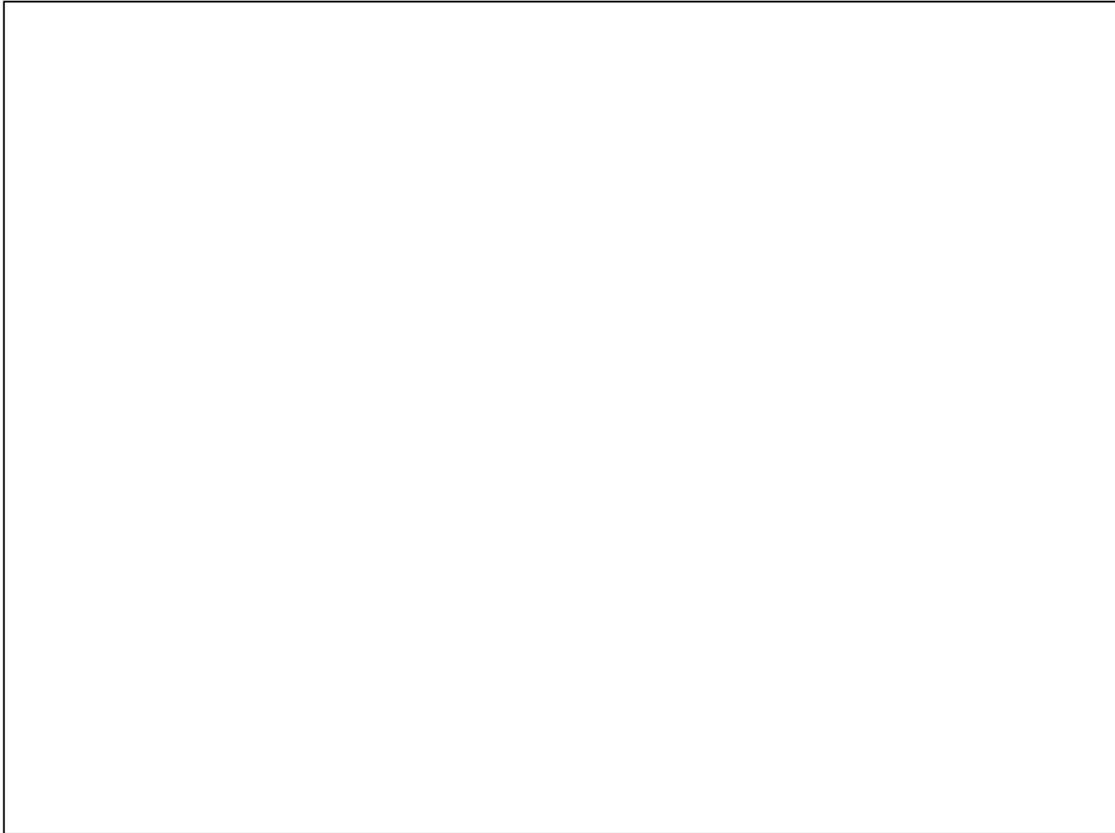
**1Co 11:3** But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God.

This verse rather than showing who is superior, showed the flow of life from God to man. Life flows from God to Christ to man to woman. This showed that to be submissive to your head was to be open to the life flowing through them. At this point I began to see that the personality or the mechanics of the relationship had a dramatic impact on how we receive the life of God.

## Chapter 35 – My Personal Experience

Armed with the principles of *relational-equality* and life flow through a channel, I began to see the direct relationship between righteousness by faith, the family structure (manhead) and the Godhead. I could see that to make Christ self-existent and separate from the Father confused the life source flow and altered the role of men and women as reflected in the image. Finally I began to realize that this was no longer a small issue and that a correct understanding of the personality of God and His Son holds precious light that would not be understood in the context of a co-equal, co-eternal Trinity.

It was not until I fully embraced sonship and the full knowledge of my *value* through the Father, that the Holy Spirit began to penetrate my *performance-thinking* at the deeper levels. The reason I had not been able to accept the literal Father and Son before was because my thinking was layered like this:



I had not realized that even though the Father accepted me fully as a son, my Christian experience was still controlled by my natural desire to serve my Father as a servant. I thought I had accepted it, but these deeper layers were still invisible to me and caused me to ask the *performance-based* question of Jesus. Without even realizing it I was asking Jesus to prove His Divinity by His *inherent power* not by His *relationship* to the Father. In essence I was not fully converted. I was still captive to the lie “You shall not surely die.” I have now begun to understand what Jesus meant when He said in response to Peter’s recognition of Him as “the Son of the living God”:

**Mat 16:17** 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.

## Chapter 35 – My Personal Experience

Flesh and blood (natural humanity) cannot grasp the equality of Jesus with the Father on a relational basis, because human nature is stamped with the lie “You shall not surely die.”

But once I accepted my Father’s words that I am His beloved son and began to live as if I really believed it, I was then ready to have the real Christ revealed to me.



Secure in my Father’s love, I am able to firstly see that Jesus is truly the Son of God, begotten by the Father in eternity and that He has received everything from the Father. I can then truly see that the very person of Christ, his very *identity* is the way to the Father. This reality has brought me joy overflowing. I know that this is the truth and it has set me free. I have found the pearl of great price and I will sell all to possess it. Satan has tried to hide Jesus from me as my Comforter, but now my Father revealed to me His Son and I have found eternal life in truly knowing the Father and the Son.

Accepting this truth has also made me realize that I have sinned against God and broken His commandments. I had worshipped a Christ of my own devising. I had dictated the terms of exactly who Christ should be. I did not allow Him to reveal himself as He truly is. For this I am ashamed and repentant. Also as a pastor I have presented to people an incorrect view of God, a view that will not fully open an understanding of righteousness by faith, distorts family relationships and negatively impacts the Spirit of Prophecy. To such people, I ask your forgiveness and pray that God will blot out my sin through the precious blood of His Son.

## Chapter 35 – My Personal Experience

To all of my church family and friends, I know I must sound completely absurd, but my fear of those thoughts means nothing compared to the truth of finding the real Jesus on the Damascus road.

Some may feel that in my book I have attacked the church regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. I love the Seventh-day Adventist church and as a loyal son of the church, I say plainly that this is not my intention. I can't attack someone else for the very things that I have been doing. I will condemn no man or women for the very things I am guilty of.

I pray earnestly that you will search your heart and allow yourself full son or daughtership, so that the Father can really reveal His Son to you. To those who believe – He is Precious!

### **36. A Word to my Fellow Pastors and Administrators**

I am sure you have experienced like me, the familiar scenario of someone coming to you after you have preached a sermon and telling you in no uncertain terms that what you are teaching is incorrect. When someone approaches me with a high level of emotion like this, I find it difficult not to become defensive and feel that I am being personally attacked. Once I am in a defensive stance, I find it very hard to actually hear what the person is saying. The only thing I really hear is that this person is against me and is trying to undermine my position as a minister. I still struggle with this problem but the more I believe that I am a son of God the less powerful my old *performance-based* nature is and the less defensive I am able to be.

Some of the sentiments contained in this book may be seen as a personal attack on the church and undermining its credibility. This will certainly be the case if we cling to *performance-based-thinking*. I hope that you will not see it this way, but rather as an appeal from a son of the church who loves his church and wants to see it prosper and excel. As I clearly stated in my previous chapter I am not condemning anyone for holding a belief in the Trinity as I have done this for many years and taught it with passion and conviction. It would be totally hypocritical for me to accuse others and totally unbiblical to show disrespect to the leaders God has appointed in His Church.

My plea to you, especially those in administrative positions is that as you have been given by our Saviour a position that can greatly bless our church, I am appealing to you to prayerfully consider the contents of this book and release to the church the full blessing of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. I wish to esteem you highly in love for your works sake and I trust that you will take this to the Lord and ask: “Are these things so?” Please see this book as a son who is coming to his father and saying “Dad, I think I found something amazing!” rather than seeing it as a self-opinionated person trying to prove that he knows more than anyone else. I know that I am certainly guilty of being opinionated and overconfident and therefore I pray that you will be patient with me and pray for me if I have displayed these traits in my book. I have been nurtured and raised by this church. Everything I have has come through this church. I appeal to you in the name of Jesus, please consider these things and release to us the blessing that God has granted you to give to the church. I have full confidence in the Lord concerning you that your desire is to bless the church of God.

As I have mentioned earlier, our view of how to conduct relationships comes directly from how we view God’s relationship with His Son. If their relationship is built on an *equality of power and position* then we will build our structures in the same way. I am confident that if we returned to the view that Christ is indeed the Son of God and received everything from Him, then our own position as ministers would be more clearly understood in the channel of blessing. Our members would begin to see that they do not have to be equal with us in power and position but rather pray for us to release God’s blessing to them as His chosen agents. The majority of independent ministries that arose in the 1980’s and onwards have failed to accomplish what they hoped because in many cases they would not acknowledge your God given authority and proved themselves deniers of God’s desire to restore the human structure of the channels of blessing.

I submit to you also how a view of Christ as the real Son of God, receiving everything from the Father will affect the families of our congregations. We can encourage *relational-equality* in homes and help families restore the blessing of children and strengthen our family base. I believe there are many advantages that can be gained if we view things in this way.

I realise that other churches would immediately label us as a cult, but how can we allow that to influence our thinking when such churches themselves are immersed in *performance-based-thinking* and the concepts of the immortality of the soul. Should we fear their judgment? Do they stand on the platform of truth so lovingly given to our pioneers by God?

Considering all that I have requested of you, I wish to make the following request which I know is asking a great deal, but I come with the confidence of a son to his father expecting to be blessed. I appeal to you as leaders to consider presenting to our people the changing of the wording of some of our fundamental teachings. Our current wording on fundamentals 2 to 5 are as follows:

## 2. The Trinity

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; 29:29; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:6, 7.)

## 3. The Father

God the Eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 14:9.)

## 4. The Son

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 5:18; 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 2:9-18; 4:15; 7:25; 8:1, 2; 9:28; John 14:1-3; 1 Peter 2:21; Rev. 22:20.)

## 5. The Holy Spirit

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the

church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 2 Peter 1:21; Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13; Rom. 1:1-4.)

My appeal to you is to consider revising these four fundamentals to reflect a belief that God the Father is the one self-originating source of life and that all the fullness of the Father is inherited by the Son and that the Holy Spirit is Christ our Comforter divested of the personality of humanity. The following EGW quotes serve as a wonderful base:

“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.” PP 34 (1890)

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way," He declares, "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; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth" (Proverbs 8:22-27).” 1SM 247

“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.” 14 MR 23.

“The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be.” 8MR p. 49

If you feel this is untenable, I ask at least that the terms co-equal and co-eternal, terms lifted right out of the Athanasian Creed be removed so that members can follow this counsel:

I say, and have ever said, that I will not engage in controversy with any one in regard to the nature and personality of God. Let those who try to describe God know that on such a subject silence is eloquence. Let the Scriptures be read in simple faith, and let each one form his conceptions of God from his inspired word. Spalding and Magan collection p. 329

Let each person come to their own conclusion with their Bibles and do not force a view of equality onto the doctrine that for some is not needed.

I appeal to you as leaders to give back to the church the real Jesus Christ who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, who took on the nature of Abraham and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. All of this is possible if we take a *relational* view of the Bible. I also ask that the wording of the fundamental concerning Christ's word in the heavenly sanctuary:

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. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have a part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who, among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the second advent (Heb. 1:3; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Mal. 3:1; Leviticus 16; Rev. 14:12; 22:12.)

I ask you to make clear that the investigative judgment began in 1844 and not just a revealing of the facts to heavenly intelligences that was already established. The wording is ambiguous and can leave the impression that Christ did not actually perform any work at this time as is suggested in Questions on Doctrine. I also request that the wording of "disposition of all sin" be changed to reflect the "blotting out of sin" so a clear connection can be made to a concept of final atonement.

Another reason I wish to make this appeal is that because our people can now purchase and access Ellen White's writings as well as the Pioneer writings on CD-ROM, enquiries are only going to increase. I have become aware that there is a significant group of Adventists who hold a literal Father and Son understanding of the Godhead but are keeping quiet for fear of persecution. This is a power keg that is waiting to go off. This issue is not going to go away. It will shake the church to its very foundations.

## Chapter 36 – A Word to my Fellow Pastors and Administrators

My brothers, God is my witness to my heart-felt plea to you to take courage to place our church on a firm foundation rather than a teaching of God that has to be *assumed as a fact* and is not explicitly stated in Scripture. Give to us a Jesus who truly knows our struggles by taking our nature and return to us the true joy of the investigative judgment that has power to unmask the servant syndrome. Give to our people a platform that we can take into the final conflict without one thread of human devising.

I submit this request to you this day the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2007.

Dear Father, hear my prayer in the name of your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

### **37. A Word to the Church and Advent Believers Worldwide.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

To my fellow believers in Christ, I pray that you will carefully consider the words of this book and take them to prayer and compare them with Scripture. I ask you to study this issue out and place yourself on the solid platform of Christ the Rock – the True Son of God, that the house you build will abide the coming fires of persecution.

I know this material will come as quiet a shock to many of you. It certainly has been for me. But I realized that I have never truly questioned the doctrine of the Godhead before, I have only tried to defend it. If you feel negative towards this material, I ask you to pray earnestly to look at the subject on its merits and not bring secondary emotional issues into the study.

If you find blessing and joy in these things, I plead with you not to act in defiant and aggressive tones toward our leaders. Rather humble yourself and repent and acknowledge that you have followed a wrong course. Let your conduct be flavoured with humility and repentance. I ask you to pray for your leaders whom God has appointed for us and humbly plead with them to restore to our church the truth of God and His dear Son, torn from his bosom to die for us on the Cross.

If you truly embrace these precious truths, then it will be evidenced in a greater love and intimate relationship between husband and wife. It will reveal itself in a stronger bond of family ties and will flow into our churches with joy and not with pride.

Do not use the truth of these things to gain *value* for yourself as though you know something that others do not, maintain the spirit of humility and grace that is fitting for such a wonderful truth as that which God has given us.

It will be evident to many of you that because of our Laodicean condition and self-sufficiency that we indeed have been captured by the god of Babylon. Let us not point fingers at others and recognize that we have all failed our Saviour. Let us pray with Daniel:

**Dan 9:3-22** And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: (4) And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; (5) We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: (6) Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. (7) O Lord, righteousness *belongeth* unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, *that are* near, and *that are* far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. (8) O Lord, to us *belongeth* confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. (9) To the Lord our God *belong* mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; (10) Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. (11) Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing,

that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that *is* written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. (12) And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. (13) As *it is* written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. (14) Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. (15) And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. (16) O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people *are become* a reproach to all *that are* about us. (17) Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. (18) O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. (19) O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

How wonderful it will be when God sends the Spirit of Elijah and releases us so that we can cry in freedom “Babylon is fallen, is fallen” and our joy in this release will lighten the whole earth with the glory that we have come to know that:

Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of the Living God.  
Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

### **38. The Fall of Babylon**

On the front cover of this manuscript I placed the following statement

“Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die." "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4,5. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time. ... Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion.” GC 561

Satan’s master deception is built directly upon the lie “you shall not surely die”. As we have discussed, this lie makes the automatic assumption that every individual has within themselves their own inherent source of life. This foundational assumption makes it impossible to understand the truth about God’s kingdom.

This lie not only affects the way we view the law, the Sabbath, the state of the dead and the sanctuary, but it affects the way we view the Son of God. Christ is the truth and every other doctrine is simply a reflection of Him. If we have had a performance-based understanding of all these doctrines then have we not by implication had a performance-based understanding of Christ Himself? Notice carefully the following:

I was directed to this scripture as especially applying to modern Spiritualism. Col. ii, 8. "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." Thousands, I was shown, have been spoiled through the philosophy of phrenology and animal magnetism, and have been driven into infidelity. If the mind commences to run in this channel, it is almost sure to lose its balance, and be controlled by a demon. "Vain deceit" fills the minds of poor mortals. **They think there is such power in themselves to accomplish great works,** that they realize no necessity of a higher power. Their principles and faith are "after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Jesus has not taught them this philosophy. Nothing of the kind can be found in his teachings. **He did not direct the minds of poor mortals to themselves to a power which they possessed. He was ever directing their minds to God, the Creator of the universe, as the source of their strength and wisdom.** Especial warning is given in verse 18. "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." The teachers of Spiritualism will come in a pleasing, bewitching manner to deceive you, and if you listen to their fables you are beguiled by the enemy of righteousness, and will surely lose your reward. **When once the fascinating influence of the arch deceiver overcomes you, you are poisoned, and its deadly influence adulterates and destroys your faith in Christ's being the Son of God,** and you cease to rely on the merits of his blood....4bSG Page 88 (1864)

Without the complete eradication of the philosophy of some power retained in man (as most obviously seen in the doctrine of the immortal soul) or some power retained through a principle of equality based on power, (as evidently seen in Adventism) it matters not. The poison is the same and that poison prevents us from seeing Christ as the Son of God.

With such poison it is of course almost impossible to see that in Christ is the very key to understanding the kingdom of God. But how we understand how Christ relates to the Father in His very person will define the very nature of God's kingdom. This is why Christ is the chief cornerstone. This is why Christ has a name above every name, because He shows us how the Father constitutes His kingdom. How relationships are conducted. The Son of God is not loved and accepted by the Father because He is inherently equal. He is not considered worthy of Godhead because of endless existence. He is not equal with God because he has the "right stuff" He is God because He is the Father's son. This is who He is.

This is the wisdom of God as expressed in 1 Cor 1:30. The Father did not write His wisdom primarily on paper, He placed it in a person and that person is His Son. The principles of worship dictate that the worshippers will become like the one they worship. Since the Father is independent, self-sufficient and not under any authority, this principle would be embraced by any created beings he would directly made. SO in the wisdom of God, he brought forth His Son, who would then create all things. The Son of God demonstrates the key principle of submission to authority and in this sense Christ is the name above every name. He is our example in all things. He is the WAY and the TRUTH and the LIFE. He is the wisdom of God that brings the power of God.<sup>238</sup>

If we see Christ as equal with the Father because He is the co-equal, all powerful, self existent, independent, self originating second person of the Godhead then we are doomed to conduct all our relationships on that basis, an equality of power (which forms the core ingredients of the poison that prevents us from seeing Christ as the true Son of God.) If God does this himself then we will definitely follow His example. We can say that the second person of the Godhead demonstrates the principle of submission, but the reality is this is not who He is in His identity, It is not real.

If we see Christ as equal with His Father BECAUSE He has received everything from Him and is full of His Father and has a mind that alone can understand the Father's heart, then we have found the very seat of relational power. We understand that all relationships are conducted on the principle of life flow and inheritance. We understand the Father is the One great source of all and His Son is the definer and jewel of understanding God's heart and kingdom. This truth is the tracer bullet that strikes the heart of Babylon. It is the stone in the sling of David that strikes Goliath on the forehead and smashes the very centre of his lie "You shall not surely die"

Satan does not want us to know who Christ really is because Christ in and of himself, in his very identity and relationship to the Father is the destroyer of Satan's kingdom. In just being, Christ's person shouts from the highest mountains that Babylon is fallen. The Son of God does not need to speak a word, His very identity is the destroyer of Satan's kingdom. Can we begin to understand why Satan had to destroy Christ. Christ's relationship to the Father proves that Satan is a liar.

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<sup>238</sup> 1 Cor 1:24

Let us step back a little and consider something. Since the Father is the source of life. He is the fountain and all power has come forth from Him, God the Father could be perceived in a power performance model. He is self originating power and life. He can be perceived in a performance-based context. In the Son of God, begotten in the express image of the Father, we see the Father's supreme demonstration of Himself. In Christ we see the very heart of the Father, we see a relational God. In exalting His Son as equal with himself we see the wisdom of God in elevating relationship above inherent power. In the worship of the begotten son, we worship the God of relationships. Every fibre of my being shakes with joy just at the contemplation of this beautiful truth. I feel like a soaring eagle flying on the heights of the clouds. I feel that my spirit has been set free from a terrible weight. Will you fly with me? Will you see Christ as the name above every name, as the jewel in the Father's crown, as the chief cornerstone. Will you kneel with me and worship this Christ, the true Christ, the complete and total revelation of the Father's heart. This is the God that I will worship in spirit and truth. In this revelation of Christ I hear the voice of the mighty angel "Babylon is Fallen, is Fallen" Brother's and sisters, in Christ we have found the soft underbelly of the serpent. Wont you take the sword of the Word and thrust the serpent through and crush him under your feet. Be free from the terrible lies that has been a yoke to heavy for us to wear.

Is it importance for us to understand the correct relation of the Son to the Father. Notice:

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. 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. MH 409

How does God reveal himself?

As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son. The outshining of the Father's glory, "and the express image of His person," MH 418

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. MH 419

Ellen White clearly states that God reveals himself through His Son. He is the outshining of the Father's glory. This is how God reveals himself. Is this not plain for us to see.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three co-eternal beings decided to assume the roles they now occupy. God has not given this picture as a revelation of himself. There is not one word of inspiration that supports this claim. The claim that the members of the Godhead express themselves through the forms of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in danger of the influences of the platonic heresy of "forms". This concept teaches the God can reveal himself through a form but that form is not who he really is, it is only a representation of Him. Most Adventists would never acknowledge this, but it is hard to escape the claim.

It is exactly this thinking that has lead our scholars to question many aspects of the sanctuary teaching. In my theological training, I heard all the time, that we can't see the sanctuary as literal, God is not sitting in a box for 150 years. So what does this spiritualising of the sanctuary in heaven facilitate? It removes the two apartments of the sanctuary as implausible. Once the two apartments are minimized, some scholars are emboldened to deny the doctrine of the investigative judgement. None of this would be possible if the sanctuary was accepted as literal **BECAUSE THIS IS HOW GOD REVEALS IT TO US!**

Maybe the Sanctuary is not literal and may the Son of God is not literally begotten but this is How God reveals it to us and I intent to believe it as Gods has revealed it. I will not spiritualise it and open the door to a multitude of damnable heresies.

Back to Ellen White's statements in Ministry of Healing. If we must know aright, does this involve a correct understanding of the relationship of the son to the Father. Ellen White states further in the chapter in her efforts to give this true knowledge:

***The disciples did not yet understand Christ's words concerning His relation to God. Much of His teaching was still dark to them. Christ desired them to have a clearer, more distinct knowledge of God.***

"These things have I spoken unto you in parables," He said; "but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in parables, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." John 16:25, margin.

When, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, they understood more fully the truths that Christ had spoken in parables. Much of the teaching that had been a mystery to them was made clear. But not even then did the disciples receive the complete fulfillment of Christ's promise. They received all the knowledge of God that they could bear, but the complete fulfillment of the promise that Christ would show them plainly of the Father was yet to come. Thus it is today. Our knowledge of God is partial and imperfect. When the conflict is ended, and the Man Christ Jesus acknowledges before the Father His faithful workers, who in a world of sin have borne true witness for Him, they will understand clearly what now are mysteries to them.

Christ desires for you and I to have a correct understanding of His relation to the Father. Like the disciples many of His teachings are dark to us because we do not correctly understand the relation of the Son to the Father. Brothers and sisters I have tried as much as I can with the frailty of language to express to you what I believe God has shown me. Please take to our Heavenly Father and ask Him "Is this how you want me to understand your Son" I pray that you will find in this the power of the fourth Angel in the person of Christ and His relationship to the Father.

## Appendices

### **Appendix A – Pioneer Statements on the Trinity**

Listed below is a selection of statements from some of the leading pioneers on the Trinity. In some places, points made and reasoning offered may not hold weight but the general consensus and basic thrust of their understanding of the Godhead Doctrine is fairly uniform. As you read, not once did the Lord impress his prophet to speak against these pioneers, while on other subjects she was given plenty of counsel when they wavered and embraced dangerous teachings.

#### **1. James White (1821–1881)**

““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, 4) ...The exhortation to contend for the faith delivered to the saints, is to us alone. And it is very important for us to know what for and how to contend. In the 4th verse he gives us the reason why we should contend for THE faith, a particular faith; “for there are certain men,” or a certain class who deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. ... *The way spiritualizers 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.*” {J. S. White, The Day Star, January 24, 1846}

*“As fundamental errors, we might class with this counterfeit sabbath other errors which Protestants have brought away from the Catholic church, such as sprinkling for baptism, the trinity, the consciousness of the dead and eternal life in misery.* The mass who have held these fundamental errors, have doubtless done it ignorantly; but can it be supposed that the church of Christ will carry along with her these errors till the judgment scenes burst upon the world? We think not. "Here are they [in the period of a message given just before the Son of man takes his place upon the white cloud, Rev.xiv,14] that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." This class, who live just prior to the second advent, will not be keeping the traditions of men, neither will they be holding fundamental errors relative to the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. And as the true light shines out upon these subjects, and is rejected by the mass, then condemnation will come upon them. ... Solemn dreadful, swiftly-approaching hour!" {J. S. White, Review & Herald, September 12, 1854}

*“Here we might mention the Trinity, which does away the personality of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and of sprinkling or pouring instead of being "buried with Christ in baptism," "planted in the likeness of his death:" but we pass from these fables to notice one that is held sacred by nearly all professed Christians, both Catholic and Protestant. It is, The change of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment from the seventh to the first day of the week.”* {J. S. White, Review & Herald, December 11, 1855}

“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.” {J. S. White, Review & Herald, February 7, 1856}

“The Father and the Son were one in man's creation, and in his redemption. *Said the Father to the Son, "Let us make man in our image."* And the triumphant song in which the redeemed take part, is unto "Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.” {J. S. White, *The Law and the Gospel*, p. 1. 1870}

“The gospel of the Son of God is the good news of salvation through Christ. When man fell, angels wept. Heaven was bathed in tears. *The Father and the Son took counsel*,<sup>239</sup> and Jesus offered to undertake the cause of fallen man. He offered to die that man might have life. *The Father consented to give his only beloved*, and the good news resounded through heaven, and on earth, that a way was opened for man's redemption.” {J. S. White, *The Law and the Gospel*, pp. 2, 3. 1870}

“The inexplicable Trinity that makes the Godhead three in one and one in three, is bad enough; but that ultra Unitarianism that makes Christ inferior to the Father is worse. Did God say to an inferior, “Let us make man in our image?”” {J. S. White, *Review & Herald*, November 29, 1877}

“The Father is the greatest in that he is first. The Son is next in authority because He has been given all things .” {J. S. White, *Review & Herald*, January 4, 1881}

## 2. J.N. Andrews (1829–1883)

“Protestants not Guided by Scripture. ["Doctrinal Catechism"- pp. 101,174,351-355.]

"Q. Have you any other proofs that they [Protestants] 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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.” {*Review & Herald*, August 22, 1854}

“The doctrine of the Trinity which was established in the church by the council of Nice, A. D. 325. This doctrine destroys the personality of God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The infamous, measures by which it was forced upon the church which appear upon the pages of

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<sup>239</sup> A.T Robinson, RH Nov 1, 1929 “Before the creation of this world and man, there was a council held between the Father and the Son, when the risk of sin had to be taken into account and provision made to meet such terrible emergency.”

ecclesiastical history might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush.” {J. N. Andrews, Review & Herald, March 6, 1855}

“Every member of the human family, except Adam, has had parents, and every one has had beginning of days; and indeed, with two exceptions, everyone has had end of life. Even the angels of God have all had beginning of days, so that they would be as much excluded by this language as the members of the human family. And as to the Son of God, he would be excluded also, for he had God for his Father, and did, at some point in the eternity of the past, have beginning of days.” {J. N. Andrews, Review & Herald, September 7, 1869}

“That God is the fountain and source of immortality is plain from the statement of Paul. He speaks thus of God the Father: '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 honor and power everlasting; Amen.' 1 Tim. 6:16. This text is evidently designed to teach that the self-existent God is the only being who, of himself, possesses this wonderful nature. Others may possess it as derived from him, but he alone is the fountain of immortality. "Our Lord Jesus Christ is the source of this life to us. 'For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.' John 5:26. 'As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.' John 6:57. The Father gives us this life in 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.' 1Jn 5:11,12. These Scriptures do clearly indicate that Christ is the source of endless life, and that those only have this who have Christ.” {J. N. Andrews, Review & Herald, January 27, 1874 p. 52}

### **3. J.N. Loughborough (1832–1924)**

“QUESTIONS FOR BRO. LOUGHBOROUGH.

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 2Sam.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; 1Jno.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 1John [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." (Discussion between Summerbell and Flood on Trinity, p. 38) Milman says the idea of the Trident is fabulous. (Hist. Christianity, p.34) 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." {J. N. Loughborough, Review & Herald, November 5, 1861 }

#### **4. Uriah Smith (1832–1903)**

[Note: Uriah Smith often describes the Holy Spirit as an influence and Divine emanation. While his descriptions of the Holy Spirit sometimes seem to give the sense of a force rather than a being, he also clearly saw it as the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of the Father. Whatever Uriah Smith believed, Ellen White was never instructed to correct his views as destroying the personality of God or that he was in danger of committing the unpardonable sin for denying the Holy Spirit. Whereas when Kellogg embraced Trinitarianism and began to focus on the Holy Spirit as a separate Being, her pen was rapid in response. While we understand that Kellogg was

twisting the standard Trinitarian view, it was the Trinity that opened the door for Kellogg to his pantheistic pathway. This is something to keep in mind.]

“J. W. W. Asks: “Are we to understand that the Holy Ghost is a Person, the same as the Father and the Son? Some claim that it is, others that it is not.”

Ans. - The terms “Holy Ghost”, are a harsh and repulsive translation. It should be “Holy Spirit” (hagion pneuma) in every instance. This Spirit is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ; the Spirit being the same whether it is spoken of as pertaining to God or Christ. But respecting this Spirit, the Bible uses expressions which cannot be harmonized with the idea that it is a Person like the Father and the Son. Rather it is shown to be a Divine influence from them both, the medium which represents their presence and by which they have knowledge and power through all the universe, when not personally present. Christ is a person, now officiating as priest in the sanctuary in heaven; and yet he says that wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in the midst. Mt. 18:20. How? Not personally, but by his Spirit. In one of Christ’s discourses (John 14-16) this Spirit is personified as “the Comforter,” and as such has the personal and relative pronouns, “he,” “him,” and “whom,” applied to it. But usually it is spoken of in a way to show that it cannot be a person, like the Father and the Son. For instance, it is often said to be “poured out” and “shed abroad.” But we never read about God or Christ being poured out or shed abroad. If it was a person, it would be nothing strange for it to appear in bodily shape; and yet when it has so appeared, that fact has been noted as peculiar. Thus Luke 3:22 says: “And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him.” But the shape is not always the same; for on the day of Pentecost it assumed the form of “cloven tongues like as of fire.” Acts 2:3, 4. Again we read of “the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6. This is unquestionably simply a designation of the Holy Spirit, put in this form to signify its perfection and completeness. But it could hardly be so described if it was a person. We never read of the seven Gods or the seven Christs.” {U. Smith, Review & Herald, October 28, 1890}

“It may not then be out of place for us to consider for a moment what this Spirit is, what its office is, what its relation to the world and to the church, and what the Lord through this proposes to do for his people. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God; it is also the Spirit of Christ. It is that Divine, mysterious emanation through which they carry forward their great and infinite work. ... 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.” {U. Smith, General Conference Daily Bulletin Volume 4, March 14, 1891, pp. 146, 147}

### **5. J.H. Waggoner (1820–1889)**

[Note: Waggoner clearly shows how the Trinity destroys the personality of the Father and the Son, through the notion of “three absolute independent principles” so there is “no proper relation of Father and Son”.]

“The 'Athanasian creed'...was formulated and the faith defined by Athanasius. Previous to that time there was no settled method of expression, if, indeed, there was anywhere any uniformity of belief. Most of the early writers had been pagan philosophers, who to reach the minds of that class, often made strong efforts to prove that there was a blending of the two systems, Christianity and philosophy. There is abundance of material in their writings to sustain this view. Bingham speaks of the vague views held by some in the following significant terms: "There were some very early that turned the doctrine of the Trinity into Tritheism, and, instead of three

Divine Persons under the economy of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, brought in three collateral, coordinate, and self-originated beings, *making them three absolute and independent principles, without any relation of Father or Son, which is the most proper notion of three gods*. And having made this change in the doctrine of the Trinity, they made another change answerable to it in the form of baptism.'-Antiquities, book 11, chap. 3, &4. "Who can distinguish between this form of expression and that put forth by the council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, wherein the true faith is declared to be that of 'an uncreated and consubstantial and coeternal Trinity?' *The truth is that we find the same idea which is here described by Bingham running through much of the orthodox literature of the second and third centuries. There is no proper 'relation of Father and Son' to be found in the words of the council*, above quoted...Bingham says this error in regard to a Trinity of three coordinate and self-originated and independent beings arose in the church very early; and so we find it in the earliest authors after the days of the apostles ... We leave it with the good judgment of every unprejudiced reader that three baptisms are more consistent with the idea of "three collateral, co-ordinate, and self-originated beings", than with the idea of baptism into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in the likeness of the Saviour's death and resurrection." {J. H. Waggoner, Thoughts on Baptism, 1878}

"As before remarked, the great mistake of Trinitarians, in arguing this subject, is this: they make no distinction between a denial of a trinity and a denial of the Divinity of Christ. They see only the two extremes, between which the truth lies; and take every expression referring to the pre-existence of Christ as evidence of a trinity. The Scriptures abundantly teach the pre-existence of Christ and his Divinity; but they are entirely silent in regard to a trinity." {J. H. Waggoner, The Atonement In The Light Of Nature And Revelation, pp. 173, 174}

## 6. S.N. Haskell (1833–1922)

"The rainbow in the clouds is but a symbol of the rainbow which has encircled the throne from eternity. *Back in the ages, which finite mind cannot fathom, the Father and Son were alone in the universe. Christ was the first begotten of the Father, and to Him Jehovah made known the Divine plan of Creation*. The plan of the creation of worlds was unfolded, together with the order of beings which should people them. Angels, as representatives of one order, would be ministers of the God of the universe. The creation of our own little world was included in the deep-laid plans. The fall of Lucifer was foreseen; likewise the possibility of the introduction of sin, which would mar the perfection of the Divine handiwork. It was then, in those early councils, that Christ's heart of love was touched; and the only begotten Son pledged His life to redeem man, should he yield and fall. Father and Son, surrounded by impenetrable glory, clasped hands. ... and the everlasting covenant was made; and henceforth Father and Son, with one mind, worked together to complete the work of creation. Sacrifice of self for the good of others was the foundation of it all." {S. N. Haskell, The Story of the Seer of Patmos, pp. 93, 94. 1905}

## 7. R.F. Cottrell (1814–1892)

"Men have gone to opposite extremes in the discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity. Some have made Christ a mere man, commencing his existence at his birth in Bethlehem; *others have not been satisfied with holding him to be what the Scriptures so clearly reveal him, the pre-existing Son of God, but have made him the 'God and Father' of himself*...I would simply advise all that love our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to believe all that the bible says of Him, and no more....We Understand that the term trinity means the union of three Persons, not offices, in one God; so that the Father, Son and holy Ghost, are three at least, and one at most. That one person is three Persons, and that three Persons are only one person, is the doctrine

which we claim is contrary to reason and common sense. The being and attributes of God are above, beyond, out of reach of my sense and reason, yet I believe them: But the doctrine I object to is contrary, yes, that is the word, to the very sense and reason that God has himself implanted in us. Such a doctrine he does not ask us to believe. ... But our Creator has made it an absurdity to us that one person should be three Persons, and three Persons but one person; and in his revealed word he has never asked us to believe it. This our friend thinks objectionable. ... ***But to hold the doctrine of the Trinity is not so much an evidence of evil intention as of intoxication from that wine of which all the nations have drunk. The fact that this was one of the leading doctrines, if not the very chief, upon which the bishop of Rome was exalted to popedom, does not say much in its favor. This should cause men to investigate it for themselves;*** as when the spirits of devils working miracles undertake the advocacy of the immortality of the soul. Had I never doubted it before, I would now probe it to the bottom, by that word which modern Spiritualism sets at nought. ... Revelation goes beyond us; but in no instance does it go contrary to right reason and common sense. God has not claimed, as the popes have, that he could “make justice of injustice,” nor has he, after teaching us to count, told us that there is no difference between the singular and plural numbers. Let us believe all he has revealed, and add nothing to it.” {R. F. Cottrell, Review & Herald, July 6, 1869}

“Position of SDA Pioneers on the Trinity

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. 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

## Appendices

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 worshipping 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. 1:8. 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." {R. F. Cottrell, Review & Herald, June 1, 1869}

## **Appendix B – E.G. White Statements of Interest**

As you read the following statements, observe how impossible it is to have a third separate God being involved. Note carefully how Ellen White describes the Father and Son.

### **1. Relationship of Father and Son**

“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."” EW 54 (1882)

“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.” PP 34 (1890)

“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.” PP 36 (1890)

“"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.” ST, May 30, 1895 par. 3

“The voice of nature testifies of God, but nature is not God. As His created work, it simply bears a testimony to God's power. Deity is the author of nature. The natural world has, in itself, no power but that which God supplies. There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son. And "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;” RH Nov 8, 1898

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality.” UL 367 (1905)

“God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” 8T 268 (1909)

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way," He declares, "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; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth" (Proverbs 8:22-27).” 1SM 247

## **2. Exaltation of the Son**

“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.” 1SP 17 (1870)

“Christ had been taken into the special counsel of God in regard to his plans, while Satan was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was he permitted to know, the purposes of God. But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of Heaven, his power and authority to be the same as that of God himself.” 1 SP 18 (1870)

“There was contention among the angels. Satan and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into his unsearchable wisdom and ascertain his purposes in exalting his Son Jesus, and endowing him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son.” 1SP 18

“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. If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all.” PP 37 (1890)

“To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” 8T 268 (1909)

### **3. Life Flow though the Universe**

“But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

“In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of Divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” 7T 273

“God has sent his Son to communicate his own life [The Father’s Life] to humanity. Christ declares, "I live by the Father," my life and his being one. (Ellen G. White, Home Missionary, 1st June 1897, ‘A call to the work’)

“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.” YI, July 7, 1898 par. 2

### **4. Position of Lucifer**

“The Lord has shown me that Satan was once an honored angel in heaven, next to Jesus Christ.” 1SG (1858)

“Satan in Heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son.” 1 SP 17 (1870)

“Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, once had an exalted position in Heaven. He was next in honor to Christ.” RH, February 24, 1874 par. 33

“Satan was well acquainted with the position of honor Christ had held in Heaven as the Son of God, the beloved of the Father.” RH, March 3, 1874 par. 21

### **5. The Creation**

“Jesus had united with the Father in making the world.” 2T 209 (1868-1871)

“The Father and the Son engaged in the mighty, wondrous work they had contemplated, of creating the world. The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful.” 1 SP 24 (1870)

“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.”” 1SP 24 (1870)

“But when God said to His Son, "Let us make man in our image," Satan was jealous of Jesus.” EW 145 (1882)

“In the beginning the Father and the Son had rested upon the Sabbath after their work of creation.” DA 769 (1898)

“With what intense interest the whole universe watched the conflict that was to decide the position of Adam and Eve. How attentively the angels listened to the words of Satan, the originator of sin, as he placed his own ideas above the commands of God, and sought to make of none effect the law of God through his deceptive reasoning! How anxiously they waited to see if the holy pair would be deluded by the tempter, and yield to his arts! They asked themselves, Will the holy pair transfer their faith and love from the Father and Son to Satan? Will they accept his falsehoods as truth? They knew that they might refrain from taking the fruit, and obey the positive injunction of God, or they might violate the express command of their Creator.” {1BC 1083.3}

## 6. Plan of Salvation

“The Son of God was next in authority to the great Lawgiver. He knew that his life alone could be sufficient to ransom fallen man.” 2SP 9 (1877)

“Sorrow filled heaven as it was realized that man was lost and that the world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and that there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. I then saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, “He is in close converse with His Father.” The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father we could see His person. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with a loveliness which words cannot describe. He then made known to the angelic choir that a way of escape had been made for lost man; that He had been pleading with His Father... Then joy, inexpressible joy, filled heaven, and the heavenly choir sang a song of praise and adoration. They touched their harps and sang a note higher than they had done before, because of the great mercy and condescension of God in yielding up His dearly Beloved to die for a race of rebels. Then praise and adoration was poured forth for the self-denial and sacrifice of Jesus, in consenting to leave the bosom of His Father, and choosing a life of suffering and anguish, and an ignominious death, that He might give life to others.” EW 126 (1882)

“Said the angel, “Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no.” It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His darling Son to die for them.” EW 127 (1882) [Note: Did the Father really struggle or just role- play for the angels?]

“God became one with man when, in the council between the Father and the Son in heaven it was determined that if man fell from his allegiance, the Son of God should be his Redeemer and restore in him the moral image of God.” 1888 Study materials p. 869 (1891)

“By Christ the work upon which the fulfillment of God's purpose rests was accomplished. This was the agreement in the councils of the Godhead. The Father purposed in counsel with His Son that the human family should be tested and proved to see whether they would be allured by the temptations of Satan, or whether they would make Christ their righteousness, keeping God's commandments, and live. God gave to His Son all who would be true and loyal. Christ

covenanted to redeem them from the power of Satan, at the price of His own life. We have the condition of this covenant. "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. 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" [Isaiah 53:10, 11]." 21MR 54

"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." RH, July 9, 1895 par. 13

"By Christ the work upon which the fulfillment of God's purpose rests was accomplished. This was the agreement in the councils of the Godhead. The Father purposed in counsel with His Son that the human family should be tested and proved to see whether they would be allured by the temptations of Satan, or whether they would make Christ their righteousness, keeping God's commandments, and live. Letter 126, (1898) to Kellogg." MS Vol 21 p 54

"All communication from heaven to earth since Adam's fall has come through Christ." The Kress Collection p 126, 4 July (1900)

## 7. The Comforter; The Holy Spirit

"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." 14 MR 23.

"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.* Again Jesus says, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" [John 16:12, 13].

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. Piety, devotion, sanctification of soul, body, and spirit--this is essential for us all. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" 14MR 179

"The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be." 8MR p. 49

"As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving Jesus the Comforter." 19MR 297

"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..." RH August 26 1890.

## Appendices

“The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul.” RH, October 26, 1897

“The teacher must be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Then the mind and spirit of Christ will be in him, and he will confess Christ in a spiritual and holy life.” RH, February 9, 1892

“The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; it is His representative. Here is the divine agency that carries conviction to hearts.” 13MR 313

But *man can keep the commandments of God only as he is in Christ, and Christ in him....* None will keep the law of God unless they love Him who is the only-begotten of the Father. And, none the less surely, if they love him, will they express that love by steadfast, willing obedience. And all who love Christ will be loved of the Father, and he will manifest himself to them. In all their emergencies and perplexities they will have a helper in God.

But it was difficult even for the disciples to understand the words of Christ. *That Christ should manifest himself to them, and yet be invisible to the world, was a mystery to them. They could not understand the words of Christ in spiritual sense.* They were thinking of the outward, visible manifestation. *They could not take in the fact that they could have the presence of Christ with them, and yet he be unseen by the world.* They had yet to learn that the inward spiritual life, all fragrant with the obedience of love, would give them the spiritual power they needed. ST, November 18, 1897

“The juices of the vine, ascending from the root, are diffused to the branches sustaining growth, and producing blossoms and fruit. So the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from Christ, and imparted to every disciple, pervades the soul, renews the motives and affections, and even the most secret thoughts, and brings forth the precious fruit of holy deeds. The life attests the union with the true and living Vine.” 3SP 418 (1878)

“Let them [Believers in the Truth] be thankful to God for His manifold mercies and be kind to one another. They have one God and one Saviour; and one Spirit--the Spirit of Christ-- is to bring unity into their ranks.” 9T 189 (1909)

“Yes, Christ has become the medium of prayer between man and God. He has also become the medium of blessing between God and man. He has united Divinity with humanity. God’s appointments and grants in our behalf are without limit.” ST April 14 1909 p.4 [Note: Websters dictionary on *medium* “the space or substance through which a body moves or passes to any point.”]

From the two olive trees the golden oil was emptied through the golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick, and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God's presence His Spirit is imparted to the human instrumentalities who are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate to God's people that heavenly grace which alone can make His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 4:6. COL 408

In this vision the two olive trees which stand before God are represented as emptying the golden oil out of themselves through golden tubes into the bowl of the candlestick. From this the lamps of the sanctuary are fed, that they may give a bright, continuous light. So from the anointed ones that stand in God's presence the fullness of divine light and love and power is imparted to His

people, that they may impart to others light and joy and refreshing. Those who are thus enriched are to enrich others with the treasure of God's love. PK 594

These empty themselves into the golden bowls, which represent the hearts of the living messengers of God, who bear the Word of the Lord to the people in warnings and entreaties. The Word itself must be as represented, the golden oil, emptied from the two olive trees that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. This is the baptism by the Holy Spirit with fire. 4BC 1180

Read and study the fourth chapter of Zechariah. The two olive trees empty the golden oil out of themselves through the golden pipes into the golden bowl from which the lamps of the sanctuary are fed. The golden oil represents the Holy Spirit. With this oil God's ministers are to be constantly supplied, that they, in turn, may impart it to church. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." God's servants can obtain victories only by inward purity, by cleanness of heart, by holiness.-- Review and Herald, December 22, 1904. (TM 188)

***The continued communication of the Holy Spirit to the church is represented by the prophet Zechariah under another figure, which contains a wonderful lesson of encouragement for us.***

The prophet says: "The angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? . . . Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? . . . Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

***From the two olive trees, the golden oil was emptied through golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God's presence, His Spirit is imparted to human instrumentalities that are consecrated to His service.*** The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate light and power to God's people. It is to receive blessing for us that they stand in God's presence. As the olive trees empty themselves into the golden pipes, so the heavenly messengers seek to communicate all that they receive from God. The whole heavenly treasure awaits our demand and reception; and as we receive the blessing, we in our turn are to impart it. Thus it is that the holy lamps are fed, and the church becomes a light bearer in the world. TM 510

Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it." It is the purchase of His blood. The divine Son of God is seen walking amid the seven golden candlesticks. Jesus Himself supplies the oil to these burning lamps. He it is that kindles the flame. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

No candlestick, no church, shines of itself. From Christ emanates all its light. The church in heaven today is only the complement of the church on earth; but it is higher, grander--perfect. The same divine illumination is to continue through eternal ages. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof. No church can have light if it fails to diffuse the glory it receives from the throne of God (MS 1a, 1890). {6BC 1118}

**Joh 1:4-5** In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

**Joh 8:12** Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. ... (20) These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple

**Joh 9:5** As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

When He spoke these words, Jesus was in the court of the temple specially connected with the services of the Feast of Tabernacles. In the center of this court rose two lofty standards, supporting lampstands of great size. After the evening sacrifice, all the lamps were kindled, shedding their light over Jerusalem. This ceremony was in commemoration of the pillar of light that guided Israel in the desert, and was also regarded as pointing to the coming of the Messiah. At evening when the lamps were lighted, the court was a scene of great rejoicing. Gray-haired men, the priests of the temple and the rulers of the people, united in the festive dances to the sound of instrumental music and the chants of the Levites.

In the illumination of Jerusalem, the people expressed their hope of the Messiah's coming to shed His light upon Israel. But to Jesus the scene had a wider meaning. *As the radiant lamps of the temple lighted up all about them, so Christ, the source of spiritual light, illumines the darkness of the world.* Yet the symbol was imperfect. That great light which His own hand had set in the heavens was a truer representation of the glory of His mission.

*It was morning; the sun had just risen above the Mount of Olives, and its rays fell with dazzling brightness on the marble palaces, and lighted up the gold of the temple walls, when Jesus, pointing to it, said, "I am the light of the world."*

By one who listened to these words, they were long afterward re-echoed in that sublime passage, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not." "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:4, 5. DA 463

**Appendix C – Placing apparent Trinitarian E.G.White statements in Context**

We will look at some statements that seem to clearly indicate that there are three separate and individual Persons in the Godhead. Remembering the weight of evidence from Appendix B, let us test each statement in the context of the nine layers of thinking found in Appendix D.

**1. There are three living Persons of the heavenly trio**

Let's place this statement in its full context.

“The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fullness 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. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers --the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.-- Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7, pp. 62, 63. (1905)” Ev 614, 615

Notice the nine layers below:



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Since we have observed that there are apparent conflicting statements in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, we need to dig into our layers of thinking and see what are the issues driving our conclusions.

If we have not tested the basis of our questions about God then we will default to a *performance-based* system. A *performance-based value system* will cause us to move our underlying assumption towards a *performance* view of Divinity rather than a *relational* view. This is what causes us to ensure that Christ is equal to the Father in terms of co-equal and co-eternal.

A *performance* view will also dramatically affect the emotional and foundational issues. If I entertain an idea that the Church does not agree with and will possibly take action against me for holding a different view, *performance-based-thinking* will influence me towards an orthodox position. The same can be said for family and friends. If I hold a new position, what will my friends say? With all of these pressures, the decision will be overwhelmingly in favour of the Trinity.

So what happens when we are faced with a passage that clearly indicates that the Trinity is incorrect? Like this one:

“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.” PP 34

Either we force our *performance-based* premise and say, “Well we know this can’t be saying the Holy Spirit is not a separate person, so He must be invisible to the angels” or “The Holy Spirit is a mystery and we can’t understand it.” Or we simply pull out more statements that seem to agree with our position. We have to do it because the emotional pressures and *performance-base* have captivated our thinking and we can’t do otherwise.

From the Bible, E.G.W. statements and pioneer positions cited, the weight of evidence suggests that this statement cannot be a Trinitarian statement. Remember our Church acknowledges that the Trinity is ‘assumed as a fact’ and is not explicitly stated in Scripture. So gaining a Trinitarian answer to this passage should be seen as rowing upstream and against the tide, not the other way around.

Let’s shift our *value system* to *relational-thinking*. This will then alter our underlying assumption and the questions we ask of how Divinity is ascribed. Then we will ask the questions “What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?” We will accept that Divinity is ascribed through *inheritance* and then our eyes are opened to the many Bible and E.G.W. statements that clearly state this. It also allows us to see the statements that refer to the Spirit as Christ in Omnipresent form and then the mystery is solved. Yes there are three Persons or personalities in the heavenly trio – The Father, His Son and their omnipresent Spirit.

Notice these statements:

“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

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thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.” 14 MR 23.

“The juices of the vine, ascending from the root, are diffused to the branches sustaining growth, and producing blossoms and fruit. So the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from Christ, and imparted to every disciple, pervades the soul, renews the motives and affections, and even the most secret thoughts, and brings forth the precious fruit of holy deeds. The life attests the union with the true and living Vine.” 3SP 418 (1878)



“The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul.” RH,  
October 26, 1897

These statements read very naturally and make complete sense. It is a reflection of Rev 22:1-2 where the river flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. The Holy Spirit is the Omnipresent Spirit of Christ that proceeds out of Him to the universe.

It is interesting to note that Ellen White adapted this statement from another book called the “*The Higher Christian Life*” by W.E Boardman. This book was instrumental in the higher life movement that occurred amongst the Methodists. This book was inventoried in the library of Ellen White when she died. Boardman was certainly a Trinitarian and here is the statement that Ellen White adapts from his book on page 104:

“The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead Invisible  
The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested  
The Spirit is all the fullness of the Godhead making manifest”

Notice how Ellen White changes this Methodist Trinitarian Statement:

1. "The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight.
2. The Son is all the fullness 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.
3. 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." Ev 614, 615

Ellen White adds the word "bodily" but invisible to mortal sight. This is to avoid the belief that God does not have a form. She then clarifies the Son as the express image of the Father and that He is the only-begotten of the Father and shows the personality of the Father. She then speaks of the Spirit as the Comforter that all receive when they receive Christ as their Saviour. If Ellen White was a Trinitarian then why did she alter what Boardman said to make it appear Pioneer-based? Remember this statement was written in 1905, seven years after the release of *Desire of Ages* when many suggest Ellen White fully changed her position. The full context of the 'Heavenly trio' statement is Pioneer-based.

It is important to note that Boardman's book uses expressions such as "Trinity", "Tri-une God" and "three in one". Nowhere does he use the term 'Heavenly trio'. It appears to be a term that Ellen White has coined herself to avoid the association of a co-equal Trinity. All this weight of evidence suggest that the statement is not Trinitarian.

## 2. Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God

"Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God.... In speaking of his pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him.--Signs of the Times, Aug. 29, 1900." Ev 615

Again, we ask as Jesus did "How do you read?" from a *performance-base* or *relational* one. And what are the issues that drive us to that conclusion?

From a *relational* focus we see that Christ is indeed a Son in relation to the Father and that Christ has never been apart from that *relationship*. We see that Christ's self-existence was given to Him in eternity when He was begotten as is clearly stated in John 5:26 and John 3:16.

If we ask the *performance* questions, we will look for measuring tools to prove His inherent Divinity. The word's "self-existent" and "never was time" provide the needed *performance* measures to make Him the Second independent Person of the Godhead. In this context for Christ to be equal to the Father he must have existed exactly the same time as the Father. The problem is that if we use time as a measure of equality, then time must exist as long as God. This is the problem with *performance-based-thinking*, it lifts the measures to the level of the measured. Time then could be considered as old as God and as it is the measurer, maybe we should adopt

the Greek idea of personifying time under Kronos and worship it as a God. M.L. Andreasen expresses the issues involved time well in his book on the Sabbath, when he states:

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 1:1 – The Sabbath pages 54,55

The Scripture explains this simply. Ellen White tells us that Prov 8 is Christ speaking.<sup>240</sup>

**Prov 8:23** I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

The Strong's Concordance tells us that the word *everlasting* means properly *concealed*, that is, the *vanishing* point; generally time *out of mind* (past or future), that is, (practically) *eternity*;

This simply means that time is concealed from the human mind. We can't penetrate it. It is beyond the vanishing point and is a time that is out of reach of our minds. But only a *relational* model can accept such an explanation. The *performance-based* mind demands a measuring stick but Scripture does not give one. It simply gives us the Father and only-begotten Son. Let us not seek to unlock the secret things of God that are not revealed to us.

As Ellen White states:

“Here Christ shows them that, although they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet ***His Divine life could not be reckoned by human computation.*** The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures.” {E. G. White, Signs of the Times, May 3, 1899 par. 4}

“Angels of God looked with amazement upon Christ, who took upon Himself the form of man and humbly united His Divinity with humanity in order that He might minister to fallen man. It is a marvel among the heavenly angels. God has told us that He did do it, and we are to accept the Word of God just as it reads. ***And although we may try to reason in regard to our Creator, how long He has had existence, where evil first entered into our world, and all these things, we may reason about them until we fall down faint and exhausted with the research when there is yet an infinity beyond.***” {E. G. White, S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7, p. 919}

Any attempt to make Christ equal with the Father by means of time is indeed trying to compute His Divine life and we are trying work out how long our Creator has had existence. This is one thing we certainly should leave as a mystery! How can we measure the pedigree of Christ's eternity by something that He himself has made? Christ made Time and it is absurd to consider measuring Christ's eternity by it.

<sup>240</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 34.

### 3. Life original, unborrowed, underived

“Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life." In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. "He that hath the Son hath life." The Divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life.-- The Desire of Ages, p. 530 (1898)” Ev 616

Once again, how do we read, with a *performance* view or a *relational* view?

A *relational* view shows that Christ has this life through the inheritance He received from His Father. A *performance* view, born of the lie of the serpent, would push us to see this life as separate from the Father and inherent in Himself. For a detailed answer on this statement look at chapter 19.

### 4. The Eternal Heavenly Dignitaries

“The eternal heavenly dignitaries--God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit--arming them [the disciples] with more than mortal energy, . . . would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin.--Manuscript 145, 1901.” Ev 616

It should be fairly evident by now that once we look at statements through a *relational* view and let inspiration speak plainly, and not allow emotional pressures to twist our thinking that these statements certainly do not suggest a Trinity.

This statement says nothing about co-equal or co-eternal beings. It is a straight forward statement and the Father and His Son and their Omnipresent Spirit.

### 5. Holy Spirit Just as Much a Person as God is a Person

“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. (From a talk to the students at the Avondale School.)” Ev 616

Notice this passage:

“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.” 14 MR 23.

The Holy Spirit is certainly a Person. It is the Person of Christ who is the express image of God.

Again, when we think *performance* measures – then the words “as much as” jump out at us as a *performance* measure to prove that the Holy Spirit is a separate Being. But from a *relational* view point this simply tells us that the very life of God is present with us by His Spirit. Remove the poison of the serpent’s lie and the passage is plain to read.

## 6. The Holy Spirit is a Person

“The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God. . . . 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."” Ev 616, 617

Again if we use *performance-based-thinking* tainted by independent *life source*, this statement certainly sounds like it is saying the Holy Spirit is a separate Person, but the weight of evidence in a *relational* context denies this.

Notice these statements:

“In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of Divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” 7T 273

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” Christ is not here referring to his doctrine, but to his person, the Divinity of his character.” RH, April 5, 1906 par. 12

In this context, the Spirit is a Divine Person – revealed in the Person of the Father and His Son.

## 7. The Third Person of the Godhead

“The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.--Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 10, p. 37. (1897)” Ev 617

Look at these passages together:

“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 the church.” RH May 19, 1904 par.3

“Yes, Christ has become the medium of prayer between man and God. He has also become the medium of blessing between God and man. He has united Divinity with humanity. God's appointments and grants in our behalf are without limit.” ST April 14 1909 p.4

Notice here that:

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Christ is a medium between man and God – Son of Man.

Christ is also become a medium between God and Man – the Holy Spirit.

It is Christ as another Person or Personality. The statements are fairly clear in context. Remember also that in all the passages we looked at regarding the Father and Son and the creation and plan of salvation, the Holy Spirit is nowhere mentioned as being a third separate member in all these activities.

I could mention more statements but I think this will suffice to encourage us to check the full context in a *relational value system* that lets all Bible and Spirit of Prophecy have weight in the case.

**Appendix D – Nine Layers that affect our Thinking**



**The Visible Layers**

The Premise: The premise is the statement we make like “Jesus Christ is equal with the Father”

Underlying Assumption: This gives context to the key words of the premise. Such as “equal”

Main Teachings or Beliefs: These are the Bible teachings that support our Biblical framework. They are the teachings that we clearly see affect our premise. For instance the doctrine of creation affects our view of “Jesus being equal with the Father” because Jesus made all things.

**The Semi-Visible layers**

These layers are the rational and emotional bases that affect our thinking. The chart is fairly self explanatory in regard to these.

**The Invisible layers**

These are the two layers that reflect whether we still are impacted by the serpent’s lie of “you shall not surely die” that produces a performance value system or whether you are impacted by God’s Word – “You are my beloved child whom I love” and hold a relational view. These layers drive every other layer but are usually not discerned.

### **Appendix E – Miller’s Rules for Bible Interpretation**

1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible. Matt 5:18
2. All scripture is necessary, and may be understood by a diligent application and study. 2 Tim 3:15-17
3. Nothing revealed in the scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering. Deut.29:29. Matt.10:26,27. 1Cor.2:10. Phil.3:15. Isa.14:11. Matt. 21:22. John 14:13,14. 15:7. James 1:5,6. 1 John 5.13-15.
4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence, and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in an error. Isa.28:7-29, 35:8. Prov.29:27. Luke 24:27,44,45. Rom.16:26. James 5:19. 2Pet.1:19,20.
5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound it to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed or wisdom is my rule, not the Bible. Ps.19:7-11, 119:97-105. Matt.23:8-10. 1Cor.2.12-16. Eze.34:18,19. Luke 11:52. Mal.2:7,8.
6. God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables, and in this way the same things are oftentimes revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures, and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one. Ps.89:19. Hos.12:10. Hab.2:2. Acts 2:17. 1Cor.10:6. Heb.9:9,24. Ps.78:2. Matt.13:13,34. Gen.41:1-32. Dan.2. 7. and 8. Acts 10:9-16.
7. Visions are always mentioned as such. 2 Cor 12:1
8. Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy, to represent future things, times and events; such as mountains, meaning governments; beasts, meaning kingdoms. Waters, meaning people. Lamp, meaning Word of God. Day, meaning year. Dan.2:35,44. 7:8,17. Rev.17:1,15. Ps.119:105. Ezek.4:6.
9. Parables are used as comparisons to illustrate subjects, and must be explained in the same way as figures by the subject and Bible. Mark 4:13
10. Figures sometimes have two or more different significations, as day is used in a figurative sense to represent three different periods of time. 1. Indefinite 2. Definite, a day for a year. 3. Day for a thousand years. If you put on the right construction it will harmonize with the Bible and make good sense, otherwise it will not. Ecc 7:14. Ezek 4:6. 2 Pet 3:8
11. How to know when a word is used figuratively. If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally, if not, figuratively. Rev 12:1,2. 17:3-7
12. To learn the true meaning of figures, trace your figurative word through your Bible, and where you find it explained, put it on your figure, and if it makes good sense you need look no further, if not, look again.
13. To know whether we have the true historical event for the fulfilment of a prophecy. If you find every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is literally fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event. But if one word lacks a fulfilment, then you must look for another event, or wait its future development. For God takes care that history and prophecy doth agree, so that the true believing children of God may never be ashamed. Ps.xxii.5. Isa.45:17-19. 1Pet.2:6. Rev.17:17. Acts 3:18.
14. The most important rule of all is, that you must have faith. It must be a faith that requires a sacrifice, and, if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires, character, living, occupation, friends, home, comforts, and worldly honors. If any of these should hinder our believing any part of God's word, it would show our faith

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to be vain. Nor can we ever believe so long as one of these motives lies lurking in our hearts. We must believe that God will never forfeit his word. And we can have confidence that he that takes notice of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our head, will guard the translation of his own word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in his word, from erring far from the truth, though they may not understand Hebrew or Greek.

These are some of the most important rules which I find the word of God warrants me to adopt and follow, in order for system and regularity. And if I am not greatly deceived, in so doing, I have found the Bible, as a whole, one of the most simple, plain, and intelligible books ever written, containing proof in itself of its divine origin, and full of all knowledge that our hearts could wish to know or enjoy. I have found it a treasure which the world cannot purchase. It gives a calm peace in believing, and a firm hope in the future. It sustains the mind in adversity, and teaches us to be humble in prosperity. It prepares us to love and do good to others, and to realize the value of the soul. It makes us bold and valiant for the truth, and nerves the arm to oppose error. It gives us a powerful weapon to break down Infidelity, and makes known the only antidote for sin. It instructs us how death will be conquered, and how the bonds of the tomb must be broken. It tells us of future events, and shows the preparation necessary to meet them. It gives us an opportunity to hold conversation with the King of kings, and reveals the best code of laws ever enacted.

This is but a faint view of its value; yet how many perishing souls treat it with neglect, or, what is equally as bad, treat it as a hidden mystery which cannot be known. Oh, my dear reader, make it your chief study. Try it well, and you will find it to be all I have said. Yes, like the Queen of Sheba, you will say the half was not told you.

The divinity taught in our schools is always founded on some sectarian creed. It may do to take a blank mind and impress it with this kind, but it will always end in bigotry. A free mind will never be satisfied with the views of others. Were I a teacher of youth in divinity, I would first learn their capacity and mind. If these were good, I would make them study the Bible for themselves, and send them out free to do the world good. But if they had no mind, I would stamp them with another's mind, write bigot on their forehead, and send them out as slaves!

## **Appendix F – The Seventh-day Adventist Doctrinal Platform**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been laid on a firm foundation. Our pioneers studied earnestly until a connected system of truth was laid. Notice the following:

“After the passing of the time in 1844 we searched for the truth as for hidden *treasure*. I met with the brethren, 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.” RH, May 25, 1905 par. 24

“I do not wish to ignore or drop one link in the chain of evidence that was formed as, after the passing of the time in 1844, little companies of seekers after truth met together to study the Bible and to ask God for light and guidance. . . . The truth, point by point, was fastened in our minds so firmly that we could not doubt. . . . ***The evidence given in our early experience has the same force that it had then. The truth is the same as it ever has been, and not a pin or a pillar can be moved from the structure of truth. That which was sought for out of the Word in 1844, 1845, and 1846 remains the truth in every particular.*** Letter 38, 1906, pp. 1, 2. (To the Wahroonga Sanitarium Family, January 23, 1906.)” 1MR 52.2

“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.” EW 258 (1882)

A careful reading of the history of our pioneers clearly indicates that a solid platform was laid. The pillars of that platform would not be changed. This means that any advance in knowledge must fit upon the platform laid in those early years. Knowledge could increase and expand but always upon this platform. Did Ellen White consider the doctrine or personality of God as part of the old landmarks or platform?

“Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. *Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men.* They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor.” MR760 9.5

Ellen White states that the personality of God and Christ are pillar doctrines that must be held fast. It is inconceivable that God would raise a movement that did not give a correct view of Himself, the very foundation of all truth. Jesus said “I am the Truth”. If the platform laid by the pioneers had a wrong view of God and Christ then it cannot be called the platform of Truth. The truth about God directly affects every other doctrine. Notice:

“Christ, His character and work, is the center and circumference of all truth. He is the chain upon which the jewels of doctrine are linked. In Him is found the complete system of truth.” RH, August 15, 1893 par. 1

If Christ is the centre and circumference of all truth, then a false understanding of Jesus Christ will destroy every other doctrine. Let us get this very clear in our minds. Many within the church today equate a denial of the Trinity and especially the Holy Spirit with being in danger of committing the unpardonable sin. If this is the case, almost none of our pioneers will be in heaven, because they rejected the Trinity and the Holy Spirit as a separate Person. This is completely nonsensical.

It is totally inconsistent to claim that the platform our pioneers started on with reference to the Godhead was simply the starting point from which we have now progressed to the current position of the Trinity. Such a claim is either naïve or deceitful. The view of the pioneers is diametrically opposed to the current view of the Godhead in Adventism. There is no progression from one to the other in a logical sequence that can claim the starting point of the pioneers as its base. Such a claim is a denial of a rational thought process according to the facts.

The only line of progression that can be claimed as expanding is the focus of the Divinity of Christ as central to the plan of salvation. But such an expansion never entertained the notion of a co-equal or co-eternal Godhead. This is a complete denial of the original platform. Ellen White referred to the personality of God and Christ as a landmark pillar along with the Sanctuary teaching. As we have mentioned earlier, you can't have a non literal Father and Son operating in a literal sanctuary, they stand and fall together unless one can manage to live with the inconsistencies.

**Pro 22:28** Do not remove the ancient landmark Which your fathers have set.

As late 1920 W.W Prescott seemed to have not interpreted the life original unborrowed underived statement of EGW as the church does today (unless He never saw it, which is extremely unlikely). His powerful assessment of the relationship of Father and Son expresses succinctly the real Seventh-day Adventist Position. Notice how he expresses the relationship.

“We may conceive the Father existed from eternity and possessing infinite powers, simply because he wills so to exist, without any cause external to himself, eternal and infinite and underived; and of the Son existing with the Father from eternity, and possessing to the full the Father's infinite powers,

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but these received from the Father, existing because the Father wills him so to exist, eternal and infinite and derived. This conception will account for the entire language of the New Testament about the Son of God.”

“The Son is equal to the Father in everything except that which is conveyed by the terms *Father and Son*. He is equal to the Father in that he shares to the full the Father’s existence from eternity and his infinite power and wisdom and love. But inasmuch as the Father possesses these divine attributes from himself alone, whereas the Son possesses them as derived from the Father, in this real sense and in this sense only, the Father is greater than the Son.”

“Evidently in an eternal Father and an Eternal Son the ideas of older and younger can have no place. As we lift up the conception of sonship out of time into eternity, these elements of it, ever present in human fathers and sons, at once disappear. When they fall away, does any conception essential to our idea of sonship remain? Yes; there still remains the chief idea, viz., personal existence and powers derived from another person. And this idea is plainly embodied in John 5:26, and in other express assertions from the lips of Christ describing his own relation to God.” *The Doctrine of Christ* p. 20,21

This statement from Prescott is just another, of numerous examples, that we have indeed shifted the landmarks that our fathers have set.

## **Appendix G – A Most Precious Message**

The most precious message given to Jones and Waggoner, was a message that had power to release the power of the Latter Rain. Notice:

“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. 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.” TM 91

The message of Jones and Waggoner was set in the context of Christ as the only begotten Son of God. As I have stated earlier in the book in Chapter 20, that the correct *identity* of Christ as Son of God and Son of Man is the central feature of righteousness by faith. Notice what Waggoner says of Christ:

“This name was not given to Christ in consequence of some great achievement, but it is His by right of inheritance.<sup>241</sup> Speaking of the power and greatness of Christ, the writer to the Hebrews says that He is made so much better than the angels, because “He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” Heb. 1:4. A son always rightfully takes the name of the father; and Christ, as “the only begotten Son of God,” has rightfully the same name. A son, also, is, to a greater or less degree, a reproduction of the father; he has to some extent the features and personal characteristics of his father; not perfectly, because there is no perfect reproduction among mankind. But there is no imperfection in God, or in any of His works, and so Christ is the “express image” of the Father’s person. Heb. 1:3. As the Son of the self-existent God, He has by nature all the attributes of Deity.

It is true that there are many sons of God, but Christ is the “only begotten Son of God,” and therefore the Son of God in a sense in which no other being ever was or ever can be. The angels are sons of God, as was Adam (Job 38:7; Luke 3:38), by creation; Christians are the sons of God by adoption (Rom. 8:14, 15), but Christ is the Son of God by birth. The writer to the Hebrews further shows that the position of the Son of God is not one to which Christ has been elevated but that it is one which He has by right. He says that Moses was faithful in all the house of God, as a servant, “but Christ as a Son over His own house.” Heb. 3:6. And he also states that Christ is the Builder of the house. Verse 3. It is He that builds the temple of the Lord and bears the glory. Zech. 6:12, 13.” (E. J. Waggoner, 1890, *Christ and His Righteousness*, pages 11-13)

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<sup>241</sup> Waggoner clearly discerns the *performance* versus *relational* issue. He is working in a *relational* context.

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“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. (E. J. Waggoner, 1890, *Christ And His Righteousness*, page 9)

We honor the Father in honoring the Son. We are mindful of Paul's words, that "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 Cor. 8:6); just as we have already quoted, that it was by Him that God made the worlds. All things proceed ultimately from God, the Father; even Christ Himself proceeded and came forth from the Father; but it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and that He should be the direct, immediate Agent in every act of creation. Our object in this investigation is to set forth Christ's rightful position of equality with the Father, in order that His power to redeem may be the better appreciated. *ibid*, page 19.

The Scriptures declare that Christ is "the only begotten son of God." He is begotten, not created. As to when He was begotten, it is not for us to inquire, nor could our minds grasp it if we were told. The prophet Micah tells us all that we can know about it, in these words: "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. There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from [22] the bosom of the Father (John 8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning. But the point is that Christ is a begotten Son, and not a created subject. He has by *inheritance* a more excellent Name than the angels; He is "a Son over His own house." Heb. 1:4; 3:6. And since He is the only-begotten Son of God, He is of the very substance and nature of God, and possesses by birth all the attributes of God; for the Father was pleased that His Son should be the express image of His Person, the brightness of His glory, and filled with all the fullness of the Godhead. So He has "life in Himself;" He possesses immortality in His own right, and can confer immortality upon others. *ibid*, page 21,22

Notice what Jones says of Christ:

“He who was born in the form of God took the form of man.” “In the flesh he was all the while as God, but he did not appear as God.” “He divested Himself of the form of God, and in its stead took the form and fashion of man.” “The glories of the form of God, He for a while relinquished.” (A. T. Jones, *General Conference Bulletin 1895*, page 448)

He was born of the Holy Ghost. In other words, Jesus Christ was born again. He came from heaven, God's first-born, to the earth, and was born again. But all in Christ's work goes by opposites for us: He, the sinless one, was made to be sin in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He,

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the living One, the Prince and Author of life, died that we might live. He whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity, the first-born of God, was born again in order that we might be born again. (Christian Perfection, paragraphs 53, 54 A Sermon By A. T. Jones, Review & Herald, July 7 - August 1, 1899)

Whenever quotes like these are presented, the immediate response is “Ellen White did not agree with everything Jones and Waggoner wrote” as if this will settle the question that she believed they were wrong on the Godhead. This is poor study of the facts. Notice the following statement that she did say about Jones and Waggoner’s message

“Messages bearing divine credentials have been sent to God’s people; the glory, the majesty, the righteousness of Christ, full of goodness and truth, have been presented; the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ has been set forth among us with beauty and loveliness, to charm all whose hearts were not closed to prejudice. We know that God has wrought among us.” EGW 1888 materials page 673

She clearly says that they presented the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ. These men presented Christ as brought from the Father which we say diminishes the fullness of the Godhead in Christ. Ellen White says it is the fullness of the Godhead. How long will we stubbornly refuse this message from heaven and put our fingers in our ears? If we can’t hear the truth in that statement we can turn the volume up louder with this one:

“God is presenting to the minds of men divinely appointed precious gems of truth, appropriate for our time. God has rescued these truths from the companionship of error and has placed them in the proper framework.” EGW 1888 materials page 139, 140

If you notice the framework of Waggoner’s book, Christ and His righteousness you will see the headings:

1. How shall we consider Christ
2. Is Christ God?
3. Christ as Creator
4. Is Christ a Created Being
5. God Manifest in the Flesh

This is the framework of Waggoner’s presentation. Ellen White says the framework is proper. It is correct. Let us not say that Waggoner changed his position from 1888 to 1890, when he wrote his book. This is an argument from silence and Ellen White never points out that this was a problem. Let us cease grasping at straws on this issue.

The view of Christ presented by Jones and Waggoner would be called Semi-Arianism today and by *Performance-based* Trinitarian standards undermines the Divinity of Christ. If this is the case, then their message was not “most precious” and would not usher in the Latter Rain as suggested by Ellen White above. In 1888, the church was almost completely Pioneer-based in its view of the Godhead. If the Latter Rain could have fallen in response to the giving of this message and Christ could have come shortly after, as Ellen White indeed suggests. Notice the following:

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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 Oct 6 1896

Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God.-- Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 450. (1900)

It is quite obvious that the Trinity was not a key ingredient of the Adventist Church completing its work. Two years before the supposed water shed Desire of Ages statement concerning Life original, unborrowed and underived, Ellen stated Christ could have returned. This is something we must consider very carefully.

A study of history shows that the Trinity doctrine did not begin to be introduced into the Church until 1892 when Ellen White was in Australia. For three years from 1888 to 1891, Ellen White worked with Jones and Waggoner to get the message out. In 1888 there was wide-spread rejection of the message, but slowly over time, key figures acknowledged their error but the damage had been done.<sup>242</sup> It is interesting to note, it was in the decade after the initial rejection of the 1888 message that the Trinitarian doctrine began to be introduced to the Church.

The 1888 message needed to clarify the pioneer position of the Son, so that Christ could be proclaimed more fully. The rejection of the 1888 message opened the door to a view Christ that reflected the hearts of the rejects – performance-based. Even though the pioneers held a correct form of doctrine, the cleansing of the heart that the investigative judgment was designed to do, did not occur. Rather than turn away from a performance-based mindset, the church began to change the God they worshipped to reflect their own mind.

Refusing to walk in light causes one to be left in darkness. I encourage you to study the facts of history other than through the unique and somewhat distorted lens of Leroy Froom's *Movement of Destiny*.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> See *1888 Re-examined* by Robert Weiland

<sup>243</sup> Some good sources are: *Christ our Righteousness* by A.G Daniels and *Exodus to Advent in Type and Anti-Type* by Taylor Bunch.

## ***Appendix H – Letters relating to the Kellogg Crisis***

Kellogg to Prescott:

“You, Elder Daniells, and others have spoken about a fine line of distinction, but I could not quite see what it was, but this statement by Sister White makes it clear to me. The difference is this: When we say God is in the tree, the word ‘God’ is understood in that the Godhead is in the tree, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, whereas the proper understanding in order that wholesome conceptions should be preserved in our minds, is that God the Father sits upon his throne in heaven where God the Son is also; while God’s life, or Spirit or presence is the all-pervading power which is carrying out the will of God in all the universe.” Letter: J H Kellogg to W W Prescott. Oct 25. 1903.

Kellogg to Butler:

“As far as I can fathom, the difficulty which is found in ‘The Living Temple’, the whole thing may be simmered down to the question: Is the Holy Ghost a person? You say no. I had supposed the Bible said this for the reason that the personal pronoun ‘he’ is used in speaking of the Holy Ghost. Sister White uses the pronoun ‘he’ and has said in so many words that the Holy Ghost is the third person of the Godhead. How the Holy Ghost can be the third person and not be a person at all is difficult for me to see.” Letter: J H Kellogg to G I Butler. Oct 28. 1903.

A.G Daniells to W.C White regarding Kellogg’s View:

“Ever since the council closed I have felt that I should write you confidentially regarding Dr Kellogg’s plans for revising and republishing ‘The Living Temple’.... He (Kellogg) said that some days before coming to the council, he had been thinking the matter over, and began to see that he had made a slight mistake in expressing his views. He said that all the way along he had been troubled to know how to state the character of God and his relation to his creation works... He then stated that his former views regarding the trinity had stood in his way of making a clear and absolutely correct statement; but that within a short time he had come to believe in the trinity and could now see pretty clearly where all the difficulty was, and believed that he could clear the matter up satisfactorily. He told me that he now believed in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and his view was that it was God the Holy Ghost, and not God the Father, that filled all space, and every living thing. He said if he had believed this before writing the book, he could have expressed his views without giving the wrong impression the book now gives. I placed before him the objections I found in the teaching, and tried to show him that the teaching was so utterly contrary to the gospel that I did not see how it could be revised by changing a few expressions. We argued the matter at some length in a friendly way; but I felt sure that when we parted, the doctor did not understand himself, nor the character of his teaching. And I could not see how it would be possible for him to flop over, and in the course of a few days fix the books up so that it would be all right.” Letter: A G Daniells to W C White. Oct 29. 1903 p1.2. (Emphasis added)

Kellogg to Butler:

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

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Butler to Kellogg:

“So far as Sister White and you being in perfect agreement, I shall have to leave that entirely between you and Sister White. Sister White says there is not perfect agreement; you claim there is. I know some of her remarks seem to give you strong ground for claiming that she does. I am candid enough to say that, but I must give her the credit until she disowns it of saying there is a difference too, and I do not believe you can fully tell just what she means. God dwells in us by His Holy Spirit, as a Comforter, as a Reprover, especially the former. When we come to Him we partake of Him in that sense, because the Spirit comes forth from Him; it comes forth from the Father and the Son. It is not a person walking around on foot, or flying as a literal being, in any such sense as Christ and the Father are – at least, if it is, it is utterly beyond my comprehension of the meaning of language or words.” Letter: G I Butler to J H Kellogg. April 5. 1904.

In a vision Sr. White was “shown distinctly that these sentiments have been looked upon by some as the grand truths that are to be brought in and made prominent at the present time. I was shown a platform, braced by solid timbers – the truths of the Word of God. Some one high in responsibility in the medical work was directing this man and that man to loosen the timbers supporting this platform. Then I heard a voice saying, “Where are the watchmen that ought to be standing on the walls of Zion? Are they asleep? This foundation was built by the Master Worker and will stand storm and tempest. Will they permit this man to present doctrines that deny the past experience of the people of God? The time has come for decided action.” 1SM 204.

Sister White said he was presenting “spiritualistic theories regarding the personality of God.”  
1 SM 204.

Some Observations:

1. It appears Kellogg’s conversion to a Trinitarian view opened the door for the crisis that followed.
2. The issue boiled down to whether the Holy Spirit was a separate person or not.
3. The discussions involved an understanding of the personality of God.
4. Kellogg used Spirit of Prophecy statements to support his argument.
5. Pantheism was the fruit, but Trinitarianism was the root.
6. Ellen White said that his views were losing the platform of truth.
7. She said his dangerous views were in relation to the personality of God.

**Appendix I – The Personality of God by James White**

PERSONALITY OF GOD.

By James White

A Pamphlet published by James White Approx 1861

MAN was made in the image of God. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." Gen.i,26,27. See also chap.ix,6; 1Cor.xi,7.

2 Those who deny the personality of God, say that "image" here does not mean physical form, but moral image, and they make this the grand starting point to prove the immortality of all men. The argument stands thus:

First, man was made in God's moral image. Second, God is an immortal being. Third, therefore all men are immortal. But this mode of reasoning would also prove man omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, and thus clothe mortal man with all the attributes of the deity. Let us try it:

First, man was made in God's moral image. Second, God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Third, therefore, man is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. That which proves too much, proves nothing to the point, therefore the position that the image of God means his moral image, cannot be sustained.

As proof that God is a person, read his own words to Moses: "And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by. And I will take away mine hand and thou shalt see my

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back parts; but my face shall not be seen." Ex.xxxiii,21-23. See also chap.xxiv,9-11.

Here God tells Moses that he shall see his form. To say that God made it appear to Moses that he saw his form, when he has no form, is charging God with adding to falsehood a sort of juggling deception upon his servant Moses.

But the skeptic thinks he sees a contradiction between verse 11, which says that the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, and verse 20, which states that Moses could not see his face. But let Num.xii,5-8 remove the difficulty. "And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently."

The great and dreadful God came down, wrapped in a cloud of glory. This cloud could be seen, but not the face which possesses more dazzling brightness than a thousand suns. Under these circumstances Moses was permitted to draw near and converse with God face to face, or mouth to mouth, even apparently.

Says the prophet Daniel, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hairs of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." Chap.vii,9. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and

there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom." Verses 13, 14.

Here is a sublime description of the action of two personages; viz, God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. Deny their personality, and there is not a distinct idea in these quotations from Daniel. In connection with this quotation read the apostle's declaration that the Son was in the express image of his Father's person. "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." Heb.i,1-3.

We here add the testimony of Christ. "And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." John v,37. See also Phil.ii,6. To say that the Father has not a personal shape, seems the most pointed contradiction of plain scripture terms.

OBJECTION. - "God is a Spirit." John iv,24.

ANSWER. - Angels are also spirits [Ps.civ,4], yet those that visited Abram and Lot, lay down, ate, and took hold of Lot's hand. They were spirit beings. So is God a Spirit being.

OBJ. - God is everywhere. Proof. Ps.cxxxix,1-8. He is as much in every place as in any one place.

ANS. - 1. God is everywhere by virtue of his omniscience, as will be seen by the very words of David referred to above. Verses 1-6. "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a

word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high; I cannot attain unto it."

2. God is everywhere by virtue of his Spirit, which is his representative, and is manifested wherever he pleases, as will be seen by the very words the objector claims, referred to above. Verses 7-10. "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. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

God is in heaven. This we are taught in the Lord's prayer. "Our Father which art in heaven." Matt.vi,9; Luke xi,2. But if God is as much in every place as he is in any one place, then heaven is also as much in every place as it is in any one place, and the idea of going to heaven is all a mistake. We are all in heaven; and the Lord's prayer, according to this foggy theology simply means, Our Father which art everywhere, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is everywhere.

Again, Bible readers have believed that Enoch and Elijah were really taken up to God in heaven. But if God and heaven be as much in every place as in any one place, this is all a mistake. They were not translated. And all that is said about the chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and the attending whirlwind to take Elijah up into heaven, was a useless parade. They only evaporated, and a misty vapor passed through the entire universe. This is all of Enoch and Elijah that the mind can possibly grasp, admitting that God and heaven are

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no more in any one place than in every place. But it is said of Elijah that he "went up by a whirlwind into heaven." 2Kings ii,11. And of Enoch it is said that he "walked with God, and was not, for God took him." Gen.v,24.

Jesus is said to be on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb.i,3. "So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Mark xvi,19. But if heaven be everywhere, and God everywhere, then Christ's ascension up to heaven, at the Father's right hand, simply means that he went everywhere! He was only taken up where the cloud hid him from the gaze of his disciples, and then evaporated and went everywhere! So that instead of the lovely Jesus, so beautifully described in both Testaments, we have only a sort of essence dispersed through the entire universe. And in harmony with this rarified theology, Christ's second advent, or his return, would be the condensation of this essence to some locality, say the mount of Olivet! Christ arose from the dead with a physical form. "He is not here," said the angel, "for he is risen as he said." Matt.xxviii,6.

"And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held him by the feet, and they worshiped him." Verse 9.

"Behold my hands and my feet," said Jesus to those who stood in doubt of his resurrection, "that it is I myself. Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honey-comb, and he took it and did eat before them." Luke xxiv,39-43.

## 6

After Jesus addressed his disciples on the mount of Olivet, he was taken up from them, and a cloud received him out of their sight. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts i,9-11.

J. W.

## **Appendix J – Tracing the Prophetic Gift**

This article by J.O Corliss explains the core reason for the wrath of the dragon against the remnant, a revival of a worship of the true God, nurtured by the true prophetic gift in the face of the false prophetic gift demonstrated in the Papacy

Tracings of the Prophetic Gift  
Provision for its Restorations  
By J.O Corliss  
Review and Herald Sep 7, 1911

THE very first promise of the Bible is that the *seed* of the first woman should finally bruise the serpent's (Satan's) head. Gen. 3:15. The meaning of this is made plain in the one hundred tenth psalm. There the Lord Jesus is introduced as the Melchizedek priest who is to judge the heathen, and wound the heads over many countries. While Christ is the *Seed* by whom this work will be done, he will accomplish his purpose through his church, which carries his name, and is commissioned to carry on his work in the earth.

But the present state of world affairs reveals that the head of the old serpent (Rev. 12:9) has not yet been broken, but that he still reigns among men, leading them to push his plans of opposition to God's work. He does not, however, employ the apparently worst characters among men to carry on his warfare, but when possible, he seeks out and inspires those for his designs who profess to be followers of Christ. It was through the church of the dark ages,— the one claiming to be Christ's representative on earth, that he did the most appalling work of persecution recorded in the history of the world.

And yet this did not satisfy the dragon's wrath. We learn that he has reserved his strongest efforts in this direction to be visited upon the closing generation of men. Thus we read: "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 12:17. . In this scripture We not only have portrayed the predicted raid to be made against the last of the woman's seed, but the very reason for such an attack is openly announced; namely, that the offending remnant keep the commandments of God. and *have* the "testimony of Jesus Christ."

But why should these particular attainments so stir the wrath of the dragon? - Simply because the practice that these acquirements act in motion are opposed to Satan's earliest and continued efforts to pervert knowledge of the true God. It is of general understanding that the *unity of God* is the one doctrine upon which revelation lays the greatest stress. To guard this point was the principal object of the Jewish religion. This doctrine prefaces every important utterance of the Old Testament, from the speaking of the ten commandments to the outlines of minute ceremonials. Every prophetic warning kept this particular aspect in mind. The Lord Jesus always presented his Father in the forefront of all his teachings. The apostle Paul was careful to say that while there were in his day lords many and gods many, to him and his associates there was *but one God*, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in him. 1 Cor. 8:5,6.

The delivery of the law from Sinai, amid awful thunderings and lightnings, was a great tidal movement in human life. But as no wave can remain indefinitely uplifted at its height, the prophetic order there came in to repeat in the ears of those Hebrew refugees the oneness of God, which was So wonderfully demonstrated to them while at the base of Sinai, but the impressions of which, as the sense of the occasion should pass, Would gradually wane away. Their work then was, as was the Saviour's in a later day, to *fulfil the law*, by magnifying it and making it honorable.

The provision was one which boded divine foresight. Without this display of foreknowledge, God's people would have been required to meet their common enemy with only blank moral cartridges, which are ever impotent to subdue the mob of social passions. Indeed, man at his best state realizes the need of high spiritual backing, and looks to the "beyond" for that which he does not find in any stratum of human society. One popular writer has truthfully remarked that the church has never the right to lose the spirit of prophecy, because to keep it, and humbly to exercise it, is one of the first conditions of progress.

This thought, if all knew how to express it, would be, from the very nature of things, repeated by the majority of lips, because of the helplessness of the human mind to grasp the intent of Heaven-inspired words. Because many in every age have waited for saint or prophet to lead their way, advantage was taken of the situation; and that religiopolitical combination known as the Papacy met the humanizing demand by setting up the head of its organization as the prophet of God.

Having succeeded in being thus recognized, instead of directing minds to the one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, as the source of comforting hope, this pseudo-prophet abolished the observance of the Sabbath instituted for the sole purpose of establishing the unity of God, and thus turned men from the worship of Jehovah to see in himself an object of adoration.

But when the remnant, or last end, of the woman's seed is due – when the hour of judgment arrives, – then the call is for all nations to break away from this false adoration, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the only true God. Rev. 14:6, 7. This is what renews the conflict of the ages. It is this that introduces a world contention such as never was to that time, because it is the closing of the age-lasting contention.

In the bitterness of such a controversy, intensity will take possession of every earthly element. Old disputes will be renewed, which were thought to have long ago been hushed; and new and subtle ones will spring to the front. Amid all this will be needed a knowledge of Jehovah's will. But how may one know this when surrounded by so many clashing sentiments and so much angry discourse? Will God leave his people then to battle alone with the surging elements? How could he, and be the same God who always responded to the appeal of his old-time people?

In view of the fact that the judgment hovers near, and that every case must receive the scrutiny of both law and prophets (Rom. 3:21), each individual seeks the direction of the law as laid open by the "testimony of Jesus," which is the spirit of prophecy, knowing that only by the most careful walk can any one pass the solemn test to be encountered. The hostility to be met from the dragon's wrath becomes so galling as to drive the faithful few to their only refuge, the ever sure promise of protecting power. In response to this expression of confiding faith, messages of comforting hope come through the prophet of God, infusing courage into the patient upholder of the commandments of God. Rev. 14:12.

Through this one method, victory is to be gained over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. These will "sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Rev. 15: 2, 3. Thus will close the long-continued controversy, with the saints standing in the very presence of him who has so diligently sought to keep in close relation with men, by "rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place." 2 Chron. 36:15. *Mountain View, Cal.*

## **Appendix K – The 1936 Sabbath School Lessons Quarterly**

Listed below is the committee and information that led to a series of Sabbath School Quarterly's that presented the essential doctrines of Adventist Faith. Read carefully the names on the committee, and the backing of the church for these studies. Then observe what was written in regard to the Godhead. These lessons clearly state that Christ was begotten by the Father and received his life source from Him. This occurred in 1936 and was promoted by the General Conference committee at the time.

“The Sabbath School Department desiring special help in their Lessons Committee during the time when they will be considering the manuscripts for the lessons on Bible doctrines, it was

VOTED, That I. H. Evans, W. H. Branson, O. Montgomery, H. E. Kern, F. M. Wilcox and W. E. Howell be appointed to read the manuscripts and sit with the Sabbath School Department Lessons Committee when consideration is given to the lessons on Bible doctrines,” (*General Conference Committee notes, December 6<sup>th</sup> 1935*)

“Beginning with the fourth quarter of 1936, the Sabbath school lessons for the denomination for seven consecutive quarters are to cover the essential doctrines of this message. It was recommended that our people everywhere be encouraged to use these lessons as a basis for conducting Bible readings and cottage meetings in the homes of neighbors and friends, and that Bible training classes be organized in every church for this purpose.” (*Review and Herald, June 18<sup>th</sup> 1936, Report of the final day's session at the 1936 General Conference held at San Francisco, 'The Sabbath School Lessons for 1936*)

Beginning with the fourth quarter of 1936, the Sabbath school lessons for seven quarters will cover the essential doctrines of our faith; therefore, we recommend:

1. That in connection with the study of this important series of lessons, our people throughout the world be encouraged to use these lessons as a basis for conducting Bible readings and cottage meetings in the homes of their neighbors and friends.
2. That in preparation for this advance step, Bible training classes be organized in all our churches, as outlined by the General Conference Home Missionary Department.
3. That our publishing houses be requested to provide suitable loose-leaf folders for the use of those who desire to keep on file the series of Sabbath school lessons on Bible doctrines.” (*Review and Herald, June 18<sup>th</sup> 1936, 'Proceedings of the General Conference, Thirty-second Meeting'*)

“All these departmental meetings interspersed through the General Conference session were marked by an earnest spirit of study to solve perplexing problems, and by Intense desire to improve every moment of the opportunity afforded for binding off the discussions and plans developed in the pre-council, thus conserving and preserving the deliberations of the entire council for the future guidance of leaders in the layman's missionary movement when they will be widely separated throughout the great world field.

A great deal of time was required for the consideration of a topic of unusual interest,—how to make the most effective missionary use of the Sabbath school lessons on Bible doctrines which the Sabbath School Department has provided to be used beginning with the fourth quarter of 1936 and covering a period of seven consecutive quarters. The chairman explained that these

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lessons are prepared in a form which provides a simple outline for a Bible reading on each doctrinal subject.

For years there has been a demand from many parts of the field for a series of doctrinal Sabbath school lessons framed in such a way that our church members could use them as outlines for Bible studies in the homes of friends and neighbors. Now that we have such a set of lessons, we should thank God, and improve the opportunity to lead all our people into the broad field of Bible evangelism. It is estimated that there are about 100,000 Sabbath school teachers in our churches throughout the world, who will stand before their classes each week and give instruction on all doctrinal subjects. It would be wonderful if these hundred thousand Sabbath school teachers would spend a little time each week in teaching the lesson to groups of people or to individuals upon whose pathway the light of truth has not yet dawned.

But this is not all that we should aim to accomplish. Every member of each Sabbath school class should be encouraged to make contact with some person who is seeking for a better understanding of God's word, and in an informal way give him a Bible study each week on the lesson which he has already studied and received personal instruction upon in the Sabbath school class. What can we do, brethren, to lead the entire 'church at study' into the place where it becomes the entire 'church at work'?" (*Grace D. Mace, Review and Herald, July 16<sup>th</sup> 1936, 'Home Missionary Department Meetings'*)

"Has not the time come when each Sabbath school student who studies the Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath school lesson should recite or teach that Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath school lesson to some one who is without its blessing of truth - to a neighbor, to some friend, to a group in a cottage meeting, as a Sunday night sermon in a tent or hall, or in some other way to some other persons?

Should not each Sabbath school pupil lift up his eyes and look on the field of his own neighborhood or circle of acquaintances that is white to harvest, and carry to that field the message contained in the present Sabbath school lessons? Should not each thus become an open channel as well as a reservoir of truth?

The opportunity of a lifetime is now before us to teach the truth to our neighbors and communities, for the Sabbath school lessons on Bible doctrines are well adapted to that very purpose."

The outline at the close of each lesson will helpfully guide in the matter; and as the present lessons on doctrines are fully authenticated by the lesson committee of the General Conference Sabbath School Department, any one can know that what he teaches as he presents the lesson as a Bible reading or a sermon is correct.

As can readily be seen, if all our people are to teach the truth to others in this way, it is imperative that each one become a regular member of the Sabbath school. In addition to what our Sabbath school students may do, we have approximately one hundred thousand Sabbath school teachers and officers in the world, who are, in the very nature of the case, potential baptismal class instructors.

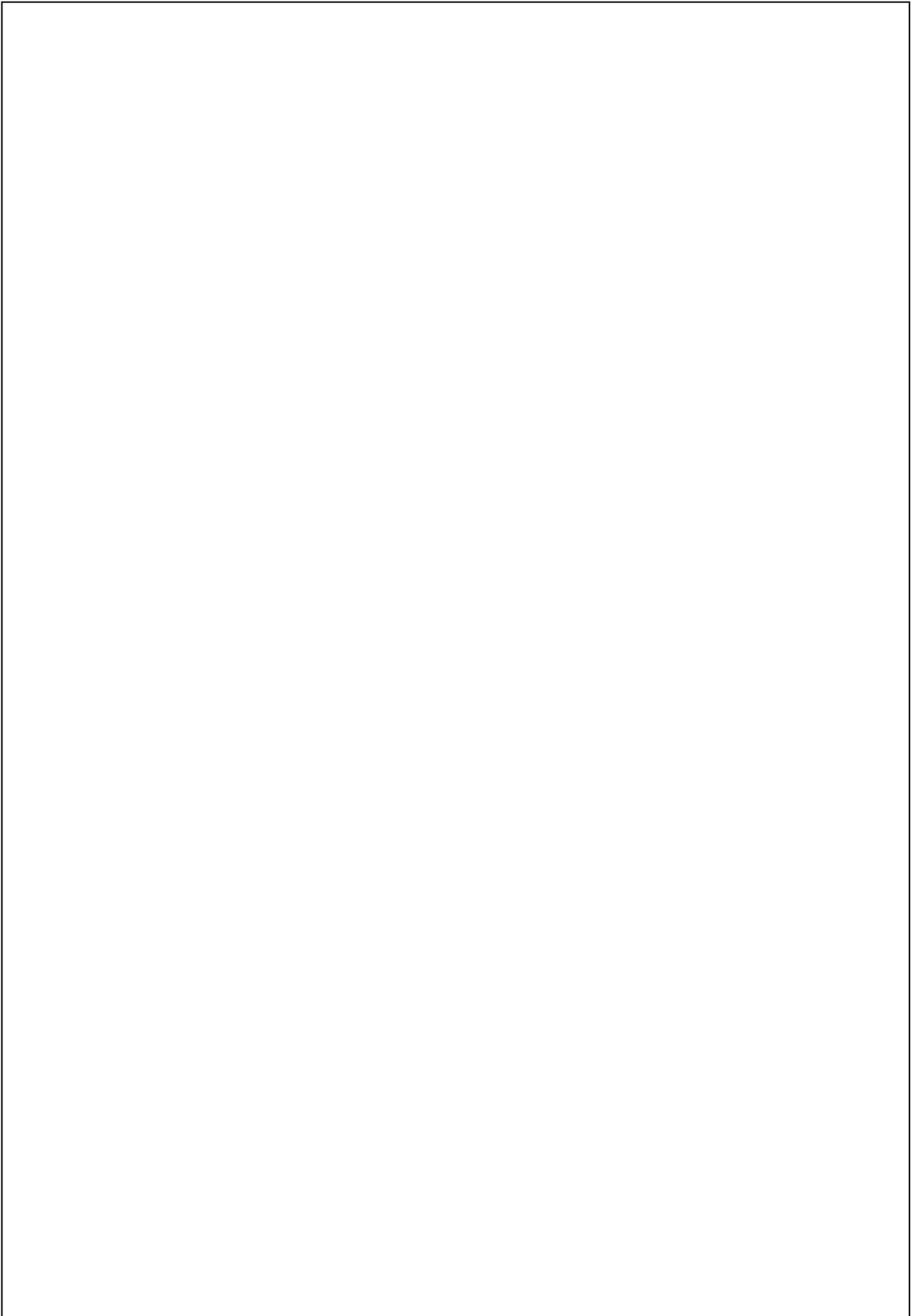
With the instruction gained from week to week, when several quarters have passed the Sabbath school teachers should be competent instructors for baptismal classes, and can easily take charge of such classes for the evangelists. If there is no evangelist or pastor, the Sabbath school teacher can prepare candidates for baptism from the membership of his Sabbath school class, and then request that a minister be sent to baptize them. (*G. A. Roberts, Review and Herald, December 17<sup>th</sup> 1936, 'The Sabbath School Lesson'*)

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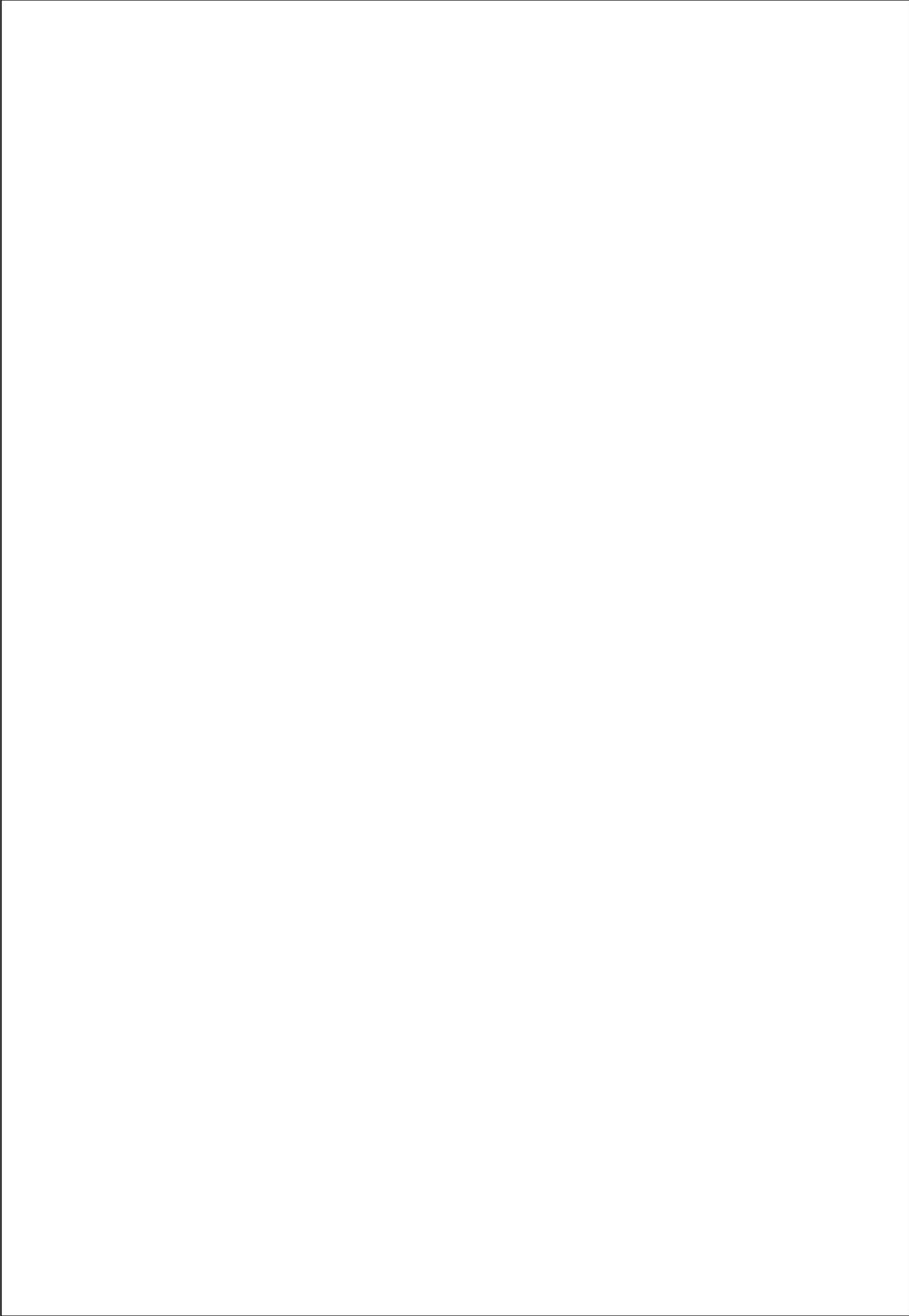
“It will preserve all your lesson pamphlets, covering Bible Doctrines as outlined in the Sabbath school lessons for seven full quarters. These lessons have been prepared under the careful supervision of the Sabbath School Department, and you will want to keep them. They are invaluable for continuous reference.” (*Review and Herald, January 14<sup>th</sup> 1937, ‘Preserve your Lesson Quarterlies on Bible Doctrines’*)



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## **Appendix L – 1872 Fundamental Statement of Beliefs**

**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.

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.

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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,

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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.

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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 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 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.

## **Appendix M – 1931 Statement of Fundamental Beliefs**

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS hold certain fundamental beliefs, the principal features of which, together with a portion of the Scriptural references upon which they are based, may be summarized as follows:

1. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, contain an all sufficient revelation of His will to men, and are the only unerring rule of faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3: 15-17.
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. Matt. 28:19.
3. That Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence as the Eternal Father. While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family, lived on the earth as a man, exemplified in His life as our example the principles of righteousness, attested His relationship to God by many mighty miracles, died for our sins on the cross, was raised from the dead, and ascended to the Father, where He ever lives to make intercession for us. John 1:1,14; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1,2; 4:14-16; 7:25.
4. That every person in order to obtain salvation must experience the new birth; that this comprises an entire transformation of life and character by the re-creative power of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3; 16; Matt. 18: 3; Acts 2: 37-39.
5. That baptism is an ordinance of the Christian church, and should follow repentance and forgiveness of sins. By *its* observance faith is shown in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. That the proper form of baptism is by immersion. Rom. 6: 1-6; Acts 16: 80-33.
6. That the will of God as it relates to moral conduct is comprehended in His law of ten commandments; that these are great moral, unchangeable precepts, binding upon all men in every age. Ex. 20:1-17.
7. That the fourth commandment of this unchangeable law requires the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. This holy institution is at the same time a memorial of creation and a sign of sanctification, a sign of the believer's rest from his own works of sin, and his entrance into the rest of soul which Jesus promises to those who come to Him. Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Heb. 4:1-10.
8. That the law of ten commandments points out sin, the penalty of which is death. The law cannot save the transgressor from his sin, nor impart power to keep him from sinning. In infinite love and mercy, God provides a way whereby this may be done. He furnishes a substitute, even Christ the righteous one, to die in man's stead, making "Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21. That one is justified, not by obedience to the law, but by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. By accepting Christ, man is reconciled to God, justified by His blood for the sins of the past, and saved from the power of sin by His indwelling life.. Thus the gospel becomes "the power of God unto salvation to every one

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that believeth.” This experience is wrought by the divine agency of the Holy Spirit, who convinces of sin and leads to the Sin Bearer, inducting the believer into the new-covenant relationship, where the law of God is written on his heart, and through the enabling power of the indwelling Christ, his life is brought into conformity to the divine precepts. The honor and merit of this wonderful transformation belong wholly to Christ. 1 John 3: 4; Rom. 7: 7; 3: 20; Eph. 2: 8-10; 1 John 2: 1, 2; Rom. 5: 8-10; Gal .. 2: 20; Eph. 3: 17; Heb. 8: 8-12.

9. That God only hath immortality. Mortal man possesses a nature inherently sinful and dying. Immortality and eternal life come only through the gospel, and are bestowed as the free gift of God at the second advent of Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Tim. 6: 15, 16; 1 Cor. 15:51-55.

10. That the condition of man in death is one of unconsciousness. That all men, good and evil alike, remain in the grave from death to the resurrection. Ecc. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3,4; John 5: 28,29.

11. That there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. The resurrection of the just will take place at the second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the unjust will take place a thousand years later, at the close of the millennium. John 5:28, 29; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20: 5-10.

12. That the finally impenitent, including Satan, the author of sin, will, by the fires of the last day, be reduced to a state of nonexistence, becoming as though they had not been, thus purging the universe of God of sin and sinners.. Rom. 6:23; Mal. 4:1-3; Rev. 20: 9, 10; Obadiah 16.

13 .. That no prophetic period is given in the Bible to reach to the second advent, but that the longest one, the 2300 days of Daniel 8: 14, terminated in 1844, and brought us to an event called the cleansing of the sanctuary.

14 .. That the true sanctuary, of which the tabernacle on earth was a type, is the temple of God in heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8 and onward, and of which the Lord Jesus, as our great High Priest, is minister; and that the priestly work of our Lord is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation; that this heavenly sanctuary is the one to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8: 14; its cleansing being, as in the type, a work of judgment, beginning with the entrance of Christ as the High Priest upon the judgment phase of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, foreshadowed in the earthly service of cleansing the sanctuary on the day of atonement. This work of judgment in the heavenly sanctuary began in 1844. Its completion will close human probation.

15. That God, in the time of the judgment and in accordance with His uniform dealing with the human family in warning them of coming events vitally affecting their destiny (Amos 3:6,7), sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the second advent of Christ; that this work is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation

14; and that their threefold message brings *to* view a work of reform to prepare a people to meet Him at His coming.

16. That the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, synchronizing with the period of the proclamation of the message of Revelation 14, is a time of investigative judgment, first with reference to the dead, and secondly, with reference to the living. This investigative judgment determines who of the myriads sleeping in the dust of the earth are worthy of a part in the first

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resurrection, and who of its living multitudes are worthy of translation. 1 Peter 4:17,18; Dan. 7: 9,10; Rev. 14:6,7; Luke 20:35.

17. That the followers of Christ should be a godly people, not adopting the unholy maxims nor conforming to the unrighteous ways of the world, not loving its sinful pleasures nor countenancing its follies. That the believer should recognize his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that therefore he should clothe that body in neat, modest, dignified apparel. Further, that in eating and drinking and in his entire course of conduct he should shape his life as becometh a follower of the meek and lowly Master. Thus the believer will be led to abstain from all intoxicating drinks, tobacco, and other narcotics, and to avoid every body- and soul-defiling habit and practice. 1 Cor. 3:16,17; 9:25; 10: 31; 1 Tim. 2:9,10; 1 John 2: 6

18. That the divine principle of tithes and offerings for the support of the gospel is an acknowledgment of God's ownership in our lives, and that we are stewards who must render account to Him of all that He has committed to our possession. Lev. 27: 30; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; 2 Cor. 9:6-15.

19. That God has placed in His church the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. That these gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible, and are given for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ. Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 1 Cor. 1:5-7.

20. That the second coming of Christ is the great hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel and plan of salvation. His coming will be literal, personal, and visible. Many important events will be associated with His return, such as the resurrection of the dead, the destruction of the wicked, the purification of the earth, the reward of the righteous, the establishment of His everlasting kingdom. The almost complete fulfillment of various lines of prophecy, particularly those found in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, with existing conditions in the physical, social, industrial, political, and religious worlds, indicates that Christ's coming "is near, even at the doors." The exact time of that event has not been foretold. Believers are exhorted to be ready, for "in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man" will be revealed. Luke 21:25-27; 17:26-30; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9: 28; James 5: 1-8; Joel 3:9-16; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Dan. 7:27; Matt. 24:36, 44.

21. That the millennial reign of Christ covers the period between the first and the second resurrection, during which time the saints of all ages, will live with their blessed Redeemer in heaven. At the end of the millennium, the Holy City with all the saints will descend to the earth. The wicked, raised in the second resurrection, will go up on the breadth of the earth with Satan at their head to compass the camp of the saints, when fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them. In the conflagration which destroys Satan and his host, the earth itself will be regenerated and cleansed from the effects of the curse. Thus the universe of God will be purified from the foul blot of sin. Revelation 20; Zech. 14: 1-4; 2 Peter 3:7-10.

22. That God will make all things new. The earth, restored to its pristine beauty, will become forever the abode of the saints of the Lord. The promise to Abraham, that through Christ he and his seed should possess the earth throughout the endless ages of eternity, will be fulfilled. The kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an ever lasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. Christ, the Lord, will reign supreme, and every creature

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which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea will ascribe blessing and honor and glory and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever. Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 4:13; Heb. 11:8-16; Matt. 5:5; Isaiah 35; Rev. 21: 1-7; Dan. 7: 27; Rev. 5:13.-*Seventh-day Adventist Year Book, 1931.*

## ***Appendix N – Waldenses Confession of Faith 1544<sup>244</sup>***

1. We believe that there is but one God, who is a Spirit - the Creator of all things - the Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all; who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth - upon whom we are continually dependent, and to whom we ascribe praise for our life, food, raiment, health, sickness, prosperity, and adversity. We love him as the source of all goodness; and reverence him as that sublime being, who searches the reins and trieth the hearts of the children of men.

2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son and image of the Father - that in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells, and that by Him alone we know the Father. He is our Mediator and advocate; nor is there any other name given under heaven by which we can be saved. In His name alone we call upon the Father, using no other prayers than those contained in the Holy Scriptures, or such as are in substance agreeable thereunto.

3. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, proceeding from the Father, and from the Son; by whose inspiration we are taught to pray; being by Him renewed in the spirit of our minds; who creates us anew unto good works, and from whom we receive the knowledge of the truth.

4. We believe that there is one holy church, comprising the whole assembly of the elect and faithful, that have existed from the beginning of the world, or that shall be to the end thereof. Of this church the Lord Jesus Christ is the head - it is governed by His word and guided by the Holy Spirit. In the church it behooves all Christians to have fellowship. For her He [Christ] prays incessantly, and His prayer for it is most acceptable to God, without which indeed their could be no salvation.

5. We hold that the ministers of the church ought to be unblameable both in life and doctrine; and if found otherwise, that they ought to be deposed from their office, and others substituted in their stead; and that no person ought to presume to take that honour unto himself but he who is called of God as was Aaron - that the duties of such are to feed the flock of God, not for filthy lucre's sake, or as having dominion over God's heritage, but as being examples to the flock, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, and in chastity.

6. We acknowledge, that kings, princes, and governors, are the appointed and established ministers of God, whom we are bound to obey [in all lawful and civil concerns]. For they bear the sword for the defence of the innocent, and the punishment of evil doers; for which reason we are bound to honour and pay them tribute. From this power and authority, no man can exempt himself as is manifest from the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily paid tribute, not taking upon himself any jurisdiction of temporal power.

7. We believe that in the ordinance of baptism the water is the visible and external sign, which represents to us that which, by virtue of God's invisible operation, is within us - namely, the renovation of our minds, and the mortification of our members through [the faith of] Jesus Christ. And by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing and declaring our faith and change of life.

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<sup>244</sup> [www.creeds.net](http://www.creeds.net)

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8. We hold that the Lord's supper is a commemoration of, and thanksgiving for, the benefits which we have received by His sufferings and death - and that it is to be received in faith and love - examining ourselves, that so we may eat of that bread and drink of that cup, as it is written in the Holy Scriptures.

9. We maintain that marriage was instituted of God. That it is holy and honourable, and ought to be forbidden to none, provided there be no obstacle from the divine word.

10. We contend, that all those in whom the fear of God dwells, will thereby be led to please him, and to abound in the good works [of the gospel] which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them - which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, sobriety, and the other good works enforced in the Holy Scriptures.

11. On the other hand, we confess that we consider it to be our duty to beware of false teachers, whose object is to divert the minds of men from the true worship of God, and to lead them to place their confidence in the creature, as well as to depart from the good works of the gospel, and to regard the inventions of men.

12. We take the Old and the New Testament for the rule of our life, and we agree with the general confession of faith contained in [what is usually termed] the apostles' creed.

## **Appendix O - Summary of My Objections**

The Biblical Research Committee has asked me to give a brief summary of objections to the church's current position of fundamental beliefs. I will list the fundamental objections and then list what I perceive to be the resulting implications of such issues. These statements are a highly condensed summary of this paper, to take exception to them without reading my manuscript would be irresponsible.

### **Objections<sup>245</sup>**

1. A spiritualizing of the terms Father and Son to the intent that Christ is not literally the Son of God (has not inherited His Divinity). – **(Alters Adventist principles of Bible interpretation)** – *See chapter 28*
2. Placing the Godhead fundamentals of the church upon a number of assumptions that can only be inferred but not proven explicitly from Scripture. **(Mixes tradition and Scripture)** – *See chapters 27 and 28*
3. The use of a spiritualized methodology regarding Father and Son that creates a precedent for spiritualizing other Bible Doctrines such as the Sanctuary doctrine, a downplaying of the two apartments and a cloudiness of the actual work of salvation that began in 1844. **(Alters other doctrines and invokes a train of heresies)** – *See chapter 8*
4. A false view of authority derived from the Trinity that places the Father as assuming the senior position and the Son assuming the submissive position. Such a view presents assumptive authority as opposed to a literal Father that has absolute authority and Christ's submission is assumed for the purposes of salvation, as opposed to his submission being the WAY and example for all created beings to understand the principle of submission and how it operates. **(Alters perception of authority and submission)** – *See chapters 31-34*
5. The claim that the Trinity is a progression of the Pioneer platform is impossibility. **(Rejection of original Adventist doctrinal platform)** – *See chapter 26*
6. A key element of Waggoner's message in 1888 was Christ's inherited Divinity. **(The Trinity causes a rejection of the heart of the 1888 message)** – *See chapter 26*
7. A false view of equality derived from Trinity that is transferred to the drive for gender neutrality of church governance that is not supported by Scripture. **(Alters perception of equality that impact Church governance)** – *See chapter 33*

Placing the above in sequence, the spiritualised view of Scripture demanded by the Trinity doctrine causes a mixture of Scripture and human tradition that alters many of our teachings. Altered perceptions of Authority and Submission lead to rejection of pioneer platform and 1888 message. Rebellion against such authority will seed the rebellion of membership against church leadership and fragment the church.

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<sup>245</sup> A more detailed list of direct objections can be found in chapter 28 of my manuscript