

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.¹⁰⁰ 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,

¹⁰⁰ 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 let's 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

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.”¹⁰¹

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 Hatton¹⁰² 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*,¹⁰³ 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.

¹⁰¹ Adam Clarke Bible Commentary used from E-sword.

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

¹⁰³ 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.”¹⁰⁴

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.

¹⁰⁴ Adam Clarke Bible Commentary found on E-Sword

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 4th 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, 2nd 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”¹⁰⁵ 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.

¹⁰⁵ 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

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).¹⁰⁶

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.

¹⁰⁶ "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.***¹⁰⁷ 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.

¹⁰⁷ 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.¹⁰⁸

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

¹⁰⁸ 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.

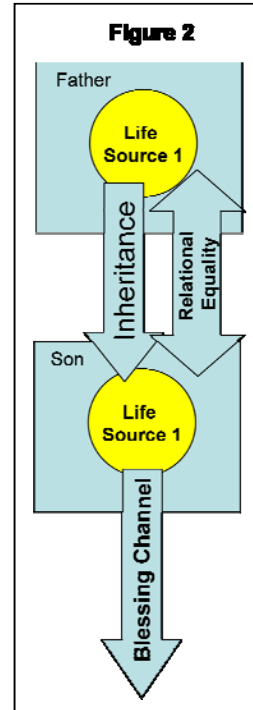
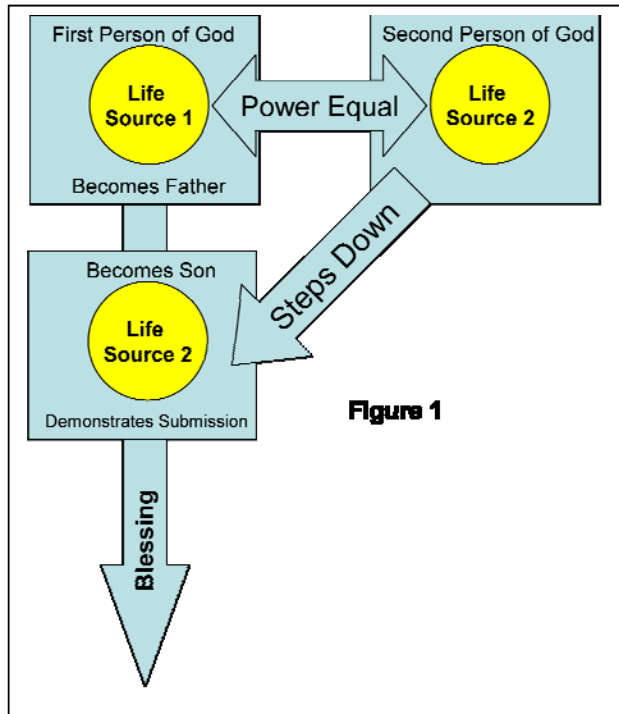
This truth can only be grasped in realization that Christ's very *identity* has its equality to the Father based in a *relational inheritance*. Note carefully:

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.

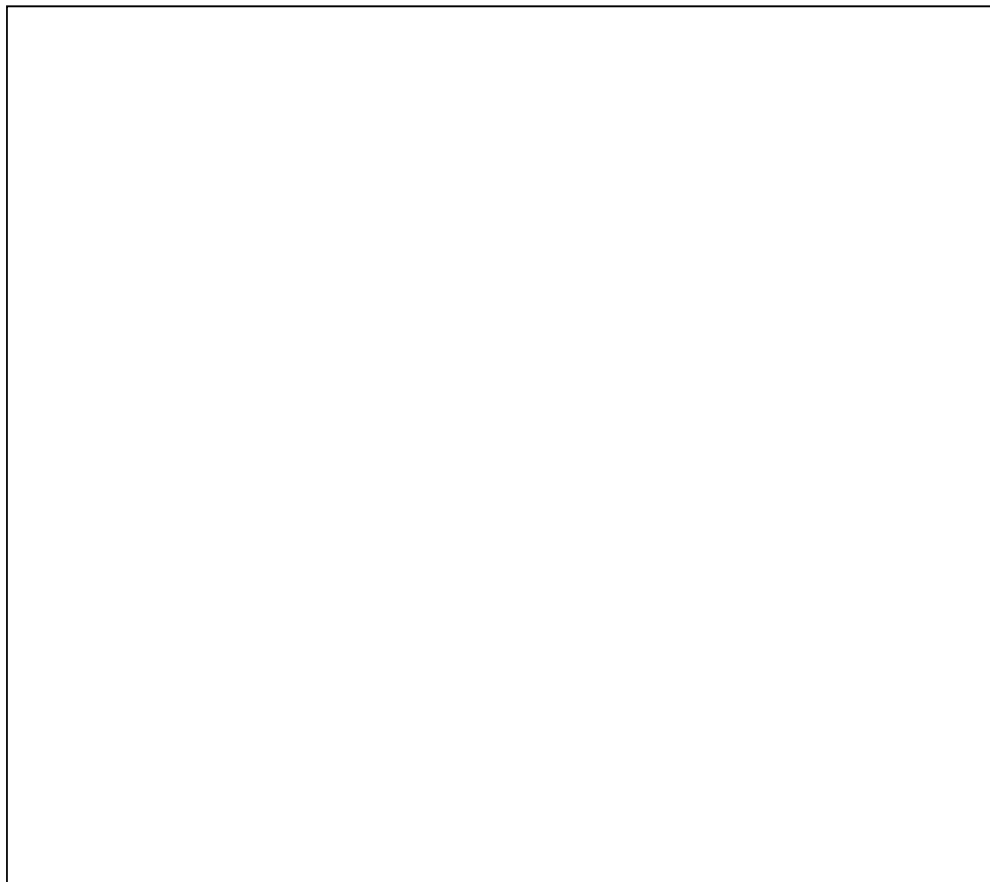
E. Relational Equality of Father and Son Through One Life Source Establishes Channel of Blessing

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.



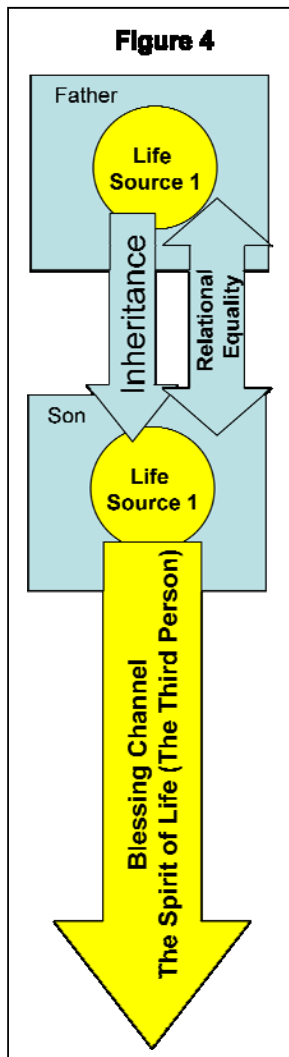
The issue of multiple life sources confusing the channel of blessing is further complicated with the subject of the Holy Spirit. The notion of 3 independent life sources united in love greatly confuses the mind when trying to conceive one God and yet avoid believing in three Gods.



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 2nd 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.¹⁰⁹

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.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ 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.”

¹¹⁰ *Questions on Doctrine*, Page 21. PDF Version found on 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.

Godhead Model	Access Qualifications	Access Mode	Quality of relationship
Trinitarian	Self-originated life, Inherent power, Eternal existence	Performance	Intimate and personal
Fountarian ¹¹¹	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

¹¹¹ 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.¹¹² 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*:

Relational Based Measurement	Performance Based Measurement ¹¹³
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

¹¹² 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.

¹¹³ 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.¹¹⁴ 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

¹¹⁴ 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”¹¹⁵ 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 life¹¹⁶ 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.)

¹¹⁵ 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.

¹¹⁶ 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.¹¹⁷ 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.

¹¹⁷ 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)¹¹⁸ 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.¹¹⁹ 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].

¹¹⁸ 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...”.

¹¹⁹ 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 reproves, 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.¹²⁰ 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.¹²¹ 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

¹²⁰ 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

¹²¹ 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.¹²²

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.

¹²² “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 Augustine¹²³ 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.¹²⁴

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.

¹²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Scotus_Erigena

¹²⁴ 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.

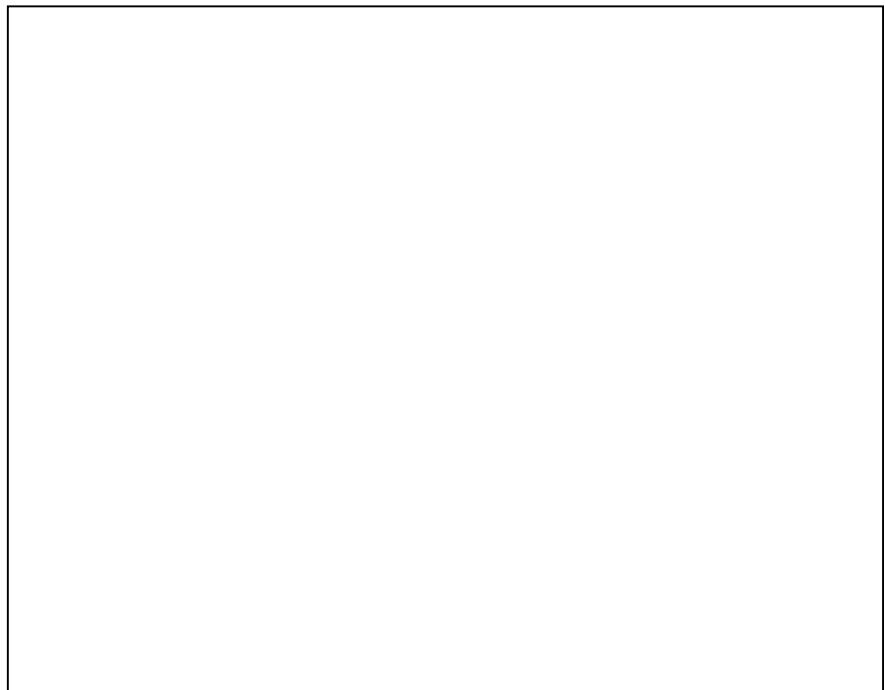
Notice how Ellen White states this:

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.¹²⁵ 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. 8:5,6.¹²⁶

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

¹²⁵ See next chapter for more detail

¹²⁶ 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.”¹²⁷

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 view¹²⁸ 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*

¹²⁷ Gordon Jensen, RH, 31-10-1996

¹²⁸ 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.....” ¹²⁹

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,

¹²⁹ ‘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.¹³⁰ 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.

¹³⁰ 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 2nd 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.¹³¹

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

¹³¹ 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 8th 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.¹³²

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.¹³³ 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

¹³² Whidden, Moon and Reeve., *The Trinity*, Review and Herald, 2002) Page 55

¹³³ "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 sheweth 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.¹³⁴ 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.

¹³⁴ 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.¹³⁵ From beginning to end Adventism has held a plain reading of Scripture. Notice the following chart:

Doctrine	SDA Belief
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) ¹³⁶ 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. ¹³⁷
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

¹³⁵ Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving The Word* (Berean Books, Berrien Springs, Michigan 1996) Page 32.

¹³⁶ 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

¹³⁷ 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.¹³⁸ 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 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.
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:

¹³⁸ 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.¹³⁹

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.¹⁴⁰

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.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Miller's Works Volume 1 Page 33.

¹⁴⁰ RH, November 25, 1884

¹⁴¹ 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.¹⁴²

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

¹⁴² 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.¹⁴³

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:

¹⁴³ 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,¹⁴⁴ 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 20th Century

There were a flood of apostasies from the church during the early part of the 20th 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...

¹⁴⁴ 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"¹⁴⁵ 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

¹⁴⁵ 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. [**Literals**] Yea he [**Pagan Rome**] magnified himself even to the Prince of the host,¹⁴⁶ [**Literals**] and by him [**Papal Rome**] the daily [Paganism] was taken away [**Literals**] and the place [Rome] of his [**Pagan Rome's**] sanctuary [miqdash]¹⁴⁷ was cast down¹⁴⁸ [**Literals**] And an host [army] [**Literals**] was given him [**Papal Rome**] against the daily¹⁴⁹ 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.¹⁵⁰ [**Literals**] Yea [he; **Papacy**] magnified himself even to the Prince of the host,¹⁵¹ [**Spiritual**] and [from Him, Christ] the daily [His continual ministry] was taken away,¹⁵² [**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 daily¹⁵³ 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 Papacy¹⁵⁴ 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 eagerness¹⁵⁵ 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

¹⁴⁶ Rome tried to kill Christ as his birth and crucified Him in 31AD on the cross

¹⁴⁷ Miqdash can be used for God’s or pagan sacred place.

¹⁴⁸ 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.

¹⁴⁹ 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.

¹⁵⁰ Papacy persecuted and killed more than 50 million of God’s people during 1260 years between 538-1798 AD.

¹⁵¹ Claimed to be God on earth

¹⁵² The priesthood of the Papacy obscured the priesthood of Christ by pointing people to earthly priests.

¹⁵³ Same as Pagan view

¹⁵⁴ 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.

¹⁵⁵ 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."¹⁵⁶

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 47¹⁵⁷

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

¹⁵⁶ Pipim, 75

¹⁵⁷ 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?¹⁵⁸

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.¹⁵⁹

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.¹⁶⁰ 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.***¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ George Burnside - The Two Apartment Sanctuary in Heaven. Pamphlet

¹⁵⁹ I John 2:22,23

¹⁶⁰ Notice the use of the word spiritualism is the context of spiritualizing

¹⁶¹ 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.

Doctrine	SDA Belief Around Release of Questions on Doctrine
Father and Son	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
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. ¹⁶² 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. ¹⁶³
Virgin Birth	Literal
Nature of Christ	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
Miracles of Jesus	All literally took place
Death of Christ	Confusion introduced over what part of Christ died or didn't die
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. ¹⁶⁴
Christian Perfection	Literal and real through the faith of Christ
Investigative Judgment	Literal and real. Daniel Seven's books being opened are literal and

¹⁶² Questions on Doctrine Page 256; RH July 14, 1927 Page 6.

¹⁶³ 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

¹⁶⁴ 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

Doctrine	SDA Belief Today in Many Places
Father and Son	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.
Heaven	Heaven is a literal place
Creation	Creation not in six literal days
The Devil	A literal Devil called Satan but many human issues are just psychological problems
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	Earth older than 6000 years
The Flood	Flood is debatable as to whether it was world wide
Old Testament Stories	Most Considered True
The Commandments	Commandments can't be followed
The Sabbath	A literal weekly rest but not a memorial of a literal six day creation
The Daily, Host and Stars Persecuted. Sanctuary Cast Down	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.¹⁶⁵
Virgin Birth	Literal
Nature of Christ	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
Miracles of Jesus	All literally took place
Death of Christ	Confusion introduced over what part of Christ died or didn't die
Resurrection	Literal and real. The central hope of Christianity
Heavenly Sanctuary	Heavenly Sanctuary not literal, but symbolic of Christ's ministry. “God not contained in a box for 160 years”
Elder	Terms Husband and Wife and not literal but interchangeable
Christian Perfection	No Such Thing
Investigative Judgment	No Such Thing or token acknowledgement
Second Coming	A literal, Audible and real event but not focused on as much. Growing emphasis on liberation and feminist theology

¹⁶⁵ 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.¹⁶⁶ 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.¹⁶⁷

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

¹⁶⁶ 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.

¹⁶⁷ 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.¹⁶⁸

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***

¹⁶⁸ RH Feb 17, 1852

*bitterness, scorn, and contempt, and some even with persecution. And this is why Babylon has fallen.*¹⁶⁹

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 effects¹⁷⁰ 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.¹⁷¹

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 and as Arthur White clearly states "saved the emerging church."

¹⁶⁹ Uriah Smith. *Modern Spiritualism*, Page 141,142

¹⁷⁰ Notice the use of the term "desolating" in connection to spiritualizing and spiritualism

¹⁷¹ Early Writings Page 77,78

26. Growing on the Solid Platform¹⁷²

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 teachings¹⁷³ 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.¹⁷⁴ 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

¹⁷² 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.

¹⁷³ See CW 30 for a description of old landmarks and pillar doctrines.

¹⁷⁴ 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.¹⁷⁵

“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.”¹⁷⁶

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 4¹⁷⁷

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:

¹⁷⁵ J. S. White, The Parable, p. 16

¹⁷⁶ RH, 18-8-1863

¹⁷⁷ 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.

	Catholicism	Protestantism	Pioneer Adventism
Doctrine	Trinity	Trinity	Father, Son Spirit
Authority	Tradition	Bible	Bible
Worldview	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”¹⁷⁸

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.”¹⁷⁹

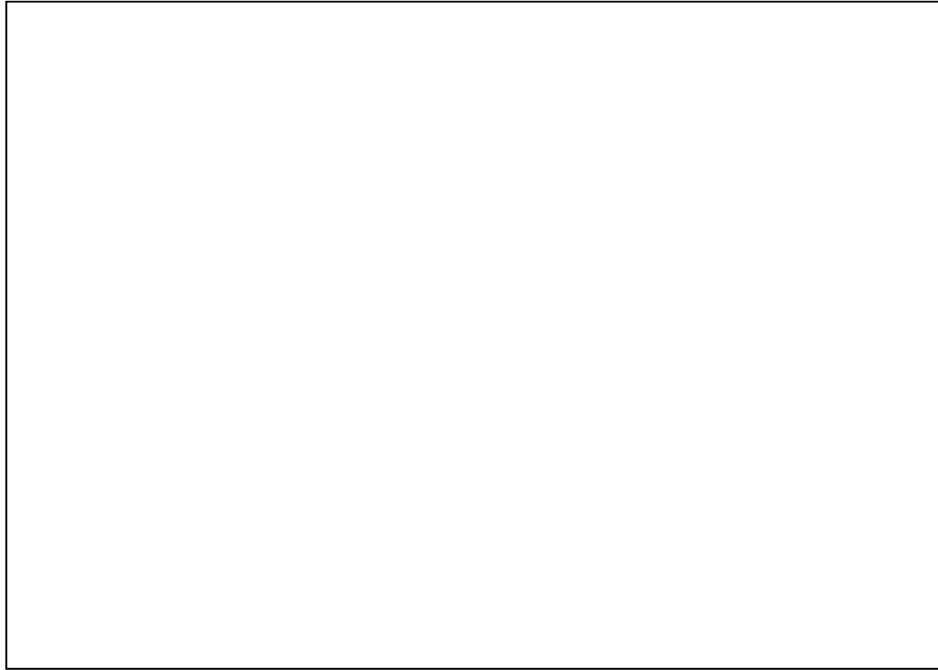
The above statement is shocking in its strident tones of obedience. There is nothing of the saving power of Christ enabling us to obey and a complete reliance on Christ for Grace to overcome. Such statements clearly indicate a lack of understanding of the work of Christ in the plan of salvation. I contend 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

¹⁷⁸ Uriah Smith, *Review and Herald* Jan 3, 1888 Page 8.

¹⁷⁹ 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.¹⁸⁰ 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 desire¹⁸¹ to avoid the cult label from other Protestants.

¹⁸⁰ 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.

¹⁸¹ 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

to choose sides. As George W. Bush expressed it “either you are with us or you are with the terrorists” (Higher Critics)

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*.¹⁸² 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

¹⁸² To read *Rome's Challenge*, go to 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.....”¹⁸³

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.

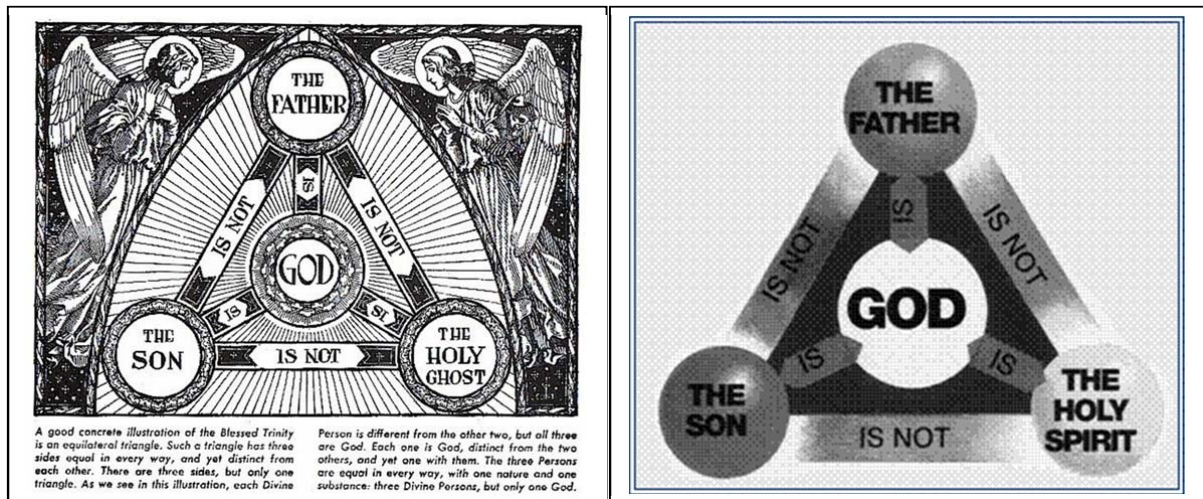
E. Different But Same

One thing that I found interesting was two illustrations used to explain the Trinity. The one on the left is Catholic¹⁸⁴ and the one on the right is Adventist.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Max Hatton, *Understanding the Trinity*, p. 13

¹⁸⁴ *My Catholic Faith* by Bishop Louis, LaRavoire Morrow, S.T.D

¹⁸⁵ *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.¹⁸⁶

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 observance¹⁸⁷, 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

¹⁸⁶ The work of the papal church was to be of an exactly opposite character to that of Christ...The Papacy, claiming to be the viceregent of the Son of God, is in truth the viceregent 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.

¹⁸⁷ 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 Reggio¹⁸⁸ 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.

¹⁸⁸ 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 seen 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.”¹⁸⁹

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.¹⁹⁰

“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.

¹⁸⁹ L. E. Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter*, rev. ed., 1956

¹⁹⁰ 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.¹⁹¹ 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}

¹⁹¹ 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:

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.¹⁹² Ellen White says that in order to be like God, we must know Him aright.¹⁹³ 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

¹⁹² John 17:3

¹⁹³ 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.¹⁹⁴

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;

¹⁹⁴ “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.¹⁹⁵ 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.¹⁹⁶ 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.¹⁹⁷

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.¹⁹⁸ 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.

¹⁹⁵ Romans 1:20

¹⁹⁶ Isa 1:18

¹⁹⁷ Deut 29:29

¹⁹⁸ 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.¹⁹⁹ 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.²⁰⁰

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

¹⁹⁹ Whidden, Moon and Reeve, Pages 23-30

²⁰⁰ 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.²⁰¹ 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 3rd and 4th 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.²⁰² To my mind, these authors worship and speak of a god that I do not acknowledge, nor will worship, therefore to favourably

²⁰¹ Max Hatton, Understanding the Trinity, Page 13

²⁰² 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

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.²⁰³

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

²⁰³ 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.²⁰⁴

Highly speculative and of course not found in the Bible.²⁰⁵ 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?

²⁰⁴ Ibid, Page 10,11

²⁰⁵ 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,²⁰⁶ 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.²⁰⁷ 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?²⁰⁸ ²⁰⁹ On the other hand if Christ is included, how do we account for the unequivocal

²⁰⁶ 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.

²⁰⁷ Whidden, Moon and Reeve, The Trinity, Page 48

²⁰⁸ 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 substance²¹⁰ or we have a blending of the three persons in a mysterious unity that can’t be fully comprehended.²¹¹ 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” no 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.²¹²

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.”²¹³

²⁰⁹ It is interesting to note that the Adventist Bible Commentary completely by-passes the difficulties of identification in the Isaiah passages

²¹⁰ Max Hatton Understanding the Trinity Page 133

²¹¹ 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.”

²¹² Heb 1:8; Rev 5:13.

²¹³ 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.²¹⁴

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

²¹⁴ 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 Isaiah²¹⁵

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.²¹⁶ 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

²¹⁵ Whidden, Moon, Reeve, 48.

²¹⁶ 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 reprove, 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 man²¹⁷ and that identification process was established through the Commandments of God.²¹⁸

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.

²¹⁷ “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

²¹⁸ “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 3rd one (Gen 5:3) refers to Seth made in Adam’s image.
- The 4th 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 3rd (Gen 5:3) one refers to Seth made in Adam’s likeness.
- The 4th (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.²¹⁹ 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

²¹⁹ 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.²²⁰

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

²²⁰ “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,²²¹ we can know the things of God by what is revealed to us.²²² 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

²²¹ Job 11:7-9

²²² 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.²²³ Thus the woman

²²³ 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)

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?²²⁴ 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

²²⁴ For more detail on this, see my sermon “Recipe for Blasphemy” found at 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.²²⁵ 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

²²⁵ 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.

Characteristic	Father/Son Model	Trinity Model
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.

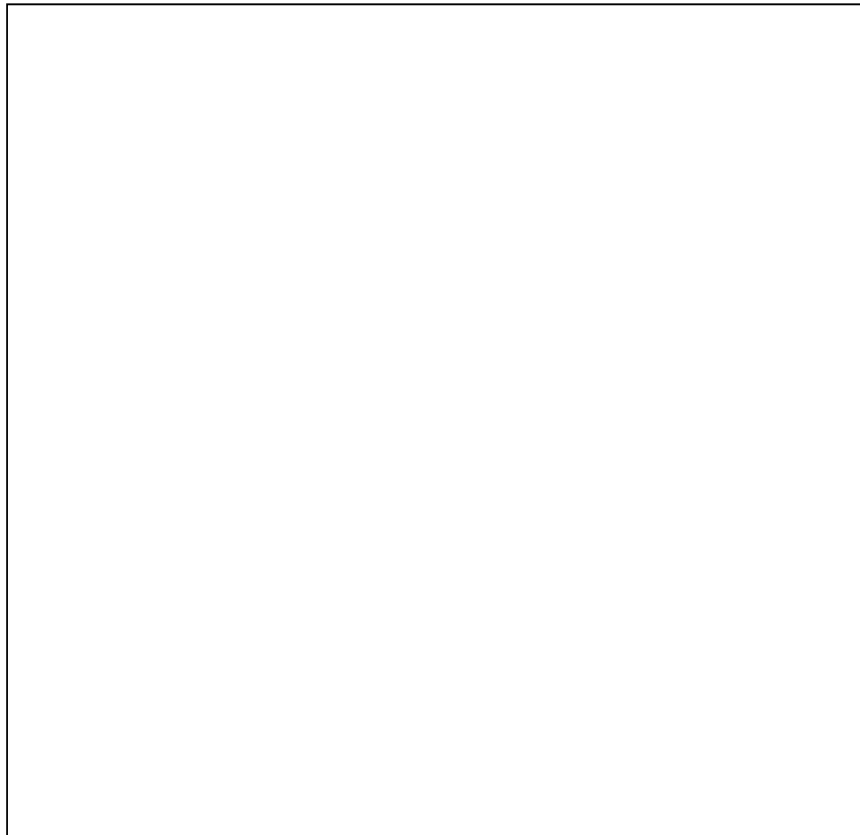
“In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, 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.”²²⁶

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

²²⁶ *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.