

THE MYSTERIES
OF THE
GODHEAD

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Camp Meeting 2025

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PREFACE

This book proposes to address the many neo-antitrinitarian views which have crept in unawares into the remnant church posing as the original pioneer views, and as precious advanced light and truth for God's people today. These doctrinal views which are specious error, seek to destroy the correct understanding of the Godhead (or miscalled The Trinity doctrine). They teach that

1. There is only one person in the Godhead (HeadGod) called by different names or manifested through different roles.
2. There are two members of the Godhead, the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.
3. Jesus Christ is **NOT** fully God (Deity), but only the Son of God
4. The Father and the Son are the same person.

5. Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead had a beginning sometime in eternity. That He was created by the Father
6. The Holy Spirit is not a person, but instead is God's force, presence or power.
7. The Holy Spirit is the angelic ministry, and that
8. Persons should be baptized only in the name of Jesus (Jesus Only movement)

The correct understanding of the Godhead is that there are Three Equal Eternal Persons in One Divine Being, who are without beginning and without end-- the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit.

This truth has been watered-down and compromised even by those who claim to be SDA reformers and Present Truth advocates. Some Protestant Evangelicals and Pentecostals have embraced this same view as the Watchtower "Jehovah's Witnesses".

"Truth is straight. Plain, clear, and stands out boldly in its own defense; but it is not so with error. It is so winding and twisting that it needs a multitude of words to explain it in its crooked form." Early Writings page 96.

"Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan; and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is betraying himself into the power of the wicked one." Mount of Blessing p. 68.3

The truths concerning the Godhead explored herein are by no means exhaustive but the evidence presented with clarity, designed to expose error and reveal truth will be overwhelming as God's people seek a clear path to walk until the light of day. May God grant us all open minds and receptive hearts is my prayer.

“The path of the just is as a shining light that shines brighter and brighter, clearer unto the perfect day” Proverbs 4:18.

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LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The focus of study of this book on the Godhead is not intended to cover every aspect of the Godhead, but only to address the different theological perspectives related to the aforementioned errors highlighted in the Preface.

This study may not always follow a logical subject sequence and may contain some repetitions of quotations and thoughts, but this is for the emphasis, enlargement and intensification of the ideas.

In addition, time constraints has led to putting the brakes on this study in preparation of camp 2025.

A later edition may either be an update of this book, or a separate book addressing the Mediatorial work of Christ in the Godhead or The Covenant Sonship relationship of Christ to the Salvation-Redemption plan.

INTRODUCTION

This subject, the Mysteries of the Godhead is a most solemn and sublime topic. It is extremely challenging as there are many discordant views espousing contradictory ideas. How can one navigate themselves through this ocean of diversity and still arrive at the truth with correct biblical logic, intellectual honesty and genuine well-balanced research.

The Highest Subject

Few doctrinal subjects have generated more passionate debate among Christians than the theme of the trinity. Churches have split and wars have even been fought over the issues that surround the nature of the Godhead.

Perplexity over God's nature is not new. Since creation, man has diligently sought to understand and explain Him. In the book of Job, Zophar uttered the cry of each human heart when he declared,

“Canst thou by searching find out God canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do, deeper than hell; what canst thou know.” Job 11:7-8.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:9.

Finite human minds will never be able to fully understand everything about the eternal God, anymore than we can jump to the stars with our feeble legs. Therefore, we need to approach this mystery shrouding His person with a large measure of barefoot reverence and deep humility. Like Moses, when he came into God’s presence, we must take off our shoes, *“for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”* Exodus 3:5. By laying aside our preconceived ideas, opinions and sectarian training, we can go directly to God’s Word and learn what He has chosen to reveal about Himself. But remember, only God can fully understand God, so even after the most diligent research, we may still have some unanswered questions that will prove to be a fruitful field of study even throughout the eons of eternity.

“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.” ---Letter 7, 1891, in Manuscript Releases, vol. 14, p. 175, 179.

Scripture cautions, in Deuteronomy 29:29—

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children foe ever.”

To arrive at truth, one must be willing to follow certain principles of interpretation so as not to put our private interpretation to understanding the Scriptures. We must examine the weight of each piece of evidence. Some evidence weighs more heavily than others. Then we look at the overall weight of evidence. We do not read into statements to make them fit our understanding.

“God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but **from weight of evidence**, carefully comparing scripture with scripture.” Spirit of Prophecy Volume 2, page 371, ‘Resurrection of Lazarus’, 1877.

We are told that concerning what is truth, “It (must) *bears the divine credentials*, for its fruit is unto holiness” (RH 9/3/1889). Each Scriptural doctrine influences our minds and lives in some way; it has “fruit” or an object as its end.

“It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character” (DA 671). “Error is never harmless” (*Maranatha* p. 60:3)

We have been warned,

“Before the last developments of the work of apostasy there will be a confusion of faith....There will not be clear and definite ideas concerning the mystery of God. One truth after another will be corrupted.” Signs of the Times, 28th May 1894, ‘Delusions of the last days’.

This prediction is being fulfilled right before our eyes. Many today are confused as to what to believe. This is not only concerning the

Godhead itself but also regarding the incarnation – which will of course depend on how the Godhead is understood/viewed. God's people have “a chart pointing out every waymark on the heavenward journey, and (they) **ought not to guess at anything.**” (Great Controversy, page 598, ‘The Scriptures a safeguard’).

“Let men beware how they seek to look into the mysteries of the most high....Let no one venture to explain God. Human beings cannot explain themselves, and how, then, dare they venture to explain the Omniscient One? Satan stands ready to give such ones false conceptions of God....The things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children. Beyond this, human beings are not to attempt to go. We are not to attempt to explain that which God has not revealed.” (Manuscript 132, Nov. 8, 1903, ‘God's Chosen People’, ‘A right knowledge of God’).

It is only reasonable to say that the things which God has revealed concerning Himself (as the Father), also His Son and the Holy Spirit, should be to us of paramount importance – but not to explain God.

“The revelation of Himself that God has given in His word is for our study. This we may seek to understand. But beyond this we are not to penetrate.” (Testimonies, volume 8, page 279, ‘The essential knowledge’, 1904).

“We may understand the revelation that He has thus given of Himself. But it is with fear and trembling and with a sense of our own sinfulness that we are to take up this

study, not with a desire to try to explain God, but with a desire to gain that knowledge which will enable us to serve Him more acceptably." (Manuscript 132, Nov. 8, 1903, "God's Chosen People", 'A right knowledge of God').

Once this fact is grasped it makes a study of the Godhead much more of a blessing.

"We are not to speculate regarding points upon which the Word of God is silent. All that is necessary for our salvation is given in the Word of God. Day by day we are to make the Bible the man of our counsel." (Signs of the Times, 8th August 1905, 'Christ our only hope').

"Satan will work with all power and "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. His working is PLAINLY REVEALED by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days. Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight." – Prophets and Kings, p. 717.1.

"When the power of God testifies to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions, contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained. Men will arise with interpretations of Scripture which are to them truth, but which are not truth. The truth for this

time, God has given us as a foundation for our faith. He Himself has taught us what is truth. One will arise and still another with new light which contradicts the light that God has given under the demonstration of His Holy Spirit." (Letter 329, to Elder Burden, December 1905, see Manuscript Release No.760).

"We must study the truth for ourselves. No living man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who it is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a perfect criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject to one another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us to learn what is truth." (Review and Herald, 18th June 1889, 'The necessity of dying to self').

"The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a **mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning** not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared: "Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God." Mark 12:24." (Great Controversy, page 598, 1911 edition, 'The Scriptures a safeguard)

As we delve into this subject under the prayerful divine guidance of the Holy Spirit, may Scriptural logic, intellectual honesty and genuine deep heartfelt sincerity prevail. As Jesus said,

“If any man will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.” John 7:17.

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32.

CHAPTER 1

A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF THE MYSTERIES OF THE GODHEAD- THREE SEPARATE, DISTINCT, ETERNAL PERSONS MAKING UP ONE BEING GOD.

This initial comprehensive overview was written several years ago. Hence, while it touches on many of the salient points on this subject of the Godhead, later writings of chapters which follow build upon and expands upon what was written in the past. Although some aspects may be repeated for emphasis and for intensification, it is designed simply to reinforce the same concepts or clarify with more detail, with additional explanations and with different examples or illustrations.

“It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theoriesBy misrepresenting the attributes of God, Satan leads men to conceive of Him in a false character.” *Great Controversy*, 583.

Some professed Christians today are ignorantly worshipping the same god that they are told not to worship in the third angel’s message—the god of the beast power? Or are we just calling the true Godhead by the name of a false god? What god are we worshipping today?

Could modern Israel, like Israel of old, be worshipping a false god?

“How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.” 1 Kings 18:21. Are these words of Elijah applicable today?

THE GODHEAD

The term “Godhead” is used in the NT to describes the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The word for “God” in the OT Hebrew is “Elohiym”. It means “Gods” in the plural. This is clearly seen in the following Scriptures:

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Gen. 1:26.

“Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” Gen. 11:7.

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Isaiah 6:8.

These verses show that the Godhead consists of more than one divine Being. There is a unity in the Godhead. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together for our salvation in perfect harmony.

THE PRE-EXISTENT, SELF-EXISTENT SON

“Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God... (Proverbs 8 quoted)..In speaking of his pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through the 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.: ST, August 29, 1900.

"He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent....He is the eternal, self-existent Son" Manuscript 101, 1897. Evangelism p.615.3.

"The Word existed as a divine Being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with his Father. From everlasting He was the Mediator of the Covenant, the One in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed....Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God." Review and Herald, April 5, 1906. Ev.p.615.4.

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matthew 1:23.

These Scriptures show us that Jesus is God. Being God Jesus is Eternal. If He is eternal, then He has no beginning, no end.

THE HOLY SPIRIT:

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? ... Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Acts 5:3,4:

*"How much more shall the blood of **Christ**, who through the **eternal Spirit** offered himself without spot to **God**, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

Hebrews 9:14.

These verses tell us that the Holy Spirit is Eternal. If He is eternal, then He has no beginning, and no end.

So, the Godhead is composed of three distinct eternal (no beginning, no end) Beings: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. See also John 15:26

THE GODHEAD IS COMPOSED OF THREE SEPARATE, DISTINCT, ETERNAL PERSONS

1. At the Incarnation—taking on human nature forever, nevermore to have Form of God
2. At the Baptism—All three members were separately identified. Father-the Voice, the Son being baptized, and Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.
3. At the Cross—The Sundering of the Divine Powers, the Divine Forsaking, and
4. The eternal separation of the Son from the Father.

Here we see Jesus on the Earth itself, the Holy Spirit in the sky above the earth, and the Father in Heaven above both the earth and sky. The Bible shows us three distinct Beings.

THE ETERNAL DIGNITARIES OF THE GODHEAD

"The eternal heavenly dignitaries—God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit—arming them (the disciples) with more than mortal energy....would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin." Manuscript 145, 1901, Evan.p.616.4.

1. *“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heaven 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 (the Father), saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*
Matthew 3:16,17
2. *“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”* *1 Corinthians 12:4-6.*

“The Holy Spirit is a person, for he beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God....the Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God.” Manuscript 20, 1906. Evan.617.1 According to their office, the Father does things that the Son does not do, and vice versa. The Holy Spirit does things that neither the Father nor the Son do. Yet all three are in “one accord” and we need all three for our salvation.

3. *“Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent Me.”*
Isaiah 48:16.

Here the Heavenly Trio is clearly seen in the Old Testament. But they are more clearly seen in the NT as the next four verses show:

4. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” 2 Corinthians 13:14.
5. “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.” 1 Peter 1:2.
- 6.
7. “Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come (the Father); and from the seven Spirits (the Holy Spirit) 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.” Revelation 1:4,5.
8. “But when the comforter is come, whom I (Jesus) will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.” John 15:26
9. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matt. 28:19.

Hence, we see from these Scriptures that the Godhead is composed of three separate, DISTINCT, eternal Beings.

10. “They (Christ’s followers) are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of supernatural help. All the intelligences of Heaven are in this army. And more than angels are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the representative of the

Captain (Christ) of the Lord's host, comes down to direct the battle." Desire of ages p. 352.

Christ is the Captain, and the General is the Holy Spirit

"Christ did not tell the disciples that their work would be easy. He showed them the vast confederacy of evil arrayed against them....but they would not be left to fight alone....One mightier than angels would be in their ranks—the General of the armies of Heaven" Acts of the Apostles, p.29.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS PRESENT EVERYWHERE THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF THE ANGELS.

"Through these (Angels) messengers He (God) is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of **His Spirit and His angels**, He ministers to the children of men." Ministry of Healing, p.417.2.

Observe that the Holy Spirit is not the same as the Angel messengers.

THE HEAVENLY TRIO SYMBOLIZED BY LINTEL AND TWO DOORPOSTS AT PASSOVER

"And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning."
Exodus 12:22.

Note: God the Father, symbolized by the lintel, maintains the

integrity of the Godhead in heaven. He does not come directly in contact with earth, for sinners would be instantly destroyed. The two side posts represent the Holy Spirit and Michael, the One who is like God, who came down from heaven and came into contact with sinful humanity. The wooden door represents Christ's humanity after the incarnation. "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Heb. 10:20. Jesus said, "I am the door." John 10:7,9.

Note: The door, representing Christ's humanity, is attached to one of the side posts—not the side post that represents His divinity, but the side post that represents the Holy Spirit. Christ did not rest his weight on his own strength. Christ did nothing as a man using His divine power, He rested in the power of the Holy Spirit.

THE ONLY TRUE GOD IS THE FATHER WHOM JESUS ADDRESSED

"Behold, I [the Father] send an Angel [Michael] before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." Ex. 23:20.

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

"The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore..." 2 Cor. 11:31.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. 1:3.

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. 4:6.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...”
1 Peter 1:3.

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Tim. 2:5.

Many will agree with the above statements about the Godhead and think that they are describing the Trinity as well. But the Trinity is a strangely different concept about God.

DEFINITION OF THE GODHEAD

We should not teach trinity doctrine. It is pagan in origin and Catholic in teaching. However, we should teach the correct understanding of the Godhead. There are 3 literal persons of the Godhead, and NOT just 2. It is best explained as God exists in three persons, distinguishable but indivisible.

Science tells us that light is constituted of three primary rays, or groups of wavelengths. Clearly distinct from each other, none of them without the others could be light. Each ray has its own separate function. The first originates, the second illuminates and the third consummates. The first ray, often called invisible light, is neither seen nor felt. The second is both seen and felt. The third is not seen but is felt as heat.

Like light, our “One God” is revealed in the three distinct persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” 1 John 1:5.

To use a limited human example: there are three aspects to you as a person. There is the REAL or INNER you (**your unique character identity**). Then there is the FUNCTIONAL you (**your personality...** the social, emotional, psychological and mental aspects of you; and the OUTER you **the body** (your bodily manifestations and functions which identify the unique person within (your looks, features, peculiar habits, characteristics, your influence or reputation (which reveal the perceptions and ideas which others have of yourself and which can also influence them). In other words, the human being is composed of body, soul and spirit. **The spirit** is the inner you which has the capacity to receive, believe, enjoy and respond to God morally. Animals don't have that capacity of moral accountability. **The soul**, which is responsible for you being a social being with intellect, emotion and will; and **the body** which manifest your outer actions and behaviours. All three of these function as one, as one human being.

In some mysterious way, **God's Eternal Power and Godhead** (Romans 1:20) function as **three distinct Divine Persons**, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, yet **One Being** with unique roles in the plan of salvation and redemption of mankind.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

“Canst thou by searching find out God canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do deeper than hell; what canst thou know.” Job 11:7-8.

John Wesley adds, *“Bring me a worm that can comprehend a man, and then I will show you a man that can comprehend the triune God!”*

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:9.

Finite human minds will never be able to fully understand everything about the eternal God, any more than we can jump to the stars with our feeble legs. Therefore, we need to approach this mystery shrouding His person with a large measure of barefoot reverence and deep humility.

Like Moses, when he came into God’s presence, we must take off our shoes, *“for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”* Exodus 3:5. By laying aside our preconceived ideas, opinions and sectarian training, we can go directly to God’s Word and learn what He has chosen to reveal about Himself.

But remember, only God can fully understand God, so even after the most diligent research, we may still have some unanswered questions that will prove to be a fruitful field of study even throughout the eons of eternity.

Isaiah records the testimony of God concerning Himself.

“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. ... Is there a God beside me yea, there is no God; I know not any.” Isaiah 44:6, 8.

Jesus also taught about *“the only true God”* (John 17:3) and Paul wrote, *“There is one God.”* 1 Timothy 2:5.

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE GODHEAD?

Does this mean that there is one person who has three different titles? Or are there three separate persons who mysteriously morph into one being? Is Jesus merely a good man, a creation to redeem us and only the Father is God? Still others hold that the Father and Son are indeed God but the Holy Spirit is only the impersonal force that does their bidding. Each of these conflicting ideas has attracted its loyal followers.

JESUS ONLY

In the 3rd century, Sabellius, a Libyan priest living in Rome, taught that God is a single person with different titles; known as modalism. Thus, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit represent different hats or titles that God wears, depending on how He wishes to communicate with man at the time. It's akin to water, which can take on the form of a solid, liquid, or gas. Just as one person can be a father, an husband and also a brother.

However, they are not three roles played by one person. The Church recognized Sabellius' ideas as contrary to Bible teaching and he was quickly excommunicated. Yet he still has adherents today in what is commonly known as the **“Oneness”** or **“Jesus Only”** doctrine. The Jesus Only teaching claims that Jesus Christ is not only the Son, but also the Father and the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 9:6, in which the Messiah (or the promised Son) is called *“The everlasting Father,”* is used to provide biblical support for this belief.

The Oneness doctrine, however, overlooks the fact that the Son came to earth to reveal the true character of God the Father to a world groping in spiritual blindness. Jesus prayed to His Father in Gethsemane,

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” John 17:5; Hebrews 1:1-3).

“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.” John 17:5-6. See also Daniel 7:13.

Jesus is the only one who could reveal the Father, because He is the express image or representation of the Father (Luke 10:22; Heb.1:3). Thus when the disciples asked Christ what the Father was like, He could say, *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”* John 14:9. Jesus so mirrored the character of the Father that He perfectly reflected Him, hence the title *“The Everlasting Father.”* Another reason Jesus is called the Everlasting Father is because this world and everything in it was created through Christ. So, in a very real sense, Jesus is our father (Hebrews 1:2; John 1:3).

The Bible physically separates the Father and the Son repeatedly. While Christ was on earth, He referred to His Father in heaven, *“My Father which is in heaven.”* (Matthew 10:32). *“My Father is greater than I”* (John 14:28; John 10:29) and *“I and My Father are one* (John 10:30; John 8:18).” Jesus always directed His prayers heavenward to the Father and stated that the Father had His own individual will.

“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” Luke 22:42.

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” Luke 23:46.

Then after He died and rose again, He ascended to “*the right hand of God.*” Romans 8:34. This indicates the Father has a separate presence.

In fact, Jesus said that He wasn’t the Father more than 80 times. While always remaining one in purpose and origin, Jesus and the Father are clearly separate and distinct persons. And on more than one occasion, the Father spoke to Jesus from heaven. “*And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’.*” Matthew 3:17 NKJV.

Either Jesus and the Father are two separate individual persons, or Jesus was an expert ventriloquist.

JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD

The Scriptures reveal Christ as the Begotten Son of God. John 3:16. He is the Eternal Son of God or the Eternal Life of God. 1 John 1:1-3. He is more real a Son than any earthly son. The term “Son” means that,

- He is the reproduction (looks) of the Father (John 3:16)
- He is the manifestation (acts and behaviour) of the Father (John 5:19)
- He is the express image of Father’s person. (Heb.1:3)
- He possesses the same nature and life as God (Phil 2:6)
- He has the same name as the Father (Matt.28:19)
- He has the same character as his Father. (John 14:9).
- He is the Son of the Mediatorial Covenant of Redemption.

IS JESUS FULLY GOD?

Another group questions whether Jesus actually possesses all the characteristics of the Eternal God. They stem from Arius, a 4th century Alexandrian priest, who had a different take on God. He taught that prior to making anything else, God created a Son who was neither equal to, nor coeternal with, the Father. According to this idea, called Arianism, Jesus Christ is a supernatural creature, but He is neither fully human nor fully divine. (See later chapter on Arianism, Pioneers, and Spirit of Prophecy.)

These concepts are totally contrary to the teaching of the New Testament in which Jesus is revealed as the Eternal Creator and not a created being (John 1:1–4). As we compare Scripture definitions for God with the Bible record of Jesus, we see the characteristics of Jehovah are also ascribed to Jesus. Note these powerful examples:

- He is Self-Existent (John 1:1–4; 14:6); only God is Self-Existent (Psalms 90:2).
- Jesus defines Himself as Eternal. *“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”* (Revelation 1:8).
- He is, and has, Eternal Life (1 John 5:11, 12, 20).
- He is All-Powerful (Revelation 1:8).
- He created all things (John 1:3). *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the Earth.”* Genesis 1:1.

“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or

dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” Colossians 1:16 NKJV.

- The Father even calls Jesus God.

“But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” Hebrews 1:8.

- Jesus is able to forgive sin (Luke 5:20-21); The Bible says only God can forgive sin (Isaiah 43:25).
- Jesus accepted worship that according to the Ten Commandments is reserved only for the Almighty (Matthew 14:33).

“And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, ‘All hail.’ And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.” Matthew 28:9.

Upon seeing the risen Saviour, the converted sceptic, Thomas, confessed, *“My Lord and my God!”* John 20:26–29.

- Even the angels worship Jesus. *“And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.”* Hebrews 1:6.
- The Scriptures also teach that only God knows the thoughts of a man’s heart (1 Kings 8:39). Yet Jesus consistently knew what people were thinking, *“for he knew what was in man.”* John 2:25. *“Nathanael said to Him, ‘How do You know me’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when*

you were under the fig tree, I saw you’.” John 1:48 NKJV

- Through the Spirit, Jesus is omnipresent. *“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Matthew 28:20 NKJV.
“For I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.” Acts 18:10 NKJV.
- He has power to give life and even resurrected Himself. *“No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”* John 10:18.
“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” John 11:25.

Therefore, by considering the primary definitions of God and seeing that Jesus fits every one of those definitions, obviously, Jesus must be Eternal God (Deity).

HIS ENEMIES KNEW

Even Jesus’ enemies understood and recognized His claim of equality with the Father God. When He boldly proclaimed, *“I and my Father are one,”* Jewish leaders were outraged and sought to execute Him. They understood unequivocally that Jesus was claiming to be God Himself.

“The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” John 10:30, 33.

The Jews even attempted to stone Christ when He assumed the self-existent title of Jehovah used at the burning bush. Jesus said to them,

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’
Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid*

Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” John 8:58 NKJV.

“Jehovah is the name given to Christ...for the LORD Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation....trust ye in the LORD forever; for in the LORD Jehovah is everlasting strength.” Signs of the times, May 3, 1899, par.18. 7ABC 439.3

The Jews understood that Jesus claimed equality with God, when He said

“My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, ... but said also that God was his Father, making Himself equal with God.” John 5:17-18.

There are only three conclusions one can derive from reading these passages. First, Jesus was insane or a lunatic when He made these outrageous claims. Second, He was a liar. These are unacceptable options. The third possibility is that He uttered a sublime truth as Lord. For a Christian who accepts the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross, the third option is the only tenable one. Otherwise, a liar or delusional man could not be righteous enough to be our Saviour

Probably the most widely held Christian view of God is known as the “trinity.” This popular belief teaches that the Godhead consists of three distinct persons who have existed together from eternity past and are named the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit. Each one possesses original, underived, and unborrowed life. They are all equally God and are one in nature, character, and purpose. They are no three “gods,” but one God in a combination of the three distinct persons.

Some think that because the word “trinity” (derived from the Latin word *trinitas*, meaning “threeness”) is not found in the Bible, the concept of a triune God cannot be right. However, even though the word “millennium,” meaning one thousand years, does not appear in Revelation 20:3, we use it to describe earth’s 1000 year rest after Jesus’ return. A teaching is not any less true simply because an extra-biblical word is used to define what is clearly a biblical teaching. This goes for the trinity, second coming, investigative judgment and a host of other concise terms for doctrines.

Likewise, the names for God found in Genesis and elsewhere tell us volumes about our Creator. “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*” Genesis 1:26. The Hebrew word here for God is *Elohim*. It is a plural noun that is used more than 2,700 times in the Old Testament. (More about this in another chapter).

This means that inspired authors preferred to use *Elohim* about 10 times more than the singular form “*El*” when they described God. Even in the Old Testament book of Daniel, we see a picture of the Father and the Son as two separate persons.

“I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.” Daniel 7:13. NASB.

The Son of man, Jesus, is seen coming before the Ancient of Days; who is, obviously, God the Father.

The New Testament writings are sprinkled with this concept of one God with three united, fully divine persons. The apostle Paul wrote that there were three divine persons:

*“There is one body, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; **One Lord**, one faith, one baptism, **One God and Father** of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:4–6.*

Paul frequently referred to the three separate persons of the Godhead.

*“The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of God, and the communion of **the Holy Ghost**, be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14.*

*“How much more shall the blood of **Christ**, who through the **eternal Spirit** offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Hebrews 9:14.*

Revelation opens by introducing the three persons of the Godhead.

*“From the **seven Spirits** who are before His throne, and from **Jesus Christ**, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to **His God and Father**, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.” Revelation 1:4–6 NKJV.*

In addition, we clearly see three distinct persons at the baptism of Jesus.

*“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.” Matthew 3:16-17.*

If Jesus is the only person in the Godhead, where did the voice come from that declared, *“This is my beloved Son.”* Did He trisect Himself into a voice from heaven, the dove wafting down through the sky and His body on the bank of the river? No. This was not simply a clever act of holy smoke and mirrors, but rather a kingly reunion revealing the truth of the Godhead.

And on top of this, it is through the shared authority of these three persons that we are commissioned to baptize.

*“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father**, and of the **Son**, and of the **Holy Ghost**.”* Matthew 28:19.

UNITY OR QUANTITY

Most of the confusion regarding the number of beings composing the Godhead springs from a simple misunderstanding of the word “one.” Simply put, “one” in the Bible does not always mean numerical quantity. Depending on the Scripture, “one” can often mean unity.

We see this principle established very early in Scripture.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24.

“*One flesh*” here does not mean that a married couple melt into one human after their wedding, but rather they are to be united into one family. Jesus prayed that the apostles would be one, saying, *“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one.”* John 17:22-23.

We need to keep in mind that when Moses said, “*The Lord is one*,” Israel was surrounded with polytheistic nations that worshiped many gods that were constantly involved in petty bickering and rivalry (Deuteronomy 6:4); whereas the God who created is composed of three separate beings who are perfectly united in their mission of saving and sustaining their creatures. As the Spirit is executing the will of both the Father and Son, it is His will also.

Like one rope with three united strands, the three persons of the Father, Son and Spirit make up the one God.

GOD MANIFESTED IN NATURE

Though there is nothing in this world that adequately illustrates God, Paul declares the “*invisible things of him from the creation of the world*” can help us understand “*his eternal power and Godhead*.” Romans 1:20. The truth that God is a “tri-unity” of two invisible persons (Father and Spirit) and one visible person (Jesus) is evident even in creation.

The universe is composed of three structures: space, matter and time. Of these three, only matter is visible. Space requires length, height and width to constitute space. Each dimension is separate and distinct in itself, yet the three form space; if you remove height, you no longer have space. Time is also a tri-unity of past, present and future. Two are invisible (past and future) and one visible (present). Each is separate and distinct, as well as essential for time to exist.

Man is also a “tri-unity,” having physical, mental and spiritual components. Again, two are invisible (mental and spiritual) and one visible (physical). Cells compose the fundamental structural unit of

all living organisms. All organic life is made up from cells that consist of three primary parts: the outer wall, the cytoplasm and the nucleus (like the shell, white and yoke of an egg). If any one is removed, the cell dies.

In each of these examples, the removal of any one component results in the demise of the whole. In like manner, the Godhead contains three distinct persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each is God (Ephesians 4:6; Titus 2:13; Acts 5:3-4), yet there is one God. The removal of one person destroys the unity of the whole.

Even the gospel story illustrates the interdependency of threes. The sanctuary had three places: the Courtyard, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. There are three stages of salvation: justification, sanctification, and glorification. In Isaiah 6:3, the angels around God's throne cry "*Holy, Holy, Holy*" three times; once for the Father, once for the Son and once for the Holy Spirit.

THE SOURCE OF MISUNDERSTANDING

Almost all of the Scriptures used by those who reject the Godhead to portray Jesus as a "lesser god" spring from a basic failure to understand the incarnation. Jesus, God the Son, laid aside or veiled the full dimension of His divinity when He came to earth. How else could He live as God among men?

"God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Romans 8:3.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Corinthians 8:9.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:5-8.

We also clearly see that before and after His incarnation, Jesus beams again with the undimmed divine glory of His Father.

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” John 17:5.

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.” Hebrews 2:9.

If God the Son had not veiled His glory when He came to earth, man could not have endured His brilliant presence, much less learned from His example.

WHO OUTRANKS WHOM

Let us now venture a little deeper onto sacred ground. As we consider the mysteries of the Godhead, we notice that there seems to be an order of authority concerning the three persons in the Godhead. Keep in mind that while all three are the same in properties and attributes and equal in power and glory, it appears that the Father is recognized as the ultimate authority. *“And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.”* 1 Corinthians 3:23. *“But I would have you know, that ... the head of Christ is God.”* 1 Corinthians 11:3.

The Son constantly receives His glory, power, throne and prerogatives as Judge from the Father (John 3:35; John 5:22). Indeed, it was God the Father that “gave” the Son. In fact, while it might not be wrong, we are never told to pray to Jesus or the Spirit, but instead to the Father in the name of the Son. Yet just because the Father seems to have supreme authority, it does not in any way diminish from the divinity of Jesus and the Spirit. That would be like saying that a corporal is less of a soldier than a sergeant.

Then also, among the three members of the Godhead, we do not see a clamouring for pre-eminence, vying for recognition, or revelling in power. Instead, the exact opposite is true. In fact, the Father, Son and Spirit always seem to be trying to out give and glorify each other. The Father wants to glorify the Son. The Son lives to glorify the Father and the Spirit lives to glorify the Father and Son (John 17:1, 5; John 16:14; John 13:31-32).

A FRIEND OR FORCE

It would be a mistake to leave this sublime subject without addressing an additional distortion to the teaching of the Godhead. Another class of sincere Christians believes that while the Father and Son are truly distinct persons, they only see the Holy Spirit as a cosmic force or essence; an impersonal power conduit or vehicle to do the bidding of the Father and Son.

We can appreciate why the Holy Spirit seems to be the hardest member of the Godhead to visualize and define. Sometimes He is called the Holy Ghost, which leaves people with a “spooky” image. The Scriptures compare Him to everything from wind and fire, to a dove, water, things that moves or flow, and even a defence attorney!

What about blood? Is it lest an organ of the body because it is not a structural organ like the heart, kidneys, stomach or brain? But as we consider the various features of the Holy Spirit, we can quickly see that He has all the credentials and characteristics of a separate, distinct, intelligent, and personal individual being.

The Holy Spirit leads and guides. *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.”* John 16:13 NKJV. It’s true that a map or GPS can lead you, but no one calls a map “he.” It would have been very easy for Jesus to simply say, *“When it comes,”* but Jesus called the Holy Spirit *“He”* more than 15 times. Why would God go to so much trouble to personify His own inherent power to the extent that it possessed emotions, thoughts and speech independent of Himself. (More details of the Holy Spirit later in the chapter “Grieve not the Holy Spirit”).

The Holy Spirit also comforts.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” John 14:16.

I have never seen a lonely child run to a vacuum cleaner for an embrace; only intelligent beings can offer comfort. Jesus promised before His ascension that He was sending another helper; paraclete is the Greek word that signifies a multi-sided personal ministry as counsellor, consoler advocate, helper, comforter, ally and supporter (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15).

These are all traits that usually belong to a person or friend. If the Holy Spirit is merely God’s active force, then John 16:7-8 is nonsense:

“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will

send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world.”

It is obvious from this text that the Holy Spirit would be more personally present after Jesus ascended. If the Holy Spirit is mere energy, there is simply no explanation or logic to why He would not come unless Jesus left.

The Holy Spirit can even be grieved (Ephesians 4:30). Cars have many unique characteristics and idiosyncrasies. But motor vehicles cannot be grieved. Nor can they speak, as the Holy Spirit does. “Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘*Go near and overtake this chariot*’.” Acts 8:29. Acts 13:1,2. Computer programs exist that can reproduce speech, but they cannot create inspired thought. The Holy Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). They reveal that He can hear, speak, be grieved, be vexed, can love, has emotions and a mind,

We also read in Revelation 1:4, 5, a prayer for grace and peace from the Father, the Spirit and Jesus Christ. We must ask, would John have put the Spirit between the Father and the Son if he had not regarded the Spirit as a divine intelligence in the same sense as they are.

If the Holy Spirit is simply some divine force, then why is it even more offensive to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and even more fatal, than speaking against the Son.

“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.” Matthew 12:31-32 NKJV.

By definition, blasphemy is “*a contemptuous or profane act, utterance, or writing against God.*” By this simple deduction, the Holy Spirit must be God! This is also why Peter said that to lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God (Acts 5:3-4).

The Holy Spirit can be a **witness** (Hebrews 10:15). In any court of the world, only living beings can be called witnesses. Finally, the Holy Spirit is said to have His own mind (Romans 8:27).

We can clearly see that the Holy Spirit is not simply a force, but the third divine person of the Godhead. Though a Spirit, He has all the characteristics of a person and an individual. The Spirit is plainly portrayed as a being who speaks, teaches, guides, makes choices, witnesses, comforts and can be grieved.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14 NKJV

LOVE AT CALVARY

The sublime truth of the triune God can also be found in the Gospel itself. In essence, when we consider John, we read that God the Father so loved the world that He sent God the Son that we might be born of God the Spirit (John 3:8, 13, 16-17).

But it is especially on Calvary Golgotha’s hill that the doctrine of the Godhead explodes with meaning and becomes more than mere denominational or theological dissertations . Before earth’s creation, the triune God discussed the potential of man’s rebellion and fall. Through the lens of divine foreknowledge, He saw the terror that sin’s rape of the world would cause. And there, before man was formed, it was decided that Jesus would leave the throne of heaven and become humanity’s substitute. Jesus was “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*” (Revelation 13:8; 1 Peter 1:19-20).

If Jesus was merely a created super being, then His death for man's redemption is no better than an angel dying for us. If Christ is not Deity itself, then any angel or sinless created being could have served the purpose. This would have virtually sustained Satan's charge that God is selfish by demonstrating that He is only willing to sacrifice His creation and not Himself.

A TEARING AT THE GODHEAD--A SUNDERING OF THE DIVINE POWERS

Another point to consider is that sin causes separation from the Creator (Isaiah 59:2). The iniquities of the human race were placed upon the Son of God, He was numbered with the transgressors and bore the sin of many (all) (Isaiah 53:6). When Jesus hung on the cross, suffering for our sins, every fibre of His being was torn as the eternal relationship with His Father and Spirit was ripped apart. In agony He cried out, *"My God [for the Father], my God [for the Spirit], why hast thou forsaken me?"* Matthew 27:46. If there had been only one person in the Godhead, there would not have been this excruciating pain of separation to wring the life out of the heart of Jesus.

The real risk in the redemption plan, besides the loss of man, was the break-up of the Godhead. Had Jesus sinned, He would have been working at cross purposes with the Spirit and His Father. Omnipotent good would have been pitted against omnipotent evil. What would have happened to the rest of creation? Whom would the unfallen universe see as right? One sin could have sent the Godhead and the universe spinning into cosmic chaos; the proportions of this disaster are staggering. Yet the Godhead was still willing to take this fragmenting risk for the salvation of man. This reveals the depth of God's amazing love.

*“These things have I spoken unto you, **being yet present with you**. But the comforter, which is **the Holy Ghost**, whom **the Father** will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:26.*

*“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**.” John 15:26.*

CONCLUSION

Augustine, that great man of God, was once walking on the shore of an ocean while greatly perplexed about the doctrine of the Godhead. As he meditated, he observed a little boy with a seashell running back and forth from the waters edge, filling his shell and then pouring it into a crab hole in the sand. “What are you doing, my little man” asked Augustine.

“Oh,” replied the boy, “I am trying to put all the ocean out there in this hole.” Augustine had learned his lesson. As he passed on, Augustine said, “That is what I am trying to do; I see it now. Standing on the shores of time, I am trying to get into this little finite mind things which are infinite.” Likewise, let us be content to let God know some things that we cannot yet know.

It would be pompous and preposterous to pretend that we understand everything about God.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” Romans 11:33.

We could completely unpack Him like cracking some genetic code, He would cease to be God. Nevertheless, there is much about God that is revealed for our blessing.

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever.” Deuteronomy 29:29.

What is revealed is that this teaching of the Godhead must be important to God. The ministry of Jesus both begins and ends with an emphasis on the three persons in the Godhead. The Father, Son and Spirit are present at Jesus’ baptism, and when He ascends to heaven, Jesus commanded His followers to baptize in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The testimony of Scripture indicates that the Godhead can neither be separated into three Gods nor merged into one person. This three-in-one not only created us, but they love us and devised an amazing plan to save a lost world from sin and to restore us to His presence in paradise.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” 2 Corinthians 13:14.

CHAPTER 2

A MASTERPIECE ANALYSIS OF THE WORD IN JOHN 1

IN THE BEGINNING

Many see this as a purposeful reference to Genesis 1:1, “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” But just as Genesis God’s work of creation, so John 1:1 introduces God’s work of redeeming His people, and that work has been going on just as long as creation itself. However, they are not focusing upon the same point of origin. John is about to give us the time frame that he has in mind.

THE WORD

Who is the Word? This identity of the Word is at issue. John 1:1-18. The Greek term translated “Word” in this passage is “logos”. It appears three hundred and thirty times as a noun in the Greek New Testament alone. It has a wide range of meanings, from the basic “word” to merely a “matter” or a “thing”. The logos was not personal in Greek philosophy, but it was very important. The Old Testament

has a similar concept, the “Word of the Lord”. For example, in Psalm 33:6, it states, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He spake and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast.” In this passage, we can see the idea that there is more to the “word” than we can see at first. Before Christ’s first coming, Jewish theologians began to see such phrases as “the word of the Lord” and the “wisdom of God” as having reference to a personal rather than an abstract concept. See Proverbs 8.

When John used the word “Logos”, he is using the word as a name, not just a description. He shifts and fills the impersonal logos with personality and life, and presents to us the living and personal Logos, the Word who was in the beginning.

THE LITTLE WORD “WAS”.

John’s choice of words is deliberate, and quite honestly, beautiful. In John 1:1, he balances between two verbs. When speaking of the Logos as He existed in eternity past, he uses the Greek word “en”. The tense of the word expresses continuous action of the past. When speaking of everything else, he uses the word “*egeneto*”. For example, “All things came into being through Him”. This verb is not describing a point of origin. This term, when used in the contexts of creation and origin, speaks of a time when something came into existence. The first verb “en” does not. John is very careful to use only the first verb of the Logos throughout the first thirteen verses, and the second verb “*egeneto*”, he uses for everything else (including John the Baptist in verse 6). Finally, in verse 14, he breaks the pattern, for a very specific reason.

When we speak of the Word, the Logos, we must ask ourselves, how long has the Logos existed? Did the Logos come into being at a point in time? Is the Logos a creature? John is very careful with his choice of words. There is a time frame John has in mind when he says “in the beginning” using the verb “en”. As far back as you wish to push “the beginning”, the Word is already in existence. The Word does not come into existence at the “beginning”, but is already in existence when the “beginning” takes place. So, if we take the “beginning” in John 1:1, the Word is already there, no matter how far back we go. John’s point is the Word is eternal (I John 1:2,3). The Word has always existed. The Word is not a creation. The New English Bible puts it quite nicely: “When all things began, the Word already was.”

“Christ was **God essentially**, and in the **highest sense**. He was with God **from all eternity**, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father.” FLB p. 45.5.

“He was equal with God, infinite, and omnipotent” FLB p.45.6.

“As a member of the human family, He was mortal; but as God, He was the fountain of life to the world.” FLB p. 46.7.

WITH GOD

This phrase in John 1:1 tells us that the Word is not only eternal but that the Word was not alone in eternity past. The Word was with God. Yes, it’s the same word “was” again, revealing to us an eternal truth. The Word has eternally been “with God”. The term “with”

speaks to a personal relationship, in fact, to intimacy. (1 Corinthians 13:12..we shall see “face to (pros) face”). When you are face to face with someone, you have no where to hide. You have a relationship with that person. So, I John 1:1b is telling us that the Word was eternally face to face with God, meaning that the Word has eternally had a relationship with God. The identity of God is here revealed describing the Almighty God, Yahweh, the Creator of all things, not as two eternal beings.

“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.” FLB p.46.2.

“Christ the Word, the only begotten of God, was **one with the eternal Father**, --one in nature, in character, and in purpose, --the only being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.” GC88 p.493.1.

“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.” FLB 46.3

WAS GOD

This third phrase balances what John is making about the Word in John 1. “and the word was God”. Again we have the eternal “en”. John avoids contradiction by telling us that the Word was with God, and the Word was God (θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος literally, theos en ho logos “God was the Word”).

If the Word is “all” of God, and God is “all” of the Word as some teach, and the two terms are interchangeable, then how could the Word be “with Himself”. Such would make no sense. John avoids equating the Word with all of God through his use of the little Greek article, the equivalent of our word “the” (ὁ). In this clause we are also given an example of what is known in grammar as a predicate nominative construction. That is, we have a noun, the subject of the clause, which is “the Word”. The Greeks have no problem putting the subject or verb at the end of a sentence rather than at the beginning as in the English language. In Spanish, we say, “Donde vive Usted?” meaning Where do you live ? rather than “Where live you? Or “Como se llama” – “How do you call yourself?” or “What is your name?” So, the Greek phrase “the Word was God” could also be rendered “God was the Word”. The difference is, in this case, “Word” has the article, the, even though it come after “God”. The subject is really “The Word”.

You will also notice that there is no form of the Greek article preceding the term θεός (theos—meaning God or Divine)). Notice the translation of the Greek:

Greek translation. En arche ēn ho Logos, kai ho Logos ēn pros ton Theon, kai Theos ēn o Logos. – John 1:1. GOD WAS THE WORD or THE WORD WAS DEITY. This is why “Theos” does not have the article. If John had put the article before “Theos”, he would be teaching modalism, the teaching that there is only one person who sometimes act like the Father, sometimes like the Son, and sometimes like the Spirit. (I am a father, a husband and a brother but I am one person). It is also called “Sabellianism”.

John is very careful to differentiate between the Father and the Son throughout the entire Gospel of John. One person observed that John is not trying to show who is God, but who is the Word. This final phrase “was God”, tells us about the Word, emphasizing the nature of the Word.

F.F.Bruce, the renowned scholar in his book, *The Gospel of John* (1983) page 31, comments on this passage thus:

“The structure of the third clause in verse 1, *theos en ho logos*, demands the translation “The Word was God”. Since *logos* has the article preceding it, it is marked out as the subject. The fact that *Theos* is the first word after the pronoun *kai* (and) shows that the main emphasis of the clause lies on it. Had *theos* as well as *logos* been preceded by the article, the meaning would have been that the Word was completely identical with God, which is impossible if the Word was also “with God”. What is meant is that the Word shared the nature and being of God or was an extension of the personality of God. The NEB paraphrase “what God was, the Word was” brings out the true meaning of the clause as successfully as a paraphrase can.

In the same way, the New Living Translation renders John 1:1, “In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God.” John is merely describing *θεός* (God) to describe quality or the nature of God, saying the Word is deity. He cannot possibly mean that Jesus is a god. If a person is to dogmatically assert the anarthrous noun *θεός* must be indefinite and translated as an indefinite article, one must be able to do the same with the 282 other times *θεός* appears anarthrously. For an example of the chaos that would be created, try translating the anarthrous *θεός* in 2 Corinthians 5:19 (“a god was in Christ..”).

Then also θεός appears many more times in the Gospel of John, yet no one argues that in these instances it should be translated “a god”. Note verses 6, 12, 13, and 18. There is no justification in the language to do this. It ignores a basic tenet of translation. In other words, if θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος is “the Word was a god”, how could John have said “The Word was God?”

IGNORES THE CONTEXT

The wrong translation (The Word was a god) tears the phrase from the immediate preceding context, leaving it alone and useless. Can He who is eternal (first clause) and who has always been with God (second clause), and who created all things (verse 3), be (a god).

Again F.F. Bruce summarizes it well:

It is nowhere more sadly true than in the acquisition of Greek that “a little learning is a dangerous thing” The uses of the Greek article, the functions of Greek prepositions, and the fine distinctions between tenses are confidently expounded in public at times by men who find considerable difficulty in using these parts of speech accurately in their native tongue.” The Books of the Parchments (1963), 60-61.

Those people who emphasize that the true rendering of the last clause of John 1:1 is “the Word was a god”, prove nothing but their ignorance of Greek grammar. Yet the vast majority of translations do in fact render the phrase “the Word was with God”.

Then also, the last clause of John 1:1 tells us about the nature of the Word in its qualitative context. Hence, F.F. Bruce states the Word

“shared the nature and being of God”. The Gospel of John, page 31. Another scholar Kenneth Wuest puts it, “And the Word was as to His essence absolute deity.” “The Word was God” is the simplest and most straightforward translation teaching the Deity of Christ and at the same time affirms that Christ is not the Father.

So, in a matter of seventeen short Greek words, John communicates the following truths:

The Word is Eternal— He has always existed and did not come into existence at a point in time. GODS are neither created or made. They are without beginning and without end.

“before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.” Isaiah 43:30b. (It would be interesting to find out who said these words, the Father or the Son although persuasion and evidence in following chapters proves it is Christ).

The Word is Personal—He is not a force but a Person, and that eternally. He has always been in communion with His Father, and everything was made by Him. Verse 3.

He was *“that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;”* 1 John 1:2.

The Word is Deity— The Word is God as to His nature. He is not a lesser or created God, He is fully God who became flesh (fully man).

“God could reveal Himself in no other way. The Eternal Word was made flesh and dwelt among us”. Signs of the Times June 16, 1898, par.4.

MORE ON THE ETERNAL WORD, THE CREATOR

So, not only was He “in the beginning with God” and also eternally existed in personal relationship with God (the Father) but verse 14 tells us that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”.

However, verse 3 introduces us to another evidence of the Deity of the Logos: His role in creation.

“All thing were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” Verse 3. KJV.

“All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” NASB.

Here is a phrase that can only be used of the one true God. Creation is always God’s work. If the Logos created all things, then the Logos is Divine—fully. He does not say “most things” or “some things” but all things came into being, were made, by the Logos. Creation took place through Him, by His power.

“For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” Colossians 1:16,17.

John makes sure that we do not leave room for anything that is not made by Logos. If it exists, it does so because it was created by the Logos.

“In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.” verse 4.

Then he goes on to speak of the preparation for the coming of the Logos into the world through the ministry of John (vs.6-8). Experiencing rejection by some and acceptance by others effecting and resulting in regeneration and salvation (vs 10-13). He talks about what Logos does by coming into the world. But in verse 14 he returns to the subject of who Logos is.

ETERNITY INVADES TIME

The Scripture reveals that the God who creates all things, “who inhabit eternity” chose to step into time to demonstrate to limited, finite beings the kind of person that He really is.

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” John 1:18.

*“And the **Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14.*

Here, John uses the Greek word “*egeneto*”, a verb that refers to an action in time. The reason for this is clear: the Word entered into human existence, “became flesh”, at a particular point in time. The Logos was not eternally flesh. He existed in a non-fleshly manner in eternity past, but at a blessed point in time, at the Incarnation, the Logos became flesh. The Eternal experienced time. The Word, the Creator of all things, the Eternal One, became flesh. Amazing!! How can the unlimited enter into limitation is unfathomable. We are simply told the Eternal Word became flesh”, and faith rests upon and trust God’s revelation.

"The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant." RH April 5, 1906, par.5. (Ev.615.4.

The Word did not simply appeared to be flesh. He was not "faking it". He was not some phantom or spirit masquerading as a real human being. He did not come down to earth in a spacesuit or parachute. The Logos entered the physical realm. He became a human being, a real living human being with the same sinful (sin-damaged), fallen, flesh and blood body as those He came to save. He rubbed shoulders with sinners and saints. He walked dusty roads, thirsted for water on hot days, and reclined at the table with friends, and even with enemies. He really existed. He really lived as one of us. John emphasizes this reality in the words:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:1-3.

There is no greater eyewitness account with repeated emphasis. He even goes so far as to say that anyone who denies that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is the antichrist. 1 John 4:2,3. And the Apostle Paul left no stone unturned with the incontrovertible declaration:

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” 1 Timothy 3:15,16.

CHAPTER 3

THE MYSTERY OF ONE BEING--THE ETERNAL THREE

There is a difference between believing in one Being of God, and three persons sharing that one Being. The “Jesus Only” position of believing there is only one person in the Godhead performing three different functions is a denial of the distinction between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It accepts the truth that there is only one true God, and that the Father, Son and Spirit are fully God, but it denies that the Bible differentiates between the three Persons.

Instead, the advocates of this position, either believe that the Father is the Son, and the Son is the Spirit, and the Spirit is the Father (like an actor on a stage wearing different masks to “play” different parts, but always being the same person), or they make the Son merely the “human nature” of Christ (hence denying His eternal nature). Jesus then becomes two “persons”, the Father and the Son; the Father being the Deity, and the Son, the human nature.

Those who deny the Heavenly trio of the Godhead, point to the baptism of Jesus and say that Jesus was a ventriloquist, manipulating Himself in three persons.

Scripture leaves no room for confusing the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The apostle John taught,

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.”
1 John 2:23.

Such a passage not only clearly differentiates between the Father and the Son, but it warns us how important God considers the truth about His nature. The scriptural truth that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Holy Spirit, is rather easily demonstrated. We begin with the fact that the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father—actions beyond our comprehension outside of recognizing that the Father is a separate divine Person from the Son.

“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands.” John 3:35.

“For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will shew Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.” John 5:20.

Just as the Father loves the Son, so the Son loves His disciples. The disciples are separate persons from the Son; the Father is a distinct and separate Person from the Son.

“As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love.” John 15:9.

*“I in them, and **Thou in Me**, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that **Thou hast sent Me**, and hast loved them, as **Thou hast loved Me**. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, **which Thou has given Me**: for **Thou lovedst Me** before the foundation of the world.” John 17:23, 24.*

At the baptism of Jesus, all three persons were identified.

*“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.” Matthew 3:16, 17.*

Here the Father speaks from Heaven, the Son is being baptized (and is again described as being the object of the Father’s love), and the Spirit is descending as a dove. Jesus is not speaking to Himself but is spoken to by the Father. There is no confusing of the persons at the baptism of the Lord Jesus.

Also, the Transfiguration of Jesus on the Mount in Matthew 17:1-9 demonstrates the separate and distinct Personhood of the Father and the Son:

*“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold **a Voice out of the cloud**, which said, This is **My Beloved Son**, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him.” Matthew 17:5.*

The Son's true pre-existent glory is unveiled for an instant in the presence of the Father in the cloud. Communication again takes place, revealing both the Deity and separate personhood of the Father and the Son. The Father spoke to the Son at another time recorded in John 12:28:

“Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a Voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” John 12:28.

Again, the distinction of the person of the Father and the Son is clearly maintained. This is a conversation, not a monologue. Again, in many of the prayers of Jesus (which were not mock prayers), Jesus is not speaking to Himself, He is clearly communicating with another Person, the Father (not His humanity speaking to His Deity). Read the entire prayer of Jesus in John 17, where the Son refers to the Father as a separate and distinct person.

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come: glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: As Thou has given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” John 17:1-3.

The usage of personal pronouns and direct address puts the very language squarely on the side of maintaining the separate personhood of Father and Son.

Striking is the example of Matthew 27:46, where Jesus quoting from Psalm 22:1, cries out, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken

Me?” That the Father is the immediate person being addressed is clear from Luke’s account, where the next statement from Jesus in his narrative is “*Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*” (Luke 23:46). That this is the Son addressing the Father is crystal clear.

Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:27 almost seem to be more at home:

*“All things are delivered unto **Me of My Father**: and no man knoweth the **Son, but the Father**; neither knoweth any man the **Father, save the Son**, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.”* Matthew 11:27.

Here, the reciprocal relationship between the Father and the Son is put forth with exactness, while at the same time dictating the absolute Deity of both. Only God has the authority to “hand over all things”, and no mere creature could ever be the recipient of the control of “all things” either.

Even the greetings of the Apostle Paul distinguishes between the Father and the Son. For example:

“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 1:7. (See other such greetings such as 1 Cor.1:3; 2 Cor.1:2; Gal.1:3; Eph.1:2; Phil.1:2)

Some religionists and denominations confuse and misinterpret some of Jesus’ statements to mean that He and the Father are one and the same person. For example:

*“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen***

*me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that **I am in the Father, and the Father in me?** the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” John 14:9, 10.*

Because Jesus said, “*He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father*”, He is not here saying “*I am the Father*”, else He would be ignoring the very words that follow, where the Lord Jesus clearly distinguishes Himself from the Father by saying the Father abides in Him and does His (Father’s) works through Him. No mere creature could ever say, “He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father”. Jesus’ words here does not make Him the Father, but they do tell us that the unity that exists between the Father and the Son is far more than a mere unity on purpose and intention. He is stating here that His works reveal the Father’s character or kind of Person that He is. John 1:18 says, “He hath declared (explained) Him (the Father). Also,

*“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have **finished the work which thou gavest me to do**I have **manifested thy name** unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that **I came out from thee**, and they have believed that **thou didst send me**.....And I have **declared unto them thy name**, and will declare it:” John 17:6, 8, 26.*

This explains the statement, “I and My Father are (Greek, plural) one”. This “one” describes the unity that exists between them both, just as in marriage when God said, “and they shall be one (Hebrew “echad”) flesh” (Gen.2:24), “and they twain shall be one flesh”

(Matt.19:5; Mark 10:8; Eph.5:31). This does not mean one person but rather describes the unity of the husband and the wife, two distinct but separate persons, yet one. So are the Father and the Son one, contextually in this passage of Scripture:

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” John 10:28, 29.

They are one in giving eternal life, they are one in protecting the sheep, and they are one in the covenant of redemption.

JESUS CHRIST, ONE PERSON WITH TWO NATURES

Jesus Christ is truly fully God and fully Man. He became the God-man at the Incarnation. He is one person with two natures, divine and human. He is not two persons. He blended His divinity with humanity to become one person, God in the flesh, to reveal God to man, and to effect our atonement and redemption. Only God could make atonement for man, not any creature. Hence, in many of His prayers (as in John 17), Jesus was not “talking to Himself” but was talking to the Father.

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” 1 Corinthians 2:8.

Crucifixion is only meaningful with reference to His human nature, as you cannot crucify the divine nature. When Paul speaks of the crucifixion of the Lord of glory, he is speaking of Christ as one person with two natures. The one action of crucifixion is predicated of one person though that person had two natures, divine and human. God only became incarnate once in the Son. In his letter to the church of Ephesus, the Apostle Paul comments:

*“For through **him** (Christ) we both have access by **one Spirit** unto **the Father**.” Ephesians 2:18.*

*“For this cause I bow my knees unto **the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That **he** would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by **his Spirit** in the inner man; That **Christ** may dwell in your hearts by faith.” Ephesians 3:14-17.*

*“There is one body, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; **One Lord**, one faith, one baptism, **One God and Father of all**, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:4-6.*

The early believers spoke easily about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and did not hesitate in joining these divine persons in the one work of salvation and in the edification of the church.

The teaching of **the three persons of the Godhead** in the New Testament are not vague but frequent, cursory, easy, confident, logical, and explicit. While it may not be as clear in the Old Testament, the Incarnation (the Son coming in the flesh) and the coming of the Holy Spirit descending upon the church in the New Testament has

cemented the understanding of the three Persons of the Godhead. Like one rope with three united strands, the three persons of the Father, Son and Spirit are intertwined and make up the one Being God.

The disciples, for example, believed in the three Person Godhead in the revelation of God. They walked with the Son, heard the Father speak from glory, and were now indwelt by the Holy Spirit which Jesus had promised them.

CHAPTER 4

THE ONE DIVINE BEING OF GOD.

For clarity, let us begin by defining in human language the Being of God, which is mysterious and yet incomprehensible but none the less real and understandable. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church,

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:....But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” 1 Corinthian 2:7, 9, 10.

Although he said it's a mystery, he proceeded to state that *“God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit”*.

Definition---Within the One Being we call God, there exist eternally three coequal, and coeternal infinite, absolute Persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

For the sake of clarity, we wish to expand upon this definition, based only on what the Scriptures have revealed of Him. Dr. Louis Berkhof in his book *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids:1941) page 87-89, as well as Charles Hodge in *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: 1986) give us some insights into this definition of God:

1. There is in the Divine Being but one indivisible essence, nature or substance.
 2. In this One Divine Being there are three Persons or individual existences, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 3. The whole undivided essence, nature or substance of God belongs equally to each of the three Persons.
 4. The existence and operation of the three persons in the Divine Being is marked by a certain definite absolute order.
 5. There are certain personal non-communicable attributes possessed by the three Persons by which they are distinguished.
 6. The Church confesses the Godhead to be a mystery beyond the comprehension of man.
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1. *There is in the Divine Being but one indivisible essence, nature or substance.* This is Foundation One: Monotheism. There is only one true God.

*“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is One LORD.”
Deuteronomy 6:4*

“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.” Mark 12:29..

*“But to us there is but **one God, the Father**, of whom are all things, and we in Him; **and one Lord Jesus Christ**, by whom are all things, and we by Him.” 1 Corinthians 8:6.*

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands...seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things:...For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” Acts 17:24, 25, 28.

Each member of the Godhead possesses that same essence, nature and substance of God. Only they possess the prerogatives and attributes of God and are worshiped. The Divine nature is shared by all Three which makes them deity or divinity. Christ who was in the form (Morphé—substance, essence and nature) of God, did not think it *“robbery to be equal God”*, did not think it robbery to keep grasping or seizing onto His Godhood (Phil:2:6-8), but humbled Himself and condescended to take on the form, nature and identity of man.

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:14.

The Godhead is indivisible. They can be distinguished, but are inseparable, they function as one unit as in both creation and redemption. In other words, you cannot chop God into parts, because He is not made up of different “parts”. God’s being is either entire, whole, or it is not God’s being at all. God’s Divine essence, nature or substance is what makes God God. Whatever the “being” of God is, creatures don’t have the same thing. Our problem is that we think very physically. We want to think of being as something you can put under a microscope or weigh in a scale. Jeremiah said, “Can a man hide himself in hiding places I do not see him”. “Do I not fill the Heavens and the earth”. And Solomon reminds us of this truth when he said, “Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You.”

God’s Being is not limited to time and space, but is eternal and without bounds omnipresent.

2. *In this One Divine Being there are three Persons or individual existences, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.* Not only are the members of the Godhead, coeternal, coequal, and infinite, but they can be distinctly identified as persons. The Father is the source of all being. The Son is the wisdom (Prov.8), righteousness (1 Cor.1:30) and knowledge of God (Col.2:3). (God does all things through His wisdom, righteousness and knowledge). And the Holy Spirit is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. He is the fellowship of the Father and the Son.

The personal distinctions in the Divine Being were manifested at the baptism of Jesus where the Father speaks from heaven, the Son is being baptized, and the Spirit descends as a dove. While

trying to avoid the idea of separate individuals, we are speaking of personal self-distinctions. What we are really saying is, you can tell the Father from the Son, and the Son from the Holy Spirit by how they are related to each other, and by what actions they take in working out creation, salvation, and so on. Father, Son and Spirit can be distinguished from one another, and yet these distinctions do not lead to a division in the One Being that is God.

3. *The whole undivided essence, nature or substance of God belongs equally to each of the three Persons.* This Foundation three statement asserts that The Father is in full possession of the entirety of the Divine essence; the Son is in full possession of the entirety of the Divine essence; and the Holy Spirit is in full possession of the entirety of the divine essence. There are not three different essences, nor is the one essence divided equally into thirds. Each Divine Person is in full possession of the entirety of the Divine nature. This is a unity of the Divine nature that is undivided.

To our finite, limited minds, **being** can only be shared fully by one person. But what is the difference between being and person? Everything that exists has being. A rock has the being of a rock, a tree the being of a tree, a dog the being of a dog, and man is a human being. That which exists has being, but not everything that has being is personal (is a person). A rock is not personal. You can insult a rock all day long, and it won't really mind, since it is not personal. Same with a tree. While a dog is a being and may have personality, it is not a person.

A **person** is an individual identity with characteristics that identify

a personality and is personal. The person has a mind which involves intellect, emotions and will. These are manifest through thinking, feeling, hearing, speaking, and demonstrates emotions such as grief, vexation, love, and hurt. Person is not to be confused with personality. While a dog may have a personality, **a dog is not a person.** Human beings can be identified as persons with both unique personality identity and personhood. **A person** is categorized as an individual identity who has reason, morality and self-consciousness.

Biblically speaking, there are three kinds of beings who are personal: God, men, and angels. I have being; I exist. Yet I am personal. My being is limited and finite. It is limited to one place geographically speaking, and one time temporally speaking. Such is the essence of being a creature. My being is shared by only one person: me. My being, since it is limited, cannot be distributed among two, three or any more persons. One being, one person: that's what it is to be human.

What we are saying about God is that **His Being** is not limited and finite like a creature's. His Being is infinite and unlimited, and hence can, in a way completely beyond our comprehension, be shared fully by three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **The Divine Being is one; the Divine Persons are three.** While the Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Spirit, each is fully and completely God by full and complete participation in the Divine Being.

Unless we recognize the difference between the terms *being* and *person*, we will never have an accurate or workable understanding of the three-some Godhead. We will continue limiting God to a

creature and his limited capacity and function. God's ways are not our ways, neither His thoughts and being ours (Isaiah 55:8, 9).

"To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." Isaiah 40: 25.

"To whom will ye liken Me, and make Me equal, and compare Me, that we may be like?" Isaiah 46:5.

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself:" Psalm 50:21.

4. *The existence and operation of the three persons in the Divine Being is marked by a certain definite absolute order.* The Father, Son and Holy Spirit perform absolutely different roles in creation, salvation and redemption. We must be very careful to distinguish relationships as we observe them outwardly and the eternal relationship that exists between the Persons inside the triune nature of God.

The "order" that is observed biblically is the Father first, the Son second, and the Spirit third. When we think of someone being "first", and someone else being "second", especially in relationships, we immediately begin to reckon with and in time. If Father is first, then He must be before the Son. Remember, we are not dealing with time but with eternity and eternal Beings, which cannot be measured or reckoned in time. So, if the Son was begotten in eternity, He is the Eternal Son of God.

"The Word existed as a divine Being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with the Father." Evangelism p. 615.4.

When we speak of the “order” of the Persons of the Godhead, we are not talking of an order of *being*. It is not an order in time. It does not refer to dignity or importance in the divine Being. The first is not “bigger” than the second, or the third. The order is one of relationship and absolute function. These are aspects of God’s nature that are difficult and challenging to grasp absolutely speaking. We cannot understand it because we are finite and limited as creatures who inhabit time. Remember, “God’s ways are not our ways” and mysteriously so.

Some Biblical texts suggest a hierarchy or “pecking order” among the Divine Beings. For example, John 14:28 and John 17:3. The Spirit of Prophecy reports Jesus’ thinking as, “I seek not mine own glory” but the glory of Him that sent me (John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18)” (DA 21). But when we understand the meaning of “other-centeredness,” when it comes to the Godhead, it fully explains this phenomenon. Jesus came representing the Father. The Holy Spirit comes representing Christ. There is not a trace of a “Me, first” attitude among them. Each honours and magnifies the others. No hierarchical jealousy troubles the Original Three; they gladly defer to the One most suited to whatever task exists, magnifying each other in the process.

Then also, when we speak of the **relationship shared by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**, we use terms like *begotten* and *procession*. We should always define these terms within the context in which they are used, and the person being referred to. “The only begotten Son of God”, the Son “proceeded

forth and came from God” (John 8:42) and “even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father” (John 15:26) are not here describing time functions but eternal phenomena and realities. That is, we should not think of “begotten” in human terms, but divine. We should not think of “procession” in a finite, creaturely sense, but in an eternal, unlimited, timeless sense. We must do so because we are talking about the infinite, timeless Eternal Being of God.

We use the term ***begotten*** of the relationship of the Father and the Son. The Son is eternally begotten by the Father. The Father is begotten by no one. Hence, we automatically place this relationship within time, and think of the **Father originating the Son at a point in time**. Definitely not so. The term as we use it here, speaks of **an eternal, timeless relationship**. It is without beginning, it will have no ending. It has always been or as always having been.

It can be likened to a book that is lying on top of another. We say the top book owes its position to the bottom one. It wouldn't be where it is without the one on the bottom. But **this is not so within the Godhead**. In other words, there **never was a time** when the Father existed without the Son.

“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....Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God **from all eternity**,

God over all, blessed forevermore....The Lord Jesus Christ, **existed from eternity**, a distinct person, yet one with the Father....He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent." Faith I Live By p.46.

The relationship of the first person of the Godhead to the second person is that of *begetting*. The relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son is described by the term *procession*. He is said to "proceed" from the Father and the Son on the basis of such passages as John 15:26 and John 16:7.

5. *There are certain personal non-communicable attributes possessed by the three Persons by which they are distinguished.*

When we look internally at the Godhead, we see that the Father generates (generation) all things through the Son (filiation) by the Holy Spirit (procession). Because of the relationship the Persons bear or sustain to each other we cannot confuse them. Only the Father generates; only the Son bears the relation of Son to the Father (filiation); and only the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. There are certain personal non-communicable attributes that all Three Persons possess that make them God/Divine/Deity. Not a single creature possesses any if these non-communicable attributes or characteristics that identifies Godhood. They cannot be transmitted. Gods cannot generate Gods, for God is neither created or made. They are without beginning and without end. These **non-communicable attributes of God are:**

- a. God is self-existent and independent of any of His Creation.
- b. God is absolutely immutable or unchanging in His nature.
- c. God is eternal and infinite. He exists beyond time.
- d. God is Omnipresent by His Holy Spirit. His presence is in all places at all times.
- e. God is Omniscient. He has complete and perfect knowledge. He knows all things, past, present, and future, including the thoughts and intentions of the heart. He knows what could have been, and the reality of what actually exists.
- f. God is Omnipotent. He is all-powerful in nature. There is nothing that God cannot accomplish.

6. *The Church confesses the Godhead to be a mystery beyond the comprehension of man.* God is incomprehensible. We can never and will never know everything about God. His wisdom, knowledge, and understanding is unfathomable. This admits that Deuteronomy 29:29 is true:

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” Deuteronomy 29:29.

He has not chosen to reveal everything there is to know. When it comes to the eternal relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, could we even begin to grasp the eternal, perfect, infinite union that is theirs, even if we tried. Are not our finite minds too limited for such a task? The statement that the Godhead is a mystery beyond the comprehension of man does

not differ from stating that how God exists eternally, outside the realm of time, is likewise a mystery beyond the comprehension of man. It is a statement about our limitedness over against the greatness of God's Being, nothing else.

We shall develop and discuss later each of these non-communicable attributes as well as delve into some of His communicable attributes.

CHAPTER 5

THE MYSTERY OF PLURALITY IN THE GODHEAD

The biblical term “Godhead” (*theiotes*) is used three times in Scripture, Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9. The word “Trinity,” which is the theological word Christians use to refer to the Godhead, is not found in Scripture.

“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (Acts 17:29).

“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” (Romans 1:20).

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Colossians 2:9).

The Word of God plainly reveals the plurality of God and that God is One God.

*“In the beginning **God** (Elohim) created the heaven and the earth.” Genesis 1:1.*

The Bible does not teach polytheism, which says that there are three separate Gods called the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Nor does the Bible say God is one person who took three forms or that the God the Father became the Son, who then became the Holy Spirit, as is taught by some false churches. The Bible does not teach that God is only one person or that Jesus is not God, but only God’s procreated son. The word of God does not teach that Jesus was created.

The Bible specifically states that God is Spirit.

“God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth,” John 4:

*“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD”
Deuteronomy 6:4*

The Bible, in this verse, emphatically states there is only one God. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:4, Mark 12:29). Literally, the verse says, “*Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our Elohim is a united Jehovah.*” The Bible is the inerrant inspired Word of God and this statement can only be understood in that God is telling us He is One God. (See 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:21). Yet, this does not mean that within the Godhead there is not a plurality. Scripturally, plurality means, that God is One God existing in three distinct Persons.

The Hebrew word for one is **Echad** and means unity while recognizing diversity with that oneness. This same word is used in Genesis 2:24,

*“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be **one (Echad)** flesh.”*

Therefore, God says that two individuals, Adam and Eve, were one flesh. Exodus 24:3 states

“...All the people answered with **one (Echad)** voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.”

Notice that all the people, which were a great multitude, replied with one voice. There are many other instances where the word is used to show the oneness of many individuals. In other words, the Hebrew word **Echad** allows for plurality within oneness, allowing God, who is emphatically described as one God, to be three Persons who are One God.

There is another Hebrew word that means “one” also which is “**Yahad**.” This word is always singular and can only mean one and so its use allows no plurality. God could have used this word in Deuteronomy 6:4, but chose **Echad** instead, which allows the concept of God being One God who is in essence three distinct Persons. When we say unity, however, we are not saying the same as a unit.

The Hebrew name for God “**Elohim**” which is used more than two thousand times in the plural form in the Bible occurs only in Hebrew. This is a plural noun, but the verb is singular which is not a normal use of grammar. Normally a plural noun would have a plural verb. But, if you wanted to teach that God is one and also a plurality, using the unique grammatical construction of using of a plural noun with a singular verb would be used. Therefore, this passage teaches that there is one God who exists in a plurality.

*“And God said, Let **us** make man in our image, after our likeness.” Genesis 1:26.*

Here again in Genesis 1:26, God is spoken of as plural. “**And God said, Let us make man in our image..**” The word “man” is the word “Adam” and refers to mankind being both male and female. The same word for “one” (*Echad*) is used in Genesis 2:24, speaking of the oneness of a husband and wife. God sees a husband and wife spiritually as being one. This is another verse that helps to establish that two or more can spiritually be one.

*“Go to, let **us** go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.” Genesis 11:7-8*

The LORD in Genesis 11:7-8 scattered the antediluvians abroad from the face of all the earth: and they stopped building the city. Here too, God is spoken of in the plural (let “us” go down) and in the singular (Jehovah = “the existing One”) at the same time. This passage summarizes the Bible’s teaching that God is one, but exists in a plurality of three Persons.

*“Thy throne, **O God**, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore **God**, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Psalm 45:6 7*

According to Hebrews 1:8-9, God the Father is speaking in Psalm 45, and He is referring to the Son as God.

*“But unto the Son he saith, **Thy throne, O God,** is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; **therefore God, even thy God,** hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Heb. 1:8-9).*

The question is: If the Son Himself was God, why did He address the Father as God? The Son addressed the Father as God for the same reason that the Father addressed the Son as God: because they are both God!

The Watchtower (Jehovah’s Witnesses) wrongly translates this verse twisting it to say, “God is Thy throne forever and ever”.

*“Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the **Lord GOD, and his Spirit,** hath sent me. Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.” Isaiah 48:16-17.*

God the Father states He is the “**Lord GOD; I am the Lord thy God.**” He then unmistakably further says He is thy «**Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.**” Isaiah 44:24 proclaims the Redeemer made Israel and the heavens, “*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.*” Both verses refer to the promised Messiah who is both Jesus and God. Jesus is the Redeemer. The LORD (Jehovah) states that He is the Creator. Therefore, the Bible is saying that it is God (Jehovah) the Father who

is the Creator. At the same time, the Bible is stating that Jesus Christ is the Creator. (See John 1:3-4, Eph. 3:9, Col. 1: 16).

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Jeremiah 23:5-6

The verse identifies the person speaking as being “the LORD” (Jehovah) and Jehovah is talking about another person who, in the future, will come to earth. David’s descendent, a King who will reign, prosper and will judge the earth. Jehovah then gives His name as “JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” This is a reference to the promised Messiah, who will be a man and a descendant of David. God the Father identifies Himself in the Old Testament as Jehovah and here He says the Messiah’s name is also called Jehovah which is the sacred name of God. It would be blasphemy to call any man Jehovah yet this is plainly the name by which the Messiah would be called. There can be no mistake that God the Father is saying the Messiah Jesus is God.

*“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, **The mighty God**, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6*

Again, this is another prophecy foretelling the birth of the Messiah. Note that the Messiah is called “**The mighty God, The everlasting Father.**” There can be no doubt that this passage is saying a human child would be born who is identified as God and the Everlasting

Father. Why would God the Father state that the Messiah, a man, is God and the Everlasting Father if He was not? Proverbs 30:4-5 states God's word are pure,

“Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.”

God is saying His words are pure and that He is the Creator and He has a Son. Clearly this passage is saying that Jesus Christ (Christ = Messiah) is God incarnate in man.

The New Testament clearly teaches this plurality in the Godhead; that Jesus is God (John 1:1, 14); the Father is God (Phil. 1:2); and the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). Since the Son speaks to the Father, they are separate persons (John 17). Since the Holy Spirit speaks also (Acts 13:2), He, too, is a separate person. There can be no question that the New Testament proclaims there is only One God and that He exists in a plurality of three distinct persons. Yet none of the three is indebted to the other for His existence. This is truly mysterious and beyond our comprehension.

Take for example such a thing as light, whether flowing from the sun, or any other luminous body. We cannot comprehend either its nature, or the manner wherein it flows. How does it move from Jupiter to the earth in either minutes, two hundred thousand miles in a moment? How do the rays of the candle brought into the room, instantly disperse into every corner? Again. Here are **three candles**, **yet there is but one light**. Explain this, and I will explain the Three-One plurality of God.

CHAPTER 6

THE GODHEAD

THREE SEPARATE, DISTINCT, ETERNAL BEINGS MAKING UP ONE GOD.

"It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theoriesby misrepresenting the attributes of God, Satan leads men to conceive of Him in a false character." Great Controversy, 583.

Some Seventh-day Adventists are ignorantly worshipping the same God that they are told not to worship in the third angel's message—the god of the beast power? Are we calling the true Godhead by the name of a false god? What god are we worshipping today? Could modern Israel, like Israel of old, be worshipping a false god?

"How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Kings 18:21. Are these words of Elijah applicable today?

THE GODHEAD

The term "Godhead" is used in the NT to describes the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The word for "God" in the OT Hebrew is "Elohiym".

It means “Gods” in the plural. This is clearly seen in the following Scriptures:

Gen. 1:26: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

Gen. 11:7: “Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”

Isaiah 6:8: “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

These verses show that the Godhead consists of more than one divine Being. There is a unity in the Godhead. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together for our salvation in perfect harmony.

The Name of God as Yashua or Yahweh.

Some believe that the only name that should be used when addressing God in prayer or public discourses is the Hebrew name Yahshua, Yahweh, or Yahoshua. Whether you are Spanish, French, English, Dutch or German or otherwise. The following examples reveal otherwise.

Jesus and the woman at the well---“*The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus said unto her, I that speak unto thee am He.*” John 4: 25,26. Jesus never rebuked her for what names she was calling Him.

At Lord's Supper.. *"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."* John 13:13, 14.

Casting out demons in the Name of Jesus... The Disciples made much ado about others casting out demons in Jesus' name and forbade them.. Jesus made no ado about His Name although it was being misrepresented. John 9.

John 17:6. "I have declared Thy Name unto the men whom Thou gavest me." What was God's name that Jesus declared?

In Exodus 33 and 34 when Moses asked God to shew him His glory, the LORD said, *"The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth keeping mercies for thousands, forgiving, iniquity, and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.."* Exodus 34:6, 7.

The Three Hebrew boys and their being called by Babylonian names. Did not make any ado about it because they knew who they were. You could call them whatever you wanted they were not perturbed , it did not and could not change their identity.

JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT HALF GOD AND HALF MAN

Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man. He was not half god and half man, but 100% God and 100% man, fully blended in one person... the God-Man.

Was he god with a common g or god with a capital G. John 1:1-3.

If he was fully God, he could not be created or made, because Gods are neither created or made. They are without beginning and without ending (eternal).

If He was made He was a creature (having a beginning), then He couldn't be eternal and therefore certainly not be god.

“Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me.” Isaiah 43:1. Who said these words?

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each eternal. The Bible tells us that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all three, compose one eternal being and are each **eternal**.

THE FATHER:

*“Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from **everlasting to everlasting**: and let all the people say, Amen.” Psalms 106:48.*

*“Now unto the King **eternal**, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” 1Timothy 1:17.*

These verses tell us that God the Father is Eternal. If He is eternal, then He has no beginning, and no end.

THE SON:

*“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**.” Micah 5:2.*

“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. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:1,2,14,

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen [it], and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)” 1 John 1:1,2.

THE PRE-EXISTENT, SELF-EXISTENT SON

“Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God..... in speaking of his pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through the 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.” St, august 29, 1900.

“He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent....He is the eternal, self-existent Son”. Manuscript 101, 1897. Evangelism p.615.3.

“The Word existed as a Divine Being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with his Father. From everlasting He was the mediator of the covenant, the one in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and

Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed.... before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God." Review and herald, April 5, 1906. Ev.p.615.4.

*"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us.**" Matthew 1:23.*

These Scriptures show us that Jesus is God. Being God, Jesus is Eternal. If He is eternal, then He has no beginning, and no end.

THE HOLY SPIRIT:

*"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? ... Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but **unto God.**" Acts 5:3,4.*

*"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through **the eternal Spirit** offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Hebrews 9:14.*

These verses tell us that the Holy Spirit is Eternal. If He is eternal, then He has no beginning, and no end.

So, the Godhead is composed of three distinct eternal (no beginning, no end) Beings: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. See also John 15:26.

CHAPTER 7

GOD'S COMMUNICABLE AND NON-COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES WHICH DEFINES GOD

In the Holy Scriptures, there are specific attributes which distinguish and separate God from His creation. However, there are some attributes which are communicable from God to man. God made man in His own image and after His own likeness. Man was the crowning work of God's creation. He made him to have dominion over the earth. He endowed him with human characteristics akin to the divine. Here are some of the communicable characteristics or attributes of God:

1. **His Holiness**: This is God's absolute purity and moral perfection. He is set apart from sin and is the standard of righteousness.

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts; His glory fills the whole earth" (Isaiah 6:3).

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Ephesians 1:4.

2. **His Love**: God's self-giving and sacrificial nature. His love is unconditional and is demonstrated supremely in the sending of His Son. "God is love" (1 John 4:8). His love can be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. While God's love (Agape) comes down vertically, it goes across horizontally.

"Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us."
Desire of Ages, p. 641.³

3. **God's Mercy**: God's compassion and kindness towards those in distress. He is patient and forgiving, withholding the punishment deserved. "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in loving devotion" (Psalm 103:8). God wants us to be merciful unto others, even the unmerciful. Mercy is the disposition to treat others better than ourselves.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."
Matthew 5:7.

"Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
Hebrews 4:16.

4. **God's Justice**: God's commitment to righteousness and fairness. He upholds His moral law and ensures that justice is executed.

“For the LORD is righteous; He loves justice. The upright will see His face” (Psalm 11:7).

“Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.” Psalm 82:3.

“The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Proverbs 4:18.

5. **Truthfulness**: God’s faithfulness and reliability. He is the source of all truth and cannot lie.

“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind” (Numbers 23:19).

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ....Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor.” Ephesians 4: 15, 25.

“LORD, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.” Psalm 15:1, 2.

6. **Wisdom**: God’s perfect application of knowledge. He knows the best means to achieve the best ends. “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and untraceable His ways!” (Romans 11:33).

“For God giveth to a man that is good in His sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail.” Ecclesiastes 2:26.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5.

These attributes, while distinct, are perfectly unified in the being of God. They provide a framework for understanding His actions and character as revealed in Scripture. Each attribute reflects the divine nature and is essential for a comprehensive understanding of who God is. God desires us to reveal His character to men.

GOD’S NON-COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES WHICH MAKES GOD GOD. These are:

1. God is **SELF-EXISTENT**. God has no cause; He does not depend on anything for his continued existence. He said, “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex. 3:14; see John 8:58). He has Life in Himself (John 5:26).

He is the First and Last, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. As the Beginning, God has no cause (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Rev. 1:8, 17; 2:8; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13). He said, there is No God before or after Yahweh (Isa. 43:10).

2. Then also God is **TRANSCENDENT**. This means that God is entirely distinct from the universe, as the carpenter is distinct from the bench. This excludes pantheism (God is in everything) and animism (everything is a god). Scriptures teach that God is separate from the world (Isa. 66:1-2; Acts 17:24) and can be contrasted with the world (Psa. 102:25-27; I John 2:15-17).

3. God is **IMMANENT**. Although God is transcendent, God is present with and in the world. This excludes deism (God is out there but not here). God is near, so He can be known (Deut. 4:7; Jer. 23:23; Acts 17:27). God's immanence is bound up with God's omnipresence (Psa. 139:7-10; Jer. 23:24; Acts 17:28).
4. God is **IMMUTABLE**. God is perfect in that He never changes nor can He change with respect to His being, attributes, purpose, or promises. Change exists in time, but God is eternal. So, God is unchangeable (Psa. 102:26-27; Isa. 51:6; Mal. 3:6; Rom. 1:23; Heb. 1:11-12; James 1:17; Heb. 13:8).

God's relations with changing men is sometimes spoken of as God changing (Ex. 32:9-14; Psa. 18:25-27). Example, "it repented the Lord that He had made man." (Gen.6). God's repentance is not like man's repentance. God is not a man (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29).

5. God is **ETERNAL**. God is perfect in that He transcends all time and temporal limitations, and is thus infinite with respect to time. His duration is through endless ages (Ps. 90:2; 93:2; 102:12; Eph. 3:21). He is unlimited by time (Psa. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8), and is the Creator of the ages (i.e. of time itself; Heb. 1:2; 11:3).
6. God is **OMNIPRESENT**. God is perfect in that He transcends all space and spatial limitations, and is thus infinite with respect to space, with His whole Being filling every part of the universe and being present everywhere (not

diffused through the universe, but present at each point in His fullness). The universe cannot contain God (1 Kings 8:27; Isa. 66:1; Acts 7:48-49) as He is present everywhere (Psa. 139:7-10; Acts 17:28; of Christ, Matt. 18:20; 28:20). God fills all things (Jer. 23:23-24; of Christ, Eph. 1:23; 4:10; Col. 3:11).

7. God is **OMNIPOTENT**: God is perfect in that He can do all things consistent with the perfection of His being. God cannot do the self-contradictory (e.g., make a rock He cannot lift), nor can He do that which is contrary to His perfect nature (e.g., He cannot change, He cannot lie, etc.). Nothing too difficult for God (Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17, 27; Zech. 8:6; Matt. 3:9). Scripture teaches that all things are possible with God (Job 42:2; Psa. 115:3; Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 1:37; 18:27; Eph. 1:11). Yet there are certain things that God cannot do as it is not part of His nature or character. God cannot lie; He cannot be tempted; He cannot deny Himself; He cannot change a man against his will, etc. (2 Tim. 2:13; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18; James 1:13).
8. God is **OMNISCIENT**: God is perfect in that He knows all things, including events before they happen or what could have been. He is perfect in knowledge. (Job 37:16). He knows the hearts of all men (1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Chr. 28:9, 17; Psa. 139:1-4; Jer. 17:10a) and He knows all future events to come (Isa. 41:22-23; 42:9; 44:7). He does not predestinate things to happen, and His foreknowledge

and foresight is infinite. Although God is a Spirit (John 4:24), He is nonetheless a real and emotional Being.

9. God is **ONE**. God is a perfectly unique and simple Being, existing as one infinite Being called God. There is therefore only one God, who is called Yahweh in the Old Testament, and who reveals Himself in the persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the New Testament. This excludes polytheism (many Gods), tritheism (belief in three Gods), and subordinationism (in which Christ is a lesser God subordinate to the Almighty God).

Scripture reveals Only one God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 43:10; 44:6, 8; 45:5-7, 21-22; Zech. 14:9; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Gal. 3:20; Eph. 4:5-6; 1 Tim. 2:5; James 2:19). All other “gods” are only “so-called,” (1 Cor. 8:4-6; 2 Thess. 2:4). Moses was “as God,” but not God or divine (Ex. 4:16; 7:1). Satan and all idols are all false gods (Psa. 96:4-5; 1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 4:4; Phil. 3:19). Sometimes wicked judges are called “gods” in irony, not to describe nature (Psa. 82:1, 6; John 10:34-36).

Yahweh is Elohim (Gen. 2:4; Deut. 4:35, 39; Psa. 100:3).

10. God is **CREATOR**. Only God can give life or create. He is the One through whom all things have come into existence ; by His unbounded power and knowledge He created finite existence ex nihilo and formed the universe as it now is. He created all things (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6; 102:25; John 1:3; Rom. 11:36; Heb. 1:2; 11:3). He made all things by

Himself (Isa. 44:24).

11. God is a **PERSONAL** Being. God, as the author of personhood in the created universe, therefore He cannot be less than personal Himself. Thus, He experiences relationships with other persons, or self-conscious beings.

The origin, source or cause of life must be living; the origin, source or cause of personality must be personal; the origin, source or cause of will must be volitional; the origin, source or cause of wisdom must be wise; the origin, source or cause of intellect must be intelligent, the origin, source or cause of emotion must be emotional; and the origin, source or cause of love must be loving.

Hence, we serve a living, personal, volitional, wise, intelligent, emotional and loving Being. He can only be known as His Son reveals Him (John 1:18; Matt. 11:25-27).

12. Only God is **MORALLY PERFECT**. The following are the moral attributes of God; they are listed here together because God's moral nature is perfectly unified, with no tension between His wrath and His love. For example,

God is GOOD: God is morally excellent, and does only good (Gen. 1:31; Deut. 8:16; Psa. 107:8; 118:1; Nahum 1:7; Mark 10:18; Rom. 8:28).

God is HOLY: God is morally transcendent, utterly separated from all evil, and perfectly pure (Ex. 3:5; Lev. 19:2; Psa. 5:4-6; 99:5; Isa. 6:3; 8:13; Hab. 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 1:14-19)

God is wholly **RIGHTEOUS**: God is perfectly moral in all that He does, doing everything right (Isa. 45:21; Zeph. 3:5; Rom. 3:26).

God is **TRUE**: God is perfectly truthful, honest and cannot lie (John 17:17; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18).

God is **LOVING**: God's moral character is pure love, sacrificial giving for the true benefit of another (Deut. 7:7-8; Jer. 31:3; John 3:16; Heb. 12:6)

God is **WRATHFUL**: God's moral perfection requires Him to show displeasure against anything which seeks to act contrary to its moral purpose, to judge that which rebels against His authority as Creator and Lord (Psa. 103:8-9; Rom. 2:5; 11:22; Heb. 10:31). His wrath is a divine wrath and therefore a good attribute of His. God respects His creatures' freedom of choice and allows them to reap that which they have sown. He is not the author of sickness, suffering, disease or death, and absolutely so.

CHAPTER 8

THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

“For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son. That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

This scripture is clear and popularly known and recited quite frequently. But what does the term Only Begotten Son mean? To some, this means that He is simply God’s Son, having a beginning sometime in the distant past, hence a creature or less than God, since He is His Son, and NOT God. To others, He was begotten or born of God as human beings give birth coming forth from a father.

The Greek word for begotten μονογενής is a word called “**Monogenes**” and really means Only One of a Kind or Unique. Many understand “**Begotten**” to mean begetting or derived from birth as human beings are begotten or born. Hence, Jesus being born of God in eternity became His Son and had a beginning as all those that are begotten.

While the same word, used in the context of human relationships means “only begotten” in terms of begetting or being born; when used in the context of GOD, cannot be possibly understood in the same way as humans, since, as God says,

“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.” Isaiah 55: 8,9.

Gods don't give birth to Gods. Gods are neither created, made or formed. They are **eternal**, that is, without beginning and without end. So Jesus would either have to be creature, a god or a semi or demi God. The Prophet Isaiah makes an astounding declaration and asked an interesting question,

*“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....therefore ye are My witnesses , saith the LORD, that I am God.” Isaiah 43:10,11.*

“I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, Your King...For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.” vs.15,3.

Who is speaking here that is Creator, King and Saviour? The Father or the Son? If it's the Father, then the Son is not God. If it's the Son, then the Father is not God. Simply because, “before Me was no God formed neither after Me”. Remember, Gods by nature are neither created, made or formed. They are eternal.

So, Jesus, the Word, is the only One of a kind or unique Son of God, then He cannot be compared to any earthly created son, neither can His begetting be like any human being. He is **God's eternally begotten Son**, as God did not beget Him in time. Hence, His Son is as eternal as He Himself.

"Christ the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father, --one in nature, in character, and in purpose, --the only being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God." GC88 p.493.1.

GOD BECAME FLESH

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten (μονογενής) of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14.

The Word which was with God and which was God, became flesh, and dwelt amongst us. That's Jesus, the Word which became incarnate.

"How wonderful is the thought that **God became flesh** and dwelt among us. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same Word was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life ; and the life was the light of men... And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us , ..full of grace and truth" John 1:1-5,14. How can men claim to believe these words, and to be

followers of Christ, and yet go on in their blind selfishness, following their perverted ideas." 18Lt Ms, Ms 59, 1903, par.1.

"Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh even as we are...He shared the lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. **He was God in the flesh.**" DA. p. 311.4.

"Christ is God as well as man. **He who was with the Father before the world was became flesh,** and dwelt among us." 17Lt Ms, Lt 96, 1902, par.28.

"He is **Emmanuel, God with us. The eternal Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and of His fullness have all we received."19 LtMs, Ms 44, 1904, par.3.

"By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God—God's thought made audible...Reflecting Christ, p.15.3.

"What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God." That I May Know Him, p.38.4

AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY

Who better than the 'only begotten of the Father' could reflect the glory of the Father? Who but the 'only begotten of the Father' would be so 'full of grace and truth'? John speaks here of Christ in relation to the Father. What more natural than that the concept of 'begotten' should be present in such a context?

It is certainly clear how the ‘only begotten of the Father’ should have the same glory as the Father. He said to His disciples before His departure,

“And now, O Father, glorify thou Me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.....that they may behold my glory, which Thou hath given Me: for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world.” John 17:5, 24.

It is also interesting that God said,

“I am the LORD: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.” Isaiah 42:8.

“For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it:... and I will not give my glory unto another.” Isaiah 48:11.

As A.T. Jones emphasizes, “If God says He will not give His glory to **another**, and yet Christ said, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory I had with you before the world was, then Christ is **NOT another** but verily God.

THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON DECLARES THE FATHER

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten (μονογενής) Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” John 1:18. KJV.

Only Christ who was God could reveal/declare God. Who but the ‘only begotten Son’ would be ‘in the bosom of the Father’; and who but the ‘only begotten Son’ would and could faithfully and authoritatively ‘declare’ the Father?

“This work (of declaring/manifesting God's character) only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known.” DA.p.22.1.

THE ONLY SON, WHO IS GOD

When we look at other translations of this same text John 1:18, we see a pattern emerging:

“No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.” NASB.

“No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known.” NIV.

“No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made Him known.” NRSV.

The KJV and NKJV follow a later, less primitive text in reading “the only begotten Son” rather than “the only begotten God” (NASB). The earliest manuscripts translate the phrase in question μονογενης θεός (*monogenes theos*) literally as “the only begotten God”, “God the One and Only”, “God the only Son” or even literally meaning “the only Son, who is God”. This preserves the word order that John uses, placing *monogenes* as a title preceding *theos* (God).

Greekbible.com › john › 1John 1:18 - Original Greek Text - Greek Bible

18 θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

What is John telling us by using such an unusual phrase? One thing is for certain: he is NOT telling us that Jesus Christ was “created” at some time in the past. He is not denying everything he said in the previous seventeen verses and turning Jesus into a creation. He would not be making any sense at all.

NO MAN HATH SEEN GOD AT ANY TIME

John tells us that no one has seen God at any time. Is this really true? Are there not many instances of men seeing God in the Old Testament? Did not Isaiah say that he saw the Lord sitting upon His throne in the Temple (Isaiah 6:1-3). So, what did John mean? How can we understand his words?

The key is found in the final phrases of verse 18, specifically, “who is at the Father’s side” or “who is in the bosom of the Father”. When John says, “no man hath seen God at any time”, he is referring to the Father. No one has seen the Father at any time. So, how do we have knowledge of the Father? The μονογενὴς θεός (*monogenes theos*) has “made Him known” or explained Him. The unique One or only Begotten Son, who is God, has revealed or made the Father known.

“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knowest no man, but the Spirit of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:11.KJV.

Another important fact of this verse is that, if indeed no one has seen the Father, then what does that tell us of the Son? Who did Isaiah

see in Isaiah 6? Who walked with Abraham by the oaks of Mamre (Genesis 18:1)? None other than the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ, the *Eternal Logos*. Jesus Christ was God in human flesh, the Eternal creator of all things, “the Only Son, who is God”.

CHAPTER 9

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERMS ONLY BEGOTTEN, FIRST BEGOTTEN, FIRSTBORN OF CREATION, FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD AND FIRSTFRUITS.

THE MEANING OF THE TERM ONLY BEGOTTEN

*“For God so loved the world that He sent His Only Begotten (μονογενής θεός (*monogenes theos*) Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.*

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten (μονογενής-Monogenes) Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” John 1:18.KJV.

In the King James Bible, the word “begotten” actually occurs 24 times from Genesis to Revelation.

*In John 3:16, the Greek word for begotten μονογενής is a word called “**Monogenes**” and really means Only One of a Kind, single of its kind only, one and only, or Unique. Many understand “**Begotten**” to mean begetting or derived from*

birth as human beings are begotten or born. Hence, they assume that Jesus being born of God in eternity became His Son and had a beginning as all those that are begotten. They see the word “begotten” and say that Jesus is a created being because only someone who had a beginning in time can be “begotten.”

Here are some examples of how the word “begotten” is used in the Bible when referring to created beings:

Genesis 1:1: “The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.”

Psalms 111:3: “Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?”

Hebrews 11:17: “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, his only begotten son...”

While the word **Monogenes**, used in the context of human relationships means “only begotten” in terms of begetting or being born (such as an only son or daughter), when used in the context of GOD, cannot be understood in the same way as humans, since, **God is eternal**. Then also:

*“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.” Isaiah 55:8, 9.*

The word “begotten” is used in the Bible to describe *the unique relationship* between God the Father and Jesus Christ, His Son.

This term is used to clarify the special nature of Jesus's relationship with God as part of the Godhead *and to distinguish Him from created beings*.

God's Only Begotten Son, **only one of a kind**, is described in Hebrews chapter 1 as the "brightness of His glory" and "*the express image of His Person*". Christ is the **only expressed image or exact representation of the Father**. We are familiar with an inverted image from a mirror. But supposed your image could step out of the mirror and stand next to you as a living personal being in your image and likeness, yet a distinct personality. What kind of image would that be? Jesus Christ possesses the same eternal life, same image and likeness, same nature, same character and same DNA as His Father. Only He who is God can reveal God. No mere creature can reveal the fullness of God. Christ is the "fulness of the Godhead bodily". Only Jesus Christ is the manifestation, the reproduction and the perfect revelation of the invisible God.

This phrase, "Only Begotten Son" can also be used to emphasize that Jesus is the only Son of God (Son of God in a new sense in the Incarnation) who is both fully God and fully human. He is not simply a human being who is somehow special or divine, but he is both God and man in one person. This unique relationship is central to the Christian understanding of God and salvation.

THE MEANING OF THE TERM "FIRSTBEGOTTEN"

"And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."
Hebrews 1:6.

The phrase “offered up his only begotten son” carries profound symbolic significance. In Christian theology, this foreshadows the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is also referred to as the only begotten Son of God.

The Greek term for “begotten” carries the idea of unique or special (Jn 1:18; 3:16). Isaac was one of a kind. He was the one who would continue the line of the Messiah. Abraham was the father of both Isaac and Ishmael, but Isaac was unique because he was the heir of the promise. The lineage of the Messiah would come from Abraham through Isaac.

The Father called the incarnate Christ His “*only begotten Son*,” and in Hebrews 1:5, when it says, “*when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world*”, this is in reference to the Incarnation of Christ.

Isaac was a type of Christ because he was uniquely born from parents of very old age. He was not the only son of Abraham and Sarah; they had another son by the name of Ishmael. God, however, excluded Ishmael from the Abrahamic Covenant because he was the son of the Egyptian Hagar. Thus, he could not be part of the Jewish line from Abraham.

Interestingly, referring to the story of Abraham and Isaac, inspiration makes an enlightening observation.

*“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up **his only begotten son**”. Hebrews 11:17.*

Here is an example which reveals the two definitions of the same term “**only begotten son**”.

The first definition is “pertaining to being the only one of its kind within a specific relationship.” This is its meaning in Hebrews 11:17 when the writer refers to Isaac as Abraham’s “only begotten son” (KJV). Abraham had more than one son, but Isaac was the **only son of promise** he had by Sarah and the only son of the covenant. Therefore, it is the uniqueness of Isaac among the other sons that allows for the use of *monogenes* in that context. Then also, it was because he was the “son of promise” (the one through whom the Messiah would come) that he had **pre-eminence** above all the eight children of Abraham.

The second definition has to do with Christ as *the only begotten Son*, being the only one of his kind or class, unique in kind.” This is the meaning that is implied in John 3:16 (see also John 1:14, 18; 3:18; 1 John 4:9). John was primarily concerned with demonstrating that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:31), and he uses *monogenes* to highlight Jesus as uniquely God’s Son—sharing the same divine nature as God—as opposed to believers who are God’s sons and daughters by adoption (Ephesians 1:5). Jesus is God’s “one and only” Son, eternally begotten, as God is eternal. Only He is the manifestation or reproduction of the Father, being the brightness of His glory and the expressed image of His Person. This word “*image*” (eikon in the Greek from which we get the English word **icon**) involves more than a resemblance, and certainly more than a mere representation. It means an exact representation or picture and ultimate revelation of God.

THE MEANING OF THE TERM “FIRSTBORN”

*“And they were seated before him from **the firstborn** according to his birthright to the youngest according to his youth. And the men looked at one another amazed.” (Gen 43:33)*

*“These are the names of the descendants of Aaron: **Nadab the firstborn**, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.” (Num 3:2)*

*“By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, in order that the one who destroyed **the firstborn** would not touch them.” (Heb 11:28).*

It seems pretty obvious that the term “firstborn” here is being used to mean **the first child born into a family**. In Jewish culture, the firstborn had certain privileges that the other siblings did not have. They received a special blessing and special authority when it was passed down from their father. Then also, every Jewish mother prayed that her firstborn son would be the Messiah, the Promised Saviour.

Some understand this to mean that Yahweh begat him Christ, or created Him — making the Son the first creation — the firstborn of God. Is Jesus a son “begotten” or “born” to God like we think of human sons being born? The problems we will run into with this word “firstborn” is that it does not always fit as a use for a literal firstborn chronologically to a family.

For example, David, the son of Jesse was one of eight sons, and was in fact the youngest. (1 Samuel 17:12-14). David, being the youngest of eight sons of Jesse, by a strict meaning for the term “firstborn”, there is no possible way we could use the term “firstborn” to describe him, right? Yet in Psalm 89 we see just that.

*“I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him.... And I will **make him the firstborn**, the highest of the kings of the earth.” (Psalm 89:20, 27 ESV)*

What is being said here, is that David would be made **pre-eminent** above the kings of the earth. When we study this word through the Scriptures, we begin to realize that by “firstborn”, it does not always mean those who are chronologically born first in line. The commentator Adam Clarke said it well in these words”

“First-born is not always to be understood literally in Scripture. It often signifies simply a well-beloved, or best-beloved son; one preferred to all the rest, and distinguished by some eminent prerogative.” (Adam Clarke Commentary on Psalm 89:27)

Furthermore, we see such a use in action of this term “firstborn” in Exodus 4:22:

*“And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, **even my firstborn.**” Exodus 4:22.*

If Israel is God’s firstborn, then how is Jesus the firstborn of God? How can you have two firstborns? How is Israel born at all, in the physical sense? The term is used to mean they are special, blessed, in a place of special blessing by God. This was also applicable in the case of Ephraim, who was also called “firstborn”. See Jeremiah 31:9. Again this term “firstborn” does not refer to something being the first to be born or created, but instead something **preferred, blessed, distinguished or having a special place of favour with God.**

Once we understand that this term “firstborn” can mean that the one spoken of is special, first in rank, or having supremacy, and not necessarily first in existence, we will not be confused with the many false interpretations theologically footballed throughout Christendom.

The evidence is clear that this term begotten, as well as firstborn, when used in relation to Christ the Son, have nothing to do with chronology of a birth or creation.

Other passages which mention the term “firstborn” are:

*“And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, **the firstborn of the dead**, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood.” Revelation 1:5.*

It is obvious in Scripture that Jesus Christ was not the first person to be resurrected from the dead but the eighth to be resurrected. Therefore, the term “**firstborn from the dead**” cannot mean first in sequence to be raised. Instead the term means, that by virtue of His being the Resurrection and the Life, all the dead come forth from the grave because of His power. (John 5:28, 29). He is the originator, source or creator of all life (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16, 17), and therefore have the preeminence over all things.

*“And He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, **the firstborn from the dead**; that in all things He might have **the preeminence**.” Colossians 1:18.*

Again, Uriah Smith, the author of the book “Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation” page 345, 346 observes,

The First Begotten of the Dead.

*“**The first begotten of the dead**’ is an expression parallel to 1 Cor. 15:20,23; Heb. 1:6; Rom. 8:29; and Colossians 1:15,18, where we find such expression applied to Christ*

as 'the first fruits of them that slept,' 'the firstborn among many brethren,' 'the firstborn of every creature,' and 'the firstborn from the dead.' But these expressions do not denote that He was the first in point of time to be raised from the dead; for others were raised before Him. ...He was the chief and central figure of all who have come up from the grave, for it was by virtue of Christ's coming, work, and resurrection, that any were raised before His time. In the purpose of God He was the first in point of time as well as in importance, for it was not until after the purpose of Christ's triumph over the grave was formed in the mind of God, who 'callesth those things which be not as though they were' (Romans 4:17), that any were released from the power of death by virtue of that great purpose which was in due time to be accomplished." Smith, DR, 345, 346.

Christ is called "*the firstborn among many brethren*" and His church is described as the "*church of the firstborn*" because His sacrifice for their eternal victory and salvation transformed them into the image of Jesus. Again, He has **pre-eminence** or **supremacy** among His brethren and in the church of God, both in Heaven and upon earth.

"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;" Romans 8:29

"To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect." Hebrews 12:23.

THE MEANING OF TERMS “FIRSTBORN OF ALL CREATION” AND “THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD”

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” Colossians 1:15.

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;” Revelation 3:14.

The description “*firstborn of all creation*” speaks of Christ’s pre-existence. He pre-existed all creation and is its source or origin. He is not a creature but the eternal Creator (John 1:10). God created the world through Christ and redeemed the world through Christ (Hebrews 1:2-4).

Notice that Jesus is called the firstborn, not the first-created. The word “firstborn” (Greek word “prototokos”) signifies **priority**. In the culture of the Ancient Near East, the firstborn was not necessarily the oldest child. **Firstborn** referred not to birth order but to rank. The firstborn possessed the **inheritance and leadership**.

Therefore, the phrase expresses **Christ’s sovereignty over creation**. After resurrecting Jesus from the dead, God gave Him authority over the Earth (Matthew 28:18). Jesus created the world, saved the world, and rules the world. **He is the self-existent, acknowledged Head of creation.**

Finally, the phrase recognizes Him as **the Messiah**: “I will make Him [Christ] My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth” (Psalm 89:27). Six times the Lord Jesus is declared to be the firstborn of God (see Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15, 18; Hebrews 1:6; 12:23; Revelation

1:5). These passages declare **the pre-existence, the sovereignty, and the redemption** that Christ offers. Thus, the phrase “firstborn of all creation” proclaims Christ’s **preeminence**. As the eternal Son of God, He created the universe and is therefore the **Ruler of creation**.

The author of “Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation”, Uriah Smith, on page 391 of his book insightfully comments,

“The words, ‘**the beginning of the creation**,’ may simply signify that the work of creation, strictly speaking, was begun by Him. ‘Without Him was not anything made.’ Others, however, and more properly we think, take the word, “**arche**” (Greek for beginning, origin or source), to mean the ‘agent’ or ‘efficient cause,’ which is one of the definitions of the word, understanding that Christ is the agent through whom God has created all things.” Smith, DR, 391.

THE TERM “FIRSTFRUITS

In the Bible the term “**first fruits**” is used in two ways. First fruits of harvest as first in time of reaping and the quality of the fruit as first in quality. In Ezekiel 44:30 (margin), they are called “CHIEF” fruits. In Numbers 18:12, they are called “BEST” fruits.

“And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the firstfruits of the land: for [it is] holy unto the LORD.” Ezekiel 48:14.

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever

he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” Revelation 14:4.

Base on Scripture, the term ‘First fruits’ as used in Revelation 14:4, has the meaning of first in quality and not first in time. Although the 144000, the final generation of living saints, will be the first in sequence to ever be ripened in character perfection while on the earth living in sinful, fallen flesh, the number as well as the term ‘first fruit’ more describes their level or quality of character development.

Although the 144000, the final generation, will be the first in sequence to ever be ripened in character perfection while on the earth living in sinful, fallen flesh, the number as well as the term ‘first fruit’ more describes their level or quality of character development. Other passages where the term “firstfruit” is mentioned are:

*“For if the **firstfruit** [be] holy, the lump [is] also [holy]: and if the root [be] holy, so [are] the branches.” Romans 11:16.*

*“But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the **firstfruits** of them that slept.” 1 Cor. 15:20.*

“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” James 1:18.

CHRIST AS FIRSTFRUITS

When Christ rose from the dead, a multitude of captives rose with Him from the graves. Matthew 27:51,52,53. As both Christ and the 144000 final generation saints are called ‘first fruits, it means that they have a similar work to do. As Christ said, “The works that I do ye shall do also.... and greater works than these shall ye do.”

As the multitude of captives could not come forth from their graves until Christ's work was finished and until His resurrection, so, not until the work of the final generation is finished and they have vindicated God's character fully and cleared Him of every charge, can the rest of the harvest of the resurrected redeemed come forth from their graves at the second coming of Christ.

"Christ was the firstfruits of them that slept...Christ takes with Him the multitude of captives as His trophy. He will Himself bring to the Father the firstfruits of them that slept, to present [them] to God as an assurance that He is conqueror over death and the grave."—Manuscript 115, 1897. (Christ Triumphant 286.6)

"Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept. He was the antitype of the wave sheaf, and His resurrection took place on the very day when the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord. For more than a thousand years this symbolic ceremony had been performed. From the harvest fields the first heads of ripened grain were gathered, and when the people went up to Jerusalem to the Passover, the sheaf of first fruits was waved as a thank offering before the Lord. Not until this was presented could the sickle be put to the grain, and it be gathered into sheaves. The sheaf dedicated to God represented the harvest. So Christ the first fruits represented the great spiritual harvest to be gathered for the kingdom of God. His resurrection is the type and pledge of the resurrection of all the righteous dead. 'For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,

even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.' 1 Thess. 4:14." "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.... For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." 1 Corinthians 15:20, 22, 23." Desire of Ages, 785,786.

"The grain of wheat that preserves its own life can produce no fruit. It abides alone. Christ could, if He chose, save Himself from death. But should He do this, He must abide alone. He could bring no sons and daughters to God. Only by yielding up His life could He impart life to humanity. Only by falling into the ground to die could He become the seed of that vast harvest,—the great multitude that out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, are redeemed to God." DA 623.4" Desire of Ages, p.623.

THE FINAL GENERATION AS FIRSTFRUITS

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as "the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb." Revelation 15:2, 3; 14:1-5. "These are they which came out of great tribulation;" GC 648.

God wants a final generation who can vindicate His character and name. This is the role of the 144000 "Firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." The vindication of God's character, his government and holy

law, is at stake. This is what it will take to stop the mouth of Satan, the accusing enemy. (See Revelation 14:12; 12:17 and Hebrews 11:39, 40).

“And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name and separate it for its holy purpose from all that defiles My name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned among them--- and the nations will know, understand, and realize that I am the Lord (the Sovereign Ruler, who calls forth loyalty and obedient service), when I shall be set apart by you and My holiness vindicated in you before their eyes and yours.” (Ezekiel 36:23, The Amplified Bible).

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do...I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.... And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17:4,6, 26. (See also Leviticus 19:12; Leviticus 20:3; Leviticus 22: 32).

“The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing obedience to right principles.” Christ's Object Lessons, p. 296.4.

“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69.1.

CHAPTER 10

CHRIST- THE INFINITE, BEGINNINGLESS WISDOM OF GOD

Was there ever a time when God was immature or without His Wisdom? Was there ever a time when God was foolish?

When was The Origin of Wisdom: Wisdom is described in Proverbs 8 as if it were a person, and its origin is located in God Himself: “The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works” (verse 22). The verb translated “to bring forth” can be rendered in English “he acquired/conceived/created me.” (See more on “qanah” later). The basic meaning of the Hebrew verb “*qanah*” seems to be “to possess” (Prov. 4:5-7). One can acquire or possess something in different ways. One of them is through begetting (Gen. 4:1). In Proverbs the context seems to suggest the idea of conception. The phrase “as the first of his works” can be translated “in the beginning of his way”; when God began to create, wisdom was already there.

God appointed wisdom from eternity, before the world began, to some specific functions. It is obvious that before one can create anything he has to bring forth his wisdom and understanding to do so.

Hence, in the book of Proverbs, Christ is not only called the Wisdom of God but He is Wisdom personified. It is in this context that Wisdom is to be applied.

*“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; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.”*
Proverbs 8:22-31.

What timing is here being referred to? Christ at His beginning of His own creation, His begetting or being birthed by the Father sometime in the distance past in eternity, Christ being brought forth at the creation of the world or Christ when He became incarnate as man?

Here in Proverbs, Christ is speaking of Himself. Christ therefore is the Wisdom of God brought forth. He is the only begotten of the Father - the divine Son of God, God Himself in the person of the Son. His being “**brought forth**”, has nothing to do with His being born or birthed, or to the beginning of His existence.

“QANAH”

In the KJV of the Scriptures, the Hebrew word ‘qanah’ is often translated to denote something which has been acquired. The majority of times it is translated ‘buy’, ‘purchased’, ‘get’ or ‘bought’ etc, thus it is used to denote the acquisition of something not previously possessed. Wisdom became necessary in the creation of the world. Hence, Wisdom must pre-exist even before creation.

The writer of Proverbs uses it this way many times. This is such as “getteth understanding” (Proverbs 15:32), “get wisdom” (Proverbs 4:5, 16:16 and 17:16 etc), “getteth knowledge” (Proverbs 18:15) and “buy the truth” (Proverbs 23:23). This gives us a very good idea as to the thought that the writer probably intended ‘qanah’ to convey in Proverbs 8:22. Acquired, redeemed, gotten or recover are other meanings.

The term “brought forth” or “begotten” here is not applied to His earthly existence but to His being brought forth before anything was created.”

Even more interestingly - especially in the context of our study of the word ‘begotten’ – in Genesis 4:1, this same Hebrew word (qanah) is translated ‘gotten’. This is where the Scriptures say “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have ***gotten*** [*qanah*] a man from the LORD.” Genesis 4:1

Note here that the word ‘qanah’ is again used with reference to something acquired – also that Cain was ‘brought forth’ from within the very being of Eve. Here it is associated with literal birth. The entire section we are studying (Proverbs 8:22-31) is birth and parent-child

language. But this term when applied to Christ who was eternally begotten of the Father cannot refer to literal birth and parent -child language, but to eternal realities as “God’s ways are not our ways”.

“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.**” *The Signs of the Times*, 29th August 1900
‘Resistance to Light.

Therefore, God’s Wisdom always existed in God, it is beginningless. As part of the Logos, the logic and reasoning of God, it was applied in the Creation of the world (John 1). God’s wisdom is described as coming into existence through birth, and yet it was always part of God’s being.

Before God began His creative work, wisdom was already part of His being. But when God began to create, wisdom was born into the world; in other words, everything that came into existence was first conceived in God’s mind. The implication is that through God’s power wisdom took the concrete form of the realities that we observe today. Therefore, when we explore the natural world we are analyzing God’s wisdom, because that wisdom determined not only the physical structure of the created world but also its functions.

So, Proverbs 8 pulls the curtain back to reveal events which preceded the creation of this world. Infinite Wisdom which is the righteous application of knowledge had to be brought forth to create or produce life.

Remember, Christ was the Logos (John 1)—the logic, the wisdom, the reasoning or understanding of God as the Scriptures testify:

*“In whom (Christ) are hid all **the treasures of wisdom** and knowledge of God.” Colossians 2:3.*

*“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us **wisdom**, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” 2 Corinthians 1:30.*

*“But unto them which are called, Christ the power of God, and **the wisdom of God**.” 1 Corinthians 1:24.*

Wisdom “proceedeth forth” and came from God in all the creation of God and wisdom was needed in the salvation and redemption of man.

The source of wisdom is always God: “For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Prov. 2:6). We are recipients of true wisdom as we reflect on that which we have seen and experienced. This type of wisdom is preceded by the “fear of the Lord” (Prov. 1:7). The fear of the Lord is the sphere within which it is possible to obtain wisdom; it is the recognition that God is the Creator and Redeemer.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” Psalms 111:10. (See also Proverbs 9:10).

“EXERCHOMAI”

At one time Jesus said these words to the Scribes and Pharisees of His day:

*“... If God were your Father, ye would love me: **for I proceeded forth** [Gr. *exerchomai*]**and came** [Gr. *heko*] **from God**; neither came [Gr. *erchomai*] I of myself, but he sent (Gr. *Apostello*) me”. John 8:42.*

What occasion/timing is Jesus here referring to in this passage of Scripture? Some say that when Jesus said “**for I proceeded forth and came from God**” He was referring to Himself becoming a Son (when He was begotten of the Father), whilst others say it simply means that Christ departed from God (as in going from one place to another - i. e. from Heaven to earth).

Some reason that the use of the word ‘*exerchomai*’ (to “flow” from one place to another, “to come forth from (physically)”, “to emanate”, “to come down from” or descended from) is meant to say more than just that Christ came from God else why not just use ‘*erchomai*’. The word ‘*heko*’ means ‘to come’ or ‘come upon one’ (to endure) whilst ‘*apostello*’ means basically to be sent (as in ‘apostle’ – one who is sent).

Here are two texts which also contain the same word ‘*exerchomai*’. It is when Jesus said

*“For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed **that I came out** [Gr. *exerchomai*] **from God.**” John 16:27.*

*“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely **that I came out** [Gr. *exerchomai*] **from thee**, and they have believed that thou didst send me.” John 17:8.*

Since we do not in this book postulate the teaching that Christ had a beginning but that He was always God (Deity), this would have to be understood to mean that He came forth from Heaven to earth being sent by His Father.

Other passages which tell us how Jesus often expressed Himself are as follows:

*“I came down from Heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of **Him that sent Me**.” John 6:38.*

*“**He that sent Me** is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.” John 8:29.*

*“My meat is to do the will of **Him that sent Me**, and to finish His work.” John 4:34.*

*“As the **living Father hath sent Me**, and I live by the Father: so He that eateth Me, even He shall live by Me.” John 6:57.*

THE GOSPEL OF BEING BEGOTTEN

Those who are born of God (Born Again Christians) are said to be “begotten of God”. They are therefore called “sons of God” (John 1:12, 13; 1 John 5:1, 18; 1 Peter 1:3; Galatians 4:6, Philippians 2:15 and 1 John 3:1). This does not refer to their beginning in terms of physical birth with their unique personality and distinct character identity and experience as they exists in the world—that is you as a person. Nevertheless, true born again Christians have had a beginning of their new birth existence in terms of their expression or manifestation of the new life of God in and through them as born

again sons of God—the new You—possessing the power of an endless eternal life in Christ.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

*“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called **the sons of God**: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we **the sons of God**, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:1,2.*

Similarly, Jesus is called the “only begotten” of the Father (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9) referring to His pre-existence when He had no beginning. In other words, He did not have a beginning at some point in the distance past or even in eternity. However, in the Incarnation, Jesus did have a beginning as the God-man in the flesh in terms of the expression or manifestation of the life, character and nature of God as the Son of God (in a new sense) and as the Son of man. Same person, but different nature.

While the Wisdom of God is personified in Christ, we need to understand that the most glorious revelation of God’s wisdom is now located in the incarnation, death, resurrection, and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. “Infinite wisdom is revealed in Christ.”

CHAPTER 11

WAS JESUS CHRIST REALLY GOD IN HUMAN FLESH?

The writers of the New Testament as well as the early Christians did not hesitate to confess Jesus as their God. There is a vital truth that is often overlooked when discussing or seeking to understand the divinity and deity of Jesus Christ. It is that

Difference in function does not indicate inferiority of nature in the Godhead.

The vast majority of those who oppose the deity of Christ ignore this basic truth. They argue, “The Father is the Creator of all things. He creates through Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus Christ is not fully God. Or since the Spirit was sent by the Father, the Spirit cannot truly be God”. They ignore this basic truth. Just because the Father, Son and Spirit do different things, does not mean that any of them is inferior to others in the nature of the Godhead. In the Godhead, the Father glorifies the Son, the Son glorifies the Father, and the Spirit testifies of Jesus Christ. All three are involved in the salvation of man and

in the Eternal covenant of Redemption. Although each performs different absolute roles, they honour each other.

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent the Son.” John 5:22, 23.

“Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself: but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” John 16:13,14.

The different role Christ takes distinguishes Him from the Father and the Spirit, but it does not make Him less than the Father or the Spirit. Sometimes as in Daniel 7, the Father is the presiding Judge, but the Son is the deciding Judge. Or the Son is the agent in Creation, but the Father is the source of Creation, but it does not logically follow that the Son is therefore *inferior*. He is different, but not less than. The Father does nothing except through the Son who is His Wisdom, and *“the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” John 5:19.*

We shall now examine some passages of Scripture that describe the Lord Jesus Christ as God. Could we ever describe a creature as “The way, the Truth and the Life?” Is a creature “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords?” Could a creature ever say, “I am the Resurrection and the Life?” Can a creature ever claim, “He that hath seen Me has seen the Father?”

Finally, the Apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:16 nails it when he said these incontrovertible words:

*“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory,”*

Who exactly was Paul speaking about?

*“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichristwhosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath **both the Father and the Son.**” 2 John 7,9.*

Jesus Christ, according to the Apostle Paul, came in the same sinful (sin-damaged), fallen, weak, degenerate flesh and blood body as those He came to save and achieved victory over sin in that flesh. See Hebrews 2:14-18; Romans 8:2-4; Romans 1:23; Hebrews 4:15, 16.

And the Apostle John has given us a clue that whoever teaches that Christ is not come in the flesh is antichrist.

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

Moreover, the same Jesus who came in the flesh declared that He was the resurrection and the life. What a claim! Only God who is the source and creator of life can give life. Not only does Christ have power to give life but He even resurrected Himself.

“Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” John 10:18.

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” John 11:25.

THOMAS' CONFESSION

This is one of the most touching scenes in all of the scripture. Its meaning is clear, unambiguous, and plain. Thomas had been absent the first time the risen Lord Jesus Christ appeared to His disciples. John recorded the incident for us:

“But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were saying to him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see His hands, the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hands into His side, I will not believe.” John 20: 24,25.

Jesus was well aware of the word of this skeptical disciple, even though He was not physically present at the time. The encounter between the Risen Lord and Thomas follows quickly:

“After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.” John 20:26,27.

Thomas was struck to his heart when Jesus immediately turned His attention to him and demonstrated that the word he had spoken were known to the Risen Lord. All we are told is what he said, and how Jesus responded:

*“Thomas answered and said to Him, **“My Lord and My God!”** Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.” John 20:28, 29.*

Jesus’ response to Thomas was not a denial, and shows not the slightest reproach or discomfort at the title “God”. No created being could ever allow such words to be addressed to him personally. No angel, prophet or sane human being could ever allow himself to be addressed as “Lord and God”. Yet Jesus not only accepts the words of Thomas but pronounces the blessing of faith upon them as well.

Some argue that when Jesus told Mary, *“Touch Me not for I am not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, “I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God ”* then He can’t really be God, but must be something else. Remember the truth, *Difference in function does not indicate inferiority in nature in the Godhead*. Here the Father is described as Jesus’ God, so He can’t be God but someone inferior to God.

What people fail to see is that Jesus was speaking post-incarnation. It was the Son who became incarnate, and the Father was His God. Remember, the Apostle Paul has also said,

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” 1 Cor.11:3.

Again, this statement was made after Christ humbled Himself to become a man and depended upon His God. Remember, it was the same Apostle Paul who said of Christ in Philipians 2:6,

“Who, being in the form (morphé—very substance, nature or essence) of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:”

Interestingly, the Apostle Paul said something that was shocking concerning Christ’s exaltation which hardly anyone observes or takes notice of,

*“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things I heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (**Kurios**), to the glory of God the Father.” Philipians 2:9-11.*

In the Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures (Watchtower Edition), they had given a clue as to how the scholar can identify when the New Testament is referring to Jehovah God. When a Hebrew word is brought straight from the Old Testament

and is placed in the New Testament unchanged or untranslated, you can know for certain it is referring to Jehovah God. And right here in Philipians 2:11, the Apostle Paul uses the Hebrew word **Kurios** and applies it to Christ. Obviously, unknown to them, they are admitting that Jesus is Jehovah God. Inspiration concurs,

"Jehovah is the name given to Christ. "Behold God is my salvation," writes the prophet Isaiah; "I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation." 7 ABC p. 439.3; Signs of the Times, May 3.1899, p. 2.

GOD OVER ALL

Romans 9:3 presents us with another reference to the deity of Christ:

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." KJV.

Here are some other translation rendering which directly identify Jesus as God.

"Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen." NIV.

"...of whom are the fathers and from whom according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen." NKJV.

"Their ancestors were great people of God, and Christ Himself was a Jew as far as His human nature is concerned.

And He is God, who rules over everything and is worthy if eternal praise! Amen.” NLT.

“They are descended from the patriarchs and from their flesh and blood came Christ who is above all God for ever blessed! Amen.” JB.

Remembering that punctuation marks did not exist in the most primitive manuscripts of the New Testament, and that Paul elsewhere in Titus 2:13 refer to Jesus as God, it would be correct to conclude that he is identifying Jesus Christ as Deity also in Romans 9:3.

In the Greek New Testament, and in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), the word “blessed” always comes before the word “God”, which would indicate that the “blessing” in Roman 9:3 is tied to the subject which came before (the discussion of Christ). Hence, the very God who is over all has entered into flesh, and for this Paul gives glory, honour and praise.

LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP JESUS

*“And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And **let all the angels of God worship him.** And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. **But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God,** is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; **therefore God, even thy God,** hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Hebrews 1:6-9.*

Since contextually the writer is demonstrating the superiority of Jesus Christ to the Angels, he emphasizes, that all the Angels of God worship the Firstborn. This is true worship and such worship is only given to God.

“Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.” Matthew 4:10.

In addition, quoting from Psalm 45:6-7 in the Old Testament, God (the Father) makes reference to God (the Son), saying, *“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.”*

Jesus is not merely superior to the Angels, He is equal with the Father as He shares in the divine nature while remaining distinct from Him. The author places Jesus far above any Angel with respect to nature and function, and on par with God with regard to nature but subordinate to God with regard to function.

Not only is Jesus the object of divine worship in verse 6, but in verses 10-12, He is identified as Yahweh. The only One whose throne will truly be forever and ever (verse 8) is God Himself.

“And, Thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they will perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.” Hebrews 1:10-12.KJV.

CHAPTER 12

OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOUR

The Great Apostle Paul describes Christians as faithful people who are looking for a blessed event: the Coming of Jesus Christ. These were his words:

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:13, 14. KJV.

The key phrase here being stressed is “*the Great God and our Saviour*”. The critical question and issue is, Do both terms refer to Jesus Christ? Is the Blessed Hope anchored in looking for the appearance of a mere creature? The apostle says He “gave Himself that he might redeem us” referring to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the Cross of Calvary, which Atonement could not possible have been made by a mere creature. What reason would

there be contextually for introducing another person into this passage of Scripture? None whatsoever. Paul is speaking clearly of only one person, Jesus Christ, as “the great God and our Savior”.

Another contextual clue which reveals the deity of Christ is found in verse 14 where Paul says Christ intends to “purify for Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”. To the Old Testament student, this is a phrase that brings to mind none other than Yahweh Himself.

“Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities”. Psalm 130:7,8.

While in the Old Testament it is Yahweh who redeems His people, here in the New Testament it is Jesus Christ. Compare Exodus 19:5..” “A peculiar treasure” or My own possession with Titus 2:14. See also Deut.7:6 and 14:2. Paul is using the same terms used of Yahweh, to Jesus Christ there in Titus 2: 14. The context then is one that would find no problem at all in calling Jesus “***the Great God and our Saviour***”, the same words that describes Yahweh their Saviour.

Before even addressing the grammatical concerns, the context gives us no reason whatsoever to think that two persons are here being discussed. Only Christ is under discussion and consideration. Why would anyone wish to find a second person, since the context does not push us in that direction.

KAI, “And”—The Granville Sharpe Rule of Greek Grammar

There is a grammatical rule which scholars have applied when translating Titus 2:13 known as the Granville Sharpe rule that has to

do with the use of nouns and the Greek connective **Kai**, “and”. When the writer uses a particular construction of “article (the word “the”) —substantive (noun) —Kai—substantive”, and when the personal nouns involved were singular and not proper names, they always refer to the same person. The significance to Titus 2:13 is found in the fact that the phrase “The Great God (**Kai**) and our Saviour” exactly fits this pattern.

The word God has the definite article (“the”) before it. It is connected by the word **Kai** with the word “Saviour”. There is only one person in the context to which both terms can be applied: Jesus Christ. He is “*the Great God and our Saviour*”.

But we only see half the evidence when we look only at Titus 2:13. The Scripture says “that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word (truth) may be established” Matthew 18:16. (See also Deut.19:15 and 2 Corinthians 13:1).

Further evidence to the validity of this understanding of the text of the New Testament is found in 2 Peter 1:1:

“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

There are a total of four such constructions in this small epistle (1:1, 1:11, 2:20, 3:18), the second being found in 2 Peter 1:11:

“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Compare 2 Peter 1:1.....our God and Saviour Jesus Christ with

2 Peter 1:11.....our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The repetition of this construction in 2 Peter 2:20 and 2 Peter 3:18 only strengthen the argument.

“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.” 2 Peter 2:20.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.” 2 Peter 3:18.

Hence, there is no good or justifiable reason for rejecting 2 Peter 1:1 as an explicit statement of the Deity/Divinity of Jesus Christ. The proper rendering of either Titus 2:13 or 2 Peter 1:1 both testify that Jesus Christ is fully God, even as the Father is God.

THE MIGHTY GOD

Long before the Incarnation of Christ, the prophet Isaiah was led by the Spirit of God to prophesy these words:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6.

Christians have always seen this passage as applying to the Lord Jesus Christ. This Messianic prophecy ascribed to this son a string of descriptive names, some of which indicate the Deity of the coming One. One of these names was *El gibbor*, “**Mighty God**”. Very few people deny that this phrase applies to the Messiah, the Son of God. Some will agree and admit that He is called the Mighty God but He is not the Almighty God. Is this passage describing two Gods, the Mighty and the Almighty Gods? But in Isaiah chapter 10:21 it says that,

“The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God”.

Here *El Gibbor*, the mighty God, is also mentioned, as in Isaiah the name *El* is always a name of God. Finally, *El Gibbor* was a traditional name of God which occurs in Deuteronomy 10:17, Jeremiah 32:18, Nehemiah 9: 32 and Psalm 24:8 and is used as an adjective, like Shaddai in *El Shaddai*. So the Messiah, then, is here in Isaiah 9:6 designated as “*the Mighty God*”. Just as in Jeremiah 23:6, *Jehovah Zidkenu* (Jehovah Our Righteousness) is also used as a name of the Messiah. Hence, the Incarnate One, is the Mighty God, truly Immanuel, God with us. The Apostle Paul agrees,

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made your overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.” Acts 20:28.

THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE

In 1 John 5:20, we are again given additional thoughts for consideration concerning the Deity of Jesus Christ.

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

Although *“The true God and eternal life”* can refer logically and grammatically, to either the Father (*“Him who is true”*) or to Jesus Christ, the relationship between the Father and the Son in John’s writings is so close, so intimate, and so perfect, that in reality, the description *“the true God and eternal life”* can be used of either one or both. Think about it: Jesus said that it is eternal life to know the Father and to know the One whom He has sent (Jesus Christ). John 17:3. Therefore, it is **not** eternal life, in John’s theology, to know the Father without the Son. John had just written those words:

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

So, to have eternal life, one must have both the Father and the Son, or we might well be missing the point in trying to find out whether it is the Father or the Son who is being referred to in 1 John 5:20.

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.” 1 John 2: 23.

Then also, given the established fact that John has already referred to Jesus as God (John 1:1 and 20:28), we should not be surprised to find such a usage in the 1 John epistle.

And, enlightening it is when we understand what the Apostle Paul means when he adds that in Jesus “*dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*.” Other translations render this as “the fullness of Deity” or “all the fulness of absolute Godhead”. “Bodily”, meaning, the very Deity of God which makes God God, in all its completeness, has its permanent home in the person, Jesus Christ. It is in Him clothed with a body.

ALPHA AND OMEGA

In the Book of Revelation, we read the following passages:

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” Revelation 1: 7, 8.

“And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” Revelation 1: 17, 18.

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” Revelation 22: 12, 13.

Christians of all ages have used the title “Alpha and Omega” to refer to the Lord Jesus from the very beginning. Alpha (A) was the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega (Z) was the last. It would be the same as saying “the A to Z” in the English language. It carries the same meaning as “first and last” and “beginning and end”.

Is Jesus identified as the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end? Certainly He is. Revelation 22:12 speaks of the coming of Christ and continues directly to verse 13, After saying, “*And behold I come quickly*”.. it follows with “*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*” There is no reason, grammatically or otherwise, to insert a break here and separate verse 13 from verse 12. Furthermore, this chapter ends with the words, “*Come Lord Jesus*” verse 20. There is no reference to the “coming” of the Father. Logically, Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega in chapter 22:13, but this does not exclude the Father. Since Jehovah is the first and the last (Isaiah 41:4; Isaiah 44:6), and each of the divine Persons is likewise identified as Yahweh, the phrase “Alpha and Omega” would apply equally to the Father, to the Son, or to the Spirit.

CHAPTER 13

EQUAL WITH GOD

On one occasion, when Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath day, a controversy ensued that sheds much light on the Deity of Christ.

“And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 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. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” John 5:16-19.

Jesus healed on the Sabbath. The Jews objected to this, alleging He was breaking God’s law. Jesus’ response is often missed in the rush to get to the phrase, “making Himself equal with God”. The Jews

took great offence when He said that His Father “worketh hitherto”, towards the same end, doing the same work as I do, “and I work”. The reason they were so upset is that they had a belief that Yahweh “broke” the Sabbath. That is, Yahweh kept the world spinning in its orbit, kept the sun shining or the rain falling, even on the Sabbath day. So, in one sense, God was above the Sabbath law because He continued to “work” in maintaining the universe. You can see then, why Jesus’ words offended them. He claimed the same right for Himself. They were enraged that by calling God “Father” in a way that was unique and special to Himself, He was making Himself equal with God. They knew that to be the Son of God was to be Deity. The Son is always like the Father, and if Jesus is the Son of the Father in a special and unique way, He must be Deity. Jesus was making sure that no one misunderstands what it means for Him to be equal with the Father. Here also, Jesus was carefully distinguishing Himself from the Father, while maintaining the truth of the claim. The Son’s action are in perfect accord with the Father, in everything. Jesus did indeed claim equality with the Father by healing on the Sabbath. They are not at odds, He and the Father are “one” (John 10:30) in all things.

Inspiration clearly informs us of His equality with God in these words verifying Scripture:

“The Son was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. He possessed divine excellence and greatness. **He was equal with God.** It pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell. He “thought it not robbery to be **equal with God.**” Spirit of Prophecy vol.2. p.38.2.

“His divinity was veiled beneath humanity. He hid within Himself those all-powerful attributes which belonged to Him **as one equal with God**. At times His divine character flashed forth with such wonderful power that all who were capable of discerning spiritual things pronounced Him the Son of God.” Spirit of Prophecy Vol.3 p. 259.1.

“In the work of creation, Christ was with God. He was one with God, **equal with Him**, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, the Representative of the Father.” Signs of the Times, December 15, 1914, par.9.
“Jesus could give alone security to God. He alone could be mediator between God and man; for He possessed divinity and humanity...As the Son of God he gives security to God in our behalf, and **as the eternal Word, as one equal with the Father**.” Review and Herald, April 3, 1894, par.13.

“In Christ is life, **original, unborrowed, underived**.” Desire of Ages, page 530.

Only One who is equal with God can have such a life. Original, unborrowed, underived from any source.

“But **Christ is equal with God**, infinite and omnipotent. He could pay the ransom for man’s freedom. He is the eternal self-existing Son.” Youth Instructor, June 21, 1900, par.2.

“It is a mystery that **One equal with the eternal Father** should so abase Himself as to suffer the cruel death of the cross to ransom man; and it is a mystery that God so loved the world as to permit His Son to make this great sacrifice.”-The Signs of the Times, Oct. 24, 1906. {7ABC 459.4}

“Not one of the angels could have become surety for the human race: their life is God’s; they could not surrender it. The angels all wear the yoke of obedience. They are the appointed messengers of Him who is the commander of all Heaven. But **Christ is equal with God**, infinite and omnipotent. He could pay the ransom for man’s freedom. He is the eternal, self-existing Son, on whom no yoke had come; and when God asked, “whom shall I send?” He could reply, “Here am I; send me.” He could pledge Himself to become man’s surety; for He could say that which the highest angel could not say,—I have power over My own life, “power to lay it down, and . . . power to take it again.”—The Youth’s Instructor, June 21, 1900. {7ABC 461.1}

HE WHO WAS IN THE FORM OF GOD

*“Who, being **in the form of God**, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:” Philipians 2:6, 7.*

When Christ “took the form of a servant (humans) and became equal to humans” necessarily implies that “in the form of God” means “in the same reality as God”, just like “in the form of slave (human)” means in the same reality as humans. So to Paul, the “form” of something denotes the reality of this very something standing for the expression of this very something. For example, if one says Pelé is “in the form of a football star”, it means that Pelé is a football star, for football starship is perfectly expressed in him. With a big difference that Pelé had to work hard to reach the starship, but Jesus has always naturally been in the form of God.

Since there is no doubt that Jesus was truly human, there should be no doubt that He was truly God. It has to be so, otherwise, Paul's perfect comparison and analogy between "in human form" on the one hand and "in God's form" on the other hand would be pointless. So, if "in the form of man" means He was 100% man, we must correctly conclude that "in the form of God" means He was 100% God.

He was in "the form", *the morphé*, of God, and did not think it robbery, that equality with God was something He should keep grasping unto, but was willing to lay that aside and take on the form (nature, substance, and essence) of man.

*"Who, although (in spite of the fact) **He existed in the form of God**, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped."* Philippians 2:6, (NASB)

The noun "form" (Greek *morphē*) is used twice in Philippians 2:6, 7, and in both cases it refers to Christ: "Being in the form of God" (verse 6), and "taking the form of a bondservant" (verse 7). The first time it describes Christ before He became a man. The second time the word describes Him as the Saviour in sinful fallen human flesh.

When the text says that Christ took "the form of a bondservant," it does not mean that He looked like or had the appearance of a servant. It means that when He came "in human likeness," or sameness (*sarx*), He actually, in fact, became a servant. (see Isa. 53:11, 12).

He did not appear to be God, He was God. He had the "form" only God has. In other words, the "form of God" means the mode of existence that corresponds to the divine being. The New International

Version renders the phrase “being in very nature God.” It correctly indicates that “form” means the very nature of Christ before He became human.

CHAPTER 14

THE FATHER IS GREATER THAN I

As the Lord Jesus walked with his disciples on the night of His betrayal, He taught them many deep truths about Himself, the Father and the soon coming Holy Spirit. He told them that he was going to be leaving them and returning to the presence of the Father. In the middle of His discourse, Jesus says,

*“You have heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you’. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for **the Father is greater than I.**”*
John 14:28. NASB

Those who reject the Deity of Christ love to quote this passage of Scripture. Rather than denying Christ’s Deity, this text confirms and embraces it. “Doesn’t that say it all?” No one is greater than God; therefore Jesus can’t be God if, in fact, there is anyone greater than Him.

Why does He refer to the Father as being greater than He is? He had told them that He was going back to the presence of the Father. If they truly loved Him, and not thinking about themselves, this announcement would have caused them to rejoice. Why? Because the Father was greater than the Son. Why should that cause rejoicing? The Son was returning back to the place He had with the Father before the world was. John 17:5. He would be at the right hand of the Father in Heaven itself. “Greater than” speaks to the position of the Father in Heaven over against the position of the incarnate Son on earth.

The Son had voluntarily laid aside His divine prerogatives and humbled Himself by entering into human flesh. He would soon be leaving this humbled position, and returning to His position of glory. So, we see that rather than denying the Deity of Christ, John 14:28 implies it, for the position into which the Son was returning, is a position fit only for Deity, not for mere creatures. This is brought out plainly in the words of Jesus in John 17 and His prayer to the Father:

“This is life eternal, that they may know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” John 17:3-5. NASB.

Amazingly, even this passage is sometimes cited against the truth of the Godhead. How can a passage that connects eternal life itself with the knowledge of both the Father and the Son, and that speaks of the Son sharing the very glory of the Father in eternity past (see Isaiah 48:11) be used against the Deity of Christ. What Jesus really said was

that to have eternal life, a person must know both the One true God and Jesus Christ, who was sent by the Father. This is exactly the same as what we read in 1 John, where having eternal life involves knowing both the Father and the Son.

The Incarnation made a difference in Jesus' perspective of how He saw and spoke of the Father. Having humbled and submitted Himself to become the God-Man, Jesus was subordinate to the Will of His Father. He came to earth to reveal how God relates to man and also to show man's relation to God. Hence, He called the Father His God, and said, "the Father is greater than I. Before His incarnation, He was fully God in the form, substance and essence of God (Phil.2:5),

"But He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philipians 2:7, 8.

Hence,

"The Father is greater than I" John 14:28.

"I can of Mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." John 5:30.

"I came down from Heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 6:38.

"For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all

things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.” 1 Corinthians 15:27,28.

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” 1 Corinthians 11:3.

“My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” John 10:29.

“For the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me.” John 5:36.

Christ who had ever been submissive as the Son of God, became submissive as the Son of Man.

“One of infinite dignity, who was equal with God, humbled Himself so that He might meet man in his fallen, helpless condition, and become an Advocate before the Father in behalf of humanity.” Southern Work p.44:2.

“He who was in the form of God, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, descended from His throne clothing His divinity with humanity that He might reach humanity.” Signs of the Times, November 19, 1896, par.4.

“In His incarnation He gain in a new sense the title of the Son of God...While the Son of a human being,

He became the Son of God in a new sense." 5 Bible Commentary p. 114.10.

There is One true God, and as the God-man, Jesus prayed to the One true God, just as we would expect. Having seen the exalted position the Son had before the Incarnation, sharing the very glory of the Father, we can well appreciate why He could say, "the Father is greater than I."

Therefore, we can easily understand that the Father was, during the entire period of the Incarnation, positionally greater than the Son, who voluntarily subjected Himself to the Father, taking a subordinate position, doing the Father's will, all to fulfill the eternal covenant in the plan of redemption.

"Yet for us there is but one God, The Father from whom are all things and we exists for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exists through Him."
1Corinthians 8:4-6. NASB.

Some believe that (like John in John 17:3) Paul's use of the phrase "One God, the Father" excludes Jesus from the realm of deity. If "one God, the Father" is meant to be taken exclusively, then does it not follow that "one Lord Jesus Christ" also excludes the Father from the realm of Lordship? Is Paul saying that "there is but one God", but includes two persons in the same breath? God is just as much Lord as the Lord is God. The two terms are merely being used to describe different Persons in their relationship to one another. They are not being used to say that God is more "Lord" than the Lord is "God".

Paul, in this verse, is asserting his monotheism (one God) in the context, explaining that the heathens may have "gods many" and

“lords many”, but “to us there is but one God, the Fatherand one Lord Jesus Christ”.1 Cor.8:6.

Paul’s conception of the “one God”, whom alone He worships, includes a recognition that within the unity of His Being, there exists such a distinction of Persons as is given us in the “one God, the Father” and the “one Lord Jesus Christ”.

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2:5.

“I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE.”

In John 10:30, Jesus said, “*I and my Father are one.*” The word “One” is in the neuter gender. This statement rules out the meaning that they are only one in purpose as some misinterpret this verse to say. It affirms that **Jesus and God are separate persons**, but one God, with the Holy Spirit. The verse says they are in **perfect unity** in their natures and actions.

Jesus emphatically stated on this occasion that He was God. The Jews who heard Him saw a man standing before them and they fully understood what He had just stated. They were so offended at His statement that they took up stones to put Him to death, “*because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God*” (John 20:33b).

These Jews fully understood that God presents Himself in the Old Testament as monotheistic, which in their minds precluded that Jesus could be God also. Here again the Bible unmistakably tells us from Christ’s own words that God the Father and Jesus Christ are One.

CHAPTER 15

WHO WAS THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Remember Jesus had said, “*No man hath seen God at any time.*” John 1:18. John had said, “*No man hath seen God at any time..*” 1 John 4:12. The Apostle Paul had said, “*Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.*” 1 Timothy 6:16.

However, the prophet Isaiah had said, “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple... Woe is me! For I am undone;for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of host.” Isaiah 6:1, 5. Moses had asked God “I beseech thee, shew me Thy glory” (Exodus 33:18), and God told him, “Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me and live...And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.” (Exodus 33:20, 23).

So, whom did they really see then? The God of the Old Testament, “The Holy One of Israel”, “Your King”, “Your Saviour” “Your

Redeemer” (Isaiah 43) was none other than Jesus Christ Our Lord and Saviour before He became incarnate. The Eternal Word or Logos that “was made flesh” (John 1:14), the “God (that) was manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16) was Jesus Christ. He was “that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us (1 John 1:2)”.

In 1 Corinthians 10 we are given a flash back of God’s leading of the Israelites through the Wilderness under the leadership of Moses. They were “under the cloud”, “all passed through the sea”, “were all baptized in the cloud and in the sea”, “did all eat the same spiritual meat” “did all drink the same spiritual drink” for they “drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and *that Rock was Christ*” verses 1-4.

“But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness...Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents” verses 5, 9.

Who was the pillar of Cloud by day and the pillar of Fire by night? Who was the Spiritual Meat and Drink, and the Spiritual Rock that followed them? It was none other than Yahweh Jesus Christ, the true and living God who became flesh and dwelt amongst us. (See Biblical comparisons and SOP statements which follow on the God of the Old Testament being Jesus Christ Himself of the New Testament).

Jesus said,

“Ye search the Scriptures (Old Testament) for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they that testify of Me”. John 5:39.

The fact that Jesus Christ is Yahweh can be seen when we compare the following Old Testament verses with the corresponding New Testament verses.

Isaiah 40:3 speaks about preparing the way for the LORD (Yahweh). When we compare this verse with **Mark 1:3** we see that Jesus is the LORD who had the way prepared for him by John the Baptist.

In **Joel 2:32a** it says that whoever calls upon the Name of the LORD (Yahweh) will be saved. This verse is quoted by Peter in **Acts 2:21**, and by Paul in **Romans 10:13**. Both apostles are referring to Jesus as the LORD in these verses.

In **Isaiah 6:1-10** we read about the marvellous vision that Isaiah had revealing the glory of the LORD (Yahweh). John tells us in **John 12:40-41** that this vision revealed the glory of Jesus.

In **Isaiah 44:6**, the LORD (Yahweh) refers to himself as “the First and the Last”. In **Revelation 1:8 and 17**, Jesus similarly refers to himself as “the Alpha and the Omega” and “the First and the Last”.

In **Zechariah 12:10** the LORD (Yahweh) speaks and says, “they will look on Me whom they have pierced.” This is Jesus speaking (**Psa. 22:16; John 19:34**). This verse from Zechariah appears again in **Revelation 1:7b** and is about Jesus Christ.

The “I Am” in whom Abraham rejoiced was Jesus (John 8:56-58)

The Lord who motivated Moses was Christ (Hebrews 11:26).

The Redeemer who brought them out of Egypt was Jesus (Jude 5).

The Rock in the wilderness was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4).

The King of Isaiah's temple vision was the Son (John 12:40-41)."

Therefore, it is accurate to say that,

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever"
(Hebrews 13:8).

The following Spirit of Prophecy quotations reveal that the God of the Old Testament was none other than the Jesus Christ of the New Testament.

"Christ, enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, was the guide and light of the children of Israel in their wilderness wandering." Letter 342,1907, par.7; 22 Lt Ms.

"The Old Testament scriptures reveal Christ, and bring to us a knowledge of His prerogatives and high authority as Captain of the Lord's host... He was an example of truth and purity enshrouded in the pillar of cloud. He gave His gospel to the children of Israel as verily as He gave it from the mount of beatitudes. And He became flesh and dwelt among men, and they beheld Him full of grace and truth." 14 Lt Ms; Ms 109, 1899.par.9.

"Christ was the foundation and center of the sacrificial system. Since the sin of our first parents, the Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through His mediatorial work He may redeem man and vindicate

the authority of the law of God. All communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ. It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh." *Eternity Past* p.256.2.

"Christ was the originator, the foundation, of all the Jewish ceremonies. Moses was the administrator of the law of God, and the True Leader was Christ Jesus, enshrouded in the pillowy cloud." *17 Lt Ms; Ms 233, 1902*, par.5.

"Christ is brought to view in the Old Testament Scriptures as a personal Saviour. And the same Christ who was the Way in the Old Testament scriptures declares in the new, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." *Signs of the Times*, January 10, 1900, par.7.

"He spoke the Word of God, as he had spoken to all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ." *Lift Him Up* p. 261.3.

"Christ in the Old Testament is the same as Christ in the New Testament. His commands and promises are identical." *Review and Herald*, January 14, 1890, par.5.

CHAPTER 16

GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

There is a reason why the Holy Spirit does not receive the same level and kind of attention that is focused upon the Father and the Son. It is not His purpose to attract that kind of attention to Himself. Just as the Son voluntarily chose to take the absolute role of suffering Servant so as to redeem God's people, so too, the Holy Spirit has chosen to take the absolute role of Sanctifier and Advocate of the people of God. But since it is the Spirit's role to direct the hearts of men to Christ, and to conform them to His image, He does not seek to push Himself into the forefront and gain attention to Himself.

The evidences of the Personality, Deity and distinct Personhood of the Holy Spirit are not as numerous or obvious as those for the Father or the Son. When He is not spoken of as often and chooses to work behind the scenes to give glory to both the Father and the Son, He is still an active member in the Godhead and Heavenly Trio. And remember, *Difference in function does not indicate inferiority of nature in the Godhead.*

Due to the fact that some deny the Deity, Personality and Personhood of the Holy Spirit, we must establish the clear truth that the Holy Spirit is not merely a “force”, “power” or “presence”, He is also, in fact, a distinct Person and has a Personality.

Just as the blood is an organ of the human body, although not a structural static organ like the heart, liver or kidneys, it does not mean that it is any less an organ of the body with its unique important function. The Holy Spirit is often represented in the Bible as wind or breath, fire, water and oil, things that flow in and through, does not mean that His mysterious nature makes Him less a Person with a Personality as well. He is an eternal Person and deity along with the Father and the Son with personal characteristics.

*“How much more shall the blood of **Christ**, who through the **eternal Spirit** offered Himself to **God**, purge your conscience from dead works to serve **the living God**.” Hebrews 9:14.*

Quite apart from proving that the Holy Spirit is eternal, this passage of Scripture reveals all three members of the Heavenly Trio.

Although the Greek neuter genders do not necessarily indicate personality, oftentimes, inanimate things can have masculine and feminine genders, and personal things can have the neuter gender. A dog can be referred to as an “it”, although a dog has a personality but may not be a person. Does the Spirit exhibit personality by speaking, using personal pronouns, and doing other things that only persons can do? Does the Holy Spirit, for example, have a will or mind of His own?

One of the clearest indications of the Personhood of the Spirit is His use of the personal pronouns like “I” or “Me” in reference to Himself.

When the Spirit spoke of Himself in separating Barnabas and Saul, He did so personally:

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Acts 13:2.

The work of ministry is a work unto the Lord, but here the Spirit not only speaks of Himself with the personal pronoun “Me”, but we see that we are to view the calling to the service of God as a ministry unto the Holy Spirit Himself. Also, in the same book, the Spirit referred to Himself in the same way.

*“While Peter thought on the vision, **the Spirit said unto him**, Behold three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.” Acts 10:19, 20.*

Here, the Spirit speaks to Peter and again uses a personal pronoun, indicating His Sovereign intelligent action in sending the men to Peter. Impersonal forces do not send men, speak or use personal pronouns in reference to their actions.

In the same way the Holy Spirit is referred to by the Son as a Person, or the statement just does not make sense. When teaching His disciples about the future ministry of the Spirit, Jesus said, not speaking of Himself, but another,

*“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 ye **also** shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.” John 15:26, 27.*

In this passage of Scripture, not only are **all three members of the Godhead** mentioned, distinguished and identified personally twice, but these words are to be seen as literal in meaning even as He applied it to His disciples also, and not spiritualized away in some deep mystically way. Moreover, this is reinforced when Jesus said,

*“Howbeit when **He, the Spirit of truth**, is come, He will **guide** you into all truth: for **He shall not speak of Himself**, but whatsoever **He shall hear**, that **shall He speak**: and he will shew you things to come. **He shall glorify Me**: for **He shall receive of Mine**, and shall shew it unto you.” John 16:13,14.*

The Holy Spirit here testifies about the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit guides disciples. He speaks, and He discloses future events. He glorifies Christ as well. Each of these activities indicate personality and personhood.

The speaking of the Spirit is found throughout the text of the Bible. Apart from the reference given previously, here are a few others”

*“Then **the Spirit said** unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” Acts 8:29.*

“And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.” Acts 21:11.

But the Spirit speaks in another vital way as well:

*“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, **crying**, Abba, Father.” Galatians 4:6.*

In the same way the Spirit intercedes on our behalf:

*“Likewise the Spirit also **helpeth our infirmities**: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the **Spirit itself maketh intercession** for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And **He that searches the hearts knoweth** what is **the mind of the Spirit**, because **He maketh intercession** for the saints according to the will of God.” Romans 8:26, 27.*

Here, the Spirit “helps”, “intercedes with groanings”, “intercedes for the Saints”. Impersonal forces or influences do not help, groan or intercede in this obviously intensely personal manner. The very act of intercession demands personality and personhood. So, likewise, does the act of “searching” and “knowing the thoughts of God”. In addition Paul states,

*“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the spirit **searcheth** all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so **the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.**” 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11.*

Only persons “know” things. Electricity “knows” nothing, and experiences nothing. Yet the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God. The thoughts of God are infinite even as He is infinite. Therefore, the Spirit must likewise be omniscient, an attribute of Deity Itself. The Spirit of God also organizes and appoints in God’s church. He sets apart elders and overseers in the congregation.

*“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which **the Holy Ghost hath made your overseers**, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood” Acts 20:28.*

An overseer (elder, bishop) is one who truly holds that office at the will of the Spirit, who guides and directs the church. Only a person can appoint elders with wisdom so as to meet the needs of the church.

The Spirit is also a witness:

*“And we are **His witnesses** of these things; and so is **the Holy Ghost**, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” Acts 20:28”.*

Can a force, power or influence be a witness or only a person? Would such hold up or be used as witness in court?

Another evidence of the Personality and Personhood of the Holy Spirit is His role in bringing the very love of God (which is not only a principle but brings emotions with it) for His people into their lives.

*“And hope maketh not ashamed; because **the love of God** is shed abroad in our hearts **by the Holy Spirit** which is given unto us.” Romans 5:5.*

The love of God has been poured out in the hearts of the redeemed by means of the Holy Spirit. Can a mere power, influence or force, inanimate entities, convey emotions such as love, joy and happiness into the human heart? Can love be poured into our hearts by electricity. Love, by its very nature, requires that the one bearing it be personal. And if it's the person of the Father or the Son, what need is there for the Holy Spirit?

Paul stresses this theme elsewhere :

*“Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the **love of God**, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” Romans 15:30. NASB.*

In His great commission to His disciples, Jesus said:

*“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them **in the name** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matthew 28:19.*

It is self-evident that the Father is a person; so also is the Son. How then, can two persons share a single name with a non-person or a mere force.

When Jesus was describing the “unpardonable sin” (the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit), He, not only distinguished between Himself, and the Holy Spirit, but He identifies the One whom when we sin against Him, the sin cannot be forgiven “in this lifeworld, neither in the world to come”. Matthew 12:32.

*“Wherefore I say unto you. All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven Him: but whosoever **speaketh against the Holy Ghost**, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” Matthew 12:31, 32.*

*“But he that shall **blaspheme against the Holy Ghost** hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.” Mark 3:29.*

Everyone recognizes exactly what Jesus is speaking about when he refers to “speaking a word against the Son of Man”. The words of the Pharisees had been directed at Him personally. In the same way, then, the words spoken “against the Holy Spirit” are placed in direct parallel with the words spoken against the Son of Man. We have no reason to believe that there would be any less personal element in their blasphemy when speaking of the Spirit than when speaking of the Son. They were attributing the work of Christ in doing good to evil sources. Jesus points out that in reality they were accusing the Holy Spirit of God of doing the very deeds of the devil. Such an action shows such spiritual blindness and perversity that Jesus warns that they are committing an “eternal sin” by blaspheming the Spirit of God.

Not only can someone blaspheme the Spirit, they can also insult Him as well:

*“How much severer punishment, do you think he will deserved who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and **has insulted** the Spirit of grace?” Hebrews 10:29.NASB.*

In the same way, the Spirit can be grieved.:

*“And **grieve** not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption”. Ephesians 4:30.*

An impersonal force or power cannot be grieved, pained or injured, nor can a mere force or power seal believers for the day of redemption. And it was a serious accusation made by Stephen against the Jewish people when He accused them of resisting the Holy Spirit:

*“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do **always resist** the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”*
Acts 7:51.

But the single greatest indisputable testimony to the Personality, Personhood and Deity of the Holy Spirit is found in His giving gifts to believers in the church. Paul says that there are different kinds of gifts given to members in the body of Christ, yet there is only one church, one body. One of the ways the unity of the church is seen is that there is only one source of these gifts: the Spirit of God. Emphasizing this truth in explaining the various manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit, he says:

*“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you to be ignorant...Now there are diversities of gifts, but **the same Spirit**. And there are differences of administrations, but **the same Lord**. And there are diversities of operations, but **the same God** which worketh all in all.”*1Corinthians 12:1-6.

*“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit: To another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues: to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.”*1 Corinthians 12:7---11.

There is only one Spirit bringing all the gifts to God’s people, and surely **the Holy Spirit must know the difference** between the many

kinds of gifts that He is dispensing. Can a mere force, power or influence have the intelligence to discern these different gifts and to whom to dispense them? He gives the gifts “just as He wills”. The Greek word for “**wills**” (*boulomai*) is used only of persons and refers to the volitional act of the will. For example, the Son **wills** to reveal the Father to the people:

*“All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever **the Son will** (*boulomai*) reveal Him”. Matthew 11:27.*

Likewise the Father “wills” using the same term:

*“Wherein God, **willing** (*boulomai*) more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath.” Hebrews 6:17.*

So, if we can plainly see that the Son’s willing is an act of a person, and the Father’s willing is likewise the act of a person, how can we possibly avoid recognizing the Spirit’s sovereignty and wisely gives His gifts to the church just as He wills to do so, and that makes Him, incontrovertibly, a person.

Sometimes, some people say we are “baptized in the Spirit”, and that we can’t be baptized in a person. Yet, in reality, the Bible speaks of our being baptized into Christ Jesus in Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27. All through the New Testament, we are said to be “in Christ” or “in Him” and this is never taken to mean that Jesus is not a person. So being baptized in the Holy Spirit does not deny He is a person—rather, it speaks to His omnipresence and spirituality.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS GOD

The Spirit of God who is said to be omnipresent (Psalm 139:7), omniscient (I Cor.2:10-11), and active in the very creation itself (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30) hardly fits the description of some kind of lesser being. But the fact that this Spirit shares the same name with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19) makes His Deity indisputable. A reference to the Holy Spirit as Deity is described by Peter thus:

*“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? **thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.**” Acts 5:3, 4.*

To whom did Ananias lie? To the Holy Spirit, or to God? Both, for to lie to the Spirit is to lie to God. Then also, we find some New Testament writers applying passages to the Spirit that were originally written about Yahweh. Yahweh’s words in the Old Testament become the Spirit’s words in the New Testament. In Isaiah, for example, Yahweh speaks and sends His prophets to the people with a message of doom (Isaiah 6:9). But notice Paul’s application:

*“And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, **Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet** unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:” Acts 28:25, 26.*

The Scriptures said it wonderfully in these words by Peter and Paul:

*“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the **Holy Ghost**.” 2 Peter 1:21.*

*“All scripture is given **by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” 2 Timothy 3:16.*

Hence the Holy Spirit is fully divine as all scripture is “God-breathed”. No mere force or creature, could take the role in the giving of the Holy Scriptures that is taken by the Spirit of God. Also, the Lord Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will speak on behalf of His followers when they are brought before authorities.

*“But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but **the Spirit of your Father which speaketh** in you.” Matthew 10:19,20.*

*“But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is **not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost**” Mark 13:11.*

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father who speaks in the believers at such times of danger and persecution.

*“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love **Me**, he will keep **My** words: and **My Father** will love him, and **We** will come unto him, and make **Our** abode with him.” John 14:23.*

Jesus promises that the Father and He will dwell with those who love Him and keep His word. How does Jesus do this? He does so by His Holy Spirit, whom He sends in His place, according to John 14 and 16. Jesus sends another Comforter to be with His people for all time. That Comforter is the Holy Spirit. So intimate is the relationship, so perfect the union, that to be indwelt by the Spirit is to have the Father and Son abiding with us. So close is the relationship of the three Persons, that Paul could describe the Spirit as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ.

*“But ye are not in the flesh, but **in the Spirit**, if so be that the **Spirit of God** dwell in you. Now if any man **have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.**” Romans 8:9.*

This powerful, living, life-giving Person, the Spirit of God, is the One who brings spiritual life to God’s people. He is the One who regenerates and causes us to be born again:

*“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is **born of the Spirit** is spirit.” John 3:6.*

*“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of **regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;**” Titus 3:5.*

Hence, the doxology of praise and worship are ascribed to all three Persons of the Heavenly Trio.

*“The grace of **the Lord Jesus Christ**, and **the love of God**, and **the communion of the Holy Ghost**, be with you all. Amen.” 2 Corinthians 13:14.*

Grace is a divine gift and comes from a divine person, Jesus Christ.

The love of God is divine and full, and comes from the Father. And the communion of the Holy Spirit is also a divine fellowship or relationship that is brought about by a divine Person, the Holy Spirit of God, the Eternal Third Person of the Godhead.

"The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. **He must also be a divine person,** else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God". Evangelism p.617.1.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT THE ANGELIC MINISTRY

While the **Holy Spirit works through** the Angelic ministry, it is not the angelic ministry per se. The angels are personal beings (ministering flames of fire) quite apart from the person of the Holy Spirit. When John talks about the seven spirits before the throne, he is talking of **the complete (7) workings of the Holy Spirit** before God and before His throne.

*"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath **the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.**" Revelation 3:1.*

*"And out of the throne proceedeth lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are **the seven Spirits of God.**" Revelation 4:5.*

*“And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are **the seven Spirits of God** sent forth into all the earth.”*
Revelation 5:6.

“These symbols represent the union of omnipotent power and self-sacrificing love.” AA.p. 589.

The Holy Spirit is present everywhere through the ministering angels of God. **The Holy Spirit**, the third Person of the Godhead, is described as ‘**the seven Spirits which are before His throne.**’ Seven represents the fullness and perfection of His power and the diversity of His operations. In Isaiah 11:1 and 2 we see a description of the **sevenfold nature of the operations of the Holy Spirit** through the Messiah.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. And (1) **the Spirit of the LORD** shall rest upon him, the (2) **spirit of wisdom** and (3) **understanding**, the (4) **spirit of counsel** and (5) **might**, the (6) **spirit of knowledge** and of (7) **the fear of the LORD.**”
Isaiah 11:1,2.

God is in active communication with every part of His dominion via the Holy Spirit and His angels.

“God ...is surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers (Angels) He (God) is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present.

Through the agency of **His Spirit and His angels**, He ministers to the children of men." Ministry of Healing, p. 417.2.

Christ manifests His power and wisdom in the earth through the Holy Spirit and **the angelic host of ‘ministering spirits’ under the command of the third Person of the Godhead**. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ’s Representative in the earth, and the hosts of angelic ‘ministering spirits,’ Christ not only sees everything that happens everywhere in the earth, but through these agencies He also carries on the earthly phase of His ministry and furnishes the power for victory over sin, showing ‘Himself strong in behalf of them whose hearts are perfect toward Him. Hence, we cannot equate the Holy Spirit with the angels.

(See also the Appendix for more detailed information, and evidence concerning the Holy Spirit).

CHAPTER 17

ARIANISM, EARLY PIONEERS AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

Arianism is the belief that God is a singular person—the Father alone being truly God. The Son is said to be the “first begotten” of the Father—the first Being that God created. God endowed him with power and authority above all other created beings. The Holy Spirit in this belief is not a person but an influence coming forth from either the Father or the Son. The contrary view was propagated by a man named Athanasius, whose views of the Trinity or Godhead, after much debate and conflict, were generally accepted by the church at the Council of Nicea in AD 325 against the view of Arius, a priest from Alexandria, Egypt.

Believers in the Trinity/Godhead express concern that Arianism is the same issue Lucifer raised in heaven at the outset of the great controversy. They see it as an attempt to “demote” Jesus from His rightful position as fully God, a mistake angels made in heaven, and it cost them eternity.

It is true that at the beginning our pioneers expressed their understanding of the Godhead in anti-Trinitarian terms. Anti-Trinitarianism at that time was based on three leading ideas:

1. There once was a time when Christ did not exist.
2. Christ received divinity from the Father and was therefore inferior to him.
3. The Holy Spirit is not the third person of the Godhead but only the power or influence of God and Christ.

"All of these ideas were originally held by our pioneers. However, it is also a historical fact that the understanding of our pioneers changed over time. For example, (1) In 1846 James White referred to "the old unscriptural trinitarian creed, viz., that Jesus is the eternal God." 36. But in 1876 he wrote that "S. D. Adventists hold the divinity of Christ so nearly with the Trinitarians, that we apprehend no trial here." 37 And a year later he declared his belief in the equality of the Son with the Father and condemned any view as erroneous that "makes Christ inferior to the Father." 38 (2) Originally Uriah Smith and others taught that Christ was the first created being. Later he adopted the position that Christ was begotten not created."

Cited from "The Godhead" by Marilyn Campbell. For reference check: http://www.macgregorministries.org/seventh_day_adventists/trinity.html

While Ellen White's published works do not use the word "Trinity" she does make enormous use of the word "Godhead" and uses the number "three" many times

(See Appendix A supplements) on her innumerable references to the Godhead.

As said before, while she never used the term “trinity,” she did refer to the “three living persons of the heavenly trio” (Evangelism, p. 615). She believed in the full deity of Christ, stating that “Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore” (Review and Herald, April 5, 1906). She also referred to the Holy Spirit as “the Third Person of the Godhead” (The Desire of Ages, p. 671). Her comments, as collected in Evangelism, pages 613-617, suggest that she believed that the Scriptures taught the existence of three co-eternal divine persons.

A number of leading Millerites/Adventists (Joseph Bates and James White among them) came out of the Christian Connection church, which believed and taught Arianism. Ellen White came out of Methodism, which has a strong tradition of belief in the Trinity. But Arians suggest she was Arian by her association with these early leaders, that she initially believed and taught Arianism and later drifted into or perhaps was influenced into supporting the Godhead concept. However, this does not make sense, nor does it fit the evidence. Arians have combed her works, seeking support for their earnest desire that she endorsed their view. In one instance, they say her son, William White, changed her work to make it support the Godhead position.

But there are several problems with this. First, support for the Godhead is in the writings of Ellen White like blue is in the sky, like mortar holds a brick building together. It may not be even possible to make such changes at that scale while still calling it her work. I have never read a single place that “Willy (her son) missed,” if he did embark on this formidable task.

Secondly, assuming Willy did change her work in this way and on this grand scale, knowing something of Ellen White’s personality, I would expect that something would have been said about it that would have reverberated several times around the world with the echoes sounding down to our own day. But such a response is missing.

Thirdly, assuming the changes were made and Ellen said nothing, would this be appropriate behavior for a prophet (or messenger) of God, knowing it would alter the theology of those embracing the work to which she had given her life? If Ellen were that complacent about such a change, can we have confidence in any of her work? If it was irrelevant to her, why do supporters of Arianism press the issue so vehemently today, as a matter of the greatest importance?

Fourthly, in the vault at the White Estate rest the works of Ellen White, much of it hand written in draft form. It would be an easy task to take a good sampling of her published statements supporting the Godhead position and the full Divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit and see if

any of them appear in her own handwriting. That should settle forever the question as to her belief regarding Arianism or the Godhead.

I seriously question that any such changes occurred. Ellen White appears to fully own her support of the Godhead position and to be fully committed to that view of God.

It is documented that while the chapters for each book were being prepared, Ellen White was constantly consulted, and when the work was completed, it was given to her for final approval.

[EGW to her sister, Mary] "I read over all that is copied, to see that everything is as it should be. I read all the book manuscript before it is sent to the printer" (Letter 133, 1902).

Finally, facing the truth that Ellen White believed in a Godhead throughout her life brings her prophetic ministry into question, if in fact Scripture teaches the Arian position. Nonetheless, it is the Biblical position that matters. Her writings only confirm, elucidates or magnifies what is already established and written in the Bible, our true rule of faith and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures of truth.

E.J.WAGONER'S UNFORTUNATE STATEMENT CARRIED TOO FAR.

Arians point to one unfortunate sentence from the prolific Waggoner's pen to assert that he believed Jesus was created and not Divine. The sentences say, "We know that Christ 'proceeded forth and came from

God' (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man"; also, "There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father (John 8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning (Christ and His Righteousness, p.21-22 (1890). These sentences are anomalies in the overwhelming abundance of evidence Waggoner offers, showing the full Divinity of Jesus. (See chapters "Is Christ God," "Is Christ a Created Being?" and "God Manifest in the Flesh" and other passages in Waggoner's Christ and His Righteousness.)

"It is by Him that all things were created, and that they all are upheld. But the works of God reveal His eternal power and Godhead; and Christ is the power of God, and in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Therefore the works of creation show the **power and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ**" (E. J. Waggoner in "The Gospel in Creation").

Admittedly, Leroy Froom (Review and Herald, 1971) correctly says that E. J. Waggoner was among the first to direct the church from Arianism to the Godhead position.

HERE IS A SAMPLE OF QUOTATIONS BY SOME LEADING PIONEERS ON THE ETERNAL GODHEAD OF THREE DIVINE PERSONS

ALL THREE PERSONS ARE WORSHIPED

"..As the saints in the Kingdom of God are accepted in the beloved, they hear: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." and then the golden harps are touched, and the music flows all through the heavenly host, and **they fall down and worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.**" (Ms139-1906.32)

THESE 3 ARE REFERRED TO AS THE ETERNAL GODHEAD

"...**The Eternal Godhead--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost**--is involved in the action required to make assurance to the human agent, . . . confederating the heavenly powers with the human..."{Upward L 148.4}

"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. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin..." {AUCR, April 1, 1901 par. 10} (Austra Lasian Union Conference Record)

In 1884, she wrote, "**The Holy Spirit** exalts and glorifies **the Saviour**. It is his office to present Christ." Ellen G. White, "Man's Obligation to God," Signs of the Times, April 3, 1884, 209.

"There is altogether too little made of the work of the Holy Spirit's influence upon the church. . . . **The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, in Christ's name**. He personifies Christ, **yet is a distinct personality.**" MS 93,1893. MR, Vol.20

p.434,324.

"Although our Lord ascended from earth to heaven, **the Holy Spirit was appointed as His representative** among men."

She then quoted John 14:15–18 and continued,

"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.**"

Ellen G. White to Edson and Emma White, February 18, 1895, Letter 119, 1895.

In 1896, she quoted the words of Jesus in John 16:7, 8, and then wrote her earliest clear statement on the Holy Spirit as a Person in the Godhead.

"Evil had been accumulating for centuries, and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the **Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power." DA.p.761.2.

"**The eternal Heavenly Dignitaries—God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit**—arming them (the disciples) with more than mortal energy....would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin." Manuscript 145, 1901, Evan.p.616.4.

Jerry Moon wrote of Miller's beliefs concerning God

“I believe in **one living and true God**, and that there are **three persons in the Godhead**”...Miller himself held a traditional view of the trinity, but not without a healthy skepticism of philosophical speculation. “I believe in one living and true God,” he declared, “and that there are three persons in the Godhead – as there is in man, the body, soul, and spirit. And if anyone tell me how these exist, I will tell him how the three persons of the triune God are connected” (James White, *Life of Miller*, p. 59). Obviously the non-Trinitarian tendency in early Adventism did not come from Miller.” (Jerry Moon, *The Trinity*, page 187, ‘Anti-Trinitarianism in Seventh-day Adventist History’)” {1853 SB, MWM 77.5}--- **William Miller**.

James White said emphatically, “I believe in one living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead...” {1875 JW, SLWM 59.3}.

“Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one as He was one with His Father. This prayer did not contemplate one disciple with twelve heads, but twelve disciples, made one in object and effort in the cause of their Master. Neither are the Father and the Son parts of the “three-one God”. They are two distinct beings, yet one in the design and accomplishment of redemption.” James White, *Life Incidents*, p.343, 1868.

In 1907, A. T. Jones wrote, “The Holy Spirit is not an influence; nor an impression, nor peace, nor joy, nor any thing. . . . **The Holy Spirit is a Person, eternally a divine Person.**” A. T. Jones, “Christian Loyalty,” *Medical Missionary*, March 27, 1907, 98.

“The **Holy Spirit is Christ’s personal representative** in the field; and **he is charged** with the work of meeting Satan, and defeating this personal enemy of God and his government. It seems strange to me, now, that I ever believed that the Holy Spirit was only an influence, in view of the work he does.” --**R. A. Underwood**, “The Holy Spirit a Person,” Review and Herald, May 17, 1898, 310; emphasis in original. (began to shift his position in the 1890s).

“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 cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ. “ 7ABC p. 441.9; Evangelism p.615.

Elder W. W. Prescott once raised the question,

“Can we believe in the Deity of Christ without believing in the eternity of Christ?” Bible Conference Transcripts, July 6, 1919, p.62.

That question he had already answered when he wrote in 1896,

“As Christ was twice born, once in eternity, the only begotten of the Father, and again in the flesh, thus uniting the divine with the human in that second birth, so we, who have been born once already in the flesh, are to have the second birth, being born again in the Spirit

..." Review and Herald, April 14, 1896, p. 232.

R. F. Cottrell in 1869 while addressing the challenge of reconciling two apparently contradictory declarations of Scripture (Christ is God and yet as the Son of God) stated,

"But if I am asked what I think of Jesus Christ, my reply is, I believe all that the Scriptures say of Him. If the testimony represents Him **as being in glory with the Father before the world was**, I believe it. If it is said that **He was in the beginning with God, that He was God**, that all things were made by Him and for Him and that without Him was not anything made that was made, I believe it. If the Scriptures say that **He is the Son of God**, I believe it. If it is declared that the **Father sent His Son** into the world, I believe **He had a Son to send**." The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, June 1, 1869.

M. L. Andreasen (another serious pioneer) recounts,

"I remember how astonished we were when Desire of Ages was first published, for it contained some things that we believed were unbelievable; among other things the doctrine of the trinity which was not generally accepted by Adventists then."⁴⁷ (Quoted in Russell Holt, "The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination" (Term Paper, Andrews University, 1969).

During 1909, Andreasen spent three months at Elmshaven where he was able to look at her handwritten manuscripts. He wrote,

"In her own handwriting I saw the statements which I was sure she had not written — could not have written. Especially was I struck with the now familiar quotation

in *Desire of Ages*, page 530: "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived." 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. (Testimony of **M. L. Andreasen**, Oct. 15, 1953, DF 961)

CHAPTER 18

CONTRASTING TWO MYSTERIES THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS VS THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. 1 Timothy 3:25,16

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

This Is The Mystery Of Godliness: that the Eternal Logos, fully Deity by nature, Eternal Creator, the very source of life itself, humbled Himself, became a human being with the identical fallen human nature of those He came to save. The mystery is that “God was manifest in the flesh!” It is not called a mystery because God is deliberately hiding it from us! but simply because we don’t understand it, we just don’t get it, seems foolish to us, we can’t fathom it. 1 Cor.2:9,10.

These verses in 1 Timothy 3:15, 16 says that God is manifested in the flesh or God is incarnate in flesh. Jesus was “justified in the Spirit” proclaiming that it was not the flesh that justified, but the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ was thus vindicated in the Spirit at His resurrection. Some believe this means Jesus was “seen of angels” but the word is “angelos” which means a messenger. Contextually, it is referring to the Apostles who saw the Lord in the flesh and preached the Gospel to the Gentiles. That Jesus was “preached among the Gentiles” refers to the scope of His ministry that He came to save all nations, not just the Jews. He was more than the Jewish Messiah, but was the Savior of the world. Jesus was “believed on in the world” being proven to be the Redeemer and is believed on and accepted as Saviour by those who seek after God. He was then “received up into glory when His work was finished. Today Christ is at the right hand of God, making intercession for those who by faith are trusting in Him.

Whereas Satan wanted God’s throne and to exalt himself above, and to occupy His position (Isaiah 14:12-15), Christ humbled Himself and was willing to step down from the throne and to become a real man, then to die a most cruel death upon the cross (Phil.2). Because of this humiliation,

“God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philipians.2: 9-11.

THE INCARNATION A MYSTERY

Christ blended His divinity with humanity, the human with the Divine, and became one with the human race forever. Christ so blended his divinity with humanity that they were no longer two but one. A one that could never be divided into two again. Heb.2:11. Christ who was “in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” and was willing to humble Himself.

“In contemplating the incarnation of Christ in humanity, we stand baffled before an unfathomable mystery, that the human mind cannot comprehend. The more we reflect upon it, the more amazing does it appear. How wide is the contrast between the divinity of Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem's manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child? And yet the Creator of worlds, He in whom was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless babe in the manger.” *The Signs of the Times*, July 30, 1896. (7ABC 443.3).

“That God should thus be manifest in the flesh is indeed a mystery; and without the help of the Holy Spirit we cannot hope to comprehend this subject. The most humbling lesson that man has to learn is the nothingness of human wisdom, and the folly of trying, by his own unaided efforts, to find out God.”--*The Review and Herald*, April 5, 1906. {7ABC 444.2}

“He voluntarily assumed human nature. It was His own act, and by His own consent.” 5 BC 1126.8.

"Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us'." General Conference Bulletin, June 2, 1913, par.32.

"It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life." Desire of Ages p.49.

"We cannot explain the great mystery of the plan of redemption. Jesus took upon himself humanity, that He might reach humanity; but we cannot explain how divinity was clothed with humanity. An angel would not have known how to sympathize with fallen man, but Christ came to the world and suffered all our temptations, and carried all our griefs."--The Review and Herald, Oct. 1, 1889. {7ABC 444.5}

This Mind or thinking of Christ was one of self-surrender, self-sacrificing, self-abnegation, self-denying, self-crucifixion, self-humiliation (not exaltation), and unselfish service for others. This was contrary to the mind of Satan. He wanted to be first in Heaven

and coveted the position of Christ and was jealous of His influence and exaltation above him. This was the Mystery of Iniquity which developed in the mind of Lucifer.

Jesus understood this principle of the Mystery of Godliness clearly. He said,

“He that humbleth himself shall be exalted” Luke 14:11.

“He that would be first must be last”. Mat.19:30; 20:16.

“He that would be chief must be least of all.” Luke 7:28.

“He that would be greatest must be servant of all.” Mat.18:4; 20:26-28.

MYSTERY OF INIQUITY STARTED BY SATAN IN HEAVEN

The principle of the Mystery of Iniquity which began with Lucifer demonstrates the opposite to these principles. It is based on selfishness, self-serving, self-centredness, and self-exaltation. All those who are influenced and controlled by the mystery of iniquity are in bondage and under the control of the satanic principle and are not free.

“Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of the truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan. While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness.” *Desire of Ages* p. 466.3.

However,

“In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom.” DA 466.4.

There is real freedom and true happiness in the mystery of godliness, whereas there is force, deception and unhappiness in the mystery of iniquity.

When we compare the mind of Satan with the mind of Christ (Isaiah 14:12-15 vs Phil. 2:5-11), we see the contrast between the Mystery of Iniquity and the Mystery of Godliness.

Satan wanted to exalt himself above the stars of God, to sit upon the mount of the congregation, to ascend above the heights of the clouds, to be like the Most High. In doing so he introduced the Mystery of Iniquity into God’s universe.

Christ, on the other hand, thought it not robbery be equal with God, humbled Himself, made Himself of no reputation, took upon Himself the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men (in sinful flesh), was obedient unto death, even the death on the cross (Phil 2: 7-9). In doing so, he created the Mystery of Godliness. Herein lies the contrast between the two mysteries.

The Apostle John calls this mystery of iniquity the spirit of the antichrist.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of

*God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that **spirit of antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” (1 John 4:1-3).*

It must be noted that the phrase “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” is a direct reference to His Deity and that GOD came to the earth in flesh. All men are “born in the flesh,” therefore this verse has no significance unless it is referring to God coming in the flesh. John says those that deny this revealed truth of the Godhead are not of God and the denial of this doctrine comes from the spirit of the antichrist who is directed by Satan. The very thing Satan challenged in Heaven at the start of the controversy (Rev.12:7-9), that Christ is not God, he is continuing today via his mystery of iniquity or antichrist doctrines.

In addition, John the Apostle explains that the mystery of godliness is the belief that Jesus came in **sinful human flesh**, while the mystery of iniquity is the opposite belief that **Jesus did not come in sinful human flesh**. (See Rom.1:2, 3; Rom.8:3,4; Hebrews 2:14-18; Hebrews 4:15, 16). Jesus coming in sinful human flesh is essential for understanding the character of God and for believers to strive for a life of victory, purity and holiness. Furthermore, the Scriptures teach that the mystery of godliness will be finished when Christ’s character is fully reproduced in His people. (Rev. 10: 7; Col.1:27, 28).

*“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may **present every man perfect in Christ Jesus**.” Colossians 1: 27, 28.*

MYSTERY OF INIQUITY STARTED BY THE MAN OF SIN IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 stressed

*“For **the mystery of iniquity** doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.” 2 Thessalonians 2:7 KJV*

Paul mentions **the mystery of iniquity** right after talking about the man of sin (elsewhere called the son of perdition),

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4 KJV.

John refers to it as,

“This is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world.” 1 John 4:2.

What religious power, according to Bible prophecy, would come opposing and exalting himself above God, is worshipped, and claims to be God on earth? What power is represented as **the little horn in Daniel 7:8** as a religious and political power, arising in Roman territory (fourth beast) after the 10 divisions of Rome (476 AD), that blasphemes the name of God, that plucked up 3 horns upon its rise, made war with the saints of God, think to change times and laws, and rules for a period of 1260 years? See Daniel 7: 8, 20, 21, 24, 25. This is a Roman power (in nature as the horn is on the 4th beast) that believes and teaches that Christ did not come in sinful flesh but

had an immaculate conception, claims to forgive the sins of men, persecuted and killed many Christians in the past, and is worshipped even today. Paul is talking about someone or some system whose secret agenda is to overthrow God's law and set himself on God's throne. It is this power that helps to advance the mystery of iniquity and carries forward the work of the antichrist.

This same power sought to overthrow the sanctuary, abolish God's law, and destroy God's holy people, because it was a constant reminder of the three-person Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Within the heart of the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant abode three items: The tables of stone, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. The law stands for **the Father**, depicting His character written down. This is His name, His glory. The pot of manna reminds us of **the Son**, who came from heaven to redeem us, whose words become the very essence of the lives of the redeemed. Aaron's rod had within it the life of **the Spirit of God**, without whom we are as dry chaff, already dead in trespasses and sins. The Holy Spirit gives life to humans. Housed together in this sacred place, these objects symbolized a three-Person Divine family, each with a specific role to play in human salvation.

Eventually, the mystery of Godliness will overcome the Mystery of Iniquity. Rev.11:15. Eventually, the people of God will get the victory over the antichrist's beast, image, mark, name and number. Rev.15:2,3.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Re, 12:11.

The mystery is the amazing work of God in becoming human in order to bring us closer to Him.

CHAPTER 19

SATANIC COUNTERFEITS OF THE GODHEAD – THE DEVIL’S TRINITIES

The Satanic mastermind has been bent wholly towards sin and evil and seeks to pervert and misrepresent the truth about God, His character, the Nature of His Government, His divine institutions and His principles of dealing with sin. We are living in the midst of a great controversy between Christ and Satan. It is a war which began in Heaven and will finish right here upon Planet Earth. A war in which the forces of good and the forces of evil are both contending for the loyalty of the human mind (the Battle for the Mind) and this battle is fought and won in the realms of the thoughts. This great controversy has nothing to do with who has more power than who; that is a given. It has to do with truth versus error. Who is telling the truth about God and who is telling the lies about Him.

For six thousand years that master mind that once was highest among the angels of God, has been wholly bent to the work of deception and ruin. And all the depths of Satanic skill and subtlety acquired, all the cruelty developed during these struggles of the ages, will be brought to bear against God’s people in the final conflict.

Fred T. Wright in his book, “Behold Your God” has stated it thus,

“Satan now has behind him six thousand years of experience – six thousand years of training, six thousand years in which Satanic skill and subtlety has been acquired. So, he has more experience now than he had then, and all this is to be brought to bear upon God's people in these last days... Do not forget that today we are working against a master counterfeiter of all time – that being who is so crafty as to be able to make black appear white. He was able to deceive one-third of God's loyal angels into following him completely.”

So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true, that it will impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures.” This means that our eyes will tell us that Satan's counterfeit is the work of God; our ears will believe it to be the work of God; human reasoning and logic will favour it; and all too many will tragically depend upon the witness of their senses. But by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, every statement and every miracle must be tested.

VIA THE MEDIUM OF FALSE TEACHERS AND LEADERS

The Apostle Peter had some things to say about religious teachers and leaders who peddle false teachings. In the first three verses of 2 Peter 2, he provides us with four characteristics of counterfeit communicators.

“.... There will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon

themselves. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words.” (2 Peter 2:1-3a)

The false doctrines introduced into the body of Christ by these teachers are like a malignant cancer, but their style is not offensive overtly. They won't blatantly deny the truth in the beginning, they simply lay their false teachings alongside the truth and give the impression that they believe the fundamentals of the truth. Before long, they remove the true doctrine and leave their false doctrine in its place.

Religious counterfeits are also masters of what Peter calls “false words”. From the Greek term for “false”, *plastos*, we get our English word *plastic*. Warren Weirsbe once referred to them as “Plastic words! Words that can be twisted to mean anything you want them to mean! The false teachers use our vocabulary, but they do not use our dictionary... they do not mean what we mean.” Peter tells us that they openly deny the truth vs 1. False teachers are better known for what they deny than for what they embrace. (They deny that Christ is also called God and that He is equally and fully God and that the Holy Spirit is a Person, as in the case of the subject of this book).

THE DEVIL'S TRINITIES

One of the ways how we can know that there is a Trinity in the Godhead in Heaven and that Satan knew about it, is the fact that he has set up a counterfeit of it in every one of his false religions. Satan is a master counterfeiter.

TRUE CONCEPTS	<u>FALSE CONCEPTS</u>
1. God has a Sabbath	1. Satan has a counterfeit Sunday Sabbath, a pagan holy day.
2. God has baptism	2. Satan has a counterfeit, sprinkling
3. God has prophets	3. Satan has counterfeit (false) prophets
4. God has a gift of speaking in tongues	4. Satan has a counterfeit gibberish or glossolalia.
5. God has divine healing	5. Satan has a counterfeit, pretended miraculous faith healing.
6. God has faith	6. Satan has a counterfeit presumption.
7. God has divine worship	7. Satan has a counterfeit celebration style worship
8. God has conditional immortality for the faithful	8. Satan has a counterfeit natural immortality for every body.
9. God has a fire that will destroy the wicked when He withdraws.	9. Satan has a counterfeit, a fire that will never stop burning the wicked forever in hell.
10. God has a Sanctuary Ministry of Christ as High Priest offering forgiveness of sin and cleansing in answer to our prayers, confession and repentance.	10. Satan has a counterfeit religious system of priests who offer forgiveness of sin and purging upon prayers, confessions and paying penances to them.

Satan has overlooked nothing. He has counterfeited everything that God is or does. And the fact that it is pagan in origin does not make it any less a counterfeit of a concept that is true and real.

It has been reasoned that since all pagan religions come from the devil, it follows that the concept of the ‘trinity’ in the Godhead came into these pagan religions only from Satan, who originated it. The assumption while logical is really incorrect. The begging question is

WHERE DID THE DEVIL GET THE IDEA OF A TRINITY FROM?

Why did he so unfailingly work that idea of a three-person Godhead into all of his false religions? Why did he never set up a false religion with a Godhead of two divine beings, or four, or five, or six? Why did he stick so religiously to his “false religion blue print” that there must always be a Godhead of three divine beings in every false religion.

Where did he get such an idea? For sure we know that he stood in the presence of the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God rested upon him. Isaiah the Prophet verbalized the words of Lucifer after his fall upon earth, in his questions

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the star of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” (Isaiah 14:12-14)

And so he set out to be like the Most High, seeking to establish a rival sacred temple or sanctuary, sacred people, sacred book, sacred priests or saints and so on and on and on.

If he was only contending with the Father and the Son and coveted their positions, why did he not establish a rival government of a twinity. Did he desire to be “next to Christ among the inhabitants of heaven”, to be the “most honoured of God and highest in power and glory”, thus forming part of a trinity? That would have already been the case if it was in fact so. Then why did he rebel?

Another point which should not be overlooked is mentioned by Ralph Larson (2001) in his monumental thesis/book, “The Word was Made Flesh”. He states “Several of Satan’s false religions not only have their trinities; they also have their miraculous born “babies” (a miracle baby).” He adds,

“Does this prove that the miraculous birth of Jesus is only a pagan myth?” or was it a reality counterfeited or to be counterfeited? Definitely it was not a myth by any means. This only furnished us with additional evidence that Satan counterfeits everything God does. How did Satan know about the miraculous birth of Jesus long before it happened? He knew it from the first promise of a Redeemer which was given in Genesis 3:15. A child of this woman would bruise the serpent (Satan’s) head, and not any ordinary child at that, but a divine – human child. That is why some pagan religions not only had a trinity, they also had a miraculously born child, a divine – human child, long before Isaiah wrote, “A virgin shall conceive, and bear a child.”

Counterfeits are more effective when they are made in advance. Now consider these questions: Do counterfeiters put out likenesses of things that do not exist? Have you ever seen, or heard of a counterfeit four-dollar bill? Or a six, seven or eight dollar bill? Does not the existence of the counterfeit indicate the existence of the real or genuine?

The final and coming conflict will be the last great show down between the powers of light and the forces of darkness. It will be essentially religious in character and nature. Satan's last desperate effort to overthrow the church of God will be the masterpiece of deception. (See Rev 12:17, Rev 14:12, Rev 17:14)

The Apostle John in his apocalyptic book of Revelation especially Chapter 13 gives some additional counterfeits of Satan to God's real or genuine.

It is all too easy to be deceived. A little carelessness, a failure to watch unto prayer; a neglect to study for one's self or a willingness to let the preacher do all the thinking, all open the door, to one's being carried captive forever by the deceptions and sophistries of the enemy in regard to his false ideas of the Godhead. And let us never forget that the devil had his concept of a trinity from heaven. He did not manufacture it out of thin air. He did not originate it. He was counterfeiting what he had seen and known in the courts of glory from whence he came.

In conclusion, how can we discern or identify the true from the counterfeit? In his book "Waiting", Ben Patterson wrote,

"The American Banking Association once sponsored a two-week training program to help tellers detect

counterfeit bills. The program was unique – never during the two-week training did the tellers ever look at counterfeit bill, nor did they listen to any lectures concerning the characteristics of counterfeit bills...All they did for two weeks was handle authentic currency, hour after hour, and day after day, until they were so familiar with the true that they could not possibly be fooled by the false."

Just as the bank tellers need a thorough knowledge of legitimate currency in order to spot counterfeit bills, so Christians need a thorough knowledge of the Bible in order to spot bogus religious training. This is the right approach in spotting counterfeit communicators and doctrines as well. We need to study, meditate on, and apply God's Word until we are so familiar with it that we cannot be fooled by anything less than the real truth. (2 Timothy 2:15 ; 1 John 4 : 1 ; 2 John 7,9).

"None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict." Great Controversy p. 593.2.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:12.

GENUINE / REAL

1. God has a Son
2. God's son receives a mortal wound (lamb as it had been slain)
3. God's Son is resurrected miraculously.
4. God's Son ministered for 3 1/2 years
5. God advocates true worship
6. God has an image (his express image)
7. God has a mark/seal.
8. God has a name
9. God has a true day of worship – the true 7th day Sabbath
10. God has a number – 144,000
11. God has a literal, visible, audible second coming of His Son. (Acts 1:8-11, Rev 1:7, 1 Thess 4:15-17).
12. God has a call/invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb for all the faithful. Rev 19: 7, 9.

COUNTERFEITS

1. Satan has a Son of Perdition.
2. One of the Beast's head (Son of Perdition – the Papacy) receives a deadly wound.
3. The Deadly wound is healed and the world wonders in amazement
4. The Papacy (Satan's Son of Perdition) ministers in his persecutory career for 3 1/2 prophetic years (42 months).
5. Satan advocates a false system of worship – All that dwell on the earth shall worship him.
6. Satan has an image of the beast and to the beast.
7. Satan has a mark of the beast
8. The Beast has a name
9. Satan has a false day of worship – a false Sunday Sabbath
10. The Beast has a number – 666
11. Satan has a secret rapture doctrine and a counterfeit second coming
12. There will be an invitation to the great chicken supper for the fowls to eat the flesh of the unfaithful. (Rev 19: 17, 18)

CHAPTER 20

THE SACRIFICE OF THE GODHEAD FOR THE SALVATION OF THE HUMAN SOUL

TRUE UNITY

The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. The personality of the Father and the Son, also the unity that exists between Them, are presented 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.” John 17:20, 21.

“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.” MH 422.1. John 10:30.

There are two distinct, individual, identifiable persons but they are one in the sense of character.

“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}

Also, we have already established that both are equally God and that the Jesus Christ of the New Testament was not a lesser God. He is 100% divine. He is equal to the Father. He said, “I and my Father are one..”

At the Incarnation He humbled Himself in subordination to the Father and recognized the Father as His God saying, “the Father is greater than I.”

“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 268.3}

“This Saviour was the brightness of His Father’s glory and the express image of His person. He possessed divine majesty, perfection, and excellence. He was equal with God. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell” (Colossians 1:19). . . {AG 160.2}

“Jesus was the Majesty of Heaven, the beloved commander of the angels, who delighted to do His pleasure. He was one with God, “in the bosom of the Father” (John 1:18), yet He thought it not a thing to be

desired to be equal with God while man was lost in sin and misery."

"He stepped down from His throne, He left His crown and royal scepter, and clothed His divinity with humanity. He humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, that man might be exalted to a seat with Him upon His throne." {AG 160.4}

"Christ was the Son of God; He had been one with Him before the angels were called into existence. He had ever stood at the right hand of the Father; His supremacy, so full of blessing to all who came under its benignant control, had not heretofore been questioned. The harmony of heaven had never been interrupted; wherefore should there now be discord?" Patriarchs and Prophets p. 38,39.

There was a special intimacy that existed between the Father and the Son. John 1:18. John said, "He is in the bosom of the Father.."

"God permitted his beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory to a world marred and blighted with sin, shadowed with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted him to leave the bosom of his love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. And Jesus bore all this untold sorrow, that we might be changed to his divine image, and become the sons of God." RH, February 28, 1888 par. 2. see also 1 John 3:1.

Hebrews chapter 1 verse³ tell us that “Jesus is the express image of the Father.”

“The Son of God was next in authority to the great Lawgiver.....He was in the express image of His Father, not in features alone, but in perfection of character..... The Son of God was in the form of God, and He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” LHU 24.2

Jesus is the Father’s second self. He has the DNA of His Father.

“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.” JOHN 14:9 {YI, December 16, 1897 par. 5}

Both the Father and Son were composed of the same nature and substance.

Philipians 2:6 states that Jesus “who being in the form (MORPHE) of God” took on the form (MORPHE) of man. Imagine that!

“I and my Father are one.” The words of Christ were full of deep meaning as he put forth the claim that he and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same attributes.”{ST, November 27, 1893 par. 5, 2John 3.

“Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one

with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by him as his right."

"This was no robbery of God. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way," he declares, "before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was..." RH, April 5, 1906 par. 6.

Jesus is the glory of the Father—Hebrews 1:3, John 1:14.; 2 Corinthians 4:6. (same glory)

"Christ came to this world as the expression of the very heart and mind and nature and character of God. He was **the brightness of the Father's glory**, the express image of His person. But He laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and stepped down from His high command to take the place of **a servant**." MM 19.

"In Him is gathered all the **glory of the Father**, the fullness of the Godhead. He is the **brightness of the Father's glory** and the express image of His person. The glory of the attributes of God is expressed in His character." Christ's Object Lessons p. 115.

"In order to fully realize the value of salvation, it is necessary to understand what it cost.... Such love as is manifested in the gift of God's beloved Son amazed the holy angels.....This Saviour was the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person. He

possessed divine majesty, perfection, and excellence. He was equal with God." 2 T 200.

The Son of God from eternity past has been subject to His Father's authority as His head. 1 Cor. 11:6. While both have equal authority and dominion, the Father has absolute authority and the Son has delegated authority. John 5:22. The Father is the presiding judge, and the Son is the deciding judge.

Jesus has never acted independently of his Father and is never known to tell the Father that He is as much God as He is. He was ever subject to His Father's authority and His Father's will. This was the case even before the Incarnation.

"He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Lucifer was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which devolved on Christ alone. The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that He might in the presence of all the angels confer special honour 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." {Story of Redemption, p.13.2}

"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.**"

"Before the assembled inhabitants of Heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. "

"Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love." {PP 36.2}

Even after the Incarnation, Jesus was still subject to the Father's will. That is true submission. See Matthew 28:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:28.

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

In Genesis 2:20,22 we are told that man (Adam and Eve) was made in the image of God. Two individuals yet they were one. The relationship between Adam and Eve was to reflect the relationship between the Father and the Son. They were both equally human, having the same nature and substance. The Father and the Son were both equally God and shared the same substance and nature.

Just as there was a special intimacy between Adam and Eve, Eve taken from a rib from Adam's bosom, so the Son was in the bosom of the Father. See Deut.13:6.

"God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided "an help meet for him"--a helper corresponding to him--one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation." Patriarchs and Prophets p. 46.

Eve was created in the image of Adam, so Jesus was the express image of the Father. Just as Eve was Adam's second self, so Jesus was the Father's second self. Just as the woman was the glory of the man (1 Cor.11:6), so Christ was the glory of the Father. (Heb.1:3). Just as Eve was to be in subjection to the authority and in submission to Adam

although his equal, so Christ was subject to and in submission to his Father. Ephesians 5:22-31.

EVE'S SIN

Eve's sin was in acting independently of Adam. Although human, she wanted to ascend to Godhood. (selfishness). God told her to stay with Adam, but she wanted to move, act and be independent of Adam.

That is why an independent spirit is dangerous and causes problems, divisions and schisms wherever it goes. A small thing but can create big problems in our world, in the church and in the home. It created the whole sin problem.

"The angels warned them to be on their guard against the devices of Satan, for his efforts to ensnare them would be unwearied. While they were obedient to God the evil one could not harm them; for, if need be, every angel in heaven would be sent to their help."

"If they steadfastly repelled his first insinuations, they would be as secure as the heavenly messengers. But should they once yield to temptation, their nature would become so depraved that in themselves they would have no power and no disposition to resist Satan." Patriarchs and Prophets p. 53.2.

"Eve, unconsciously at first, separated from her husband in her employment. When she became aware of the fact she felt that there might be danger, but again

she thought herself secure, even if she did not remain close by the side of her husband. She had wisdom and strength to know if evil came, and to meet it. This the angels had cautioned her not to do. Eve found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the fruit of the forbidden tree." Story of Redemption p. 42.

"Eve's curiosity was aroused. Instead of fleeing from the spot, she listened to hear a serpent talk. It did not occur to her mind that it might be that fallen foe, using the serpent as a medium.....But that strange voice should have driven her to her husband's side to inquire of him why another should thus freely address her. But she entered into a controversy with the serpent." Story of Redemption p.33.

RELATED COUNSEL TO JOHN AND MARY LOUGHBOROUGH

"The Head of the House—Mary, .. I wish in all sisterly and motherly kindness to kindly warn you upon another point. I have often noticed before others a manner you have in speaking to John in rather a dictating manner, the tone of your voice sounding impatient. Mary, others notice this and have spoken of it to me. It hurts your influence." Testimonies on Sexual Behaviours p. 28.1.

"We women must remember that God has placed us subject to the husband. He is the head, and our judgment and views and reasonings must agree with his, if possible. If not, the preference in God's Word is given

to the husband where it is not a matter of conscience. We must yield to the head."—Letter 5, 1861. Testimonies on Sexual Behaviours p. 28.2

ADAM'S SIN

Like God the Father, Adam had a most precious possession, Eve. Am I willing to give up Eve who is one with me? How can I give up the one who is my image, my same substance, nature and my glory? One close to my bosom?

This was the gospel of the cross. He could not imagine being separated from the one he loved forever, his second self. The gospel tells us about a second Adam. 1 Cor.15:45-48.

Whereas the first Adam was selfish, thinking only about himself, not willing to lose Eve eternally, and was not willing to take the risk, the second Adam, Jesus Christ did the very opposite. Desire of Ages p. 623.

And just as Adam agonized and struggled as to whether he would give up Eve, his most precious possession or die with her with whom he had the most intimate relationship; so the Father struggled and agonized to give up his most precious companion.

"Adam understood that his companion had transgressed the command of God, disregarded the only prohibition laid upon them as a test of their fidelity and love. There was a terrible struggle in his mind. He mourned that he had permitted Eve to wander from his side. But now the deed was done; he must be separated from her whose

society had been his joy. How could he have it thus?" Conflict and Courage p.16. (See also Patriarchs and Prophets p. 56. The relationship of the Father and the Son parallels at the divine level a similar decision/dilemma which the Father faced as did Adam. Am I willing to give up my beloved Son? My most prized possession? My most intimate partner, my second self? My treasured eternal companion? Am I willing to give up my dear Son at the risk of eternal loss or do I keep Him to myself? (one equal, same substance, same image, same life, same nature, same character). See Desire of Ages page 49.

THE STRUGGLE OF GOD, THE FATHER

"Said the angel, "Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no." It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His darling Son to die for them. Angels were so interested for man's salvation that there could be found among them those who would yield their glory and give their life for perishing man. "But," said my accompanying angel, "that would avail nothing." The transgression was so great that an angel's life would not pay the debt. Nothing but the death and intercession of God's Son would pay the debt and save lost man from hopeless sorrow and misery." Early Writings p. 127.1.

"Before the Father He pleaded in the sinner's behalf, while the host of heaven awaited the result with an intensity of

interest that words can not express. Long continued was **that mysterious communing--"the Counsel of Peace"**--for the fallen sons of men. **The plan of salvation** had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is a lamb "foreordained before the foundation of the world"; yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race."

"But "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." O, the mystery of redemption! The love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which "passeth knowledge"? Through endless ages, immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore." {Signs of the Times, November 4, 1908 par. 3}

"For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul." {COL 196.4}

"Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every

human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, **at the risk of failure and eternal loss.**" {Desire of Ages p. 49.1}

While God the Father was faced with the same decision as Adam, he made the opposite decision/choice.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32.

"The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave his only begotten Son, tore from his bosom Him who was made in the express image of his person, and sent him down to earth to reveal how greatly He loved mankind. He is willing to do more, "more than we can ask or think." {Review and Herald, July 9, 1895 par. 13}

PARALLELS WITH JESUS

Did Jesus face those same two dilemmas? Jesus was God's equal, but instead of willing to ascend, He was willing to descend. Phil.2: 5-8. Instead of acting independent of His Father, Jesus was willing to cooperate, and said "Not my will but Thine be done". I am willing to submit my will with you as my Leader. (This is Divine accountability).

JESUS DID THE OPPOSITE OF EVE.

The relationship between Adam and Eve was a microcosm of the relationship between the Father and the Son. The Father was willing to do what Adam was unwilling to do; that is, to sacrifice himself at

the risk of eternal failure and loss (separation). The Son of God was willing to do what Eve was unwilling to do, that is, come down at the risk of failure and being separated from his Father for eternity.

Even if it were but for one soul. Here we see the value of a soul. It can only be understood by the risk that the Father and the Son were willing to take.

"All men have been bought with this infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord's property." {Amazing Grace p. 173.2}

"The wealth of earth dwindles into insignificance when compared with the worth of a single soul for whom our Lord and Master died. He who weigheth the hills in scales and the mountains in a balance regards a human soul as of infinite value." {Amazing Grace p. 173.5}

THE SOUL OF INFINITE VALUE CAN ONLY BE BOUGHT BY PAYING AN INFINITE PRICE.

"One soul is of more value to heaven than a whole world of property, houses, lands, money. For the conversion of one soul we should tax our resources to the utmost. One soul won to Christ will flash heaven's light all around him, penetrating the moral darkness and saving other souls." {Testimonies vol. 6. p. 21.2}

"If but one soul would have accepted the gospel of His grace, Christ would, to save that one, have chosen His life of toil and humiliation and His death of shame. If through our efforts one human being shall be uplifted and ennobled, fitted to shine in the courts of the Lord, have we not cause for rejoicing?" {Ministry of Healing p. 135.1}

"The value of a soul, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, go to Gethsemane, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross. Hear that despairing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Mark 15:34.

"Look upon the wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet. Remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul." Christ's Object Lessons p. 197.

"God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son." {Testimonies vol.8, p. 268.3}

"This Saviour was the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person. He possessed divine majesty, perfection, and excellence. He was equal with

God. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell" (Colossians 1:19).{Amazing Grace p. 160.2}

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Jesus Christ was a distinct personalty; One with the Father; Equal with the Father. There was a special intimacy that existed between the Father and the Son. John 1:18. "He is in the bosom of the Father.."

"God permitted his beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory to a world marred and blighted with sin, shadowed with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted him to

leave the bosom of his love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. And Jesus bore all this untold sorrow, that we might be changed to his divine image, and become the sons of God." Review and Herald, February 28, 1888 par. 2. (See also 1 John 3:1).

Hebrews 1: ,3 tell us that "Jesus is the express image of the Father."

"The Son of God was next in authority to the great Lawgiver.....He was in the express image of His Father, not in features alone, but in perfection of character..... The Son of God was in the form of God, and He thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Lift Him Up p. 24.2

JESUS IS THE FATHER'S SECOND SELF

"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." {Youth Instructor, December 16, 1897 par. 5} (See also John 14:9).

Both Father and Son were composed of the same substance. Philipians 2:6. "morphe".

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

"I and my Father are one." The words of Christ were full of deep meaning as he put forth the claim that he and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same attributes." {ST, November 27, 1893 par. 5}

“Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by him as his right. This was no robbery of God. “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,” He declares, “before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was...” Review and Herald, April 5, 1906 par. 6.

In essence, the Son has the Father’s DNA. Jesus is the glory of the Father. Hebrews 1:3, John 1:14.; 2 Corinthians 4:6. (same glory).

“Christ came to this world as the expression of the very heart and mind and nature and character of God. He was the brightness of the Father’s glory, the express image of His person. But He laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and stepped down from His high command to take the place of a servant.” Medical Ministry p. 19.

“In Him is gathered all the glory of the Father, the fullness of the Godhead. He is the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person. The glory of the attributes of God is expressed in His character.” Christ’s Object Lessons p. 115.

“In order to fully realize the value of salvation, it is necessary to understand what it cost.... Such love as

is manifested in the gift of God's beloved Son amazed the holy angels...This Saviour was the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person. He possessed divine majesty, perfection, and excellence. He was equal with God." Testimonies vol.2 p. 200.

CAMP SONG

FOR ALL THE SAINTS

For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who thee by faith before the world confessed.

Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress and their Might;
Thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

O may Thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
And win with them the victor's crown of gold.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Thro' gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,

Alleluia! Alleluia!

APPENDIX A

BIBLICAL AND SOP SUPPLEMENTS

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

The Holy Spirit is included in the Godhead, which is made up of 3 distinct persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The following verses give a beautiful picture of the Godhead in the Bible consisting of three (3) persons.

Matthew 3:16-17 As soon as Jesus (the Son) was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven (the Father) said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

John 14:16-17 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever– the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Acts 2:32-33 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

The Holy Spirit has the Characteristics of Personality:

The Holy Spirit has a Mind: Romans 8:27 “And he who searches

our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

The Holy Spirit has a Will: 1 Corinthians 12:11 "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills."

The Holy Spirit has Emotions: The Holy Spirit grieves: Ephesians 4:30 "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." Isaiah 63:10. "Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them".

The Holy Spirit gives joy: Luke 10: 21 "At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure." 1 Thessalonians 1:6 "You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit can Speak: Acts 13:1. The Holy Ghost said "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them".

The Holy Spirit can Guide and Hear: John 16:13. "He will guide you into all truth. Whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak".

The Holy Spirit Teaches: John 14:26 "But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

He Testifies of Christ: John 15:26 “When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.”

He Convicts: John 16:8 “When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt [Or will expose the guilt of the world] in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.”

He Leads: Romans 8:14 “Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

He Reveals Truth: John 16:13 “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”

He Strengthens and Encourages: Acts 9:31 “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.”

He Comforts: John 14:16 “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;”

He Helps Us in our Weakness: Romans 8:26 “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”

He Intercedes: Romans 8:26 “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but

the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”

He Searches the Deep Things of God: 1 Corinthians 2:11 “The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”

He Sanctifies: Romans 15:16 “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

He Bears Witness or Testifies: Romans 8:16 “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.””

He Forbids: Acts 16:6-7 Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.”

He Can be Lied to: Acts 5:3 Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?”

He Can be Resisted: Acts 7:51 “You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!”

He Can be Blasphemed: Matthew 12:31-32 “And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”

He Can be Quenched: 1 Thessalonians 5:19 “Quench not the Spirit.”

SPIRIT OF PROPHECY EVIDENCE FOR THE THIRD PERSON OF THE GODHEAD, THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1. “We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is **as much a person as God is a person**, is walking through these grounds.”—Evangelism, 616 (Manuscript 66, 1899 (Ev 616).
2. “**The Holy Spirit is a person**, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God . . .**“The Holy Spirit has a personality**, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. **He must also be a divine person**, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. “For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.’ ”—Evangelism, 616-617 (Manuscript 20, 1906).

3. “The Holy Spirit [is] the Third Person of the Godhead.” — Testimonies to Ministers, 392.
4. The Father and the Son work through the Holy Spirit, to help people and to accomplish Their objectives throughout the universe. “The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.” — Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 10, page 37 (Ev 617).
5. “The work is laid out before every soul that has acknowledged his faith in Jesus Christ by baptism, and has become a receiver of the pledge from the three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” — 6 Bible Commentary, 1074
6. “The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.” — Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 10, p. 37 (Ev 617).
7. “The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit; for it is His representative.” — Messages to Young People, 55.
8. The Power of God in the Third Person.—The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.—Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 10, p. 37. (1897) {Ev 617.2}
9. He (Christ) determined to give His representative, the third person of the Godhead. {ML 36.3}
10. “Evil had been accumulating for centuries, and could

only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.” — Testimonies to Ministers, 392 (Letter 8, February 6, 1896; Series A, No. 10, p. 25; 10 Manuscript Releases, 63).

11. “There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.” — Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7, p. 63 (Ev 615).
12. “Evil had been accumulating for centuries, and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. Another spirit must be met: for the essence of evil was working in all ways, and the submission of man to this satanic captivity was amazing.” — Testimonies to Ministers, 392.
13. “When God’s people search the Scriptures with a desire to know what is truth, Jesus is present in the person of His representative, the Holy Spirit, reviving the hearts of the humble and contrite ones.” — 12 Manuscript Releases, 145 (Manuscript 158, 1898).

14. “We are to co-operate with the three highest powers in heaven,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—and these powers will work through us, making us workers together with God.”—Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7, p. 51 (Ev 617).
15. The eternal Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—is involved in the action required to make assurance to the human agent.”—Upward Look, 148.
16. “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, powers infinite and omniscient, receive those who truly enter into covenant relation with God. They are present at every baptism, to receive the candidates who have renounced the world and have received Christ into the soul temple.—6 Bible Commentary, p.1075 (Manuscript 27, 1900).
17. “When we have accepted Christ, and in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit have pledged ourselves to serve God, the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit—the three dignitaries and powers of heaven—pledge Themselves that every facility shall be given to us if we carry out our baptismal vows to ‘come out from among them, and be . . separate . . and touch not the unclean thing.’”—6 Bible Commentary, p.1075 (Manuscript 85, 1901).
18. “Our sanctification is the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit . . Have you been born again? Have you become a new being in Christ Jesus?—7 Bible Commentary, 908 (Manuscript 11, 1901).
19. “Keep yourselves where the three great powers of heaven—

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, can be your efficiency. These powers work with the one who gives himself unreservedly to God. The strength of heaven is at the command of God's believing ones."—In Heavenly Places, 176 (Signs, May 10, 1910).

20. "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost supply the power that makes him victorious in every conflict with the prince of darkness."—6 Manuscript Releases, 167 (Letter 200, December 15, 1902).
21. "The three highest powers in the universe are pledged to labor with those who will seek to save the lost."—Review, August 12, 1909.
22. "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, man is laid in his watery grave, buried with Christ in baptism, and raised from the water to live the new life of loyalty to God. The three great powers in heaven are witnesses; They are invisible but present."—6 Bible Commentary, 1074 (Manuscript 57, 1900).
23. "But no distance, no circumstances can separate us from 'the Comforter.' Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is there, always a presence, a person connected with heaven,—2 Manuscript Releases, 32 (Letter 89b, March 22, 1897).
24. The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He [Christ] would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent."— 14 Manuscript Releases, 23.

(Desire of Ages, 669-670, is similar.)

25. “The Holy Spirit comes to the world as Christ’s representative. Counsels to Teachers, 68.
26. “The Holy Spirit, the representative of [the Father] Himself, is the greatest of all gifts.” — Mount of Blessing, 132.
27. “And more than angels are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord’s host, comes down to direct the battle.” — Desire of Ages, 352.
28. “By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ.” — Testimonies to Ministers, 506.
29. “Do not forget that you have a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, **which Christ has appointed.**—Adventist Home, 350 (Letter 124, 1897).

WHERE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Jesus promised His followers that upon His return to Heaven He would send the Holy Spirit to earth to comfort them:

“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.” (John 14:16-17)

One of the main functions of the Holy Spirit is to direct attention to Jesus Christ:

“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.” (John 15:26)

God the Holy Spirit, in spirit form and invisible to the natural eyes of man, is in the world today. He is active in convicting men of sin, drawing men to Jesus Christ, equipping believers with power for spiritual warfare, guiding them, and testifying of Jesus. The Holy Spirit ministers in many other ways in the world.

IS THE HOLY SPIRIT A PERSON?

God has a spirit and is also a spirit. Our spirit is not a person, its an attitude.

Are good angels spirits? Are they persons?

Are evil angels spirits? Are they persons?

Is satan a spirit? Is he also a person?

SO WHY CAN'T THE LIVING, THINKING, SPEAKING, VOLITIONAL, LOVING, HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD BE A PERSON TOO?

Satan is an exact opposite of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was sent by God to draw men to Himself. Satan is committed to draw men away from God.

Holy Spirit	Satan	References
Spirit of truth	Spirit of Error	I John 4:6
True	A liar	John 14:17; 8:44
Life giving	A murderer	I Corinthians 15:45; John 8:44
Holy	Evil	Romans 1:4; Matthew 6:13
Like a dove	Like a serpent	Matthew 3:16; Revelation 12:9
Our helper	Adversary	Romans 8:26; I Peter 5:8
Gives utterance	Makes men dumb	Acts 2:4; Mark 9:17
Advocate	Slanderer	John 14:16; Job 1:9-11
Stronger than Satan	Strong armed man	Luke 11:21-22

PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

The Holy Spirit is part of the triune nature of God, but the Holy Spirit also has an individual personality.

The Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit:

Has a mind:

“And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit...” (Romans 8:27)

Searches out the human mind:

“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (I Corinthians 2:10)

Has a will:

“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” (I Corinthians 12:11)

The will of the Holy Spirit guides believers by denying permission for certain actions:

“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not.” (Acts 16:6-7)

The will of the Holy Spirit also guides believers by granting permission:

“And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.” (Acts 16:10)

Speaks:

“Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” (Acts 8:29) (Acts 13:1)

Loves:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” (Romans 15:30)

Intercedes: The Holy Spirit intercedes (prays to God) on behalf of believers:

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (spoken)”. (Romans 8:26)

From this list of personality traits we can immediately recognize the important functions of the Holy Spirit in spiritual warfare. The Holy Spirit guides your warfare. He reveals spiritual things that cannot be known naturally. The Holy Spirit speaks the will and words of God to us. He also intercedes for us as we are engaged in spiritual battles.

SENSITIVITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

The Holy Spirit has a sensitive nature. This means He has feelings that can be affected by the actions of man. Because of the sensitive nature of the Holy Spirit, the Bible warns that we should not lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4), resist the Spirit (Acts 7:51), quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19), grieve the Spirit (Psalms 78:40 and Ephesians 4:30), insult the Spirit (Hebrews 6:4-6), blaspheme against the Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32), or vex the Spirit (Isaiah 63:10). It is important that we do not offend the sensitive nature of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is offended by your actions He will withdraw His presence. You cannot wage effective spiritual warfare without the power of the Holy Spirit.

FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

The Holy Spirit also develops spiritual fruit in the life of the believer. The “fruit of the Holy Spirit” refers to the nature of the Spirit revealed in the life of the believer, spiritual qualities which should be evident in the lives of all Christians. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are for power for service. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is for character in the life of a believer. If we do not develop Christlike character traits then we will become a victim of the forces of evil. Spiritual fruit is evidence of spiritual maturity. Like fruit in the natural world, it is a product which is the result of the process of life.

There are two types of spiritual fruit. There is the **spiritual fruit of reproduction**: Jesus said,

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain..”.
(John 15:16)

There is also the **inner fruit of Christlike qualities**. These qualities are completely opposite of the fleshly nature of man:

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:19-23)

Although the power of the flesh was defeated at the cross, as a believer we experience this only to the degree that we practice faith in the finished work of Jesus. Therefore, to be effective in denying the power of the sinful nature of the flesh, it is necessary that we develop or “put on” the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

TITLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

There are several titles used in the Bible to describe the Holy Spirit. A title is a descriptive phrase which explains a person’s position and/or function. It is important that we know the function of the Holy Spirit as we enter spiritual warfare. Look up the following references in your Bible to study the titles given the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is called:

The Spirit of God: I Corinthians 3:16

The Spirit of Christ: Romans 8:9

The Eternal Spirit: Hebrews 9:14

The Spirit of Truth: John 16:13

The Spirit of Grace: Hebrews 10:29

The Spirit of Life: Romans 8:2

The Spirit of Glory: I Peter 4:14

The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation: Ephesians 1:17

The Comforter: John 14:26

The Spirit of Promise: Acts 1:4-5

The Spirit of Holiness: Romans 1:4

The Spirit of Faith: II Corinthians 4:13

The Spirit of Adoption: Romans 8:15

EMBLEMS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

The Bible uses several emblems to represent the Holy Spirit. An emblem represents something. It is a symbol which has a special meaning. Look up the following references in your Bible. They each use emblems which represent the Holy Spirit:

The dove: John 1:32, Songs Of Solomon 6:9

Oil: Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38; Hebrews 1:9

Water: John 7:37-39; Isaiah 44:3

A seal: Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; II Corinthians 1:22

Wind: John 3:8; Acts 2:1-2

Fire: Exodus 3:2; 13:21; Leviticus 9:24; Acts 2:3

The meaning of each of these emblems of the Holy Spirit is explained....

A SHORT TESTING QUIZ

Column One lists some of the attributes of the Triune God. Column Two lists definitions of these attributes, but they are not in correct order. Look at each attribute in Column One. Then find the correct definition in Column Two. Write the letter of the correct definition in the blank provided. The first one is done as an example for you to follow.

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <u>h</u> Eternal | a. Without flesh and blood |
| 2. _____ Sovereign | b. Present everywhere. |
| 3. _____ Omnipresent | c. Good, kind |
| 4. _____ Holy | d. Highest, supreme power |
| 5. _____ Infinite | e. All powerful |
| 6. _____ Unchanging | f. Knows all things |
| 7. _____ Benevolent | g. Sinless |
| 8. _____ A spirit | h. No beginning or end |
| 9. _____ Omniscient | i. Does not change. |
| 10. _____ Omnipotent | j. Fair and impartial in judgment |
| 11. _____ Just | k. Shows mercy to sinful mankind |
| 12. _____ Merciful | l. Not subject to natural limitations |

“ . . . Satan will work with all power and “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. His working is **PLAINLY REVEALED** by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous

errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days. Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight.” – {PK 717.1}

We SHOULD NOT teach The Trinity Doctrine. It is Catholic. HOWEVER, we should teach the correct understanding of the Godhead. THERE ARE 3 LITERAL persons of the Godhead, and NOT just Two (2) Persons.

Here are over 16 quotes from the Inspiration where the Godhead is referred to as Three (3):

-3 Dignitaries (MS 85, 1901)

-3 Worthies {7MR 267.2}

-3 Great Worthies {1SAT 363.1}

-3 Representatives {6MR 29.3} {6MR 389.3}

-3 Witnesses (Ms57-1900.10, August 12)

-3 Living Persons {SpTB07 63.2} (and no, Leroy Froom did not write this quote as many claim; it comes from the original Manuscripts)

-3 Persons (Ms57-1900.11)

-3 Great Powers (Ms57-1900.10, August 12)

-3 Highest Powers {PUR, July 2, 1908 par. 4}

-3 Great and Glorious Heavenly Characters (Ms 45, 1904, pp. 9, 10)

-3 Holiest Beings in heaven { 7MR 267.2 }(Manuscript 95, 1906)

-The Heavenly Trio ." {Ms21-1906.11}

-All Heaven is Represented by these 3 {6MR 389.3}

-When we get to Heaven, we will worship all 3 (Ms139-1906.32}

“...As the saints in the Kingdom of God are accepted in the beloved, they hear: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” And then the golden harps are touched, and the music flows all through the heavenly host, and **THEY FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.**” (Ms139-1906.32}

-THESE 3 ARE REFERRED TO as the ETERNAL GODHEAD

“...**The eternal Godhead--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost**--is involved in the action required to make assurance to the human agent, . . .confederating the heavenly powers with the human...”{UL 148.4}

“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. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin...” {AUCR, April 1, 1901 par. 10}

William miller:

“I believe in one living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead...” {1853 SB, MWM 77.5}

James White:

“I believe in one living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead...” {1875 JW, SLWM 59.3}

APPENDIX B

Merlin D. Burt, “The Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist History,” Ministry, February 2009, 5-8.

THE PERSONHOOD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

No Christian teaching is more fundamental than the doctrine of God. The Seventh-day Adventist biblical understanding of the Trinity helps us to understand the revealed nature, attributes, and character of God. In the last 15 years, much has been written on the history of the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the Godhead or Trinity and, particularly, the position of Jesus in the Godhead.¹ Less has been written on the history of Ellen G. White and the Adventist understanding of the Holy Spirit in the Godhead.²

Against the background of early Seventh-day Adventist theology and experience, this article will explore Ellen G. White's understanding of the Holy Spirit. I will first provide a brief overview of the Adventist view on the personality of the Holy Spirit through the early twentieth century. Careful Bible study, together with Ellen G. White's clear statements, majorly influenced a change in Adventist understanding. Because of current questions, some attention will be given to establishing the veracity of Ellen G. White's clearest statements on the nature of the Holy Spirit in the Godhead.

ADVENTIST VIEWS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UP TO THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Sabbatarian and Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the Holy Spirit, until the 1890s, was largely focused on the tangible, or “living reality,” of the Holy Spirit as a divine manifestation rather than His nature or personality.³ During the period up to the 1890s, most Adventists did not accept that the Holy Spirit had a distinct personality. For them, the Godhead included the Father (who was omnipotent and omniscient), the pre-Incarnate begotten Divine Son, and the Holy Spirit as a manifestation of the presence or power of the

Father or the Son. Adventists emphasized the separate and distinct personalities of the Father and the Son. For many early Adventists, a personality required a material form, which prevented omnipresence. By defining the Holy Spirit as an influence or power from the Father or the Son, it allowed for God to be omnipresent.⁴

In 1877, J. H. Waggoner wrote of the Holy Spirit as an *It* rather than a *He*. After writing of the “one question which has been much controverted,” that is, “the personality of the Spirit,” he described the “Spirit of God” as “that awful and mysterious power which proceeds from the throne of the universe.”⁵ In 1878, Uriah Smith answered the question “What is the Holy Spirit?” by writing, “In a word it may, perhaps, best be described as a mysterious influence emanating from the Father and the Son, their representative and the medium of their power.”⁶ Both men remained respectful of the mysterious nature of the Holy Spirit. In 1878, D. M. Canright, in a more argumentative and apologetic two-part article, explicitly rejected the personhood of the Holy Spirit, “The Holy Spirit is not a person, not an individual, but is an influence or power proceeding from the Godhead.”⁷

In 1889, M. C. Wilcox, one of the editors of the *Signs of the Times*, wrote, “God’s power, separate from his personal presence, is manifested through his Spirit.”⁸ In representing the idea of how God can be omnipresent, Wilcox wrote in 1898: “God is a person; how can His life be everywhere present?” and then compared the Spirit to an “aura” that extends beyond a person.⁹

A few other Seventh-day Adventists took a very different view and speculated that perhaps the Holy Spirit was an angel or in the same class as the angels.¹⁰

The 1890s saw the beginning of a shift toward accepting the personhood of the Holy Spirit. One example of this change can be seen in R. A. Underwood's understanding. "The Holy Spirit is Christ's personal representative in the field; and he is charged with the work of meeting Satan, and defeating this personal enemy of God and his government. It seems strange to me, now, that I ever believed that the Holy Spirit was *only* an influence, in view of the work he does."¹¹

The shift in thinking on the personhood of the Holy Spirit was well underway when, in 1907, A. T. Jones wrote, "The Holy Spirit is not an influence; nor an impression, nor peace, nor joy, nor any *thing*. . . . The Holy Spirit is a *Person*, eternally a divine *Person*."¹²

ELLEN G. WHITE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT UP TO THE 1890S

Ellen G. White's writings are particularly rich in regard to the Holy Spirit, often referring to Him in both her published and unpublished writings. In fact, she refers to the Holy Spirit almost as often as to Jesus.

Ellen G. White adopted three important orientations regarding the Holy Spirit and the Godhead during her earlier years that continued throughout her life. First was her emphasis on the personhood of God the Father and Jesus. During 1845 and 1846, there was a branch of Millerite Adventists who argued that Jesus had come spiritually on October 22, 1844. They also spiritualized the resurrection, heaven, the New Jerusalem, the new earth, and also the Father and Jesus. In 1846, Ellen G. White wrote in affirmation of the personhood of the Father and Jesus: "I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired his lovely

person. . . . I asked Jesus if his Father had a form like himself; He said he had, but I could not behold it.”¹³

Other cofounders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, such as James White and Joseph Bates, also directly countered the spiritualizing view in print and supported the personhood of the Father and Jesus.¹⁴

Second, like Adventists generally, Ellen G. White understood the Holy Spirit in a practical and demonstrable sense. The work of the Holy Spirit was very present and active in her Christian experience and ministry. She received hundreds of prophetic visions and dreams and often experienced dramatic blessings through the operation of the Holy Spirit. During the first few years of her prophetic ministry, Ellen G. White was confronted by some who believed that her visions were a result of mesmerism—now known as hypnotism—and said that there was no Holy Spirit. This gave her “keen anguish, well-nigh to despair.”

“Many would have me believe,” she wrote, “that there was no Holy Ghost and that all the exercises that holy men of God have experienced were only mesmerism or the deceptions of Satan.”¹⁵ She rejected this idea.

Third, her views on the Holy Spirit were drawn from and centered on the Bible. She, like other early Adventists, was, first of all, a student of Scripture. She was particularly careful not to stray beyond the Bible in her descriptions of the Holy Spirit.

In 1891, Ellen G. White wrote in response to a man who believed that the Holy Spirit was really the angel Gabriel and that the 144,000 will be Jews that acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. After giving

important principles of biblical interpretation, she directly addressed his positions. “Your ideas of the two subjects you mention do not harmonize with the light which God has given me. The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery not clearly revealed, and you will never be able to explain it to others because the Lord has not revealed it to you.” She then quoted [John 14:16](#) and continued, “This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.” Ellen G. White then confessed the limits of her own understanding: “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.”¹⁶ In the absence of special insight on the nature and personality of the Holy Spirit, Ellen G. White stayed close to Scripture and, unlike the other Adventist writers previously cited, left the personality of the Holy Spirit undefined.¹⁷ This was soon to change.

ELLEN G. WHITE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT FROM THE EARLY 1890S

Two years later, in 1893, she wrote, “There is altogether too little made of the work of the Holy Spirit’s influence upon the church. . . . The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, in Christ’s name. He personifies Christ, yet is a distinct personality.”¹⁸

In 1896, she quoted the words of Jesus in [John 16:7, 8](#), and then wrote her earliest clear statement on the Holy Spirit as a Person in the Godhead. “Evil had been accumulating for centuries, and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.” In 1898, Ellen

G. White published these words, with slight modification, in *The Desire of Ages*.¹⁹ There is no indication of a particular vision that Ellen G. White received that caused her to write more explicitly on the personality of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, as a messenger of the Lord, she became very specific on the issue during the 1890s. Through the remainder of her life, she continued to support the personhood and full deity of the Holy Spirit.²⁰

For example, Ellen G. White often referred to [John 14–16](#) and the Comforter bringing the presence of Jesus to the believer. She continued this theme as she presented the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Godhead. She wrote, “Although our Lord ascended from earth to heaven, the Holy Spirit was appointed as His representative among men.” She then quoted [John 14:15–18](#) and continued, “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.”²¹ Ellen G. White was comfortable with the existing tension of the Holy Spirit being a Person and also representing Jesus. One characteristic of the biblical Trinity is to represent or point to Each Other. The Holy Spirit represented Jesus. Jesus, throughout His life on earth, represented the Father ([John 14:9](#)), and the Father pointed to and exalted the Son ([Matt. 3:17](#); [17:5](#); [Mark 1:11](#); [9:7](#); [Luke 3:22](#); [9:35](#)).

ELLENG. WHITE’S USE OF *HE* AND *IT* WHILE REFERRING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

In 1936, H. C. Lacey claimed that his 1895 series of early morning Bible studies at the Armidale camp meeting and his 1896 presentations

at an institute in Cooranbong, Australia, influenced Ellen G. White to accept the personhood of the Holy Spirit. Lacey speculated that Ellen G. White had not used the term *Person* or referred to the Holy Spirit with the personal pronoun *He* or *Him* before his presentation.²²

An examination of Ellen G. White's statements show that she did use the word *Person* to refer to the Holy Spirit as early as 1893, as quoted above. But she used the pronouns *It* and *He* variously both before and after her explicit statements on the personality of the Holy Spirit. In 1884, she wrote, "The Holy Spirit exalts and glorifies the Saviour. It is his office to present Christ."²³ In 1891, she wrote of the "Holy Spirit working upon our hearts." She continued, "[H]e takes of the things of God, and presents them anew to our minds."²⁴ In *The Desire of Ages*, written in 1898, she clearly articulates the personhood of the Holy Spirit, "When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life."²⁵ In 1900, she wrote, "The Holy Spirit has gone out into all the world; everywhere it is moving upon the hearts of men."²⁶

The Desire of Ages not only helped to explain the personhood of the Holy Spirit, but it also clearly taught the eternity of Jesus and His full equality with the Father. Her statement, "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived," along with other statements on the divinity of Jesus helped many Adventists to take a new look at Scripture to understand Jesus' place in the Godhead.²⁷

VERACITY OF ELLEN G. WHITE'S STATEMENTS

There are some who believe in the prophetic authority of Ellen G. White's writings but deny the personhood of the Holy Spirit and His place in the Godhead. Ellen G. White's clear statements place them in a difficult position. In response, they have argued that her secretaries or editors inserted these statements without her knowledge. Tim Poirier, vice director of the Ellen G. White Estate, published a helpful paper in 2006 tracing back key statements by Ellen G. White to their original source.

Original drafts, written by the hand of Ellen G. White, are available for at least four of her clearest statements.²⁸ Other documents are accessible in the original typed form and contain handwritten notations by Ellen G. White on the pages.²⁹ At the top of one typed manuscript, Ellen G. White had written the words, "I have read this carefully and accept it."³⁰ Several of these statements were published in various forms. Ellen G. White, herself, paid for the publishing plates of *The Desire of Ages* and most of her other books. In *The Desire of Ages*, she even sent corrections for the book after the first edition was already published. These changes were incorporated in the second printing. The degree of veracity for Ellen G. White's statements is significant, and editors find it hard to argue that she did not write the statements regarding the Holy Spirit that appear in print.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White was given the prophetic gift. Her emphatic statements had a significant influence on the development of the Adventist understanding of the Trinity, particularly through support of the eternal and original

nature of Jesus and the full divinity and personhood of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, Seventh-day Adventist doctrine is established through the authority of Scripture rather than through the writings of Ellen G. White. Mrs. White understood her prophetic role was to bring people to the Bible as the final authority and the basis for all faith and practice. She wrote in her first published tract: “I recommend to you, dear reader, the word of God as the rule of your faith and practice.”³¹ On many occasions she defined the relationship of her writings to the Bible. In one of her more compelling statements, she defined her prophetic role: “I have a work of great responsibility to do—to impart by pen and voice the instruction given me, not alone to Seventh-day Adventists, but to the world. I have published many books, large and small, and some of these have been translated into several languages. This is my work—to open the Scriptures to others as God has opened them to me.”³²

Seventh-day Adventists have a more biblical orientation on the Holy Spirit because of the writings of Ellen G. White. We can be grateful that God has led throughout the history of the church to build an understanding of the Bible through the influence of the Holy Spirit in the gift of prophecy.

1 Studies include Merlin D. Burt, “Demise of Semi-Arianism and Anti-Trinitarianism in Adventist Theology, 1888-1957” (research paper, Andrews University, 1996); Gerhard Pfandl, *The Doctrine of the Trinity Among Adventists* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1999); Woodrow W. Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John Reeve, *The Trinity: Understanding God’s Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2002); Jerry Moon, “The Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 1:

Historical Overview,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 41, no. 1 (2003): 113–129; Jerry Moon, “The Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 2: The Role of Ellen G. White,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 41, no. 2 (2003): 275–292; Michael Dörnbrack, “Die Rolle Ellen Whites bei der Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre in der Adventgemeinde: Aussagen, Auswirkungen und Reaktionen” (research paper, Theologische Hochschule Friedensau, 2004); Merlin D. Burt, “History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17, no. 1 (2006): 125–139; Jerry Moon, “The Quest for a Biblical Trinity: Ellen White’s ‘Heavenly Trio’ Compared to the Traditional Doctrine,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17, no. 1 (2006): 140–159; Denis Fortin, “God, the Trinity, and Adventism: An Introduction to the Issues,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17, no. 1 (2006): 4–10; Denis Kaiser, “A Comparative Study on the Trinity as Seen in the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Christian Connexion, and Among Seventh-day Adventists Until 1870” (research paper, Andrews University, 2008); Merlin D. Burt, “The Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist History,” *Ministry*, February 2009, 5–8. Only a few papers were written before the 1990s. Two of the more significant are Erwin Roy Gane, “The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer” (master’s thesis, Andrews University, 1963); Russell Holt, “The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance” (term paper, Andrews University, 1969).

2 Recent studies include Denis Kaiser, “The Holy Spirit and the Hermeneutical Approach in Modern Adventist Anti-Trinitarian Literature” (research paper, Andrews University, 2008); Denis Kaiser, “The Reception of Ellen White’s Trinitarian Statements, 1897-1915,”

in *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, eds. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., forthcoming; Tim Poirier, “Ellen White’s Trinitarian Statements: What Did She Actually Write?” *Ellen White and Current Issues Symposium 2* (2006): 18–40; Evelyn Tollerton, “The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Seventh-day Adventist Theology: A Paradigm Shift From Anti-Trinitarianism to Trinitarianism, 1846-1946” (research paper, Andrews University, 2006). The earliest history of the personality of the Holy Spirit is from Christy Mathewson Taylor, “The Doctrine of the Personality of the Holy Spirit as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church up to 1900” (bachelor’s thesis, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1953). Some of the content in the first section of this paper is drawn from Taylor’s research.

3 E. Goodrich, “No Spirit,” *Review and Herald*, January 28, 1862, 68; R. F. Cottrell, “The Beginning of the End,” *Review and Herald*, December 16, 1873, 5; Joseph Clarke, “Be Filled With the Spirit,” *Review and Herald*, March 10, 1874, 103.

4 D. M. Canright, “The Personality of God,” *Review and Herald*, August 29–September 19, 1878, 73, 81, 82, 89–90, 97; D. M. Canright, *Matter and Spirit; or, The Problem of Human Thought: A Philosophical Argument* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882), 47, 48; D. M. Canright, “The Holy Spirit,” *Signs of the Times*, August 8, 1878, 236; Uriah Smith, “In the Question Chair: Is the Holy Ghost a Person?” *Review and Herald*, October 28, 1890, 664. For a good explanation of early Adventist understanding of personhood, see Evelyn Tollerton, “The Spirit of God: The Omnipresent Influence of God” (paper presented at SDATS

Scholarship Symposium, January 9, 2007).

5 J. H. Waggoner, *The Spirit of God: Its Offices and Manifestations to the End of the Christian Age* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1877), 8, 9.

6 James White and Uriah Smith, *The Biblical Institute: A Synopsis of Lectures on the Principal Doctrines of Seventh-day Adventists* (Oakland, CA: Steam Press of the Pacific S.D.A. Pub. House, 1878), 184.

7 D. M. Canright, “The Holy Spirit,” *Signs of the Times*, July 25, 1878, 218; D. M. Canright, “The Holy Spirit,” *Signs of the Times*, August 8, 1878, 236.

8 M. C. Wilcox, “Manifestation of the Holy Spirit,” *Signs of the Times*, July 15, 1889, 422.

9 M. C. Wilcox, “The Spirit of Life,” *Signs of the Times*, June 2, 1898, 342.

10 C. P. Bollman, “The Spirit of God,” *Signs of the Times*, November 4, 1889, 663.

11 R. A. Underwood, “The Holy Spirit a Person,” *Review and Herald*, May 17, 1898, 310; emphasis in original.

12 A. T. Jones, “Christian Loyalty,” *Medical Missionary*, March 27, 1907, 98. With the exception of Ellen G. White, Jones is also the earliest clear presenter of the eternal underived deity of Jesus. See Burt, “Demise of Semi-Arianism,” 7, 8.

13 Ellen Harmon, “Letter From Sister Harmon,” *Day-Star*, March

14, 1846, 7.

14 James White, “Preach the Word,” *Review and Herald*, December 11, 1855, 85; see also James White, “Letter From Bro. White,” *Day-Star*, January 24, 1846, 25; Joseph Bates, *The Opening Heavens; or, A Connected View of the Testimony of the Prophets and Apostles, Concerning the Opening Heavens, Compared With Astronomical Observations, and of the Present and Future Location of the New Jerusalem, the Paradise of God* (New Bedford, MA: Benjamin Lindsey, 1846), 1.

15 Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1945), 22.

16 Ellen G. White to Brother Chapman, June 11, 1891, Letter 7, 1891, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), 175, 179.

17 The same is true regarding the nature of the Jesus’ divinity. In this case, she is the earliest Adventist writer to refer to Christ as eternal. See Ellen G. White, “An Appeal to the Ministers,” *Review and Herald*, August 8, 1878, 49.

18 Ellen G. White, “Privileges and Responsibilities of Christians; Depend on Holy Spirit, Not Self,” MS 93, 1893, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993), 323, 324.

19 Ellen G. White, “My Brethren in America,” February 6, 1896, Letter 8, 1896, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), 34; Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies*

for *Ministers and Workers*, no. 10 (1897), 25–33; Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), 671.

20 Ellen G. White to Sister Wessels, March 7, 1897, Letter 124, 1897, in *Daughters of God* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1998), 183–185; Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers*, no. 10 (1897), 37; Ellen G. White, “Extracts From Discourse Given by Mrs. E. G. White in the Avondale Church, March 25, 1899,” MS 66, 1899; Ellen G. White, “Preparation for Baptism,” MS 57, 1900; Ellen G. White, “God’s Purpose for His People,” MS 27a, 1900; Ellen G. White, MS 130, 1901; Ellen G. White, “An Important Letter,” *Union Conference Record*, April 1, 1901, 2; Ellen G. White, “Preach the Word,” MS 20, 1906; Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies Series B*, no. 7 (1905), 62, 63 from MS 21, 1906, written in regard to J. H. Kellogg and his view that God was an essence that pervades all of nature rather than a personal being. She wrote earlier in this manuscript, “I am instructed to say, The sentiments of those who are searching for advanced scientific ideas are not to be trusted. Such representations as the following are made: ‘The Father is as the light invisible; the Son is as the light embodied; the Spirit is the light shed abroad.’ ‘The Father is like the dew, invisible vapor; the Son is like the dew gathered in beauteous form; the Spirit is like the dew fallen to the seat of life.’ Another representation: ‘The Father is like the invisible vapor; the Son is like the leaden cloud; the Spirit is rain fallen and working in refreshing power.’ All these spiritualistic representations are simply nothingness. They are imperfect, untrue.”

21 Ellen G. White to Edson and Emma White, February 18, 1895, Letter 119, 1895 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate).

22 H. C. Lacey to W. C. White, July 27, 1936 (Berrien Springs, MI: Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University).

23 Ellen G. White, “Man’s Obligation to God,” *Signs of the Times*, April 3, 1884, 209.

24 Ellen G. White, “Meeting Trials,” *Review and Herald*, August 25, 1891, 529.

25 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 173.

26 Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1900), 70.

27 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 530.

28 Poirier, “Ellen White’s Trinitarian Statements.” Handwritten original drafts by Ellen White are extant for MS 93, 1893; MS 57, 1900; MS 20, 1906; and MS 21, 1906.

29 Interlineated original typed manuscripts are extant for Letter 8, 1896; MS 27a, 1900; MS 57, 1900; MS 20, 1906; and MS 21, 1906.

30 MS 20, 1906.

31 Ellen G. White, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White* (Saratoga Springs, NY: James White, 1851), 64.

32 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8 (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1904), 236.

SOME WORTHWHILE COMMENTS FROM READERS OF

THIS ARTICLE

Timberlyn Baum Jeffery. Kaupa2 months ago

Response to a critic

You're using "We want the Holy Spirit which is Jesus Christ" as your argument? Is Jesus not God?? Of course He is. Jesus calls Himself God many times. So then how does your quoted verse not directly work against what you're trying to argue?? If the Holy Spirit is Jesus and Jesus is God... Is not the Holy Spirit also God? And does the bible not say that God always was and always will be? Why did Christ tell people to baptize in the name of the father, the son and the Holy spirit? This implies they have equal authority. Why does Jesus say the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin if the Holy Spirit isn't God? Only God can convict of sin. If I called myself Jesus Christ, would I not be calling myself God? Of course I would! Don't get too caught up on the word "trinity". If you look at how this word is defined by the Adventists in the fundamental beliefs, they define it the exact way Ellen White did as well as the bible. Catholics may define the word a different way. The same that every church defines the word "rapture" differently than how Adventists would define it and that word is found nowhere in the bible either. What matters is definition. What someone means by the word. The intent. That's all that matters to God. Do you think we'll be condemned for no longer speaking the same language as Jesus spoke in His time? Obviously not. Don't get caught up in word semantics. Word semantics is an effective strategy employed manipulate others.

Thus we get their Idea of Transubstantiation. in the Eucharist, which is really the concept of the Human becoming infused with

the substance of Jesus which is rely the substance of the Father. This is the Idea of infused righteousness. Justification and Sanctification are made one. This is also the basis of Pantheism (which is the Alpha and Omega of apostasy), which is the Idea of the substance of God blended into the human which if allowed will perfect/sanctify the human physically, mentally and spiritually and morally in every way. Thus the Holy Spirit is really just the substance of God blended with Humanity. A power form Jesus and the Father to sanctify Humanity.

The Trinity that the Church holds today is the same in title only. But very different in what it means. The non trinitarian position today is actually very much in line with the Catholic Trinity. See their catechism for more.

Our pioneers as James White has been recorded on hating this idea of oneness or one substance. That was their problem with the Trinity. Like I said when you understand the Catholic Trinity you will see that it very much lends itself to Pantheism and is nothing like the SDA church view on Trinity today.

“Grace be with you and peace from GOD THE FATHER, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 1:3) “Grace be unto you, and peace from GOD OUR FATHER, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:2) “Grace to you, and peace, from GOD OUR FATHER and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philemon 1:3) “But to us there is but ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in HIM; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

Ernest Smith Jeffery. Kaupa5 months ago

EGW, Jesus is the same substance of His Father. He is an exact duplication (image) of His Father. There is One God, the Father of Christ, from whom all things originate. Christ created everything because His divinity came from His Father! Christ has no problem or issue with also being called by His Father's names, and no problem being equal in all regards to His Father. Nor do I have any issues being called by my earthly father's name! But I am not my father. The Prince may one day become a king, but that right he inherited from his father.

Hushai 4 years ago

Ellen White describes the Godhead as consisting of **one** Being having **two** personalities (The Father and Christ) and **three** persons.

The Bible agrees that God is one being, as those who study carefully will find. Jesus, however, is special. In Greek, we find the term “monogenes” used to refer to His uniqueness, meaning something like one of a kind, and translated as “only begotten” in the KJV. Ellen White recognizes that Jesus was both God and man, and that the two were separate. God did not become a human, neither did humanity become Divine in the incarnation. Evidence for this split identity occurs in at least two places, with one being that of Jesus’ death on the cross. Mrs. White is clear that divinity did not die, but that humanity did, and that Christ raised Himself from the dead (His divinity raised His humanity). The other place we see this split identity is with the wilderness experience: Jesus was said to be tempted in the wilderness (as a human); whereas the Bible is clear (James 1:13) that God cannot be tempted. Ellen White writes of this and says:

We must practice the example of Christ, bearing in mind His

Sonship and His humanity. **It was not God that was tempted in the wilderness, nor a God that was to endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself.** It was the Majesty of heaven who became a man— humbled Himself to our human nature. {3SM 140.4}

So if “God” was not tempted in the wilderness, and if divinity did not die on the cross, was Jesus not God? Of course, that is not the answer. The fact remains that Jesus was BOTH God and man. And that is where most of the confusion lies in the entire debate about the nature of the Godhead.

Silas Marner Don Edstrom 6 years ago

God has no gender! “He” is the generic gender. It is only the problem brought

on by gender rights people, LGBTs, women’s movement, etc. that make this an issue. I say again: God has no gender! So the Holy Spirit being God has no gender.....this is not an issue. If one wants to take up the gender issue, then making it to the kingdom is key where God will have an answer for that. God Bless!

APPENDIX C

WHILE THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY
DIDN'T ACTUALLY USE THE WORD
"TRINITY," LOTS OF OTHER "THREE'S"
ARE USED TO DESCRIBE THE ETERNAL
GODHEAD OF THREE.

the three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...Ms 57,
 1900, par.11.
 the three living persons of the heavenly trio...7ABC p.441.9.
 the three great powers...8T p.254.1,
 the three powers of the Godhead...RH, July 18, 1907, par.3.
 the three highest powers of heaven...OHC 157.4.
 the three highest powers in heaven...Ev.617.3.
 the three highest powers in the heavenly courts...6MR 29.3.
 the three highest powers in the universe...RC 107.2.
 these three great powers...HP 336.2.
 these three great powers of heaven....Ms 183, 1907, par.7.
 the three great powers in heaven....Ms 159, 1904, par.48.
 the three great powers of heaven...8T p.254.1.
 the three great heavenly Powers...6MR 167.1
 the three great powers that were in the heavenly courts...Ms 159,
 1904, par.48.
 these three great, infinite powers...LHU p.109.2.
 the three great personal powers, the authorities of heaven..Lt 205,
 1901, par.8.
 the three great authorities of heaven...Ms 177, 1907, par.15.
 the three heavenly authorities...Lt 396, 1906, par.6.
 the three highest authorities of the heavenly courts—the Father, the
 Son, and the Holy Ghost...Ms 87, 1902, par.36.
 these three representatives of heavenly authority...6 MR 29.3
 the three greatest representatives of heavenly authority...Ms 57,
 1902, par.28.
 the three highest authorities in the universe...Ms 129, 1907, par.28.
 these three great agencies..AG 150.4
 these three great individual Agencies...15LtMs, Ms 68, 1900,
 par.12.
 three distinct agencies, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost...
 Ms 27a, 1900, par.22
 the three great and glorious heavenly characters...6 MR389.3
 the three dignitaries and powers of heaven..6 BC p. 1075.

the three great personal dignitaries of heaven...7 BC 959.8; SD P.351.3.
 the three holy dignitaries of heaven...5BC 1110.8.
 the eternal heavenly dignitaries—God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit..7ABC 442.4
 the three great Instrumentalities of heaven...Ms 11, 1901, par.19.
 the three great Worthies...Ms 145, 1906, par. 12.
 the three great Worthies, the Powers in heaven...Ms 139, 1906, par.15.
 the three great Worthies in heaven/of heaven...Ms 95, 1906, par.13.
 the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost/Spirit...6T 91.3.
 the threefold powers in the heavenly world...UL p. 148.4.
 the threefold powers in heaven...Ms 229.1902, 40.
 the great threefold power....ST June 19, 1901. Par.8.
 the three holiest beings in heaven...7 MR 267.2

“ALL HEAVEN IS REPRESENTED BY THESE THREE IN COVENANT RELATION WITH THE NEW LIFE.” MS 45,1904 PAR.17.

CAN WE PRAY TO ANY MEMBER OF THE GODHEAD?

“Since the Godhead is active in behalf of man’s salvation and redemption, it is really not out of place to *address any member of the Deity in prayer*. In the Scriptures, no one is seen directly addressing the Holy Spirit in prayer (or in any other way) but God is addressed *through* the Spirit of God (see Romans 8:26 etc). Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father which art in Heaven...in Jesus’ name”. We are also told that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us “with groanings which cannot be uttered.” We shall see that in the Spirit of Prophecy as well as in the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is not spoken of as an

individual exactly like how God the Father and Christ are persons with forms, although He can rightly be termed a person. We shall see that His mysterious nature cannot be understood by humanity. Although the blood is not a structure like the heart, the liver or the kidneys, it is nonetheless called an organ in the body with a very specific and critical function therein. The Holy Spirit is the lifeblood of the spiritual body of Christ, and is often represented as fluid that flows in and through such as water, oil, wind and fire.

However, while it is the usual practice to pray to the Father (see Acts 4:24), Scripture records the martyr Stephen's brief prayer to Jesus (chap. 7:59, 60); some Christian hymns, such as Isaac Watts's "Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove," *are essentially prayers to the Third person of the Godhead.*" However, when in doubt, stick to the pattern prayer given by Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX D

DEALING WITH VAGUE AND AMBIGUOUS STATEMENTS TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT AND SPECIFIC CHARGES

As is the case with **ambiguous texts in Scripture**, we need to **clarify ambiguous passages in Ellen White** or statement taken out of context, with **clear statements on the topic**. As we shall see below, during the 1890s several statements came from the pen of Ellen White which clearly support the true Godhead concept of three eternal persons in One Divine Being. We cannot use ambiguous statements to explain clear statements, but clear statements to clarify and explain the ambiguous statements.

Charge: In 1904 she wrote, “God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ had been given an exalted position. He has been **made equal with the Father**. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son” (Testimonies to the Church, 8:268). If He was made equal with the Father, then He wasn’t equal before.

Response: This statement appears immediately following a quote from Hebrews 1:1-5, where reference is made to the fact that Christ after his ascension is “appointed heir of all things” and is “being made so much better than the angels.” Her statement in this context can be seen as an elaboration of the text in Hebrews which refers to Christ after his ascension.

Charge: Only after Ellen G. White’s death was the Trinity doctrine introduced into the church.

Response: The historical facts plainly contradict this statement. As indicated, Ellen White in 1897 and 1898 taught that in Christ “was life, original, unborrowed, underived.” 1SM p.296. This can only

be true if he was God in the highest sense and did not derive his existence from the Father. In regard to the Holy Spirit she told the students at Avondale College in 1899, “We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.” Evangelism p.616.

Charge: The Book Evangelism has been manipulated to support the Trinity.

Response: The editorial changes which are found in Evangelism do not alter the meaning of the statements. Two examples showing **the full context** should be sufficient to prove the point:

“The Lord instructed us that this was the place in which we should locate, and we have had every reason to think that we are in the right place. We have been brought together as a school, and we need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds, that the Lord God is our keeper, and helper. He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind.”

Ellen White is saying the same thing as the Bible. Jesus, “is as much a person” as God the Father “is a person.” Jesus “is walking through these grounds.” Jesus “is our keeper, and helper.” Jesus “hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind. Same for the Holy Spirit as a person.

Charge: The Trinity or Godhead doctrine is pagan.

Response: The doctrine of the Godhead of three persons is based on Scripture not on pagan religions or human philosophy. Similar triadic constellations in other religions such as Brahma, Siva, and

Visnu in Hinduism; Osiris, Isis, and Horus in the Egyptian religion; or Nimrod, Ishtar, and Tammuz in Babylon are based on the family concept — father , mother, and son — which is not the case in the Christian religion. If there is any parallelism at all it would be evidence for a satanic counterfeit such as we find in the book of Revelation (the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet).

Charge: The doctrine of the Trinity Godhead is Catholic [papal] in origin.

Response: The historical record gives us a different picture. Although the concept of the Trinity Godhead is scriptural, the doctrine was formulated at the ecumenical Council of Nicaea in AD 325. The Council summoned by Emperor Constantine assembled in Nicaea (Asia Minor) to deal with the Arian controversy. Of the 318 bishops only eight came from the West, the rest were from the Eastern churches where the bishop of Rome had very little influence. The bishop of Rome himself was not even present, he sent two priests to represent him. This clearly contradicts the claim that the Trinity is of Roman Catholic origin.

Charge: All our pioneers, including Ellen White were anti-Trinitarians.

Response: It is true that at the beginning, our pioneers expressed their understanding of the Godhead in anti-Trinitarian terms. Anti-Trinitarianism at that time was based on three leading ideas: (1) There once was a time when Christ did not exist. (2) Christ received divinity from the Father and was therefore inferior to him. (3) The Holy Spirit is not the third person of the Godhead but only the power or influence of God and Christ. All of these ideas were originally

held by our pioneers. However, it is also a historical fact that the understanding of our pioneers changed over time. For example, (1) In 1846 James White referred to “the old unscriptural trinitarian creed, viz., that Jesus is the eternal God.” (The Day-Star, Jan. 21, 1846.) But in 1876 he wrote that “S. D. Adventists hold the divinity of Christ so nearly with the Trinitarians, that we apprehend no trial here.” (Review and Herald, Oct 12, 1876). And a year later he declared his belief in the equality of the Son with the Father and condemned any view as erroneous that “makes Christ inferior to the Father.” (Review and Herald, Nov. 29, 1877 p.72) (2) Originally Uriah Smith and others taught that Christ was the first created being. Later he adopted the position that Christ was begotten not created (see p. 3 above). (3) In 1896 W. W. Prescott wrote, “We have used terms in that accommodating sense that are not really in harmony with Scriptural teaching. We believed a long time that Christ was a created being, In spite of what the Scripture says. I say this, that passing over the experience I have passed over myself in this matter — this accommodating use of terms which makes the Deity without eternity, is not my conception **now** of the gospel of Christ. I think it falls short of the whole idea expressed in the Scriptures, and leaves us not with the kind of Saviour I believe in now, but a sort of human view — a semi-human being. As I view it, the deity involves eternity. The very expression involves it. You cannot read the Scripture and have the idea of deity without eternity. (1919 Bible Conference Transcripts, July 6, 1919, 58).

As we can see, our pioneers were not locked into one particular interpretation. When new understanding came, they changed their views even though at times it took a long time. Furthermore, we must note that some of their views as to what was involved in the Trinity

were erroneous, e. g., they thought the Trinity was three persons in one person, or that Jesus and the Father were one and the same. Another misconception was the idea that the Trinity teaches the existence of three Gods. Many also held the view that belief in the Trinity would diminish the value of the atonement, i. e., if Christ was the self-existing God, he could not have died on Calvary. If only his humanity died, then his sacrifice was only a human sacrifice. These misunderstandings contributed to the rejection of the Trinity Godhead.

Charge: Some, objecting to Christ being eternally begotten and never having a beginning but being fully God (Deity) as the Father, argue that the statement “there never was a time” means that she was obviously saying that **since the time He has been brought forth of God (begotten of God—meaning His beginning)**, “there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God”

Response: The entire context of this statement is dealing with Wisdom (Proverbs 8), which God always possessed, being brought forth in the creation of the world. This is simply referring to His pre-existence with God before Creation. As already proved, Christ is the Logos, The Word that always existed with the Father, is fully God, and never had a beginning. Hence, “there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God”.

Charge: “The Father and the Son ALONE are to be exalted”. (Youth Instructor, July 7, 1898). Confirm this with 1 John 1:3; “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ”.

Response: ALONE compared to who else? Who is the “Fellowship”? The context is only dealing with the Father and the Son and is not

referring to the Holy Spirit and His quiet unseen role.

Charge: “We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ. If we commune with God, we shall have strength and grace and efficiency.” (Letter 66, April 10, 1894)

Response: Elsewhere she says wherever the Holy Spirit is, there Christ is. And that the Holy Spirit is the living presence and representative of Christ in the soul. Christ and Holy Spirit work hand in hand but are not the same person. Where one is the other is.

“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 p. 805.3.

“We must have the grace of Christ and the impartation of His Spirit.” Lt.5, 1903, par.15.

“His (God’s) ministers are instrumentalities that, in His hands, under the impartation of the Holy Spirit from the Lord Jesus Christ, are doing all the good they can do.”. Lt, 32, 1906, par.2.

For additional information on questions see THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AMONG ADVENTISTS by Gerhard Pfandl of the Biblical Research Institute in Silver Spring, Maryland. June 1999.

APPENDIX E

At the start of this year, the Lord impressed on my heart to use the devotional book “Ye Shall receive Power”. Here are some of the gems which were revealed related to this concept on the Godhead. They are cited because they are relevant in addressing some of the false ideas which we have been addressing this book. There can be no spiritualizing or mystifying of the plain obvious language in these quotations to create confusion in the mind of anyone.

“The **Holy Spirit** was the highest of all gifts that **He** could solicit from His **Father** for the exaltation of His people”. - YRP 13.3.

“To all who have accepted **Christ** as a personal Saviour, the **Holy Spirit** has come as a counsellor, sanctifier, guide, and witness”. - YRP 9.4. **Christ is not the Holy Spirit.**

“So the life-giving power of the **Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Saviour**, pervades the soul, renews the motives and affections, and brings even the thoughts into obedience to the will of God, enabling the receiver to bear the precious fruit of holy deeds.” YRP 20.2.

“**Christ** draws them to Himself by an unseen power. He is the light of life, and **He imbues them with His own Spirit.**” YRP 40.5

“And **He** promised them the Comforter, **the Holy Spirit**, whom **the Father** was to send in His name.” -The Signs of the Times, November 16, 1891. YRP 39.4

“In the plan of restoring in men the divine image, it was provided that the Holy Spirit should move upon human minds, and **be as the presence of Christ**, a molding agency upon human character.” YRP 47.2

“**The Holy Spirit** never leaves unassisted a soul who is looking to **Jesus**. It takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to the seeker. And if the eye is kept fixed **upon Jesus**, the **work of the Spirit** ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image.” YRP 59.4

“**The Holy Spirit** is ready to **cooperate** with all who will receive Him and be taught by Him.” YRP 93.5. The Holy Spirit can only cooperate with us if He **has Intelligence**.

“While **Jesus**, our Intercessor, pleads for us in heaven, the **Holy Spirit** works in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure. All heaven is interested in the salvation of the soul.” YRP 94.4

“In the gift of **Christ** all heaven was poured out, and **through Christ the Holy Spirit** is promised to the believer.” YRP 98.4

“Has not God said He would give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? And is not **this Spirit a real, true, actual Guide**?” YRP 114.3

“The gift of **Christ** and the illumination of the **Holy Spirit** reveal to us the **Father**.” YRP 115.2

“I wish to impress upon you the fact that those who have **Jesus** abiding in the heart by faith have **actually received the Holy Spirit**. Every individual who receives **Jesus** as his personal Saviour just as surely **receives the Holy Spirit** to be his Counselor, Sanctifier, Guide, and Witness.” YRP 118.3

“Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His Word has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, **the Spirit** was promised **by our**

Saviour, to open the Word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings.” YRP 122.3.

“When the **Spirit** was poured out from on high, the church was flooded with light, but **Christ** was the source of that light.” YRP 123.5

“It is the **Holy Spirit** that draws men to **Christ**; for He takes of the things of God, and shows them unto the sinner. **Jesus said**: “**He shall glorify me**: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you”. YRP 126.4

“It is the truth as it is in **Jesus** that quickens the conscience and transforms the mind; for it is accompanied to the heart by **the Holy Spirit**.” YRP 126.2

“But no circumstances, no distance, can separate us from **the heavenly Comforter**. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always there, **one given in Christ’s place**, to act in His stead.” YRP 130.5

“The influence of the **Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul**. This **Spirit** works in and through everyone who receives **Christ**.” YRP 130.6

“When Satan would overwhelm you with despair, the **Holy Spirit** will point you to the intercession made for you by a **living Saviour**.” YRP 133.4

“We need to recognize the Holy Spirit as our enlightener. That Spirit **loves to address the children**, and discover to them the treasures and beauties of the Word of God.” YRP 141.4. **Obviously, the Spirit can distinguish between children and adults. A mere force, influence**

or power can't.

“The angels attended **Jesus** when He lived upon earth under the guidance of God's **Holy Spirit**, doing His heavenly **Father's will**.” YRP 142.2

“But if the **Spirit** of him that raised up **Jesus** from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Romans 8:11.” YRP 145.1

“Imbued with **the Spirit of God**, he will gain a deep, rich experience, and **heavenly angels** will give him success in the work.”— (Australasian) Union Conference Record, May 1, 1901 YRP 148.4.
Angels are not the Holy Spirit.

“To the consecrated worker there is wonderful consolation in the knowledge that even **Christ** during His life on earth sought **His Father** daily for fresh supplies of needed grace; and from this communion with God He went forth to strengthen and bless others.” YRP 153.3.

“When, after **Christ's** ascension, **the Spirit** came down as promised, like a rushing, mighty wind, filling the whole place where the disciples were assembled, what was the effect?” YRP 158.5

“The **Holy Spirit** would give devoted workers glimpses of **Jesus** that would brace them for every conflict, that would elevate and strengthen them, and make them more than conquerors.” YRP 161.3.

“Although without wealth, though counted by the world as mere ignorant fishermen, they were made by the **Holy Spirit** witnesses for **Christ**.” YRP 165.3

“The light shining from the cross of Calvary holds him in its bright rays, and the **Spirit** has taken of the things of **Christ**, and revealed them to him in such an attractive light as to have a transforming effect on his habits and practices, showing that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus.” YRP 169.4

“The **Holy Spirit** is the Comforter, as the personal presence of **Christ** to the soul. He who looks to **Christ** in simple, childlike faith is made a partaker of the divine nature through the agency of the **Holy Spirit**.” YRP 177.2

“...for through the efficacy of the **Holy Spirit**, they now saw Him exalted to be a **Prince and Saviour**, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins. **Christ** was glorified through the power of the **Holy Spirit** resting upon men.” YRP 177.3.

“The revelation of **Christ** by the **Holy Spirit** brought to them a realizing sense of His power and majesty, and they stretched forth their hands unto Him by faith, saying, “I believe.” YRP 177.4

“The true altar is **Christ**, and the true fire is the **Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit is to inspire, to teach, to lead, and to guide men, and make them safe counsellors.” YRP 178.2

“**Christ Himself** is the renewing power, working in and through every soldier by the agency of the **Holy Spirit**.” YRP 183.2.

“The transforming power of God must be upon you, that your minds may be renewed by **the Holy Spirit**, that you may have the mind that was in **Christ**.” YRP 186.4.

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