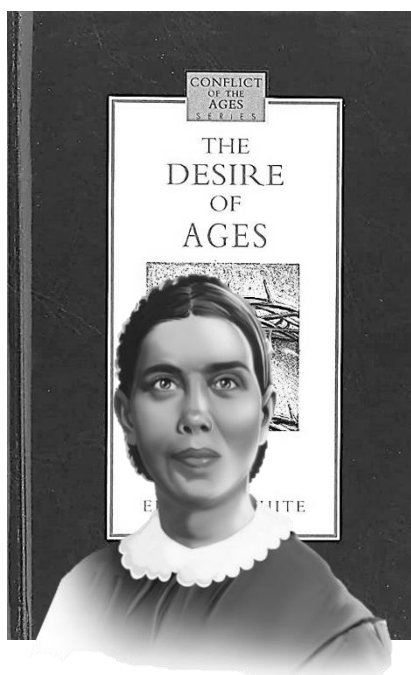


# A PARADIGM SHIFT?



**Does *The Desire of Ages* Prove  
That Ellen G. White Became  
a Trinitarian?**

# A PARADIGM SHIFT?

By Kevin J. Mullins



*Discovering the light of the character of God which  
shines out of darkness in the face of Jesus Christ  
(2 Corinthians 4:6)*

April 2023

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The information in this book is not an exhaustive study on the trinity doctrine, but is a semi-detailed journey through the writings of Ellen G. White and the Adventist pioneers on how they viewed the trinity and the one true God and His only begotten Son in contrast to modern Seventh-day Adventist leaders. For Bible only answers regarding if the trinity is found in Scripture, please see the *Questions Concerning the Trinity* section at [lastmessageofmercy.com](http://lastmessageofmercy.com).



## ***Jesus Was the Begotten Son of God in Heaven Before the Angels Were Created***

*"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that **God has sent His only begotten Son into the world**, that we might live through Him."  
(1 John 4:9)*

There are many teachers, including modern SDA pastors, who teach that the time in which Jesus was "begotten" was when Christ veiled his divinity with humanity at His incarnation and became a man. The above verse, however, states that God "sent His only begotten Son into the world." In order for God to send His only begotten Son into the world, Christ must have been already begotten.

### **1870 (28 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

"Angels that were loyal and true sought to reconcile this mighty, rebellious angel [Satan] to the will of his Creator. They justified the act of God in conferring honor upon Jesus Christ ... They clearly set forth that **Jesus was the Son of God, existing with him before the angels were created; and that he had ever stood at the right hand of God ...**" (*Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 1, p. 19)

### **1910 (12 years after *Desire Ages*)**

"Angels were expelled from heaven because they would not work in harmony with God. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and **they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus**. This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that **Christ was the only begotten Son of God**, and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ. One angel began the controversy and carried it on until there was rebellion in the heavenly courts, among the angels. They were lifted up because of their beauty." (*This Day With God*, p. 128)

What does Ellen White say Satan and the fallen angels would do to carry on the controversy? – they would "obscure" the fact that "Christ was the only begotten Son of God."

*"Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also." (1 John 2:22-23)*

## **SDA Pioneers Applied Proverbs 8 to Jesus**

*"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion ... **The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.** 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, **I was brought forth**; While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, **I was there**, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, Then **I was beside Him** as a master craftsman; And **I was daily His delight**, Rejoicing always before Him. Rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men." (Proverbs 8:22-30)*

As you will see, many (including modern SDA pastors) reject the idea that Proverbs 8 is prophetically speaking of Jesus. Instead they claim it is a metaphore speaking of "wisdom" which verse 22 so clearly says. However, notice what Paul says in his letter to the Corinthian assembly:

*"For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ** the power of God and **the wisdom of God** ... you are in **Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom** from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.'" (1 Corinthians 1:22-24, 30-31)*

In the very year *Desire of Ages* was published (1898), E.J. Waggoner wrote an article in *The Present Truth U.K.* (PTUK) entitled: *Studies in the Gospel of John. Christ the Beginning*, where he applies Proverbs chapter 8 to Jesus:

## E.J. Waggoner (1855-1916)



"Jesus Christ Himself is the Beginning. Col. i. 18. He is 'the beginning of the creation of God.' Rev. iii. 14. He is the power of God, and 'the wisdom of God.' 1 Cor. i. 24. **Therefore it is He who speaks in the eighth chapter of proverbs**, saying, 'I walk in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; that I may cause those that love Me to inherit substance, and that I may fill their treasuries. 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.' Prov. viii. 20-23. On this last text it may be remarked that the words 'set up' are from one Hebrew word meaning anointed, so that the meaning is the same as in the second psalm, 'Yet have I set My name upon My holy hill of Zion.' The word is the same in the Hebrew, and it will be noticed in the margin we have 'anointed' as the rendering of the Hebrew. **Thus we learn that Christ was the anointed king before the earth existed.** Moreover, the word 'in' has really no place in the twentieth verse of Proverbs viii., as there is nothing in the Hebrew to indicate it. So we read, 'The Lord possessed Me, the Beginning of His way, before His works of old.' Still further, it should be stated that the word 'possessed' is the very same that occurs in Gen. iv. 1, where we read that on the birth of Cain, Eve said, 'I have gotten a man from the Lord.' **Therefore putting all these things together, we learn that Jesus was brought forth 'from the days of eternity' Micah v. 2, margin), before anything was created, and that He Himself is the beginning of all the ways of God. He is 'the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.' Col. i. 15. He is the Beginning of everything.**" (*Present Truth U.K.*, December 22, 1898, p. 803, par. 4-6)

A.T. Jones, writing in the year 1901 (3 years after *Desire of Ages*) agrees with Waggoner:

"Jesus Christ is the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person. From the Father He spoke all things into existence. '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.' He upholds all things

by the word of His power. By Him all things hold together. 'It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.' **He is the One whom the Lord possessed 'in the beginning of His way;' who was 'set up from everlasting;' who 'was by Him as one brought up with Him.'**" (A.T. Jones, *Ecclesiastical Empire*, Ch. 21, p. 566).

On March 4, 2019, SDA pastor, Doug Batchelor, made this comment on a YouTube video entitled: "*Was Jesus Created?*"

"There will be people who look at Proverbs 8. Let me read this to you. Proverbs 8, and I'm going to read verses 22-25. **They believe this is a prophecy speaking about Jesus.** This song is not a proverb, it's in the book of proverbs, but it's one of the songs of Solomon which starts at verse 8 **and has nothing to do with Jesus being brought forth.** It is a metaphor for wisdom ... wisdom was brought forth in the very beginning. **It's not talking about Jesus.**"



So, when pastor Doug says, "*they* believe this is a prophecy speaking about Jesus", he must be including our SDA pioneers, such as E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones. What pastor Doug failed to mention is that Ellen White also taught this very same truth, both before and after *Desire of Ages*:

### **1890 (8 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

"And **the Son of God declares concerning Himself:** 'The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting ... When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.' **Proverbs 8:22-30.**" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34)

### **1906 (8 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

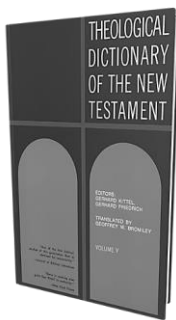
"**The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father.** He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by him as his right. This was no robbery of God. 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way'" **he [Jesus] declares, 'before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I**

was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he [the Father] had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he [the Father] prepared the heavens, I was there: when he [the Father] set a compass upon the face of the depth [Prov. 8:22-27].” (*Review & Herald*, April 5, par. 7, words in brackets added)

The problem lies in the fact that pastor Doug believes “begotten” means “created.” In the aforementioned video, pastor Doug said this:

“Now, some are gonna parson argue with the words. They say, ‘well Jesus was not made, He was begotten and He came out of the Father’ and **they try to make an argument with semantics**. But the fact is, that if there was a time when Christ Jesus did not exist and then, through some act of the Father, He was brought forth, He was created, that’s all you can say. **You can’t change the words and try to say ‘well, begotten is different than being created.’** If He’s brought forth from the Father – if He goes from being ‘non-being’ to ‘being’ by an act of the Father – He’s created and so that would mean that He’s a creature and He’s not the Creator.”

The Greek word used for “only begotten” in John 3:16 is μονογενής (*monogenés*) which literally means “only offspring,” yet the modern idea in Adventism is that the word means “unique Son.” Who really is changing the meanings of words here? As you will see in the next section, Doug is accusing the SDA pioneers (including Ellen White) of making “an argument with semantics” since they clearly believed “begotten is different than being created.”



**“Monogenés – Definition 2:** As the only-begotten Son he shares all things with the Father. His glory is not merely like that of an only child; it is that of the only-begotten Son (Jn. 1:14). **He is not just unique; he is the Son**, for combined with *huios* [Son] **the term describes his origin**. The risen Lord is also **the preexisting Lord**, who is with God, is loved by him, and shares his glory from all eternity (17:5, 24). Whether or not this implies **actual begetting by God** is debated by some, but **1 Jn. 5:18 definitely teaches this, for sonship is here presented in the terms of begetting.**” (Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*)



## Proverbs 8

"The Lord possessed me, **the beginning** of His way ... From **the beginning**" (Vss. 22-23)

"... **before** there was ever an earth ... **Before** the mountains were settled, **Before** the hills" (Vss. 23, 25)

"I have been established **from everlasting**" (Vs. 23)

"I was **brought forth**" (Vss. 24-25)

"When He prepared the heavens, **I was there** ... When He marked out the foundations of the earth, **Then I was beside Him.**" (Vss. 27, 30)

"I was daily **His delight**" (Vs. 30)

"Rejoicing **in His inhabited world**, and **My delight was with the sons of men**" (Vs. 31)

## Jesus

"In **the beginning** was the Word" (John 1:1)

"And **He is before all things**, and in Him all things consist." (Colossians 1:17)

"Yet out of you [Bethlehem] shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, **from everlasting.**" (Micah 5:2)

"Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me, for **I proceeded forth and came from God**; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.'" (John 8:42)

"... and **the Word was with God.**" (John 1:1)

"... a voice out of the heavens, saying, 'This is My Son -- the Beloved, **in whom I did delight.**'" (Matthew 3:17, Young's Literal Translation)

"In Him was life, and the life **was the light of men** ... And **the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory." (John 1:4, 14)

## ***A Divine Son Begotten, Not Created***

During the entire time of Ellen White's ministry, Seventh-day Adventists were often accused of not believing in the divinity of Christ because of our stance against the trinity doctrine. In 1889 E.J. Waggoner defended our true position:

"The first text that we quote is that one so familiar to everyone who knows anything of the Bible, John 1:1: '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.' That this refers to Christ is evident from verse 4: 'In him was life; and the life was the light of men;' and from verse 14: 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.' Indeed, we never heard of anyone who doubted that the evangelist has reference to Christ in this passage. **From it we learn that Christ is God. That text alone, if we had no other, is sufficient to establish the divinity of Christ, for the word 'divinity' means, 'the nature or essence of God.' We believe in the divinity of Christ, because the Bible says that Christ is God.**" (*Signs of the Times*, March 25, p. 167, 1889)

In April of the same year E.J. Waggoner explained that Christ being God (divine) is dependant upon Him being the only begotten Son of God:

"The fact that Jesus is spoken of as the only begotten Son of God should be sufficient to establish a belief in his divinity. As the Son of God, he must partake of the nature of God." (*Signs of the Times*, April 8, p. 201)

In Genesis chapter 1 we learn that everything begets "after their kind." God built this law into creation when He said to His Son: "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness" (Genesis 1:26). Thus Christ is God (divine) because He was begotten and came forth out of God (John 8:42).

The Greek word translated "from" in John 8:42 – "I proceeded forth and came *from* God" – is the word ἐκ (*ek*), which literally means, "from out, out from among, from, suggesting from the interior outwards." Jesus is of the same kind as God, just as we are all human, of the same kind, because we were begotten and came out of humans. It is the perfect divine pattern of life. Writing in the year 1889, E.J. Waggoner explains that Jesus is God because He has the same nature as God:

“... Christ is the Son of God. **While both [the Father and the Son] are of the same nature, the Father is first in point of time. He is also greater in that He had no beginning, while Christ’s personality had a beginning** ... In order to redeem men, he had to come where they were. He did not lay aside his divinity, but he laid aside his glory, and veiled his divinity with humanity. So his statement, ‘My Father is greater than I,’ is perfectly consistent with the claim, made by himself as well as by all who wrote of him, that **he was and is God.**” (E.J. Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1889, words in brackets added)

As “the Father is first in point of time”, Adam was first, and then Eve came forth from within Adam via Adam’s rib closest to his heart. Thus Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, *because she was taken out of Man*” (Genesis 2:23). Again, it’s the perfect divine pattern.

In Genesis 3:20 it says, “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.” Adam was the *source* of whom are all the living; Eve was the *channel* through whom all living things come into being, thus revealing to us the divine pattern of the Father “of whom are all things” and His Son “*through* whom are all things” (1 Corinthians 8:6).

Scripture says Christ is “the brightness of His [the Father’s] glory and the express image of His person” (Hebrews 1:3). Christ knows and submits to the fact that He is not the glory of His own brightness, but the glory of His Father’s. This is contrary to Lucifer whose “heart was lifted up because of [his] beauty” and who “corrupted [his] wisdom by reason of [his] brightness” (Isaiah 28:17, KJV).

Likewise, Scripture says “woman is the glory of man” (1 Corinthians 11:7). Just as “the head of Christ is God”, “the man is the head of the woman” (1 Corinthians 11:3). Obviously, headship does not mean tyrannical domination. It means channel of blessing. Wives are to submit to their husbands as the husband submits to Christ, as Paul said, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1, KJV).

All the blessings God can give come through Christ, to the man, to the woman. This again doesn’t mean the woman is of lesser value being on

## Genesis 1:26 – Let Us make man in Our Image

Many teach that when Genesis says “Us” and “Our”, it must be referring to the trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – consisting of three coeternal beings. However, Ellen White tells us exactly who the Father was speaking to:

“After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, **the Father and Son carried out their purpose**, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now **God said to His Son, ‘Let us make man in our image.’**” (*Story of Redemption*, p. 20)

“... when **God said to His Son, ‘Let us make man in our image,’** Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man, and because he was not, he was filled with envy, jealousy, and hatred. He desired to receive the highest honors in heaven next to God.” (*Early Writings*, p. 145)

Writing in harmony with his wife, James White adds:

“The inexplicable Trinity that makes the Godhead three in one and one in three, is bad enough; but that ultra Unitarianism that makes Christ inferior to the Father is worse. Did God say to an inferior, ‘Let us make man in our image?’” (James White, *Review & Herald*, Nov. 29, 1877)

The Father was speaking to no one else but His only begotten Son. This is confirmed by Scripture several times, which reveals the Father is the great *source* of all, who created all things through the *channel* of His Son (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-3).

“Yet for us there is one God, the Father, **OF** whom [Source] are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, **THROUGH** whom [Channel] are all things, and through whom we live.” (1 Corinthians 8:6, words in brackets added)

It was in God’s crowning act of creating mankind that He would reveal the “image” and “likeness” of He and His Son.

the “bottom.” It means she receives a three-fold blessing from God, Christ and the man. Paul wrote: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her” (Ephesians 5:25). However, in order to receive the blessing, one must stand under (submit to) the shower

of blessing. As Christ submits to His Father, man submits to Christ, and the woman submits to the man, creating a perfect channel of blessing.

The Bible presents the Father as the Self-originating God, the source of all, and His Son who is God by inheritance and the one true divine example to all the universe of how to serve the Father.

### **Ellen G. White (1827-1915)**

“But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. ‘I do nothing of Myself,’ said Christ; ‘the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father.’ ‘I seek not Mine own glory, but the glory of Him that sent Me.’ John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. **In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God,**



**but He took to give.** So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: **through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.** And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” (Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 21)

In 1869, Adventist pioneer, J.G. Matteson, explained the SDA teaching that, although “Christ is the only literal Son of God”, He is still God “because He is the Son of God”:

### **J.G. Matteson (1835-1896)**



“**Christ is the only literal Son of God.** ‘The only begotten of the Father.’ John 1:14. **He is God because he is the Son of God;** not by virtue of his resurrection. If Christ is the only begotten of the Father, then we cannot be begotten of the Father in a literal sense. It can only be in a secondary sense of the word.” (J.G. Matteson, *Review & Herald*, October 12, 1869)

In 1878, a reader of the *Review & Herald* asked if Seventh-day Adventists were unitarians or trinitarians; the answer given was:

“We do not believe in the three-one God of the Trinitarians nor in the low views of Jesus Christ held by unitarians. **We believe that Christ was a divine being**, not merely in his mission, but in his person also ...” (*Review & Herald*, June 27, 1878)

On one occasion, when Ellen White was in New Zealand in 1893, she explained that the church had tried to hire a hall to hold some evangelistic meetings but permission had been refused:

“... an effort was made to obtain the use of the hall at a village four miles from Hastings, where some of our workers proposed to present the gospel to the people; but they did not succeed in obtaining the hall, because a schoolteacher there opposed the truth, and **declared to the people that Seventh-day Adventists did not believe in the divinity of Christ.**” (*Review & Herald*, Dec. 5, 1893, ‘*An appeal for the Australasian field*’)

This is a common accusation even today against those who hold a non-trinitarian belief. In most discussions concerning this topic some form of reference will be made to the teachings of Jehovah’s Witnesses who, not only reject the trinity doctrine, but also say Christ was created by God. Seventh-day Adventists have *never* believed Christ was created. They emphasized a clear distinction between the words “begotten” and “created.” Ellen White went on to say:

“This man may not have known what our faith is on this point, but he was not left in ignorance. **He was informed that there is not a people on earth who hold more firmly to the truth of Christ’s pre-existence than do Seventh-day Adventists.**” (*Ibid*)

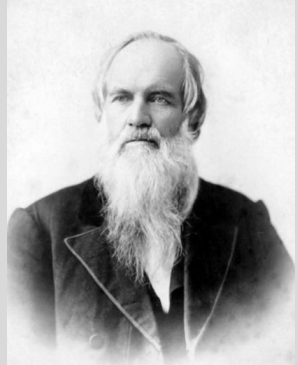
As part of the requirements of his studies on Adventist history for Dr Mervyn Maxwell, Russell Holt wrote this in June 1969:

“A survey of other Adventist writers during these years reveals, that to a man, they rejected the trinity, yet, **with equal unanimity they upheld the divinity of Christ. To reject the trinity is not necessarily to strip the Saviour of His divinity.**” (Russell Holt, *The doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh day Adventist denomination: Its rejection and acceptance*)

In 1884, J.H. Waggoner (father of E.J. Waggoner) wrote:

**J.H. Waggoner (1820-1889)**

“Many theologians really think that the Atonement, in respect to its dignity and efficacy, rests upon the doctrine of a trinity. But we fail to see any connection between the two. To the contrary, the advocates of that doctrine really fall into the difficulty which they seem anxious to avoid. Their difficulty consists in this: **They take the denial of a trinity to be equivalent to a denial of the divinity of Christ.** Were that the case we should cling to the doctrine of a trinity as tenaciously as any can; but it is not the case. **They who have read our remarks on the death of the Son of God know that we firmly believe in the divinity of Christ; But we cannot accept the idea of a trinity, as it is held by Trinitarians without giving up our claim on the dignity of the Sacrifice made for our redemption.**” (J.H. Waggoner, *The Atonement in light of Nature and Revelation*, 1884, Chapter: *Doctrine of a Trinity Subversive of the Atonement*)



What Waggoner is alluding to is the trinitarian belief that God the Father did not actually send His only begotten Son but sent and gave Himself in the role of a Son. This is exactly what SDA pastor, David Asscherick, said in a YouTube presentation recorded for *Campus Ministries Student Congress* in 2017 during the Q&A time:

“Question: Did our church make a mistake leaving the position of Ellen White and the pioneers regarding God of adopting the Catholic position of the trinity? Absolutely not! The trinitarian nature of God is not a Catholic position ... it’s a biblical one ... Friends, **the good news of the gospel is, not that God gave someone else, it’s that God gave Himself.** ‘Greater love has no man than this, that a man would lay down *his life* for his friends.’ In a non-trinitarian or a unitarian picture of God, God has sacrificed *His Son*? That’s not good news, that’s child sacrifice.”



It’s hard to believe that Pastor David is saying that God did not give (or send) His Son, and anyone who believes that He did is either a

non-trinitarian or unitarian. There is a multitude of clear Scripture in support that God gave His only-begotten literal Son (Jn. 3:16-17; Rom. 5:10; 8:32; Gal. 4:4; 1 Jn. 4:9-10), therefore, according to pastor David, the Bible must be either a non-trinitarian or unitarian book. In an objection letter to the SDA conference written in 1939, J.S. Washburn states:

**J.S. Washburn (1863-1955)**



"[If we] accept and teach the very central root doctrine of Romanism, the Trinity, and teach that the son of God did not die, even though our words seem to be spiritual, is this anything else or anything less than apostasy, and the very Omega of apostasy? ... However kindly or beautiful or apparently profound his sermons or articles may be, when a man has arrived at the place where he teaches the heathen Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and denies that the Son of God died for us, is he a true Seventh-day Adventist? Is he even a true preacher of the Gospel?"

Pastor David's whole idea is based off a misconception of the atonement as J.H. Waggoner suggested well over 100 years ago. David says that if God sent "someone else" (referring to His Son) it would be "child sacrifice." But keep in mind that God never desired nor required any type of sacrifice in order to forgive fallen man (Psalm 40:6). It was fallen man's misconception of God that led him to believe that God demanded a sacrifice. The atonement is not made by God requiring a sacrifice and we providing one, it's that man required a sacrifice and God providing one. God gave His Son over to sinful man and we, not God, killed Him.

God did not send Jesus to pay for our sins and appease God's wrath, as is the common understanding of atonement. Jesus came to reveal the true loving, non-condemning and healing character of His Father, and that brings atonement (at-one-ment) between humanity and God.

At Gethsemane and the cross, "Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race." (*Desire of Ages*, Page 753). Mercy will no longer plead because mercy will be wholly



rejected by the unbelieving sinner. Like the unbelieving sinner, the anguish Christ felt was the sense of His Father's presence being withdrawn:

"God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed ... in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father's presence." (*Desire of Ages*, P. 753)

Christ sensed a separation from His Father:

"We can have but faint conceptions of the inexpressible anguish of God's dear Son in Gethsemane as he realized **the separation from his Father** in consequence of bearing man's sin. He became sin for the fallen race. **The sense of the withdrawal of his Father's love pressed from his anguished soul** these words: 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' **Then with entire submission to his Father's will** he adds, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'" (*Pamphlet 169, The Sufferings of Christ*, p. 6).

Does this sound even close to to what pastor David is suggesting? Did God feel inexpressible anguish because He realized the separation from Himself? Was the sense of the withdrawal of His own love toward Himself what pressed against His anguish soul? Did God sacrifice Himself and die or did God take a divine risk and permit His Son to offer Himself?

"None but **Christ** could redeem man from the curse of the law. **He proposed to take upon Himself** the guilt and shame of sin,—sin so offensive in the sight of God that it would necessitate separation from His Father ... **Christ**, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, **offered Himself as a sacrifice** and substitute for the fallen sons of Adam." (*Signs of the Times*, December 15, par. 10, 1914)

### Joseph Bates (1792-1872)

"Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was an impossibility for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same being. I said to my father, 'If you can convince me that we are one in this sense, that you are my father, and I your son; and also that I am your father, and you my son, then I can believe in the trinity.'" (*Joseph Bates, The Autobiography Of Elder Joseph Bates*, 1868, p. 204)



Can you see how the trinity doctrine destroys the biblical view of the atonement? No wonder J.N. Andrews said:

“The doctrine of the Trinity which was established in the church by the council of Nice A. D. 325. This doctrine destroys the personality of God and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” (J.N. Andrews, *Review & Herald*, March 6, 1855)

Can you image what would have been said if Adventist pioneer, J.N. Loughborough, was in the audience when paster David made his comment? Well, we don't need to imagine:

**J.N. Loughborough (1832-1924)**



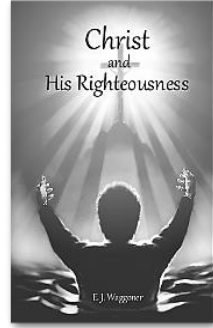
“QUESTION 1. What serious objection is there to the doctrine of the Trinity? ANSWER. There are many objections which we might urge, but on account of our limited space we shall reduce them to the three following: 1. It is contrary to common sense. 2. It is contrary to scripture. 3. Its origin is Pagan and fabulous ... To believe that doctrine, when reading the scripture we must believe that God sent himself into the world, died to reconcile the world to himself, raised himself from the dead, ascended to himself in heaven, pleads before himself in heaven to reconcile the world to himself, and is the only mediator between man and himself. It will not do to substitute the human nature of Christ (according to Trinitarians) as the Mediator ... We must believe also that in the garden God prayed to himself, if it were possible, to let the cup pass from himself, and a thousand other such absurdities.” (J.N. Loughborough, *Review & Herald*, November 5, 1861)

At the 1888 General Conference Session, A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner presented a series of presentations on Christ and His righteousness. Referring to these presentations, Ellen White wrote, “That which has been presented harmonizes perfectly with the light which God has been pleased to give me during all the years of my experience.” (*1888 Materials*, p. 164).

Shortly after 1888, E. J. Waggoner took the notes from his presentations, and printed them as a book, entitled, *Christ and His Righteousness*, which

was published in 1890. Disregarding Ellen White's endorsement, modern SDA leaders do not look favorably at how E.J. Waggoner explained the pre-existence of Christ in his book and have often tried to warn the members of its supposed error. Here's what he wrote:

"The Word was 'in the beginning'. The mind of man cannot grasp the ages that are spanned in this phrase. **It is not given to men to know when or how the Son was begotten**; but we know that He was the Divine Word, not simply before He came to this earth to die, but even before the world was created." (E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 9, 1890)



On page 12, Waggoner expands on this point:

"It is true that there are many sons of God, but Christ is the 'only begotten Son of God,' and therefore the Son of God in a sense in which no other being ever was or ever can be. **The angels are sons of God, as was Adam (Job 38:7; Luke 3:38), by creation; Christians are the sons of God by adoption (Rom. 8:14, 15), but Christ is the Son of God by birth.**" (E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, p.12, 1890)

Then, on pages 21-22 of the same book, Waggoner expands our belief even further:

"The Scriptures declare that Christ is 'the only begotten Son of God.' **He is begotten, not created.** As to when He was begotten, it is not for us to inquire, nor could our minds grasp it if we were told. The prophet Micah tells us all that we can know about it in these words, 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.' Micah 5:2, margin. **There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father (John 8:42 and 1:18) but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning.** But the point is that Christ is a begotten Son and not a created subject. (E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, pp. 21-22, 1890)

Take notice that these three quotations are all extensions of one continuous thought. If Ellen White disagreed with Waggoner's thoughts, wouldn't she have written out her concerns as she did concerning Kellogg's book *The Living Temple*? Instead, she said God had given her the same light and then quotes from the book using her own words in 1895, just three years before *The Desire of Ages* was published:

"A complete offering has been made; for 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,'— **not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father's person**, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (*Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895, 'Christ our complete salvation')

Again, just for clarity: "Not a Son by Creation .... But a Son begotten." The two words are not synonymous. Writing one year after the publication of *Desire of Ages*, Ellen White echoes, in her own words, Waggoner's understanding of Christ coming forth from God "so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning":

### **1899 (1 year after *Desire of ages*)**

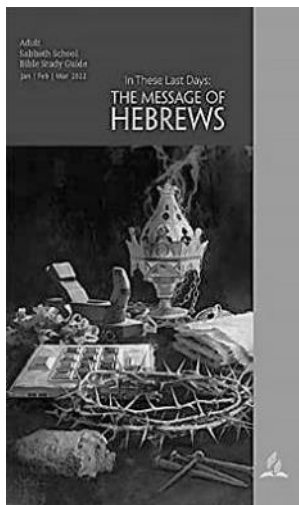
"The scribes and Pharisees accused Christ of blasphemy because He made Himself equal with God ... 'Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.' Here Christ shows them that, altho they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet **His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures.**" (*Signs of the Times*, May 3, par. 3-4, 1899)

The 2022 *Sabbath School Quarterly* entitled: *In These Last Days: The Message of Hebrews* (prepared by Félix H. Cortez, an associate professor of New Testament Literature in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, and a committee representing the various world divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church) further confuses the matter by stating:

"Hebrews 1:5 reports the following words of the Father to Jesus: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You' (NKJV). What does it mean that Jesus was 'begotten,' and when did this happen? Does not this show that Jesus was somehow created by God sometime way in the past, as many believe?

**Jesus was begotten in the sense that He was installed, or 'adopted,' by God as the promised ruler, the son of David.** The concept of the **divine adoption** of the ruler was common in the Greco-Roman world and the east. It gave the ruler legitimacy and power over the land. God promised to

David, however, that his Son would be the true legitimate ruler of the nations. **He would 'adopt' David's son as His own Son.** Through this process the Davidic King would become God's protégé and His heir. The covenant is fulfilled in Jesus as the Son of David. God would defeat His enemies and give Him the nations as His inheritance (Ps. 89:27; Ps. 2:7, 8). As we can read in Romans 1:3, 4 and Acts 13:32,33, Jesus was publicly revealed as God's Son. Jesus' baptism and transfiguration were moments when God identified and announced Jesus as His Son (Matt. 3:17, Matt. 17:5). Yet, according to the New Testament, **Jesus became the 'Son of God with power' when He was resurrected and seated at the right hand of God. It was at that moment that God fulfilled His promise to David that his son would be adopted as God's own Son** and His throne over the nations would be established forever (2 Sam. 7:12-14). Thus, Caesar (symbol of Rome) was not the legitimate 'son of god,' ruler of the nations. Instead, Jesus Christ was. **The 'begetting' of Jesus refers to the beginning of Jesus' rule over the nations, and not to the beginning of His existence, because Jesus had always existed. There was never a time when Jesus did not exist, because He is God."** (First Quarter, Lesson Three, *The Promised Son*, Thursday, January 13, *Today I Have Begotten You*)



This is another blatant contradiction to what our SDA pioneers taught. Ellen White so plainly taught that Jesus is "not a son by creation, as were the angels, **nor a son by adoption**, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father's person" (*Sings of the Times*, May 30, 1895, 'Christ our complete salvation').

The Sabbath School lesson goes on to say:

“In fact, Hebrews 7:3 says that Jesus does not have ‘beginning of days nor end of life’ (cf. Heb. 13:8) because He is eternal. Thus, the idea of Jesus as God’s ‘only begotten son’ is not dealing with the nature of Christ as deity but with His role in the plan of salvation. Through the incarnation, Christ fulfilled all the covenant promises.” (*ibid*)

This is a gross misunderstanding of Hebrews 7:3, which is speaking about Melchisedek during the time of Abraham. The whole of verse 3 says Melchisedek was “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.”

Melchisedek was a normal human being, not immortal. What Paul is discussing here is the contrast between the Levitical priesthood and Christ’s priesthood, which is of the order of Melchisedek (Psalm 110:1,4; Hebrews 7:15-17). Melchisedek was “priest of the Most High God” (Vs. 1) even though he was not of the tribe of Levi, which were ordained as God’s priests. Paul is saying there was no record of Melchisedek’s genealogy to prove he was from the tribe of Levi, yet he was still a priest ordained of God. Likewise, Jesus had no genealogy with the tribe of Levi since He was from the tribe of Judah, yet He too is an ordained High Priest (Hebrews 8:1).

Clearly, Melchisedek had a mother and father, he just couldn’t prove his priesthood status to any Jew because he wasn’t from the tribe of Levi. Therefore, it was said of him that he had no “beginning of days” (birth certificate), nor a record of his “end of days” (death certificate) indicating he was a Levite (because he wasn’t a Levite). Likewise, we know that Jesus had a divine Father and a human mother, but neither of them were from Levi. So, this verse is not saying Jesus does not have ‘beginning of days’, that He is as old as His Father – “the Ancient of Days” (Daniel 7:13) – it’s just a simple Hebraic idiom meaning one is not from the tribe of Levi; “For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood” (Hebrews 7:14). Non-Adventist scholar, Adam Clarke writes:

**“He who could not support his pretensions by just genealogical evidences, was said by the Jews to be without father ...**

In this way both Christ and Melchisedec were without father and without mother; i.e. were not descended from the original Jewish sacerdotal stock [Levi]. Yet Melchisedec, who was a Canaanite, was a priest of the most high God ... This sense Suidas confirms under the word Melchisedec ...



**‘He is, therefore, said to be without descent or genealogy, because he was not of the seed of Abraham, but of Canaanitish origin, and sprung from an accursed seed; therefore he is without the honor of a genealogy.’** And he farther adds, ‘That, because it would have been highly improper for him, who was the most righteous of men, to be joined in affinity to the most unrighteous of nations, he is said to be *απατορα και αμητορα*, without father and without mother.’ **This sort of phraseology was not uncommon when the genealogy of a person was unknown or obscure.”** (*Clarke’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Hebrews 7:3)

But if some of you are thinking that Melchizedek was Jesus, Ellen White says otherwise:

“It was Christ that spoke through Melchisedek, the priest of the most high God. **Melchisedek was not Christ**, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father.” (*Review & Herald*, February 18, 1890)

The *SDA Bible Commentary* agrees:



**“Without father, without mother.** These words have given rise to the speculation that Melchisedec was some supernatural being, as he must of necessity have been if he was actually without parents, without beginning of days and without end of life. Such an assertion in its totality can be literally true of the persons of the Godhead only. **However, it is not necessary to take this view of the wording. The author may simply mean that there**

**is no record of who Melchisedec’s father and mother were.**

**Without descent.** Gr. *agenealogētos*, literally, ‘without genealogy.’ The Jews were very careful to record and preserve their genealogies. This was especially true concerning the priests (see *Ezr\_2:61-63*). No one could serve

as priest unless he belonged to the family of Aaron of the tribe of Levi, and this he must be able to prove without any doubt whatever. If there was a break in the line somewhere, he would be counted out and thus lose the privileges accorded the priests. For this reason every Jew, and particularly the priests, preserved carefully their genealogical records. **Of melchisedec no genealogy exists.**

**Beginning of days.** That is, **there is no record of his birth, or of his death,** as indicated by the phrase ‘nor end of life.’” (SDA Bible Commentary, Hebrews 7:3)

In 1869 Adventist pioneer, J.N. Andrews, wrote:

### J.N. Andrews (1829-1883)



“And as to the Son of God, he would be excluded also, for he had God for his Father, and did, some point at the eternity of the past, have beginning of days. So that **if we use Paul’s language in an absolute sense, it would be impossible to find but one being in the universe, and that is God the Father, who is without father, or mother, or descent, or beginning of days, or end of life.**”

(J.N. Andrews, *Review & Herald*, September 7, 1869)

So, again, we see that this certain *Sabbath School Quarterly* was way off the mark when it came to the Sonship of Christ. But let’s move on.

Writing in the year 1883, W.H. Littlejohn (an SDA influential writer, speaker, and administrator) explains:

### W.H. Littlejohn (1834-1916)



“You are mistaken in supposing that S.D. Adventists teach that Christ was ever created. They believe, on the contrary, that he was ‘begotten’ of the Father ... They believe, however, that **somewhere in the eternal ages of the past there was a point at which Christ came into existence.**” (W.H. Littlejohn, *Review & Herald*, April 17, 1883)



Did the SDA church continue with this ideology? In 1898, the year *The Desire of Ages* was published, Uriah Smith echoed E.J Waggoner's thoughts when he wrote the following:

**Uriah Smith (1832-1903)**

"God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be,—a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity,—appeared the Word [Jesus] ... **His beginning was not like that of any other being in the universe.** It is set forth in the mysterious expressions, 'God's only **begotten Son**' (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9), 'the only **begotten of the Father**' (John 1:14), and, 'I proceeded forth and came from God.' John 8:42. Thus it appears that by some divine impulse or process, **not creation**, known only to Omniscience, and possible only to Omnipotence, **The Son of God appeared.**" (Uriah Smith, *Looking Unto Jesus*, p. 10, 1898)



Going back to Waggoner's quotation where he said, "There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father (John 8:42 and 1:18) but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning", we take careful note that just prior to this statement, he quotes Micah 5:2 as one of his proof-texts:

"The prophet Micah tells us all that we can know about it in these words, 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.' Micah 5:2, margin." (E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, pp. 21-22, 1890)

It's interesting how modern teachers use this verse to "prove" that Jesus never had a beginning, and yet Waggoner is using it to show just the opposite. As he quotes this text he makes certain he quotes it from the marginal reading of the KJV which says, "from the days of eternity" instead

of "from everlasting" to show that, even though the two phrases mean the same, the latter can be (and most-often is) mistaken as meaning Jesus never had a beginning.

In fact, the Hebrew word translated as "goings forth" is the word, נִצְּיִן (*motsaah*), which means, "going forth, family decent, origin." So Christ's "goings forth", or the time when He "proceeded forth and came from the Father" (family decent) is spoken of as His "origin." Here's a couple of other translations:

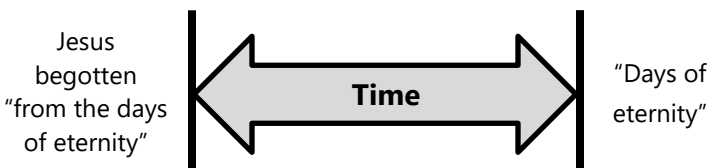
**New Living Translation:** *"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, **whose origins are in the distant past**, will come from you on my behalf."*

**English Standard Version:** *"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, **whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.**"*

**Berean Standard Bible:** *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come forth for Me One to be ruler over Israel—**One whose origins are of old, from the days of eternity.**"*

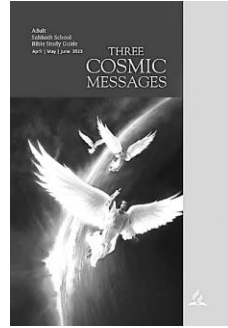
**The Message Bible:** *"But you, Bethlehem, David's country, the runt of the litter - From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule Israel. He'll be no upstart, no pretender. **His family tree is ancient and distinguished.**"*

Micah 5:2 is revealing to us that Jesus' origin, when He was begotten of the Father, was before time as we know it. Time as we know it, including the sun and moon, were created by Jesus Christ. There were succession of events in the days of eternity, but the calculation of time as we know it did not exist in eternity when Christ was begotten.



Although the modern SDA church rejects this idea that something or someone “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (KJV) can mean having a beginning, they contradict themselves when they make statements such as:

“And this plan, the plan of salvation, had been **put in place** even before the beginning of time (2 Tim. 1:9, Titus 1:2, Eph. 1:4), which helps explain why it is called **‘the everlasting’ gospel**. Before the world was created, God knew what would happen, and so He instituted the plan of salvation to meet the crisis when it, eventually, would come.” (2023 *Sabbath School Quarterly, Three Cosmic Messages, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, The Everlasting Gospel*, Monday, April 10)



Here, it is said the reason why it’s called “the everlasting gospel”, is because it was “put in place ... before the beginning of time ... before the world was created.” Is this not what Micah 5:2 says and what Jesus said of Himself in Proverbs 8:

*“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.” (Proverbs 8:23-24, KJV)*

On a side note, referring to the statement that “God knew what would happen, and so He instituted the plan of salvation to meet the crisis *when* it, eventually, would come”, Ellen White instead says that the everlasting gospel (i.e. “the covenant of mercy”) was put in place between the Father and Son “*if*” man rebelled, not “*when*”:

*“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Christ was not alone in making His great sacrifice. It was the fulfillment of **the covenant made between Him and His Father before the foundation of the world was laid**. With clasped hands they had entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the surety for the human race **if** they were overcome by Satan's sophistry. The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. **The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant.** So surely as there never*

was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity.”  
(*The Faith I Live By*, p. 76)

This statement is in harmony with Scripture, which says God declares “the end from *the beginning*” (Isaiah 46:10). Creating beings as free-moral agents was a divine *risk*, God not knowing what we would chose, but knowing the end-results of each choice we make, “whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Romans 6:16).

## ***Jesus Given an Exalted Position by the Father***

*“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘**All authority has been given to Me** in heaven and on earth.’” (Matthew 28:18)*

In Colossians 1:19 we read, “For it pleased the Father that in him [Jesus] should all fulness dwell” (KJV). This “fulness” is the divinity of God the Father, which He (the Father) was pleased to *give* to His begotten Son. Notice these alternate translations:

**Good News Translation:** *“For it was by God's own decision that the Son has in himself the full nature of God.”*

**International Standard Version:** *“For God was pleased to have all of his divine essence inhabit him.”*

**Weymouth’s New Testament:** *“For it was the Father's gracious will that the whole of the divine perfections should dwell in Him.”*

**Contemporary English Version:** *“God himself was pleased to live fully in his Son.”*

Writing in the year 1890, E.J. Waggoner says:

**“A word of caution may be necessary here. Let no one imagine that we would exalt Christ at the expense of the Father** or would ignore the Father. That cannot be, for their interests are one. We honor the Father in honoring the Son. We are mindful of Paul's words, that ‘to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him’ (1 Cor. 8:6); just as we

have already quoted, that it was by Him that God made the worlds. **All things proceed ultimately from God, the Father; even Christ Himself proceeded and came forth from the Father, but it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,** and that He should be the direct, immediate Agent in every act of creation." (E.J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 19, 1890)

Notice Waggoner connects the giving of all "the fulness" to Christ by the Father as something that took place when He proceeded forth from the Father before the act of Creation. Ellen White confirms this:

### **1879 (19 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

**"The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son.** The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. **The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ should be equal with himself;** so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence. His word was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. **His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host."** (*Signs of the Times*, Jan. 9, par. 2)

### **1904 (6 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

"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 for the Church*. Vol. 8, 268.3)

Here we learn that Christ is not equal with the Father due to anything from Himself, but because the Father *ordained* that His Son should be equal with Himself and has *given* Him an exalted position.

But what about the statements from Ellen White where she says, "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived" and that Christ is "the self-existent One"?

## ***Doesn't Christ Have Life Which is Original, Unborrowed and Underived?***

*"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)*

One of the most famous statements used by SDA trinitarians, concerning the pre-existence of Christ, is found on page 530 of the book *Desire of Ages* where Ellen White says, "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived."

This phrase is used as proof that Ellen White shifted her belief from believing Christ had a beginning, deriving His life from His Father, when He was begotten "in the days of eternity", to being "the source of all life", thus God is a trinity and Christ is coeternal with the Father. In 2018, SDA layman, Joel Ridgeway gave a YouTube presentation called: *The Godhead: Joel's Journey – Why I Left the Ant-Trinitarian Movement*. In his presentation he mentions the above statement from Ellen White:

"Ellen White is placing triple emphasis on the fact that Jesus' life did not come from someone else. In other words, He is the source of all life. He is God in every sense of the word. Now, if Jesus' life really did come from the Father, why on earth would God write something like that to confuse us? This statement shows us that, in order for Christ to be fully divine, He needs to be eternal, otherwise you may as well clasp Christ with all the other angels and other created beings."



So, if the Adventist pioneer view is correct, and Christ derived His life from His Father, and therefore is not as old as His Father, Joel is asking how is it possible that He had "life, original, unborrowed, underived"? Remaining in complete harmony with our previous section, revealing that God the Father had *given* His only begotten Son "an exalted position" and ordained His Son to "be equal with Himself", Jesus says:

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

It is the Father who has life, which is original, unborrowed and underived, and, contrary to what Joel said, the Father has *given* this life to His Son. In

fact, in the original source manuscript, from where the *Desire of Ages* quote comes from, Ellen White not only teaches this life can be given, but it will be given to us:

### **1897 (1 year before *Desire of Ages*)**

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But **the life of Christ was unborrowed**. No one can take this life from him. ‘I lay it down of myself,’ he said. **In him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift** if he will believe in Christ as his personal Saviour. ‘This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.’ [John 17:3]. This is the open fountain of life for the world.” (*Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1897, words in brackets added)

Just as “life, original, unborrowed, underived” was *given* to Christ by His Father, Christ *gives* us the same life as a free gift. Take note she harmonizes her statement by quoting John 17:3, which is one of the most non-trinitarian statements in Scripture. What else can we learn about this “life”?

*“If we have faith in God's Son, we have believed what God has said. But if we don't believe what God has said about his Son, it is the same as calling God a liar. **God has also said he gave us eternal life and this life comes to us from his Son. And so, if we have God's Son, we have this life. But if we don't have the Son, we don't have this life.**”* (1 John 5:10-12, *Contemporary English Version*)

A.T. Jones adds:

“Life and immortality are imparted to the faithful followers of God, but Christ alone shares with the Father the power to impart life. **He [Christ] has ‘life in himself,’ that is, he is able to perpetuate** [continue indefinitely] **his own existence.**” (A.T. Jones, *The Signs of the Times*, vol. 15 April 8, 1889, p. 201, par. 35, words in brackets added)

Remember, “it pleased the Father that in him [Jesus] should all fullness dwell” (Colossians 1:19). Likewise, it pleases the Father that we

“may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:19) as we become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

Joel boldly stated that “Ellen White is placing triple emphasis on the fact that Jesus’ life did not come from someone else. In other words, He is the source of all life.” But is that what we read from page 21 from the same author of the same book, describing the Father as “the great Source of all”?

“**All things Christ received from God**, but He took to give ... through the beloved Son, **the Father’s life flows out to all**; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to **the great Source of all.**”  
(*Desire of Ages*, p. 21)

When Ellen White uses the phrase, “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived”, she is actually quoting John Cummings who wrote this in 1856:

“In him was life” – that is, original, unborrowed, underived. In us there is a streamlet from the Fountain of Life; in him was the Fountain of Life. Our life is something we receive, something that the Giver takes back again to himself.” (*Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament, St. John*, p. 5)

This is important because, even though John Cummings says the word “underived”, he (being a Presbyterian) believed Jesus’ life is *continually derived* from the Father. The SDA pioneers, however, believed Jesus received the Father’s underived life at *one point* “in the days of eternity.”

## ***Isn’t Jesus Self-Existent?***

“Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’” (*John 8:58*)

### **1898 (Quote from *Desire of Ages*)**

“With solemn dignity Jesus answered, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.’ Silence fell upon the vast assembly. **The name of God**, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His [Jesus’] own by this Galilean Rabbi. **He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One**, He who had been promised to Israel, ‘whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.’ Micah 5:2, margin.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 469)



Even though Jesus is self-existent, does this prove that the Son of God was not begotten and did not come forth from God? Not at all. Ellen White states that, by saying the name "I AM" – which means self-existent One – Jesus claimed that name as His. How did He get that name?

*"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, **whom He has appointed heir of all things**, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as **He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent NAME than they.**" (Hebrews 1:1-4)*

Jesus inherited this "name" from His Father – "the Majesty on high" – because, as we saw in the last section, His Father gave Him life, authority and an exalted position. God had told His people to obey "the Angel" He would send "for My name is in Him" (Exodus 23:20-21).

A.T. Jones explains it like this:

"He [Christ] is the only begotten of the Father, and is therefore in very substance of the nature of God; in Him 'dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;' He, therefore, **by divine right of 'inheritance,' bears from the Father the name of 'God.'** Thus Christ Jesus was indeed by divine and eternal right one of God—'equal with God.'" (A.T. Jones, *Ecclesiastical Empire*, Ch. 21, p. 566)

Another statement by Ellen White is found in the *Signs of the Times*:

### **1900 (2 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

"Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?' 'Verily, verily, I say unto you,' Jesus answered, 'Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.' Their eyes were blinded that they might not see Him. 'Before Abraham was, I am.' **Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God.** The message He gave to Moses to give to the children of Israel was, 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.' The prophet Micah writes of Him, 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, tho 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.'" (*Signs of the Times*, par. 13, August 29, 1900)

The context is clearly the pre-existence of Christ, not only before Abraham but also before all creation. But take note Christ is not the pre-existent "God the Son", but "Son of God." In the very next paragraph she explains further the pre-existence of the Son of God by quoting Proverbs 8 which describes the Son of God being "brought forth" before all creation and thus He pre-existed before anything that was created:

"Through Solomon Christ declared: "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**. ... 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." (*ibid*, par. 14)

We have already discussed Proverbs 8 and Christ's pre-existence before. The SDA church has always believed in Christ's pre-existence. In the next paragraph she continues to speak of His self-existence:

"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.**" (*ibid*, par. 15)

Many use this statement as proof that the Son of God existed as long as His Father has existed. But that's not what she's saying at all. It's like saying, there was never a time when Eve was not in close fellowship with Adam. In other words, as long as Eve existed, she was always in close fellowship with Adam. Likewise, Jesus, from the time He was brought forth (begotten), He has always been in close fellowship with the eternal God (His Father) "as one brought up with Him" (again quoting from Proverbs 8).

In fact, Ellen White makes a similar statement in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets* – a book that modern SDA ministers claim was written before Ellen White became trinitarian:

### **1890 (8 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

“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 ...**” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 38)

Both statements are saying the same thing, only worded differently. “There never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God” means the same as “He had ever stood at the right hand of the Father.” Therefore, we see yet again, there is no paradigm shift between 1890 to 1900 in her understanding.

We have learned that when we receive “eternal life” as a gift, we receive Christ’s “original, unborrowed, underived” life which He received from His Father; for “this is life eternal, that they might know thee [the Father], the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). Christ made it clear that His Father is “the only true God” – the Source of life.

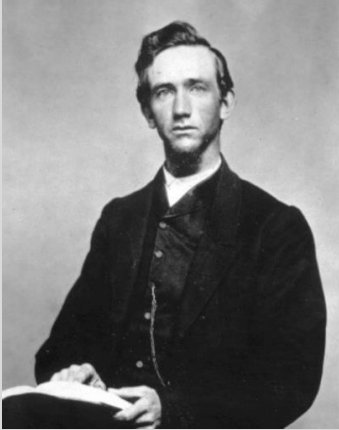
### **R.F. Cottrell (1814-1892)**

“The Trinity, or the triune God, is unknown to the Bible; and I have entertained the idea that doctrines which require words coined in the human mind to express them, are coined doctrines ... But if I am asked what I think of Jesus Christ, my reply is, I believe all that the Scriptures say of him. If the testimony represents him as being in glory with the Father before the world was, I believe it. If



it is said that he was in the beginning with God, that he was God, that all things were made by him and for him, and that without him was not anything made that was made, I believe it. If the Scriptures say he is the Son of God, I believe it. If it is declared that the Father sent his Son into the world, I believe he had a Son to send. ... **Children inherit the name of their father. The Son of God ‘hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than the angels.’**” (R.F. Cottrell, *Review & Herald*, June 1, 1869)

## D.M. Canright (1840-1919)



"... the Bible never uses the phrases, 'Trinity,' 'triune God,' 'three in one,' 'the holy three,' 'God the Holy Ghost,' etc. but it does emphatically say there is only one God, the Father. And **every argument to prove three Gods in one person, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, all of them of one substance, and every way equal to each other, and all three forming but one, contradicts itself, contradicts reason, and contradicts the Bible** ... God is self-existent, and the source and author of all

things,-of angels, of men, of all the worlds,-of everything. Thus Paul says, 'For of him and through him and to him, are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen.' Rom. 11:36. **He is the source of all life and immortality.**

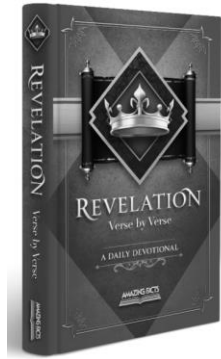
Thus, speaking of the Father, Paul says, 'Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.' 1 Tim. 6:16. Notice that this glorious God is the only one who, in himself, possesses immortality. That is, he is the fountain-head, the source of all life and immortality ... 'For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.' John 5:26. This statement is unequivocal. **The Father has life in himself, and in his great love for his Son he bestows the same gift upon him; but it will be noticed that the Father is the one from whom the gift came** ... How carefully Paul distinguishes between the Father and the Son. He says, 'The Father, of whom are all things,' and 'Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.' **The Father is the source of everything.** Jesus is the one through whom all things are done. **All the authority, the glory, and the power of Christ he received from his Father...**

**A belief in this doctrine is very important.** Indeed, it cannot be too strongly insisted upon. **Jesus even declares that the knowledge of this truth is necessary to eternal life.** 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee [the Father] the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.' John 17:3. **We must know the Father as the only true God. Then there is no true God besides the Father.** But we must also know his Son Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. How simple and plain is this doctrine, and how abundantly sustained by the Holy Bible." — (D.M. Canright, *Review & Herald*, August 29, 1878)

Here again we see the SDA pioneers' understanding that to receive eternal life "we must know the Father as the only true God. Then there is no true God besides the Father. But we must also know his Son Jesus Christ, whom he has sent." Today the SDA church is missing out on this critical doctrine by it's adoption of the trinity.

To further show this, Amazing Facts published a daily devotional book which covers the book of Revelation verse by verse. On Day 50 the book discusses Revelation 3:7. Read carefully what paragraph 2 says:

"It is thus fascinating that Jesus Christ identifies Himself in the same sentence as both One who keeps 'the key' and One 'who is holy.' The attribution of 'holy' denotes divinity: 'To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?' says the Holy One' (Isaiah 40:25). Who is 'the Holy One'? The gospel of Luke recounts the foretelling of Christ's birth: 'That Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God' (1:35). What a fitting description of the Savior of the world, who is both the Son of man and the Son of God, who was both 'a bondservant' (Philippians 2:7) and 'is the true God' (1 John 5:20)." (Page 60)



Did you catch it? The "Holy One" is "the Son of God" who is also "the true God." So, if the Son of God is the true God, what does that make the God of which He is the Son of? If He is the Son of God, clearly His Father must be God, but according to Amazing Facts the Father cannot be "the true God" if the Son "is the true God." Of Course, Amazing Facts is trying to insert the trinity here by implying the Father and the Son are coeternal. Not only does this go against what our SDA pioneers taught, but more importantly it totally misquotes 1 John 5:20 that it references:

*"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 that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."  
(1 John 5:20)*

Do you see what it really says? It says "the Son of God" (Jesus) came to

give us understand of “him that is true.” Who is the “him that is true”? The verse continues saying, “and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.” Clearly the “him that is true” is the Father of Jesus Christ. Then it concludes saying, “This is the true God, and eternal life.” John is telling us that “him that is true” is the Father of Jesus Christ and is “the true God” – the Source of “eternal [original, unborrowed, underived] life.” It is interesting that immediately after saying this, John ends his letter by saying, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen” (Verse 21). What are idols? False gods.



“This doctrine of the trinity was brought into the church about the same time with image worship, and keeping the day of the sun, and is but Persian doctrine remodeled. It occupied about three hundred years from its introduction to bring the doctrine to what it is now. It was commenced about 325 A.D., and was not completed till 681. See Milman's Gibbon's Rome, vol. 4, p. 422. It was adopted in Spain in 589, in England in 596, in Africa in

534.—Gib. vol. 4, pp. 114, 345; Milner, vol. 1, p. 519.” (J.N. Loughborough, *Review & Herald*, November 5, 1861)

## ***Christ, the Only Being that Could Enter Into All the Counsels and Purposes of God***

### **1890 (8 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

“Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—**the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.**” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34)

She says the same thing after the publication of *Desire of Ages*:

## 1911 (13 years after *Desire of Ages*)

“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.**

By Christ the Father wrought in the creation of all heavenly beings.” (*Great Controversy*, p. 483)

Now, there is a comment within the Ellen G. White database that we will have to consider here:

“Here is where the work of the Holy Ghost comes in, after your baptism. You are baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. You are raised up out of the water to live henceforth in newness of life—to live a new life. You are born unto God, and you stand under the sanction and the power of **the three holiest beings in heaven**, who are able to keep you from falling.” (*Manuscript 95*, par. 29, 1906)

The above comments were not written by Ellen White, but by one of her stenographers attending a Sabbath sermon she delivered on October 20, 1906. This statement was never published during Ellen White’s lifetime, but the full sermon is reproduced in *Sermons and Talks*, Vol. 1, pp. 360-383, published in 1990.

The debate in Adventism is whether or not Ellen White used the phrase, “three holiest beings.” If we study her writings as we do Scripture, comparing Scripture with Scripture, then we must compare her statements with other statements to get the whole idea. Ellen White herself endorsed this method:

“And now to all who have a desire for truth I would say: **Do not give credence to unauthenticated reports as to what Sister White has done or said or written. If you desire to know what the Lord has revealed through her, read her published works.** Are there any points of interest concerning which she has not written, do not eagerly catch up and report rumors as to what she has said. (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 696)

“The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture.” (*Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 42)

Some SDA non-trinitarians like to use the above quotes to simply dismiss the statement concerning “the three holiest beings” as being fraudulent since it was not one of her published writings during her lifetime. However, I think we need to assume she said it, or she said something slightly different and the stenographer made a mistake. Both of these scenerios are possible.

Whether you are on the trinitarian side or the non-trinitarian side, one must admit it is a strange, one-of-a-kind statement that’s found within her writings, especially as she repeatedly said that Christ is “the *only being in all the universe* that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.” In 1897 she wrote:

“... in order that the human family might have no excuse because of Satan’s temptations, Christ became one with them. **The only Being who was one with God** lived the law in humanity, descended to the lowly life of a common laborer, and toiled at the carpenter’s bench with His earthly parent. (*Letter 121, 1897*)

If God was a trinity, made up of three coequal, coeternal beings, then why is it that the Holy Spirit is not allowed into the counsels of God? Is it because he’s not one with God? Can you see the delemna here? To further clarify things, Ellen White wrote this in *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

“There was no note of discord to mar the celestial harmonies. But a change came over this happy state. **There was one who perverted the freedom that God had granted to His creatures. Sin originated with him who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. Lucifer, ‘son of the morning,’** was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. He stood in the presence of the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God rested upon him.” (p. 35)

According to Ellen White here, the being who “next to Christ had been most honored of God and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven” was Lucifer. So at one point, before Lucifer’s fall, could it be said that God, Jesus and Lucifer were “the three holiest beings in heaven”? Because of the fall of Lucifer, Ellen White says the angel Gabriel took his place:



**“It was Gabriel, the angel next in rank to the Son of God**, who came with the divine message to Daniel. It was Gabriel, ‘His angel,’ whom Christ sent to open the future to the beloved John; and a blessing is pronounced on those who read and hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things written therein. Revelation 1:3.” (*Desire of Ages*, P. 234)

Admittedly, that’s clearly not what the statement in question is saying. She is clearly speaking of “the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”, but can you see the apparent contradictions when we consider her other writings? This leads me to believe either the stenographer made an error or the original word she used (possibly, “Persons”) was changed to “Beings.” There are several statements she makes referring to the Holy Spirit as a Person (as we will see later) but this is the only place in all her writings where she refers to the Holy Spirit as a Being.

It is very provable that the stenographer may have made an error when we consider the fact that most of the time Ellen White had more than one stenographer writing things down. This produced multiple manuscripts, and just like Scripture, which was written by various authors, oftentimes different words are used when quoting the same person. For example, Luke quotes Jesus saying:

*“And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at **My table** in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Luke 22:29-30)*

However, Matthew quotes Jesus saying:

*“Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on **the throne** of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew 19:28)*

Even though, Luke says “My table” but Matthew says “the throne”, we can come to the conclusion that they are not contradictory, but synonymous. Thus, when we look into the sanctuary and see the table of showbread, it is of no coincidence



that this table was placed on the *north end* because the north is where Scripture places God’s throne, of which Satan wants to take control (Isaiah

14:12-14). It is also no coincidence that the table of showbread had *two* crown moldings (Exodus 25:24-25) which represent the *two* crowns who sit at that throne – God, the Most High and His Prince; for it is “the throne of God [the Father] and of the Lamb [Jesus]” (Revelation 22:3, words in brackets added).

To prove this point, we know that on Monday, April 1, 1901 Ellen White gave a talk where there were 5 stenographers. All five of these Manuscripts exist (*Manuscripts* 43, 43a, 43b, 43c, and 43d). The following is from an online study by Jason Smith at *asitreads.com*, November 30, 2021:

“Now let’s get into some of the details of these manuscripts. First up Ms 43 has 4,905 words while Ms 43b has 4,943 words and those two manuscripts lack the introduction found in the other 3 manuscripts. If you look at these manuscripts you can see that they are edited to remove the free-form expressions present in typical speech. They also remove redundant material and shorten some accounts. They also help to clarify ambiguities which are present in the other 3 manuscripts.

Now here’s the important part. There are clear variations of words in them. For example one manuscript uses:

‘This is what **alarms** me’ {Ms43-1901}

The other one uses:

‘This is what **frightens** me’ {Ms43b-1901}

So which word did she use? Or again one manuscript uses:

‘These things must be **purged** from the men who are helping to prepare a people to stand in the last great conflict, which is just upon us.’ {Ms43-1901.20}

While the other uses:

“These things must be **taken away** from the men who are helping to prepare a people to stand in the last great conflict, which is just upon us.’ {Ms43b-1901.18}

So what did she actually say?

Again one manuscript uses:

'...we know that **new power** must be brought into the regular lines.' {Ms43-1901.4}

But the other uses:

'...we know that **new blood** must be brought into the regular lines.' {Ms43b-1901.4}

So is it power or is it blood?

Do you see the problem? Stenography reports aren't perfect! And the other manuscripts, which are much longer, have their variations too. We will not discuss these details except to say that Ms 43a is 8,106 words, Ms 43c is 7856 words and Ms 43d is 8,127 words. And



there are occasions where these manuscripts disagree with one other manuscript but agree with the other. Now can you imagine if someone attempted to base a doctrine off of just one quote? Say for example the 'new blood' quote from Ms43b. Should we go by that stenography report or should we examine the totality of sister White's published writings before reaching any conclusion? Thoughtful readers will understand what I am getting at here."

Again, it is very probable that she used the word "being" synonymously with "person." However, it is also probable that the stenographer or copyist made a blunder, either by writing down the wrong word or thinking that "being" and "person" meant the same to Ellen White when it pertains to the Holy Spirit. We just don't know and it is perfectly understandable for someone to accept it just as it reads as long as they consider and compare the Testimonies with the Testimonies.

## ***Worship is Given to the Father and Son Alone***

### **1870 (28 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

"Adam and Eve ... united with them and raised their voices in harmonious songs of love, praise and adoration, **to the Father and his dear Son**, for the tokens of love which surrounded them." (*Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 1, p. 26)

### **1898 (the Year *Desire of Ages* was published)**

"The Father and the Son alone are to be exalted." (*Youth's Instructor*, July 7)

### **1903 (5 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

"In your hands will be placed a golden harp, and touching its strings, you will join with the redeemed host in filling all heaven with songs of praise **to God and His Son**." (*Australasian Union Conference Record*, January 15, par. 14)

Again, if there are "three" coequal, coeternal "holiest Beings in heaven", why do only the Father and the Son get to be worshiped and exalted? The answer is found in our next section.

## ***The Holy Spirit is a Person with a Personality***

"Nevertheless I [Jesus] tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, **the Helper [Comforter]** 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 of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment ... I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when **He**, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He** will guide you into all truth; for **He** will not speak on **His** own authority, but whatever **He** hears **He** will speak; and **He** will tell you things to come. **He** will glorify **Me**, for **He** will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." (*John* 16:7-8, 12-14)

In 1890 (9 years before *Desire of Ages*) Uriah Smith answered a question from J.W.W. concerning the personhood of the Holy Spirit, which was recorded in the *Review & Herald*:

"J. W. W. Asks: 'Are we to understand that the Holy Ghost is a person, the same as the Father and the Son? Some claim that it is, others that it is not.'

Answer - The terms 'Holy Ghost', are a harsh and repulsive translation. It should be 'Holy Spirit' (*hagion pneuma*) in every instance. **This Spirit is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ;** the Spirit being the same whether it is spoken of as pertaining to God or Christ. But respecting this Spirit, **the Bible uses expressions which cannot be harmonized with the idea that it is a person like the Father and the Son.** Rather it is shown to be a **divine influence** from them both, the medium which represents their presence and by which they have



knowledge and power through all the universe, when not personally present. **Christ is a person, now officiating as priest in the sanctuary in heaven; and yet he says that wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in the midst. Mt. 18:20. How? Not personally, but by his Spirit.** In one of Christ's discourses (John 14-16) **this Spirit is personified as 'the Comforter,' and as such has the personal and relative pronouns, 'he,' 'him,' and 'whom,' applied to it.** But usually it is spoken of in a way to show that it cannot be a person, like the Father and the Son. For instance, it is often said to be 'poured out' and 'shed abroad.' But we never read about God or Christ being poured out or shed abroad. If it was a person, it would be nothing strange for it to appear in bodily shape; and yet when it has so appeared, that fact has been noted as peculiar. Thus Luke 3:22 says: 'And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him.' But the shape is not always the same; for on the day of Pentecost it assumed the form of 'cloven tongues like as of fire.' Acts 2:3, 4. Again we read of 'the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.' Rev. 1:4 3:1 4:5 5:6. This is unquestionably simply a designation of the Holy Spirit, put in this form to signify its perfection and completeness. **But it could hardly be so described if it was a person.** We never read of the seven Gods or the seven Christs." (Uriah Smith, *Review & Herald*, October 28, 1890)

Disagreeing with Smith in some points, A.T. Jones wrote this in 1907 (9 years after *Desire of Ages*):

**A.T. Jones (1850-1923)**



"... **the Holy Spirit is a person.** This great truth is not recognized, indeed it is not believed, by more than a very few even of Christians. For everybody knows that almost invariably, with very, very few exceptions, the Holy Spirit is referred to and spoken of by Christians as 'it.' But the word 'it' never applies to a person. The word 'it,' in the very genius of our language, refers and applies only to things, never to persons; to things of inanimate substance, as a stone, a horse, a

tree; or to things of concept, or experience, as space, height, breadth, peace, joy, grief, an impression, an influence. But the Holy Spirit is none of these: **the Holy Spirit is not an influence;** nor an impression, nor peace, nor joy, nor any thing. The Holy Spirit gives peace, and gives joy, assuages in grief, makes an impression, exerts an influence; but the Holy Spirit is none of these things, nor any other thing. No, eternally no! **The Holy Spirit is a Person, eternally a divine Person. And he must be always recognized and spoken of as a Person, or he is not truly recognized or spoken of at all.**" (A.T. Jones, *The Medical Missionary*, p. 98, 1907)

After quoting several verses to prove his case (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15), Jones goes on to say:

**"Thus in the short space of a few lines the Lord Jesus speaks twenty-four times of the Holy Spirit as a person;** and speaks of him in no other term than that which signifies in Greek, literally, 'that person there.' Yet this is not peculiar to the New Testament. David said, 'The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and *HIS* word was in my tongue.' 2 Samuel 23:2. **Note that this latter word introduces another element of personality—**'the Spirit of the Lord spake.' This is also stated of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Read it:—

'Then the Spirit **said** unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.' Acts 8:29.

'The Holy Spirit **said**, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' Acts 13:2.

'As the Holy Ghost **saith**.' Hebrews 3:7.

'Well **spake** the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet.' Acts 28:25.

**Thus the Scriptures make perfectly plain the truth that the Holy Spirit is, none other than a living, speaking, divine, and eternal person. Exactly as Christ is a person and as God is a person.** Indeed Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father, just as he speaks of himself as proceeding from the Father. Of himself Jesus says: 'I proceeded forth and came from God.' John 8:4. Of the Holy Spirit, Jesus says that he 'proceedeth from the Father.' John 15:26. Therefore to be consistent those people who persist in speaking of the Holy Spirit as 'it,' should also speak of Christ as 'it,' and of God as 'it.' But as certainly as any one speaks of God as *HE* and of Christ as *HE*, he must also speak of the Holy Spirit as *HE*." (A.T. Jones, *ibid*)

Take note of the differences between Uriah Smith and A.T. Jones:

**Uriah Smith (1890):** "But respecting this Spirit, the Bible uses expressions which cannot be harmonized with the idea that it is a person like the Father and the Son."

**A.T. Jones (1907):** "Thus the Scriptures make perfectly plain the truth that the Holy Spirit is, none other than a living, speaking, divine, and eternal person. Exactly as Christ is a person and as God is a person."

**Uriah Smith (1890):** "Rather it is shown to be a divine influence from them both."

**A.T. Jones (1907):** "The Holy Spirit is not an influence."



However, take note of the similarities:

**Uriah Smith (1890):** "In one of Christ's discourses (John 14-16) this Spirit is personified as 'the Comforter,' and as such has the personal and relative pronouns, 'he,' 'him,' and 'whom,' applied to it."

**A.T. Jones (1907):** "The Holy Spirit is a Person, eternally a divine Person ... as certainly as any one speaks of God as *HE* and of Christ as *HE*, he must also speak of the Holy Spirit as *HE*."

Concerning the differences between Smith and Jones, does Ellen White write anything between the years 1890 and 1907?

### 1898 (Quote from *Desire of Ages*)



"In describing to His disciples the office work of **the Holy Spirit**, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. **The Holy Spirit** was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit** was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of **the Third Person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power." (*Desire of Ages*, p. 671)

### 1899 (1 year after *Desire of Ages*)

"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, unseen by human eyes, that the Lord God is our Keeper and Helper. He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind." (*Manuscript 66*, par. 11, 1899)

We'll be discussing more on the above paragraphs in the next section.

### 1906 (8 years after *Desire of Ages*)

"**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.'" (*Manuscript 20*, 1906)

Clearly, Ellen White believed the Holy Spirit is a divine person. It's important to note that she believed this before and after she wrote *Desire of Ages*. Therefore, the book does not reveal any paradigm shift of what she believed concerning the personhood of the Holy Spirit.



But did the phrase, “Third Person of the Godhead” reveal a paradigm shift of what she believed concerning the trinity in general? The answer is no because she never believed the Holy Spirit was a separate coeternal being. Notice how she harmonizes the statements made by Smith and Jones:

### **1910 (12 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

“As the divine endowment—the power of the Holy Spirit—was given to the disciples, so it will today be given to all who seek aright. This power alone is able to make us wise unto salvation, and to fit us for the courts above. Christ wants to give us a blessing that will make us holy. ‘These things have I spoken unto you,’ He says, ‘that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.’ Joy in the Holy Spirit is health-giving, life-giving. **In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself—a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” (*Signs of the Times*, par. 10, March 15, 1910)**

This echoes what she wrote 8 years earlier in 1902 (only it’s worded slightly different):

### **1902 (4 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

“Christ wants to give us a blessing that will make us holy. ‘These things have I spoken unto you,’ He says, ‘that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.’ John 15:11. Joy in the Holy Spirit is health-giving, life-giving joy. **In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences**, to give health and life to the world.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, p. 273, 1902)

## ***According to the Bible and Ellen White, Who is “the Third Person of the Godhead”?***

*“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and **He will give you another Helper [Comforter]**, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; **but you [the disciples] know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans [comfortless]; I will come to you.**” (John 14:15-18)*

As you can see by Christ's words, the disciples (and us) would be left comfortless unless Jesus Himself came to us. When Jesus says "another helper [Comforter]" He's not saying a totally different being would come. The disciples already knew Him because He was dwelling with them at that time in the flesh – "but you [the disciples] know Him, for *He dwells with you.*" Jesus then says that the Helper (Comforter), who was dwelling with them in the flesh, would be "in" them – "I will not leave you orphans [comfortless]; *I will come to you.*"

The Greek word for "Helper" or "Comforter" here is παράκλητον (*parakletos*) which is the same word translated as "advocate" in 1 John 2:1 – "... if any man sin, we have an *advocate [parakletos]* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." It could have been easily translated as, "we have a *Helper/Comforter* with the Father", as it appears in the *Bible in Basic English*:

*"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may be without sin. And if any man is a sinner, **we have a friend and helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, the upright one.**"*

Here again we see that the Holy Spirit (the Helper/Comforter) is in fact the omnipresence of Jesus. Here's what Ellen White wrote concerning John 14:15-18:

### **1891 (7 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

"It is not essential for you to know and be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and the Comforter is the Holy Ghost, 'the Spirit of truth, which the Father shall send in my name.' [John 14:26.] 'I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, 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.' [Verses 16, 17.] **This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.** Again Jesus says, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.'" [John 16:12, 13.]" (*Letter 7*, par. 14, 1891)

## **1892 (6 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

“The work of the holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and **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. When led by the Spirit of God, the Christian may know that he is made complete in him who is the head of all things.” (*Review & Herald*, November, 29, par. 3, 1892)

In John chapter 16, Jesus continues reiterating His promise of the coming Holy Spirit who would be sent. In verse 16 He says, “A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.” Verses 17 and 18 says the disciples didn’t fully understand what He was saying. In verse 25 Jesus explains: “These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.” Therefore, this whole speech about the Holy Spirit, and Christ saying “*another* Helper/Comforter”, “*He* may abide in you”, is all figurative language meaning “*I* [Jesus] will come to you.” Jesus spoke to them in “figurative language” while with them in the flesh, but would speak “plainly about the Father” when He dwells in them in Spirit form.

In John 1:14 we read, “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.” Jesus, the Word, was just as much a person when He came in the flesh as He was when He was in heaven. Paul wrote, “And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam [Jesus] *became a life-giving spirit*” (1 Corinthians 15:45). When Jesus became a “life-giving spirit” He is as much a person as He is in the flesh, just as He was as much a person when He was in heaven.

When Jesus told His disciples (and us) that the Father would send the Helper/Comforter to be “in them”, He was referring to Himself in the third person (i.e. using figurative language).

*“And because you are sons, **God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’**” (Galatians 4:6)*

*"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)*

*"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified." (2 Corinthians 13:5)*

In Acts 16:7, Luke personifies the Spirit. Here's how it reads in the *New King James Version*:

*"After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, **but the Spirit did not permit them.**"*

What's interesting is that in most every other translation it reads "the Spirit of Jesus." Here's just a couple of samples:

**American Standard:** *"and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and **the Spirit of Jesus** suffered them not."*

**Weymouth New Testament:** *"When they reached the frontier of Mysia, they were about to enter Bithynia, but **the Spirit of Jesus** would not permit this."*

Notice what the *SDA Bible Commentary* says about this:



**"Spirit.** Textual evidence attests the reading 'Spirit of Jesus.' This confirms the view that the Spirit stands in the same relation to the Son as to the Father, and may therefore be spoken of as either the Spirit of God, or of Christ, or of Jesus (cf. Rom 8:9)." (*SDA Bible Commentary*, Acts 16:7)

We can clearly see from this passage that the disciples believed and taught that the Holy Spirit was the Spirit of Jesus.

Right after Jesus told His disciples about the coming Helper/Comforter, saying, "I will not leave you orphans [comfortless]; I will come to you" (John 14:15-18), He added, "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you (John 14:19-20).

Responding to this, Judas asked, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" (Vs. 22). Take note that Judas is linking the whole discussion of the Helper/Comforter (the Holy Spirit) as being the presence of Jesus. What he didn't understand is *how* this would be accomplished. Jesus answered this by saying, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (Vs. 23). So, the Holy Spirit is described as the omnipresence of both the Father and His Son, as we also saw from Ellen White:



**The Father:** "In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences" (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, p. 273, 1902)

**The Son:** "[The Holy Spirit] refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter." (*Letter 7*, par. 14, 1891)

The disciples taught the same:

**The Father:** "But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but **the Holy Spirit**." (Mark 13:11)

"But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but **the Spirit of your Father** who speaks in you." (Matthew 10:19-20)

**The Son:** "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by **the Holy Spirit**." (1 Peter 1:20-21)

"Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, **the Spirit of Christ** who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." (1 Peter 1:10-11)

Afterall, isn't "the Spirit of prophecy" the "testimony of Jesus Christ"?

Again, Ellen White is in perfect harmony with Scripture, writing in 1893:

“He will send his representative, **the Holy Spirit**; for He says, ‘I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.’ **By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you.**” (*The Bible Echo*, January 15)

On page 48, I cited *Manuscript 66* where Ellen White said, “We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds, unseen by human eyes ...” If you were to read this comment in the book *Evangelism*, which is a compilation of Ellen White quotes published after her death, it appears like this:

“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)

But as you can see from the original comment made in 1899, (1 year after *Desire of Ages*) from *Manuscript 66*, there is no period after the word “grounds.” She did not end her thought there but instead continued to clarify who she believed this “person” is. Here it is again:

“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, unseen by human eyes, that **the Lord God is our Keeper and Helper. He** hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind.” (*Manuscript 66*, par. 11, 1899)

We need to be very careful with these compilations that were published after her death. Again, this is why she warned not to trust reports of what she has said or written and “If you desire to know what the Lord has revealed through her, read her published works.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 696).

Commenting on the Holy Spirit, here’s what A.T. Jones had to say:

“We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith; but what brings it? The Spirit of God; and when we have that, Christ dwells in the heart. Then **it is the Holy Spirit that brings the personal presence of Jesus Christ, and in bringing His personal presence to us, He brings Himself.** Then it is the mind of Christ, by which we may investigate, and reveal in, the deep things of God which He reaches down and brings forth to our understanding and sets them before us in their plainness.” (A.T. Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, #11, p. 31, 1893)

So, even though Jones taught that the Holy Spirit is a person, he still believed it (He) wasn't a totally separate person than the Father and Christ. It's important here that Jones connects "the Holy Spirit" with "the personal presence of Jesus" with "the mind of Christ." Paul does the same in 1 Corinthians 2:10-16. Ellen White echoes what Jones taught:

### **1890 (8 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

"The work of the ministry is no common work. **Christ is withdrawn only from the eye of sense, but he is as truly present by his Spirit as when he was visibly present on earth.** The time that has elapsed since his ascension has brought no interruption in the fulfillment of his parting promise,—'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' (*Signs of the Times*, April 7, par. 6, 1890)

### **1895 (3 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

"Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. **The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.**" (*Manuscript Release*, Vol. 14, p. 23)

Writing in 1898, the year *Desire of Ages* was published, Ellen White refers to John 14:19-23 and the disciples' misunderstanding of how Jesus would manifest Himself to them after His ascension:

### **1898 (the Year *Desire of Ages* was published)**

"That Christ should manifest **Himself** to them, and **yet be invisible to the world, was a mystery to the disciples.** They could not understand the words of Christ in their spiritual sense. They were thinking of the outward, visible manifestation. They could not take in the fact that they could have the **presence of Christ** with them, and yet He be **unseen by the world.** They did not understand the meaning of a spiritual manifestation." (*The Southern Work*, September 13, 1898 par. 2)

Notice how this next quote, from *Desire of Ages* (1898), is just a re-wording of what we read above from *Signs of the Times*, April 7, 1890:

## 1898 (Quote from *Desire of Ages*)

“Though the ministration was to be removed from the earthly to the heavenly temple; though the sanctuary and our great high priest would be invisible to human sight, yet the disciples were to suffer no loss thereby. They would realize no break in their communion, and no diminution of power because of the Saviour’s absence. **While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth.** He is withdrawn from the eye of sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ Matthew 28:20. **While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church.**” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 166, 1898)

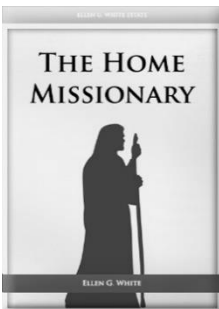


The above quote is also an echo of what we read earlier from Uriah Smith in 1890, thus showing the harmony between the SDA pioneers on this subject, although Ellen White states is slightly more correctly:

“Christ is a person, now officiating as priest in the sanctuary in heaven; and yet he says that wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in the midst. Mt. 18:20. How? Not personally, but by his Spirit.” (Uriah Smith, *Review & Herald*, October 28, 1890)

This is also in harmony with what she wrote in 1897:

## 1897 (1 year before *Desire of Ages*)



“The influence of **the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul.** We do not now see Christ and speak to him, but **his Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as another.** It works in and through every one who receives Christ.” (*The Home Missionary*, July 1, par. 1)

Earlier we quoted from the *Desire of Ages* where Ellen White wrote those famous words:

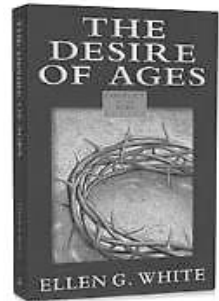


**“The Holy Spirit** was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail ... Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the **Third Person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.” (p. 671)

Is Ellen White here making a paradigm shift from believing the Holy Spirit is the personal omnipresence of Jesus Himself – His very Person “divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof”? Not at all! We just read from page 166 of the same book saying “while Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth.” And to prove there is no disharmony between pages 166 and 671 of *Desire of Ages*, let’s keep reading page 671 in the same paragraph:

### **1898 (Quote from *Desire of Ages*)**

“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the **Third Person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is **the Spirit** that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by **the Spirit** that the heart is made pure. Through **the Spirit** the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.



**Christ has given HIS SPIRIT as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.**” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 671)

Here she clearly defines what she means by “Third Person of the Godhead”, revealing that He is “the Spirit”, and that Spirit is Christ’s Spirit. In fact, when we compare page 671 with what she says on page 324 of the same book, we see that she defines it even further so there can be no question:

**Page 671:** “Sin could be resisted and overcome **only** through the mighty agency of **the Third Person of the Godhead.**” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 671)

**Page 324:** “The only defense against evil is **the indwelling of Christ** in the heart through faith in His righteousness.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 324)

Therefore, according to Ellen White, the Third Person of the Godhead is the omnipresence (the Spirit) of the *personal* presence of Jesus Himself!

In her quote she says “the Third Person of the Godhead” is “the mighty agency” who effects the “heart” and makes it pure. Compare that to what she wrote in 1895:

### **1895 (3 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

“**The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ**; it is His representative. Here is the **divine agency** that carries conviction to **hearts**.” (*Manuscript Release 13*, p. 313, 1895)

This is in harmony with what she wrote in 1891:

### **1891 (7 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

“... but it is the leaven of **the spirit of Jesus Christ**, which is sent down from heaven, **called the Holy Ghost**, and that Spirit affects the **heart** and the character.” (*Sermons and Talks*, Vol. 1, p. 209, 1891)

Throughout the book, *Desire of Ages*, Ellen White continues to reveal who the Holy Spirit is:

### **1898 (Quotes from *Desire of Ages*)**

“After His resurrection He explained to the disciples in “all the prophets” “the things concerning Himself.” Luke 24:27. The Saviour had spoken through all the prophets. “**The Spirit of Christ which was in them**” “testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” 1 Peter 1:11.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 234)



“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. Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 805)

“All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. **Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life**. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 827)

Did Ellen White continue to believe that the Comforter (the Third Person of the Godhead) is Jesus Himself after the publication of *Desire of Ages*?

### **1902 (4 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

"Christ is to be known by the blessed name of Comforter." (*Manuscript 7*)

### **1904 (6 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

"Christ declared that after his ascension, he would send to his church, as his crowning gift, **the Comforter**, who was to take his place. **This Comforter is the Holy Spirit,—the soul of his [Christ's] life, the efficacy of his church,** the light and life of the world. With his Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence [remember Uriah Smith?] and a power that takes away sin." (*Review & Herald*, May 19, 1904, words in brackets added)

### **1906 (8 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

"It is **the spirit** that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life' (John 6:57, 63). Christ is not here referring to His doctrine, but to **His person**, the divinity of His character." (*Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 249)

### **1909 (11 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

"Those who believe the truth should remember that they are God's little children, that they are under His training. Let them be thankful to God for His manifold mercies and be kind to one another. They have **one God and one Saviour; and one Spirit—the Spirit of Christ**—is to bring unity into their ranks." (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, 1909)

### **1911 (13 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

"When on His resurrection day these disciples met the Saviour, and their hearts burned within them as they listened to His words; when they looked upon the head and hands and feet that had been bruised for them; when, before His ascension, Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up His hands in blessing, bade them, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel,' adding, 'Lo, I am with you alway' (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:20); when on the Day of Pentecost **the promised Comforter descended** and the power from on high was given and the souls of the believers thrilled with **the conscious presence of their ascended Lord**—then, even though, like His, their pathway led through sacrifice and martyrdom ..." (*Great Controversy*, p. 350, 1911)



And just in case it is still not clear who Ellen White believed is the Holy Spirit, we can read this statement from the year 1894:

### **1894 (4 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

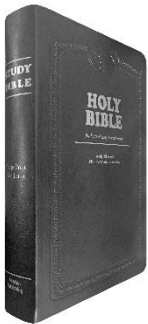
“We want that complete and perfect understanding which the Lord alone can give. It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. **We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ.** If we commune with God, we shall have strength and grace and efficiency.” (*Letter 66*, April 10, 1894, par. 18)

This is why in 1890 she could warn:

### **1890 (8 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

“The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. **He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter**, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it.’ (*Review & Herald*, August 26, par. 10)

Ellen White and the SDA pioneers are in complete harmony with Scripture, which teaches that the Spirit of God is His divine presence:



*“Where can I go from **Your Spirit**? Or where can I flee from **Your presence**? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.” (Psalm 139:7-10)*

Commenting on this verse, J.N. Loughborough explains:

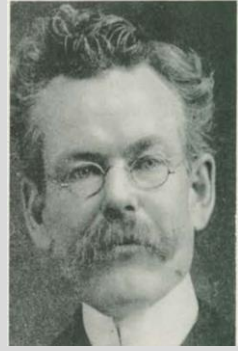
“The Spirit of God is spoken of in the Scriptures as God’s representative, the power by which he works, **the agency** by which all things are upheld. This is clearly expressed by the Psalmist [he then quotes Psalm 139:7-10]. **We learn from this language that when we speak of the Spirit of God we are really speaking of his presence and power.**” (J.N. Loughborough, *Review & Herald*, September 20, 1898)

Pay particular attention that this was written in 1898, the year *Desire of Ages* was published. Loughborough says, “when we [referring to the SDA church] speak of the Spirit of God we are really speaking of his presence and power.”

Writing in the year 1911, M. C. Wilcox explains the SDA's position on the Holy Spirit. (Pay particular attention to the first sentence which is a direct quote from *Desire of Ages*, page 805, quoted on page 58 of this book):

**M.C. Wilcox (1853-1935)**

**“The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ.’ It thus makes Christ everywhere present.** To use a crude illustration, just as a telephone carries the voice of a man, and so makes that voice present miles away, so **the Holy Spirit carries with it all the potency of Christ in making Him everywhere present with all His power,** and revealing Him to those in harmony with His law. Thus **the Spirit is personified in Christ and God, but never revealed as a separate person.** Never are we told to pray to the Spirit; but to God for the Spirit. Never do we find in the Scriptures prayers to the Spirit, but for the Spirit.” (M. C. Wilcox, *Questions and Answers Gathered From the Question Corner Department of the Signs of the Times*, pp. 181-182, 1911)



The following quote from M. C. Wilcox is from *Questions and Answers*, Vol. 11 and is found in the 1919, 1938, as well as the 1945 edition, which again shows the SDA's position **53 years after** *Desire of Ages*:

“The personality of the Holy Spirit will probably be a matter of discussion always. Sometimes the Spirit is mentioned as being 'poured out,' as in Acts 2. All through the Scriptures, the Spirit is represented as being the operating power of God ... **The reason why the Scriptures speak of the Holy Spirit as a person, it seems to us, is that it brings to us, and to every soul that believes, the personal presence of our Lord Jesus Christ** ... Because of the lack of faith, it was 'expedient,' necessary, that He should go away; for He declared, 'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you.' John 16:7. His disciples could not realize the presence of **the Spirit of God** as long as Christ was with them personally. In that sense, He could be with those only who were in His immediate presence. But when He went away, and the Spirit came, **it could make Christ present with everyone,** wherever that one was with Paul in Athens, Peter in Jerusalem, Thomas in India, John in Patmos.”

Merlin Burt (Professor of Church History, Director, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews Theological Seminary) wrote this concerning the SDA church becoming trinitarian:

“The church gradually shifted during from the **1930s to 1950s** to the ‘orthodox’ Christian view on the trinity and deity of Christ ... During the **1940s** an ever increasing majority of the church was believing in the eternal underived deity of Christ and the trinity, yet there were some who held back even actively resisted the change.” (Merlin Burt, *Demise of Semi-Arianism and anti-trinitarianism in Adventist theology, 1888-1957*, pp. 47-48)

It was between the 1950s -1970s that SDA theology started to shift toward unbegottenism (Jesus is not a begotten but a “unique” Son prior to incarnation), which is now the dominant view. In 1980, the SDA church officially voted in the trinity doctrine as one of the fundamental beliefs.

## ***Doesn't Ellen White Teach of Two Intercessors – “Christ Our mediator, and the Holy Spirit”?***

### **1900 (2 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

“**Christ**, our Mediator, **and the Holy Spirit** are constantly interceding in man’s behalf, but **the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ**, who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart.” (*Manuscript 50*, par. 15, 1900)

Did Ellen White actually believe in two mediators – two intercessors? If she did, one would have to question this due to the fact the Bible says there’s only one Mediator who is our Intercessor:

“For there is one God and **one Mediator** between God and men, the Man **Christ Jesus.**” (1 Timothy 2:5)

“... **Jesus** has become a surety of a better covenant. Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He,

because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to **make intercession** for them." (Hebrews 7:22-25)

Is Ellen White in harmony with the Bible?

### **1899 (1 year after *Desire of Ages*)**

"**Christ** represented the Father to the world, and **He represents before God the chosen ones in whom He has restored the moral image of God.** They are His heritage. To them He says, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' No man 'knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.' No priest, no religionist, can reveal the Father to any son or daughter of Adam. Men have **only one Advocate, one Intercessor**, who is able to pardon transgression." (*Signs of the Times*, June 28, par. 8, 1899)

Her statement is in complete harmony with the Bible – there is only one Mediator, one Intercessor – Jesus, both in physical form in the presence of the Father, and in His spiritual form working upon our hearts. She's saying the same thing we have read before on page 166 of *Desire Ages*. Let's read it again, only with even more context which is in complete harmony with what we are discussing:

### **1898 (Quotes from *Desire of Ages*)**

"Wherefore He [Jesus] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing **He ever liveth to make INTERCESSION for them.**' Hebrews 7:25. Though the ministration was to be removed from the earthly to the heavenly temple; though the sanctuary and **our great high priest would be invisible to human sight**, yet the disciples were to suffer no loss thereby. They would realize no break in their communion, and no diminution of power because of the Saviour's absence. **While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by HIS SPIRIT the minister of the church on earth.** He is withdrawn from the eye of sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' Matthew 28:20. While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church." (*Desire of Ages*, p. 166, 1898)

As we see, although Ellen White taught that the Holy Spirit is a person, she never referred to the Holy Spirit as a *separate person* than the Father and the Son. And that leads us to our final question:

## ***What About “the Heavenly Trio”, the “Three Great Powers”, and “the Three Dignitaries”?***

*“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of **the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)*

### **1906 (8 years after *Desire of Ages*)**

“The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fulness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. **There are three living persons of the heavenly trio: in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit**—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.” (*Manuscript 21*, par. 11, 1906)

There’s no doubt that there is a heavenly “trio” and “three great powers” – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Most modern Adventists use this quote to prove Ellen White was teaching trinitarianism, but instead of using our *own* definition of the term, let’s allow Ellen White to define what she means.

In this *Manuscript* Ellen White is actually writing a rebuttal to certain SDA leaders, such as Kellogg, who were bringing the trinity doctrine into the church. Kellogg’s book, *The Living Temple*, published in 1903, was the major culprit because Kellogg was adopting trinitarian ideas from leaders of other Protestant teachers. One such famous teacher was William E. Boardman who had released a book called, *The Higher Christian Life*, in 1858. As a result of this book, Boardman traveled world-wide and sparked

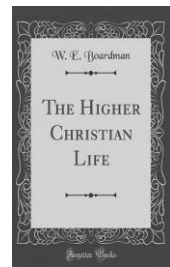


the Pentecostal, Holy Spirit, movement. Beginning on page 99 of his book, Boardman begins to describe the “essential relations of the persons of the Holy Trinity.” Ellen White did not agree with Boardman’s teaching, and in paragraphs 8 and 9 of *Manuscript 21*, she says this:

“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 as 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. They weaken and diminish **the Majesty** which no earthly likeness can be compared to. **God** cannot be compared with the things His hands have made. These are mere earthly things, suffering under the curse of God because of the sins of man. **The Father** cannot be described by the things of earth.” (Underlines added)

The words underlined are direct quotes from Boardman’s book (between pages 99-104) which is seemingly combining two modes of trinitarianism: modelism and partialism, which is generally rejected by the official trinitarian creed. However, after saying these words, Boardman writes:

“The Father **is** all the fullness of the Godhead INVISIBLE.  
The Son **is** all the fulness of the Godhead MANIFESTED.  
The Spirit **is** all the fulness of the Godhead MAKING  
MANIFEST.  
The persons are not mere offices, or modes of revelation,  
but *living persons* of the *living* God.” (Words in italics are  
Boardman’s)



Boardman has just described pure unadulterated trinitarianism. He’s describing “living persons” (plural) of “the living God” (singular). By saying the persons are not mere “offices”, he’s rejecting partialism, and by stating the persons are not “modes”, he’s rejecting modelism. Here’s how the Athanasian (Catholic) Creed (5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century AD) describes it:



Image from a **Catholic** website: [catholicbible101.com](http://catholicbible101.com)

“Now the catholic faith is that we worship **One God in Trinity** and Trinity in **Unity**, neither confounding the **Persons** nor dividing the **substance**. For there is one **Person** of the Father, **another** of the Son, **another** of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, **is One**, the Glory equal, **the Majesty coeternal.**”

As you can see, the official trinitarian creed is one God made up of a unity of three coeternal persons. In the *Augsburg Confession* of 1530, the Protestant churches clarify exactly what they mean by “persons”:

“And the term ‘person’ they [Protestant churches] use as the Fathers [Catholic fathers] have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.” (Words in brackets added)

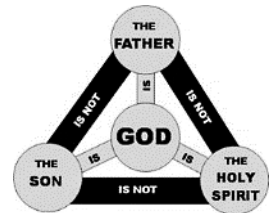


Image from a **Protestant** (Baptist) website: [livingtheologically.com](http://livingtheologically.com)

And now belief #2 from the *SDA 28 Fundamental Beliefs*:



Image from an **SDA** book: *The New Pictorial Aid for Bible Study*, p. 75, by Frank Brearden

“**The Trinity**: There is **one God**: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **a unity of three coeternal Persons**. God [meaning all three in unity] is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present ...” (Words in brackets added)

This clearly reveals that the SDA trinity is the same trinity as held by both Protestants and Catholics.

In New Orleans, September 12, 1987, pope John Paul II nearly recites the SDA position verbatim:

“The **one God** whom we worship is **a unity of Three Divine Persons.**”

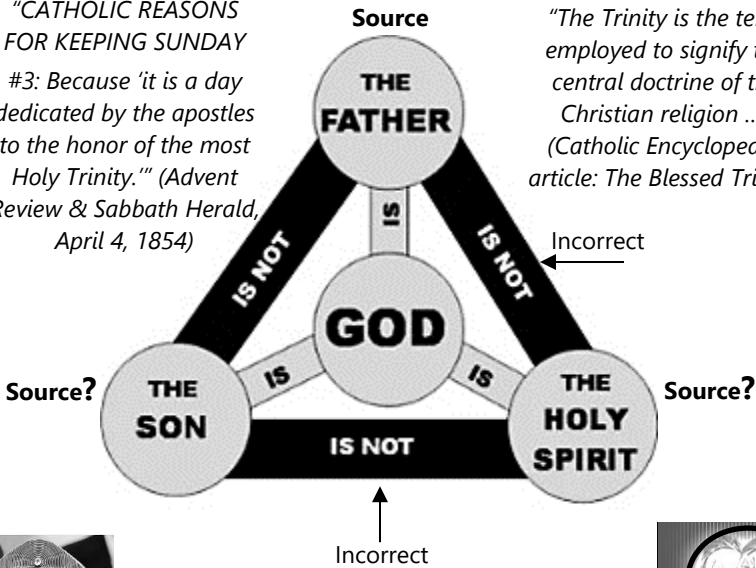


# Incorrect View of the Heavenly Trio

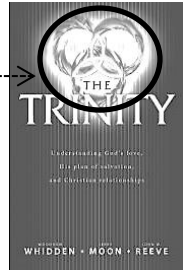
*"The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church."  
(Handbook For Today's Catholic, p. 16)*

*"CATHOLIC REASONS FOR KEEPING SUNDAY #3: Because 'it is a day dedicated by the apostles to the honor of the most Holy Trinity.'" (Advent Review & Sabbath Herald, April 4, 1854)*

*"The Trinity is the term employed to signify the central doctrine of the Christian religion ..."  
(Catholic Encyclopedia, article: The Blessed Trinity)*



*"As one line of reasoning goes, either the pioneers were wrong and the present church is right, or the pioneers were right and the present Seventh-day Adventist Church has apostatised from biblical truth." (Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, John Reeve: The Trinity, p. 190)*



## James White (1821-1881)



*"As fundamental errors, we might class with this counterfeit sabbath other errors which Protestants have brought away from the Catholic church, such as sprinkling for baptism, **the trinity**, the consciousness of the dead and eternal life in misery. The mass who have held these fundamental errors, have doubtless done it ignorantly; but can it be supposed that the church of Christ will carry along with her these errors till the judgment scenes burst upon the world? We think not." (James White, Review & Herald, September 12, 1854, p. 36)*

Many modern SDA teachers say the Adventist pioneers were not really against the trinity, but only against a certain *form* of the trinity doctrine. Jerry Moon, professor of church history at Andrews University, concluded that:

"... the Trinitarian teaching [ie, the doctrine of the Trinity] of the last writings of Ellen G. White is not the same doctrine that early Adventists rejected."  
(Jerry Moon, *The Quest for a Biblical Trinity: Ellen White's Heavenly Trio Compared to the Traditional Doctrine*, *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Spring 2006, p. 142).



If this were the case, why did George R. Knight write this:



"Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination's Fundamental Beliefs. More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the trinity." (George R. Knight, professor of church history at the Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan; *Ministry Magazine*, October, 1993, p. 10)

If the so-called "Trinitarian doctrine of the last writings of Ellen G. White is not the same doctrine that the early Adventists rejected", why would they "not be able to agree to belief number 2" today? Clearly the trinitarian doctrine that the modern SDA church has adopted is the same doctrine that the pioneers (including Ellen G. White) rejected.

Moving on in *Manuscript 21*, notice we saw that Ellen White, in contrast to the Athanasian Creed, says "the Majesty" is "the Father." She then writes the following at the end of paragraph 9, the whole of paragraph 10, and the beginning of paragraph 11:

"The Father **is** all the fulness of the Godhead bodily and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son **is** all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be 'the express image of His person.' 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in

Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Here is shown the **personality** of the Father. The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit **in** all the fulness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour.”

Take note she is *rejecting* and *correcting* Boardman’s view concerning the Godhead, thus she is in *disagreement* with his conclusions:

**Boardman:** “The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead INVISIBLE.”

**Ellen White:** “The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily and is invisible **to mortal sight.**”

She is countering the belief that God is “without form” and is invisible to all. We know from the *Day-Star* article, March 14, 1846 that, in vision, Jesus told her that the Father was a person and had a form like His but if she should see the Father (in her fallen sinful state) she would cease to exist.

**Boardman:** “The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead MANIFESTED.”

**Ellen White:** “The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be ‘the express image of **His [the Father’s] person.**’ ‘God so loved the world that He gave His **only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Here is shown the **personality** of the Father.”

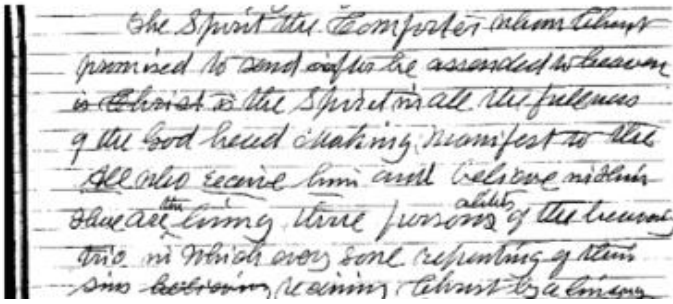
Here we see Ellen White pointing out the true relationship of the Father and His only begotten Son.

**Boardman:** “The Spirit **is** all the fulness of the Godhead MAKING MANIFEST.”

**Ellen White:** “The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit **in** all the fulness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour.”

By using the word “in” instead of “is”, Ellen White is showing a difference in the Spirit’s relation to the Father and Son. The Father “is”, the Son “is”, but the Spirit is sent “in.” There is a difference.

The next paragraph (#11) is where we read the famous words: “There are three living persons of the heavenly trio.” However, when we look at her original handwritten manuscript, we see that she worded things here a little differently:



Admittedly this is very hard to read, but it does contain handwritten edits that never made it to print. Here's the first line:

"The Spirit the Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, ~~is Christ~~ is the Spirit in all the fullness of the God head ..."

At first she writes it the way she has understood it from the beginning – that the Comforter is Christ – but she changed it to match what Boardman wrote in order to make the connection that she was correcting him. Then we have the next line:

"Here are <sup>the</sup> living three <sup>abilities</sup> persons of the heavenly trio ..."

Instead of saying, "There are three living persons of the heavenly trio", she actually wrote, "Here are the living three *personalities* of the heavenly trio." Instead of making a declaration ("There are"), she uses the demonstrative adverb "Here" thus referring to what she has spoken of before in the previous paragraphs. She does the same when she says, "Here is shown the personality of the Father" a few lines up. The word "Here" demonstrates her conclusion that Boardman is wrong concerning the Godhead and, referring to her corrections in the previous paragraphs that we have already cited, she says, "Here are the living three personalities of the heavenly trio."

It is interesting that Ellen White did in fact change some of the words to match the words that Boardman was using. Boardman's book has both the words "living persons" and "living personalities" so the word "persons" is fine. However, Boardman's book also uses the words "Trinity", "Triune God" and "three in one" but Ellen White refuses to do so. Instead she opted for

the unique phrase “heavenly trio.” This makes it abundantly clear that she’s not describing the trinity doctrine – a doctrine of three coeternal separate persons – but is simply describing the biblical understanding of the heavenly trio (i.e., Father, Son and Spirit) and that the Spirit, although a person, is not a separate person from the Father and the Son. In fact, in paragraph 15, which is an unpublished section of the manuscript in question, she confirms her belief on the Father and the Son:

“He that believeth in the Son, hath the Father also.’ **He who has continual faith in the Father and the Son has the Spirit also.** The Holy Spirit is his Comforter, and he never departs from the truth.”

Continual faith in who? “In the Father and the Son.” So, the very letter that modern SDA leaders use as “proof” that Ellen White accepted the trinity, was originally written by Ellen White to combat the trinity deception creeping its way into the church.

The fact that Ellen White crossed out the words “is Christ” when referring to the Comforter doesn’t mean she changed her mind at that second. Who does Ellen White say Christ sent? Well, it would be the third living person (ality) of the heavenly trio – the third power – right? Haven’t we’ve already seen whom she says this is in our previous section discussing the “third person of the Godhead”? Let’s collect a couple quotes for review:

### **1894 (4 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

**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, par. 18)



### **1895 (3 years before *Desire of Ages*)**

“Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. **The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.**” (*Manuscript Release*, Vol. 14, p. 23)

Notice again how Ellen White says “the Holy Spirit is Himself [Christ]” and that through His Holy Spirit “He [Christ] would represent Himself ... as the Omnipresent.” Earlier we read this statement from Ellen White: “[The Holy Spirit] refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter” (*Letter 7*, par. 14, 1891). Now notice that Joel Ridgeway says the very opposite during the aforementioned YouTube video:

“In order for the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ, He needs to be a separate person. It can’t be Christ. **Christ can’t reveal Himself**, it does not make sense.”

Apparently what Ellen White (and other SDA non-trinitarians) believe is wrong because “it does not make sense” to Joel. However, Ellen White and other SDA non-trinitarians are in complete harmony with Scripture:

*“The one who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and **I will love him and will reveal Myself to him.**”* (John 14:21, New American Standard Bible)

Keep in mind John chapter 14 is the chapter where Jesus begins to tell His disciples about “another Comforter.” Let’s continue as Ellen White explains herself concerning the third “great power”:

### **1898 (Quote from *Desire of Ages*)**

“Though the ministration was to be removed from the earthly to the heavenly temple; though the sanctuary and our great high priest would be invisible to human sight, yet the disciples were to suffer no loss thereby. They would realize no break in their communion, and **no diminution of POWER** because of the Saviour’s absence. **While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth.** He is withdrawn from the eye of sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ Matthew 28:20. While He delegates **His POWER** to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 166, 1898)

Can you see who the third great power is? While Jesus intercedes in the heavenly sanctuary, His disciples would experience “no diminution of power” because “His Spirit” would minister to the church on earth, energizing us with “His power.”



## 1898 (Quote from *Desire of Ages*)

"The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. **The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ.** It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ ... **Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life.**" (*Desire of Ages*, pp. 805, 827)

## 1902 (4 years after *Desire of Ages*)

"Christ is to be known by the blessed name of Comforter." (*Manuscript 7*)

Therefore, when she says, "The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit *in* all the fulness of the Godhead", she meant the life and presence of Christ Himself in Spirit form. But what about Ellen White's statement concerning "the three dignitaries"?

"We are not to think that as soon as we are baptized we are ready to graduate from the school of Christ. 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 ... " (*Manuscript 85*, 1901)

Again, she is speaking of the same heavenly trio and the same three great powers. Notice right in the quotation she equates "the three dignitaries" with the three "powers of heaven." Here it is again for emphasis:

### **The Three Great Powers and the Three Dignitaries in the Heveanly Trio are:**

"**one** God [the Father]  
and **one** Saviour [the Son/Christ];  
and **one** Spirit—the Spirit of Christ."  
(*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, 1909)

And in closing, we read this statement from Ellen G. White:

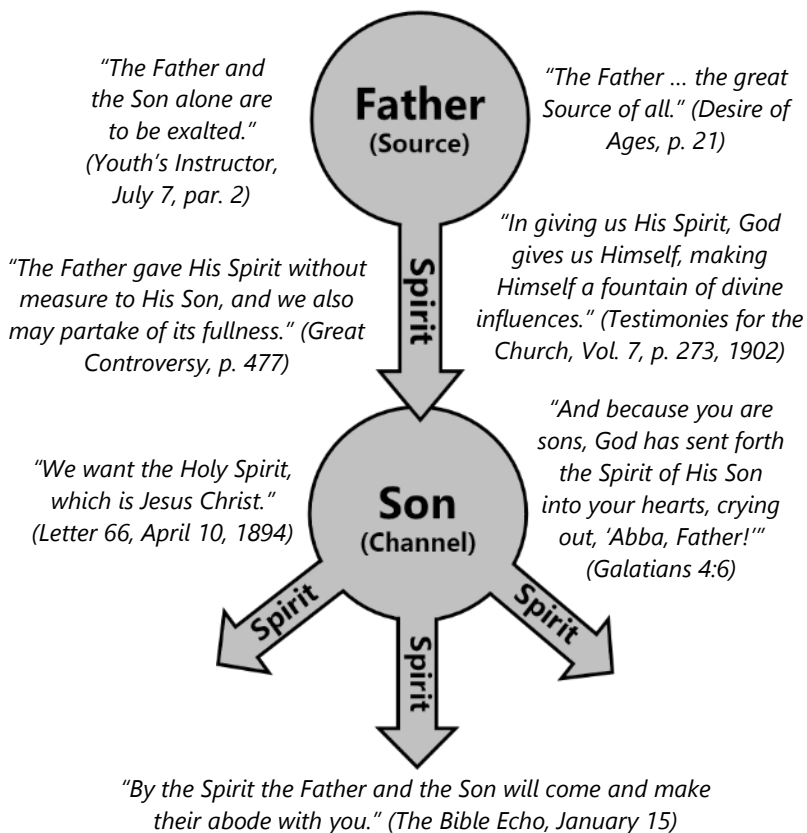
## 1906 (8 years after *Desire of Ages*)

"I understood that some were anxious to know if Mrs. White still held the same views that she did years ago ... I assured them that **the message she bears today is the same that she has borne during the sixty years of her public ministry** ... These books, giving the instruction that the Lord has given me during the past sixty years, contain light from heaven, and will bear the test of investigation." (Ellen G. White, *Review & Herald*, July 26)

## Correct View of the Heavenly Trio

**"All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life."** (Desire of Ages, p. 21)

*"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)



## Original SDA Fundamental Principles (1889-1931)

### Numbers One and Two

As elsewhere stated, Seventh-day Adventists have no creed but the Bible; but they hold to certain well-defined points of faith ... The following propositions may be taken as a summary of the principal features of their religious faith, **upon which there is, so far as we know, entire unanimity throughout the body.** They believe,

**1** – That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal; infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps.139:7.

**2** – That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom he created all things, and by whom they do consist; that he took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that he dwelt among men, full of grace and truth, lived our example, died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in heaven, where, through the merits of his shed blood, he secures the pardon and forgiveness of the sins of all those who penitently come to him; and as the closing portion of his work as priest, before he takes his throne as king, he will make the great atonement for the sins of all such, and their sins will then be blotted out (Acts 3:19) and borne away from the sanctuary, as shown in the service of the Levitical priesthood, which foreshadowed and prefigured the ministry of our Lord in heaven. See Lev. 16; Heb. 8:4, 5; 9:6, 7; etc.

“Let not erroneous theories receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing firm on the platform of eternal truth. **God calls upon us to hold firmly to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.** He calls upon us to study the words and works of Christ, the greatest missionary that this world has ever known.” (Ellen G. White, *Letter 232*, **1903**)

## SDA Current Fundamental Beliefs (1980-Present)

### Numbers One and Two

**1 – Holy Scriptures:** The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the definitive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history. (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.)

**2 – The Trinity:** There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2.)

“The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith ... **The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error** ... Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced.” (Ellen G. White, *Letter 242*, **1903**)

## The Claim:

**“The period from 1898 to 1913 saw an almost complete reversal of Adventist thinking about the Trinity.** I say ‘almost’ because this **paradigm shift** did not lead to unanimity on the topic. As Merlin Burt has documented, a few thought leaders who tended toward the ‘old view’ remained vocal, but with declining influence, for many years. Nevertheless, **the publication of Ellen White's *Desire of Ages* in 1898 became the continental divide for the Adventist understanding of the Trinity.**” (Jerry Moon, *The Adventist Trinity Debate Part 1: Historical Overview*, p. 120)

Because of this so-called “paradigm shift”, sparked by the publication of *Desire of Ages* in 1898, the Adventist church shifted her understanding and teaching on the the nature of the Son of God from being the literal begotten Son of God to a mere metaphor:

“... the father-son image cannot be literally applied to the divine Father-Son relationship within the Godhead. **The Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father.** A natural child has a beginning, while within the Godhead the Son is eternal. **The term ‘Son’ is used metaphorically when applied to the Godhead.** It conveys the ideas of distinction of persons within the Godhead and the equality of nature in the context of an eternal, loving relationship.” (Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Biblical Research Institute, A Question of Sonship*)

But did Ellen G. White truly have a paradigm shift in her thinking concerning the Son of God and the doctrine of the Trinity, or have modern leaders of the church misinterpreted her words? Join me as I explore and compare her writings from before *Desire of Ages* and after. If there truly was a continental divide in 1898, we should see a clear distinction of what she believed before and what she believed after the publication of *Desire of Ages*.