

The Trinity in Adventism from 1890 Onward

[Jason Smith·Thursday, December 7, 2017](#)

Brother [Marcos C. Thaler](#),

You requested that I write a document dealing with the context of all the quotations that brother Danny has placed on his wall. I do not have time to do this. However, what I will do is type a general expose of what some modern SDA pro-trinitarian defenders are guilty of doing. I will use some examples from [Danny Laufersweiler](#)' article and some other sources.

The first point we must establish is this – the one common point held by virtually all Seventh-day Adventist trinitarians today, whether it is the one inseparable God Being version or the three separate God Beings version, is that the Son of God is unbegotten. There is virtual unanimity on this and I know of very few exceptions. However, with that said, there does not appear to be agreement among SDAs as to whether the Spirit is actually the Spirit of God and Christ and internal within Their Persons or a “separate” Person so I will not get into that.

So what happens is that this relatively new SDA doctrine of unbegottensim, which is under attack and rightly so, is thought to be the truth by many and therefore they must defend it. In an effort to do so an approach is taken by some that involves giving quotations of the “trinity” statements from the 1890s onward. Unfortunately, at least in my experience, very often what you will find is that these statements are lifted from their literary context. Thus a misleading impression is made for the naive, modern reader who ends up thinking that the “trinity” the SDA authors wrote about in time past is the same as the SDA unbegotten trinity belief today. It is this approach that I object to. It is superficial and sometimes even deceptive. So without further ado let us begin. This is a quote from brother Danny’s article:

Danny wrote: “PERSON OF THE HOLY GHOST (1875) in a magazine edited by James White!
[Signs of the Times for 1875 - Vol. 01 - No. 22](#)

Work of the Spirit.

“The mightiest forces in the universe, are silent forces. Who ever heard the budding of an oak? Who was ever deafened by the falling of the dew? Who was ever stunned by a solar eclipse? So it is with the august phenomenon of a change of heart. So far as we know, it is the most radical change the human spirit can experience. It is a revolutionary change. Still, a change of heart is not an unnatural change. It is not necessarily even destructive of self-possession. God employs in it an instrument exquisitely adjusted to the mind of man as an intelligent and free being. Truth may act in it with an equipoise of forces as tranquil as that of gravitation in the orbits of the stars. No, it is not of necessity a tumultuous experience to which God calls us when he invites us to be saved. By what emblem have the Scriptures expressed the person of the Holy Ghost ? Is it an eagle ? "And John bare record, saying : I saw the Spirit descending like a dove." "Come," is the seleted language of inspiration. "Come, and I will give you " — what ? a shock, the rack, a swoon ? No, I will give you — " rest." Come, and ye shall find "— what ? struggle, terror, torture ? No, ye shall find—" peace." " Come ye "— come who ? "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."— Dr. A. Phelps.

(THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, VOLUME 1,; OAKLAND, CAL., FIFTH-DAY, APRIL 8 , 1875.; NUMBER 22, p. 176)

Elder James White, Editor and Proprietor

<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/ST/ST18750408-V01-22.pdf> [End Quote]

This first example is from Danny’s document. Is his implication here that James White believed and taught that the holy Spirit was a Person in 1875? If so, the problem with that implication (if that is what is being made) are several:

Problem 1: For starters this is the last page of the Signs of the Times were announcements, pithy sayings and little power nuggets were shared. This particular snippet, from Dr. A. Phelps, about the “person of the Holy Ghost” not being expressed by “an eagle” but “like a dove” is really meager pickings in terms of making James White into a believer in the Spirit’s Personhood.

Problem 2: The previous year, June 4th, 1874, in the first edition of the Signs of the Times, James White published the Fundamental Principles of the Seventh-day Adventists which were non-trinitarian and did not ascribe Personhood to the Spirit. In fact that very sane tract is advertised for 2 cents on this very same page in the April 8th, 1875.

Problem 3: Another issue is that the non-trinitarian work, “The Atonment” by J.H. Waggoner, is also advertised here. This one for 20 cents. In light of this it seems highly improbable that James White is advocating for trinitarianism by the Phelps quote.

Problem 4: The 1878 publication of “The Biblical Institute” by Uriah Smith and James White has this to say about the holy Spirit:

“3. What is the Holy Spirit? ANS. Any attempt to answer this question is venturing upon holy ground. It is something which is common to the Father and the Son: the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ. It is something to which the expression, “poured out,” “shed abroad,” “descended,” etc., are applied. It was breathed by Christ upon his disciples. John 20:22. It was an agent in the creation of the world. Gen 1:2. But it would be useless to try to enumerate all the methods and varieties of its manifestations. In a word it may, perhaps, be best described as a mysterious influence emanating from the Father and the Son, their representative and the medium of their power (The Biblical Institute 1878 pg 184)

My point here is that the weight of evidence does not suggest that James White believed that the Spirit was a Person like the Father and Son. So if that implication is being made then I believe it is wrong. Now I’m not saying he would be right in his view but what I am saying is that we should not distort it or give misleading impressions.

What has happened in Seventh-day Adventism is that there has been and still is a distortion of history on this matter. The views of the past are modified according to an agenda. For example C.P. Bollman in the Review and Herald, August 3rd, 1933 made this claim:

“That the full force of these and of other texts making mention of the Holy Spirit as a personal being has always been recognized among us as a people, does not admit of serious question.” (RH April 3rd, 1933)
Now that, of course, is completely false. Yet he said it. Sometimes certain SDA pro-trinitarians do not like to admit that the original pioneer view was different than their own and so they try to make them out to believe differently than what they actually did. I think that might be happening here with James White. We also need to recognize that the SDA pioneers were flexible with the word “person.” J.H. Waggoner explains in his 1877 work “The Spirit of God: Its Offices and Manifestations to the end of The Christian Age:

“There is one question which has been much controverted in the theological world upon which we have never presumed to enter. It is that of the personality of the Spirit of God. Prevailing ideas of person are very diverse, often crude, and the word is differently understood; so that unity of opinion on this point cannot be expected until all shall be able to define precisely what they mean by the word, or until all shall agree upon one particular sense in which the word shall be used. But as this agreement does not exist, it seems that a discussion of the subject cannot be profitable, especially as it is not a question of direct revelation. We have a right to be positive in our faith and our statements only when the words of Scripture are so direct as to bring the subject within the range of positive proof.

“We are not only willing but anxious to leave it just where the word of God leaves it. From it we learn that the Spirit of God is that awful and mysterious power which proceeds from the throne of the universe, and which is the efficient actor of the work of creation and of redemption (SGOM pg 8, 9)

So someone might use the word “person” back then but mean something different by it than what we might interpret. Now even after adopting the word “trinity” this claim from J.H. Waggoner was still used to defend the conception of the Spirit. Quoting now from April 1st, 1892 edition of Bible Echo and Signs of the Times we read:

“A CRITICISM CONSIDERED:

"An esteemed subscriber has been furnished with a criticism upon an answer to a query upon the nature of the Trinity which appeared in our Dec.15,1891, number. The objectionable paragraph reads as follows: "We understand the Trinity, as applied to the Godhead, to consist of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The two former to be personal, spiritual beings, eternal and infinite in all their ways and attributes. The Son is of the Father, equal in glory and honor, but in some measure subject in authority. The Holy Spirit is the representative of the Deity in all parts of the universe. These supreme Beings we cannot comprehend or measure."

"Our critic animadverts upon the danger of the subscriber being led to embrace per force some fatal heresy while accepting more obvious truths associated together. These words are a revelation to him; now he can see our dark designs in the position here taken relative to the personality of the Holy Spirit, He invites a comparison of the position here expressed with our Saviour's discourse in the latter chapters of John. There may be others situated as this person is, so we refer to the matter in this place.

"Our reply is that we did not consciously reveal any definite position in regard to the Holy Spirit's personality. There is certainly nothing incongruous in the idea of the Spirit being a personal representative, hence saying that the Spirit is the representative of the Father and Son does not deny his personality as our friend would make out. He occupies in our minds an exalted place with Deity; and the paragraph in question speaks of him as a supreme Being. In reference to the subject of his personality our minds are well expressed by J. H. Waggoner in his little work entitled "The Spirit of God," as follows:—

"There is one question which has been much controverted in the theological world upon, which we have never presumed to enter. It is that of the personality of the Spirit of God. Prevailing ideas of person are very diverse, often crude, and the word is differently understood; so that unity of opinion on this point cannot be expected until all shall be able to define precisely what they mean by the word, or until all shall agree upon one particular sense in which the word shall be used. But as this agreement does not exist, it seems that a discussion of the subject cannot be profitable, especially as it is not a question of direct revelation. We have a right to be positive in our faith and our statements only when the words of Scripture are so direct as to bring the subject within the range of positive proof.

“We are not only willing but anxious to leave it just where the Word of God leaves it. From it we learn that the Spirit of God is that awful and mysterious power which proceeds from the throne of the universe, and which is the efficient actor in the work of creation and of redemption.” (Bible Echo and Signs of the Times, April 1st, 1892)

So here we see the word “trinity” used but a claim that “we did not consciously reveal any definite position in regarding to the Holy Spirit’s personality” and then a defense of this by quoting the non-trinarian J.H. Waggoner! This is an example where the “trinity” of time past is not the same as the “trinity” of Adventism today.

Moving on let's look at a different example. This one comes from Cardoso Matheus, assistant editor of Spirit of prophecy books in Brazil. He wrote an article entitled "The Pioneer Adventists and the Trinity." Now what concerns us is the following quote:

"A Bible study titled" The Trinity "argued about the "three distinct personages of Heaven."18"

Now footnote # 18 reads like this:

"18. Charles L. Boyd, "The Trinity" Bible Echo and Signs of the Times, October 15, 1890, p. 315.

Now what is the point here? Do you remember that I told you that SDA pro-trinitarians will sometimes give a quote lifted from context? Let's go ahead and look at Boyd's article in its more complete literary context to see what his "trinity" teaching actually was:

"THE TRINITY

Chas. L. Boyd

....

"6. After whose form, or image, was Christ created?

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." "Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person." Phil. 2:6; Heb 1:3

....

"8. What words were addressed to Christ at the beginning of his existence?

"The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Ps. 2:7

....

"21. Then as the church on earth is working by the direct command and agency of three distinct personages in heaven for the increase of the heavenly family, in whose name shall we adopt them into this family?

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt 28:19 (The Trinity, Bible Echo and Signs of the Times October 15, 1890)

As you can see this "trinity" is one that says that Christ was created! This is exceptional because SDAs believed that the Son was begotten not created! Anyhow this article claims that the words of Ps. 2:7 were spoken to Christ at the beginning of His existence. Hence we see a most unusual exposition of the trinity. Again this "trinity" is not the modern version.

The problem is that the modern narrative simply notes the usage of the word "trinity" and "three distinct personages" thus leaving the reader with a potential false impression that the SDA understanding of the trinity today is the same as in time past. This is a tactic that is oft repeated by modern day SDA pro-trinitarians. However, as the more complete context reveals, this is certainly not the case.

Another example of this misleading narrative are the constant references to the 1891 Samuel Spear article "The Subordination of Christ." This was re-published verbatim in 1892 as "The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity" except that the sentence "or tri-une God, which has so long been the faith of the Christian Church" was edited out. Let's quote from Danny's article now (which is really him parroting Jerry Moon).

Danny wrote: "THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY = Triune God, tri-personal God = ONE GOD SUBSISTING AND ACTING IN THREE PERSONS, not a system of tri-theism, or the doctrine of three Gods (1892)

"Further evidence that this was so appeared two years later in 1892, when Pacific Press published a pamphlet titled "The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity," by Samuel T. Spear. The pamphlet corrected two

prevailing misconceptions of the Trinity doctrine, showing that “Triune God, tri-personal God “ - "is not a system of tri-theism, or the doctrine of three Gods, but it is the doctrine of one God subsisting and acting in three persons, with the qualification that the term 'person' . . . is not, when used in this relation, to be understood in any sense that would make it inconsistent with the unity of the Godhead.” - Samuel T. Spear, *The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity*, Bible Students' Library, no. 90 (March 1892), 3-14, reprinted from *New York Independent*, November 14, 1889. Advertised by our publishers more than thirty times in 1892-1911 [End Quote] Now Danny added the part “Triune God, tri-personal God” into the quote. Dr. Moon does not have that in his statement (presumably because he is aware that the part about “triune God” was edited out of the Bible doctrine document). Anyhow that’s a minor point. The problem here is that again an impression is left on the modern reader that this “trinity” is the same as that of the church today. Yet this is not the case. Quoting now from the Spear article:

“There is, however, a sense in which the Christ of the Bible, while essentially divine, is, nevertheless, in some respects distinct from and subordinate to God the Father. He is spoken of, and frequently speaks of Himself, as the Son of God, as the only-begotten of the Father, as being sent by God the Father into this world, and as doing the will of the Father

“ . . .

“6. The conclusion from all the Scriptures put together is that there is in the Godhead some essential and imminent distinction as to the mode of subsistence and operation, in virtue of which Christ is properly spoken of as subordinate to God the Father, and also spoken of as divine and equal to the Father in power and glory, and that this distinction, whatever it is, does not conflict with the doctrine of the divine unity as taught in the Bible. This fact in regard to the Godhead makes its appearance in the great plan for human salvation. God, in this plan, is brought before our thoughts under the personal titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with diversity in offices, relations, and actions toward men. These titles and their special significance, as used in the Bible, are not interchangeable. The term “Father” is never applied to the Son, and the term “Son” is never applied to the Father. Each title has its own permanent application, and its own use and sense. “The distinction thus revealed in the Bible is the basis of the doctrine of the tri-personal God [or tri-une God, which has so long been the faith of the Christian Church]. This doctrine, as held and stated by those who adopt it, is not a system of tri-theism, or the doctrine of three Gods, but is the doctrine of one God subsisting and acting in three persons, with the qualification that the term “person,” though perhaps the best that can be used, is not, when used in this relation, to be understood in any sense that would make it inconsistent with the unity of the Godhead, and hence not to be understood in the ordinary sense when applied to men. Bible trinitarians are not tritheists. They simply seek to state, in the best way in which they can, what they regard the Bible as teaching (The Subordination of Christ”)

Now let us note several things here! Beside the fact that the part in brackets was edited out when they changed the title and put it in the library series there are other important points here.

Note 1: This article does not deny begotten theology and presents the Son as under God the Father. Thus, as Merlin Burt, perceptively note:

"The title, *Bible Doctrine of the Trinity*, implied that the work would be sympathetic to the doctrine of the Trinity. Upon reading the tract, one finds almost nothing which nineteenth-century Adventists would have found objectionable. (Merlin Burt, 'Demise of Semi-Arianism and Anti-Trinitarianism in Adventist Theology, 1888-1957', pages 5-6, December 1996)

Note 2: M.C. Wilcox, the publisher of this article, did not agree with it in entirety:

“No. 90 is entitled “*The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity*,” by the late Samuel T. Spear, D.D. and is reprinted from the *New York Independent*. While there may be minor thoughts in this worthy number which we might wish to express differently, on the whole we believe that it sets forth the Bible doctrine of the trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit with a devout adherence to the words of Scripture, in the best brief way we ever saw it presented (*Signs of the Times* Vol 18, No. 22, 1892)

Note 3: M.C. Wilcox himself was not a trinitarian.

In the 1898 Signs of the Times, Wilcox published an editorial entitled "The Divine Unity" in which he states his belief in "one God, the Father." He taught Christ as "under God, our Creator and Redeemer," and compared the Spirit to the light of the sun reveals and he did not combine these three in a divine Trinity. In fact he said of the Spirit, "It is in the Father, it is in Christ; it is in every member of the church of Christ. (M.C. Wilcox "The Divine Unity" Signs of the Times, December 22nd, 1898)

Or again in 1911 Wilcox wrote this:

"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... Thus the Spirit is personified in Christ and God, but never revealed as a separate person. Never are we told to pray to the Spirit; but to God for the Spirit (M.C. Wilcox Questions and Answers gathered from 'The Question Corner Department' of the Signs of the Times. Pacific Press p18-182. 1911)

And we add another quote from Wilcox (that was in our brother's document)

"2. Yes, some do conclude, from Rev. 3: 14, that there was a time when the Son did not exist, save in the all-comprehending purpose and potency of God. And yet there are others who still hold — and there is nothing to the contrary in the text — that the beginning of the creation of God means the One in whom the creation began, as declared in Col. I: 17, "And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." The finite can not grasp the infinite. Let this suffice, — that our Lord is God with the Father from the "days of eternity"; that "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist," and He brings to all those who believe in Him the plenitude of the power of the Deity according to our needs. (M.C. Wilcox The Signs of the Times for November 17, 1914; VOLUME 41; NUMBER 45, p. 714)

Notice here that Wilcox is admitting that "some" conclude that "there was a time when the son did not exist" except in the purpose and potency of God. He offered no condemnation or repudiation of this but appears to have accepted it as a viable possibility. Thus begotten theology within linear time was still among the SDAs at this time too and could be categorized under the label of trinity. However, as the other quotes shows, begotten theology outside of time was also being taught under this same heading. So again here we have another example of the word "trinity" being used by someone who does not mean the same thing as the modern view of Adventist today. So then why would he do this? As I have written elsewhere, this makes sense in light of Canright's criticisms.

Moving on let's look at another example. Quoting again from Danny's document:

Danny wrote: "The divine Son involves the eternity of his being, co-existent and co-equal with his Father, and standing next to the Father, and being the agent, the representative of the Father, so that every revealing of God in his work in every way has been through his eternal Son.

And it was the controversy over this question, as to the place that his Son should occupy, which led to the first outbreak of trouble in heaven.

A sermon by the editor W. W. PRESCOTT at Takoma Park, D. C., Sabbath, Nov. 24, 1906. (ADVENT REVIEW AND SABBATH HERALD Vol. 84.; TAKOMA PARK STATION, WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, JANUARY 17, 1907.; No. 3.; p.4) [End Quote]

Please note who the author is here. W.W. Prescott! Now let me point out something here. You see the SDA pro-trinitarian will take the phrase "eternity of his being, co-existent and co-equal" as meaning that he taught unbegotten theology. Yet let's allow Prescott to interpret Prescott shall we?

“...the Son is co-eternal with the Father. That does not prevent His being the only-begotten Son of God....There is no contradiction to say that the Son is co-eternal with the Father, and yet the Son is the only-begotten of the Father.” (W. W. Prescott, Report of the 1919 Bible Conference for July 2nd, pg 20)

“Evidently in an Eternal Father and an Eternal Son the ideas of older and younger can have no place. As we lift up the conception of Sonship out of time into eternity, these elements of it, ever present in human fathers and sons, at once disappear. When they fall away, does any conception essential to our idea of son ship remain?”

"Yes; there still remains the chief idea, viz., personal existence and powers derived from another person. And this idea is plainly embodied in John 5:26, and in other express assertions from the lips of Christ describing his own relation to God.” (W. W. Prescott, The Doctrine of Christ: A Series of Bible Studies for Use in Colleges and Seminaries, page 20, 1920).

“As the absolute Son, He, who 'in the beginning was with God, and was God,' was begotten before times eternal; as the Son, who was the-God-man, He was begotten by the resurrection from the dead. So shall we be 'sons of God, being sons, of the resurrection.' Luke 20:26." (W.W. Prescott Signs of the Times, Jan 8, 1929)

As the quotes above reveal Prescott’s belief that the Son was co-eternal with the Father did not prevent Him from being the only begotten Son. Thus he is again still teaching begotten theology. It is simply that he sees this event as occurring at a different time, before times eternal. This is not a negation of the pre-incarnate begetting of the Son. Once again this is not modern day SDA trinitarianism is it?

Moving on yet another example. This quote is in our brother’s article

Danny wrote: “This is indeed a divine trio, but the Christ of that Trinity was not a created being such as His angels – He was the “only begotten” of the Father, and He came to earth as the one with the Father from the “days of eternity.” Micah 5:2 (margin). His goings forth were of old, and HE came full of grace and truth” to reveal God to man. John 1:14, 17. (R. Hare, Union Conference Record, July 9, 1909)

Well that’s pretty clear. He was teaching that the Christ of that Trinity was not a created being like the angels but the only begotten of the Father. This should ring a bell for those who remember Mrs. White’s quote - not a son by creation as the angels but a Son begotten. In other words this “trinity” is still teaching begotten theology. Again that’s not what modern day SDA trinitarianism teaches.

Again moving on to another example. This was quoted in our brother’s article but I am going to show some different terminology from that same article:

“[Heb 1:1-6 partially quoted; Matt 3:17 quoted] “In these statements God through his Word declares Jesus Christ to be his Son, God, an object of worship, the express image of his Father’s person (not the Father’s person, but the image of his person), and says, “Let us make man in our image...it is said of Christ that he is the “express image of his Father’s person” – not the Father’s person, but only the image of his person. Hence the God-head are one in spirit, in work, and in purpose.

“God, the Father, is declared to be the head of one great family in heaven and earth. Father of all, and above all. Eph 3:15; 4:6. Christ addresses him, “O Father” (John 17:5) and bids us to pray, “Our Father which art in heaven.” Matt. 6:9. What a beautiful conception of God is taught in the words, “Our Father.” His relation to the other members of the Godhead is thus shown to be a fatherly relation, not lordly, kingly, nor any form of arbitrary dominance over them. (W.R. French, The Trinity Review and Herald, December 19, 1912)

As the portions quoted above reveal the trinity doctrine of W.R. French is God as Father of His Son. He applies Hebrews 1 to the pre-incarnate Christ and then uses Gen 1:26. In other words it is still begotten theology. The relation of God to the other members of the Godhead is a fatherly relation.

Let's look at another quote from brother Danny's article:

Danny wrote: "The Divine Godhead

God, the Father

M. E. STEWARD

"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." Job 22:27.

THERE are three Beings in the Godhead: God, the Father; Jesus Christ, the Word; and the Holy Spirit. "These three are one." I John 5: 7. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Job 11: 7. (RH - Review and Herald, Vol. 87; Takoma Park Station, Washington, D. C., December 15, 1910; No. 50; p. 8) On page 2 is an article by Mrs. Ellen G. White "Let Your Light So Shine Before Men". <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19101215-V87-50.pdf> [End Quote]

Yet let's see some other things in this same article:

"God the Father, is -

....

3. Omnipresent. By his Holy Spirit. Ps. 139:7-11

...God gave his well-beloved Son to become a man, knowing the possibility of the failure of his flesh to endure the tests to which it must be subjected.

...

God is a person.

1. Said he at creation, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Gen. 1:26.

2. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." 1 Cor. 15:44. God has a spiritual body. "God is a spirit." John 4:24.

3. Christ was the express image of his Father's person. Heb. 1:3. (Review and Herald, Dec 15, 1910)

So we see that "God is a person" who "has a spiritual body" and is "omnipresent" by "his Holy Spirit." It was "he" who spoke in Gen 1:26 and who "gave his well-beloved Son" who "was the express image of his person." That really sounds like begotten theology not unbegotten theology.

Moving on let's look at another example:

"Synopsis: There is one God, a personal spiritual being, the great I AM, the self-existent One, the Creator of all things. He is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal, and infinite in love, mercy and justice.

"Associated with God in creation and redemption is his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, one with the Father.

"The third person in the holy trinity constituting the Godhead, is the Holy Spirit, a medium through which the Father and the Son perform the operations of creation and redemption.

"God " The numbers of the notes indicate the questions to which they belong. The most important texts are in bold-face type, it would be well if all would memorize these.

1. Who is the great First Cause, the Creator of all things? Neh. 9:6; John 5:26. "....

"Christ " 10. Who is associated with God as the creator and upholder of all things? Eph 3:9; Heb. 1:2,3; John 1:1-3. 11. Is the Son God also? Heb. 1:8; Col. 2:9; Isa. 9:6(The Youth Instructor, October 19, 1909)

Again this is begotten theology with God the Father being presented as the great first cause. Moving on let's look at yet another quote:

“From Everlasting to Everlasting

“The words of the wise man will aid us to understand this theme as far as the finite mind can reach. Of Christ, under the personification of wisdom, he says: "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 world was made, . . . when he prepared the heavens, I was there . . . 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." Prov. 8 :22-30. To this agree the words of the Psalmist, "Lord, thou has been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting, to everlasting, thou art God." Ps. 90: 2. Observe the expression used here to describe the infinity of Christ, "from everlasting to everlasting. " In other words, from the everlasting eternity of the past to the everlasting eternity of the future. That this passage from the Psalms has express reference to Christ is clearly seen by comparing it with a similar passage in Isaiah. The prophet tells the incarnation of Christ thus: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6. Here the name "God" is applied to the Son, and also the "everlasting Father." The Apostle Paul in the first chapter of Hebrews quoting from the forty-fifth Psalm, verse six, makes use of exactly the same expression.

Old Testament Writers

“It is in this light that. Christ is understood and portrayed by all the Old Testament writers, not a Christ of a coming age; but a Christ then present; not a Christ whose beginning dated from his birth in human form amid the humble surroundings of a Judean stable, but one who was everlasting, all-powerful, and co-existent with the Father; not a son merely of Joseph the carpenter, but the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (THE ORIENTAL WATCHMAN, Vol.14; LUCKNOW. JANUARY, 1911; No. 1; p.13.14)

This is again looks like begotten theology. The references to Proverbs 8 “the Lord possessed me, . . . I was set up” and Him being “the only begotten of the Father.”

Moving on let’s look at another quote from brother Danny’s article:

Danny wrote: “SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS BELIEVE IN THE DIVINE TRINITY - This Trinity consists of the eternal Father, . . . the Lord Jesus Christ, . . . [and] the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead (1913)

“F.M. Wilcox, editor of the denomination's most influential periodical, wrote that "Seventh-day Adventists believe, 1. In the divine Trinity. This Trinity consists of the eternal Father, . . . the Lord Jesus Christ, . . . [and] the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead." (F.M.Wilcox, Review and Herald, October 9, 1913, p.21) Review and Herald for 1913 - Vol. 90 - No. 41 [End Quote]

Did you notice the ellipses here? This is how this quote is shared in the book “The Trinity” by Whidden, Moon and Reeve! Yet it gives a very false impression. Let’s look at the full quote:

“1. In the divine Trinity. This Trinity consists of the eternal Father, a personal, spiritual being, omnipotent, omniscient, infinite in power, wisdom, and love; of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the eternal Father, through whom all things were created, and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the one regenerating agency in the work of redemption." (F. M. Wilcox, The Message for Today, RH Oct. 9, 1913, p. 21)

You see the full quote, as given, is compatible with begotten theology. In fact even Him being begotten at a point in time. As Gilbert Valentine notes:

"Although Review editor F.M. Wilcox was able to say in a doctrinal summary in the Review in 1913 that Adventists believed "in the divine Trinity," his language sidestepped the issue of the eternal self-existent deity of Christ and was still sufficiently vague as to be able to include both the traditional semi-Arians and the Trinitarians. Jesus was simply "the son of the Eternal Father. But the Holy Spirit was the third "person" of the Godhead. "The Message for Today" RH October 9, 1913,21 (<http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trini...>) You see this point is obscured. The trinity back then was compatible with begotten theology. The trinity today is not. By using the ellipses that point is hidden. This is hardly a fair tactic.

Moving on let's look at another trinity quote from time past

"...This whole question of the origin of the three Persons of the Trinity is shrouded in the inscrutable mind, will and purpose of God.... Human thought can never hope to solve the homoiousianis of Arius or the homoomianism of Athanasius; can never determine fully whether the Son is "like" the Father or whether He is the "same" as the Father.

After establishing the certainty that the Son is equal to the Father and not a creation the article continues on to say this:

"...Any idea that the Son is part of the creation itself is utterly foreign to Paul's conception. See Colossians 2:9; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Philippians 2:6-8. Moffatt makes the expression, "the first-born of all creation,' plainer by translating the Greek: "born first before all the creation;" and with this Goodspeed is in substantial agreement.

"The word "born" is used because, in contrasting the creation* with His creation, it postulates the nature of the Lord's origin. He was not created as were creatures, but was born out of God as God; and so is of the same nature as the Father. Just as a human son is born human by nature because his father is human, so the divine Son of God is by nature "born" God because His Father is God"

"....

"...In the light of this great, stupendous truth, all endeavors to place the Son in time, to apprehend His divine inception, must dissolve. He is indeed, the "Alpha and the Omega," "the first and the last," "the beginning and the end" ("William G. Wirth "The 'Signs" Question Corner" Signs of the Times, August 5th, 1930)

Here we see the trinity mentioned but the 2nd Person is spoken of as "born" because it "postulates the nature of the Lord's origin." Again this is begotten theology but notice that it is not placed in time.

Now there are other quotes that could be added to this document. For example Uriah Smith wrote of the trinity too

"Do the Scriptures warrant the praise or worship of the Holy Spirit? If not, does not the last line of the doxology contain an unscriptural sentiment? D. H.

Answer.--- We know of no place in the Bible where we are commanded to worship the Holy Spirit, as was commanded in the case of Christ (Heb. 1 : 6), or where we find an example of the worship of the Holy Spirit, as in the case of Christ. Luke 21: 52. Yet in the formula for baptism, the name " Holy Ghost," or "Holy Spirit," is associated with that of the Father and the Son. And if the name can be thus used, why could it not properly stand as a part of the same trinity in the hymn of praise, " Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost " (Uriah Smith, RH Oct 27, 1896)

Yet 2 years later he wrote:

"God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be, - a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity, - appeared the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1. This uncreated Word was the Being, who, in the fulness of time, was made flesh, and dwelt among us. His beginning was not like that of any other being in the universe. It is set forth in the mysterious expressions, "his [God's] only begotten Son" (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9), "the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14), and, "I proceeded forth and came from God." John 8:42.

Thus it appears that by some divine impulse or process, not creation, known only to Omniscience, and possible only to Omnipotence, the Son of God appeared. And then the Holy Spirit (by an infirmity of translation called .. the Holy Ghost”), the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the divine afflatus and medium of their power, representative of them both (Psalm 139:7), was in existence also. (Uriah Smith, Looking Unto Jesus pg 10, 1898)

So again this “trinity” is not the same as the modern day SDA trinity.