

## **In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.**

If there is any phrase that has raised intense emotions within and without Adventism, its **“In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.”**

Arguably, no person outside of Adventism has studied and researched the writings of Ellen G. White more than the late Walter Martin. During the time of the S.D.A. - Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956, Martin asked for and was given free access to the vaults at the White Estate along with any other materials he requested. Martin testified that he had read “extensively in the publications of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination and almost all of the writings of Ellen G. White, including her testimonies.” (*Eternity*, October 1956) Dr. Barnhouse stated in a taped telephone conversation with Al Hudson that: “Froom and the rest of them [Roy A. Anderson and other church leaders] say that Walter Martin knows more about Seventh-day Adventists than any professor in Takoma Park.” [*The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956*, published by the Adventist Laymen’s Foundation, PO Box 69, Ozone AR 72854]

After his extensive study, Martin came to the conclusion that Ellen G. White was at first Arian in belief, but later became Trinitarian; that’s interesting in itself for EGW to move from a Trinitarian, Arian and then again Trinitarian [that’s from truth, error then back to truth]. This charge was never repudiated by either Froom or Anderson. [From a presentation by Walter Martin and Ken Samples at the Campus Hill Church, Loma Linda, CA - January 26, 1989. See pages 204 and 205 of this volume for the actual statement by Martin]

***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. But He who would have the will of all His creatures free, left none unguarded to the bewildering sophistry by which rebellion would seek to justify itself. Before the great contest should open, all were to have a clear presentation of His will, whose wisdom and goodness were the spring of all their joy. {PP 36.1}***

***ANGELS WERE EXPELLED FROM HEAVEN BECAUSE THEY WOULD NOT WORK IN HARMONY WITH GOD. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus. THIS FACT THE [FALLEN] ANGELS WOULD OBSCURE, THAT CHRIST WAS THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD, AND THEY CAME TO CONSIDER THAT THEY WERE NOT TO CONSULT CHRIST. {TDG 128.2}***

From Methodist Church, Ellen White never used the terms “Trinity”. In her fifty years of ministry, there’s nothing in her writings bend-Trinitarian theology that cause alarm to her Adventist brethren but the turning point came in 1898 with the publication of *The Desire of Ages* when she by inspiration borrowed this phrase:

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

Significantly, M. L. Andreasen wrote: “This statement at that time was revolutionary and compelled a complete revision of my former view—and that of the denomination—on the deity of Christ.” (*Without*

*Fear or Favor*, p. 76). Was this really her re-conversion to trinitarianism?. Looking in her earlier writing you will find the same language hence the testimonies explain themselves:

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. “I lay it down of myself” (John 10:18), He said. *In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour.* (*The Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1897)

It would be then false to say that 1898 brought a change in anything. According to what Sister White wrote a year before *The Desire of Ages* was published, man is offered the same quality of life that Christ had.

### Original Citation [information from Smyrna Ministries]

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

It is no coincidence that this statement and the reference in *The Desire of Ages* are almost word for word identical. Research reveals that Sister White used the language of Cummings’ book for we find her quoting these words, and more, in at least two other places. These passages have been published in at least 13 places. In a letter dated Nov. 1, 1905, she wrote to the manager of one of our sanitariums:

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

The parallel statement from Cummings reads as follows:

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

Except for one word, these statements are word for word identical. It is not our purpose to discuss the extent of, or problems behind the literary borrowing of Sister White. It has been freely admitted by the brethren that such borrowing was done and in a much larger scale than first realized. It is also known that some of the borrowing was at times done by the secretaries. However, with Cummings’ book being in Sister White’s private bookcase, it is reasonable to believe that Sister White, *under inspiration*, made the decision on its usage instead of one of the literary assistants.

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

Secondly, we would like to examine the content of Cummings' statement. Christ is said to be the "Fountain of Life." We are said to be a "streamlet." A streamlet is defined as a "small stream." (*Webster's Dictionary*) A streamlet does not carry a large *quantity* of water nor is it the source of the water. However, it does carry the same *quality* of water that comes from the source! **[end of information from Smyrna Ministries]**

Ellen White wrote concerning our receiving the life that flows from the Fountain:

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

Hence man can receive the same life only as a gift from Christ. Christ can bestow the same *quality* of life [original, unborrowed, underived ] upon the sinner that He has because He has received it from His Father to give. In addressing the DA quote, am inclined to refer to the quality of the life itself, that life is always inherent in someone original, unborrowed, underived and as humanity begets humanity so divinity begets divinity. A person is not less human or divine because they are begotten.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the DIVINE SON OF GOD, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. (*Signs of the Times*, April 26, 1899 - See also *R&H*, April 5, 1899; and *1 SM*, p. 247)

It's this divine life inherent in him that is the property of God that makes him a real son and not a metaphor.

### ***Was there a time that Christ did not exist?***

While trying to defend the sonship of our Lord, God and Savior, we should be careful in obscuring his eternality and giving him a beginning. Life original, unborrowed and underived is immortal life, the very DNA of the Son from the Father, without a beginning. Humanity can trace their life to B.C. "4000" in Adam, you can't trace divinity [divine life] in linear scale, you will have to trace it through the Father who has no beginning. Christ's begetting, his personage, is also not in time because Christ created time and he is not bound by it. In eternity past his personage was begotten as the messenger says:

*The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly GOD IN INFINITY, BUT NOT IN PERSONALITY. He has wrought out the righteousness that enables human beings to overcome every assault of Satan. He will impute His righteousness to the believing saint who walks as He walked when on earth. {UL 367.4}*

*From ETERNITY there was a complete unity between the Father and the Son. THEY WERE TWO, YET LITTLE SHORT OF BEING IDENTICAL; two in individuality, yet one in spirit, and heart, and character. {YI, December 16, 1897 par. 5}*

If Christ was not GOD in PERSONALITY then there must be ONE who was GOD IN PERSONALITY and that is the Father. The above quotes in no sense do they speak of incarnation but pre-incarnation. The eternity being spoken here is not of his divinity but personality, his begetting.

*"Sin entered the world by the defection of one who stood at the head of the holy angels. What was it that wrought so great a change, transforming a royal, honored subject into an apostate? The answer is given, 'Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.' HAD NOT THE LORD MADE THE COVERING CHERUB SO BEAUTIFUL, SO CLOSELY RESEMBLING HIS OWN IMAGE; had not God awarded him special honor; had anything been left undone in the gift of beauty and power and honor, then Satan might have had some excuse. But God declares: 'Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till iniquity was found in thee. {GCDB, March 2, 1897 par. 33}*

This is another quote that proves to me that Christ is the son of God, *HE MADE THE COVERING CHERUB SO BEAUTIFUL, SO CLOSELY RESEMBLING HIS OWN IMAGE*. Why is it not said that Lucifer was made CLOSELY RESEMBLING THE FATHER? Because that EXPRESS IMAGE WAS FOR CHRIST ONLY. The angels had conditional immortality, the son had unconditional immortality, the very life of the Father, His own DNA.

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

Another way to translate the passage using the Greek would be to say, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to be the source of life in himself." This is more plausible to embrace because the context of the preceding and following verses makes better sense when stated in this way. What life then does the Father have? **original, unborrowed, underived**. Can a sincere person claim this life that God gave the son was at his incarnation, what then would be the life had in heaven and when did he lay it aside seeing he did not lay aside his divinity but was blended with humanity and human life was given by Mary? If you say its human life, then something must be fundamentally wrong with you, if you immortal life at incarnation then you must be believing Christ when he was incarnated did not have divinity blended with humanity hence the option left is that this is a real event in eternity that John 15:26 is talking about.

*Angels are dependent on God the Father for their life Christ is not*

*"He [Christ] was **equal with God**, infinite and omnipotent. He was above all finite requirements. He was Himself the law in character. Of the highest angels it could not be said that they had never borne a yoke. The **angels all bear the yoke of dependence**, the yoke of obedience . . . Not one of the angels could become a substitute and surety for the human race, **for their life is God's**; they could not surrender it. **On Christ alone** the human family depended for their existence. He is the **eternal, self-existent** Son, on whom **no yoke had come** . . . He could say that which not the highest*

angel could say—**'I have power over My own life.** I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.'— 12 Manuscript Release 395 (Manuscript 101, 1897).

"In Him [Jesus] was life; and the life was the light of men.' It is not physical life that is here specified, but [immortality], the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, **had this life.** Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the life-giver takes it again . . . But the **life of Christ was unborrowed.** NO ONE CAN TAKE THIS LIFE FROM HIM. 'I lay it down of Myself,' He said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is **not inherent in man.** He can possess it only through Christ."—5 Bible Commentary, 1130 (1 Selected Messages, 296-297).

"While He took upon Him humanity, it was a life taken in union with Deity. He could lay down His life as priest and also victim. He **possessed in Himself** power to lay it down and take it up again." 7BC 933.

### ***Was the life of Christ borrowed or unborrowed?***

"Jesus declared, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' **In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.** 'He that hath the son hath life' ([1 Jn 5:12](#)). The **divinity of Christ** is the believer's assurance of eternal life . . . "To the Saviour's words, 'Believest thou?' Martha responded, 'Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.' She did not comprehend in all their significance the words spoken by Christ, but she confessed her faith in His divinity, and her confidence that He was able to perform whatever it pleased Him to do."— Desire of Ages, 530.

This is one quote that "seemingly" changed the Adventist Church to the trinity doctrine. But is this even a Trinitarian quote? How many things did Christ receive from His Father? "All things Christ received from God, but He took to give." — (Desire of Ages, p. 21). And of course "all things" means everything! And John 5:26 further confirms this includes His life as you would expect. Ellen White said we can possess this same life through Christ. You can argue DA 21 is referring to incarnation because Christ as a human received his life from Mary and that life is mortal and that is not the life the Father has or the life that the dead will be given at resurrection. Again Christ did not receive eternal life at incarnation because he had already divinity blended with humanity. In his incarnation Christ did not receive everything but forfeited everything and even risked his own existence read Phil 2. Its only after resurrection that we find him saying again that all power and authority has been given to me, if given it means there was a time he didn't have it but this still does not negate his reception of everything in eternity in DA 21.

Christ is pre-existent which means to exist before something else. This He did, He pre-existed the creation of all things. It does not mean that He has always existed of course. Self-existent means to be ably to exist independently of other beings. Christ can do that also because He has His Fathers life. Trinitarians have read statements such as the one in deliberation and immediately formed opinions and reached conclusions that can be proven wrong by other inspired statements related to the topic—sometimes statements from the very same article or book.

From the full context we plainly learn that "original, unborrowed, underived" life can be GIVEN. It will be given to all those who believe. This is in harmony with the words of Christ, when He said that God the Father had given Him life: "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he *given* to the Son to

have life in himself.” (John 5:26) What life would the Son have been given? The life which was the Father’s own original, unborrowed, underived life. Once we gain eternity as Christ is eternal then we will have life original (not a copy or tampered with) unborrowed (not to return), underived (streamlets fulfilling the original purpose of the Father by being his temple).

As human offspring receive mortal life from their parents, so this immortal life was given to Christ by virtue of His divine birth (having been begotten with that life). Thus the Father’s life is also the Son’s life, through inheritance. God the Father is the “source of all life” (MH 397; 9T 44; 21MR 272), “of whom are all things.” (1Cor 8:6) Christ inherited the Father’s life by birth.

“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” (John 17:2)

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life....” (1 John 5:13)

We should learn how to exegete EGW and Bible without contradictions rather cherry-picking verses and quotes to make doctrines out of them. Original, unborrowed, underived life is simply IMMORTAL LIFE. How brethren blow this into mysterious thing that can’t be DNA of the Son from God from the Father is saddening.

"CHRIST WAS THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD, AND LUCIFER, THAT GLORIOUS ANGEL, GOT UP A WARFARE OVER THE MATTER, UNTIL HE HAD TO BE THRUST DOWN TO THE EARTH. He knows what I am saying today. He knows whenever there is a company assembled together as you are here. He knows when we are making efforts in every way possible to reach out to win the minds of the people. He has his agencies appointed so that after this meeting will be over, circumstances will arise and the enemy will try to gain the victory. {Ms86-1910.30}

It’s the same warfare that that glorious angel had and forced him to be thrust down that some are engaged in. It’s this fact, that Christ is the only begotten son of God that makes his life “original, unborrowed, underived”. Conclusively, we can’t explain everything in its minute sense but this should not cause us to reject what is revealed

**Blessings.**