



The Return of Elijah

Adrian Ebens

THE RETURN OF ELIJAH

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In memory of my grandmother

Bessie Smith

A woman of courage and conviction



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*Error spreads from the point where error begins.
The first and most foundational error accepted by mankind was
that given to Adam and Eve – “You shall not surely die”.*

*This error assumes that man can continue to exist without God.
It assumes that man’s power is self-existent, regardless of its origin.
This assumption underpins the heart of every false teaching.*

For him who has ears to hear, let him hear.

The Inroads of Spiritualism Cause Delusion

“Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die." "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4,5. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time. ... Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion.” GC 561

Spiritualism Destroys Faith in Jesus Being the Son of God

Their principles and faith are "after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Jesus has not taught them this philosophy. Nothing of the kind can be found in his teachings. *He did not direct the minds of poor mortals to themselves to a power which they possessed. He was ever directing their minds to God, the Creator of the universe, as the source of their strength and wisdom.* Especial warning is given in verse 18. "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." The teachers of Spiritualism will come in a pleasing, bewitching manner to deceive you, and if you listen to their fables you are beguiled by the enemy of righteousness, and will surely lose your reward. *When once the fascinating influence of the arch deceiver overcomes you, you are poisoned, and its deadly influence adulterates and destroys your faith in Christ's being the Son of God,....*4bSG 88

Miller's Dream

I dreamed that God, by an unseen hand, sent me a curiously wrought **casket** about ten inches long by six square, made of ebony and pearls curiously inlaid. To the casket there was a **key** attached. I immediately took the key and opened the casket, when, to my wonder and surprise, I

found it filled with all sorts and sizes of jewels, diamonds, precious stones, and gold and silver coin of every dimension and value, beautifully arranged in their several places in the casket; and thus arranged they reflected a light and glory equaled only to the sun. EW 81

* The "casket" represents the great truths of the Bible, relative to the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, which were given Bro. Miller to publish to the world.

+ The "key attached" was his manner of interpreting the prophetic Word – Comparing scripture with scripture - the Bible its own interpreter. With this key Bro. Miller opened the "casket," or the great truth of the advent to the world.

James White The Present Truth May 1850. No. 10

The Keys that Unlocked the Jewels of Adventism and Dispel Spiritualized Interpretation

Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted. In the little book entitled "Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology," Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation:-- "1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible; 2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study; 3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering; 4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error; 5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible." The above is a portion of these rules; and in our study of the Bible we shall all do well to heed the principles set forth. RH,
November 25, 1884

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Preface

Jesus told us when He was here on earth:

Matthew 7:13-14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: (14) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

This is one text in the Bible that I wish were not truth. I desire for all men to know the love, joy and blessing of the gospel. In this volume I have laid out my reasons for the truth of the true begotten Son and why He is so important for the family unit and the nourishing of the Church.

I have significantly reduced the appendices in the back of the book as these have been better covered in other volumes which I refer to. In their place I have included the response of the Adventist Church to this volume and the aftermath.

Although this volume cost me my career and membership in the Adventist Church I have no regrets. What I have gained far outweighs that which I lost. My experience in the church will remain as a testament to my love for the begotten Son and I pray it will remind the church of how it has left its first love as found in the true Son of God.

It is now twelve years to the day since I first wrote this book in manuscript form. It has been a joy to go over its pages again and relive the thrill of discovery I had when I wrote it. I did feel sorrow as I went over the exchange between myself and the church that led to my removal but may the Lord Jesus be glorified in my testimony of Him. May the Spirit of Jesus bless you and guide you as you ponder the implications of this book.

Adrian Ebens

August 1, 2019

Original Preface

Over recent years, I have become increasingly concerned about issues related to church governance, specifically the impact of gender neutral ordination on families and on family blessing structures because of its dismantling of Male Headship. As I explored this subject, I came to the realization that my study had followed the path expressed by V. Norskov Olsen where he states:

Whenever an issue regarding ecclesiology arises it should be solved in the light of theology, Christology, pneumatology, and soteriology, for the church is not an organization or institution of man, neither should it be administered as such, but a living organism – the body of Christ.¹

In my effort to understand family and church structures, I have been led to consider Theology, (the study of God) Christology, (The study of Christ) pneumatology (The study of the Holy Spirit) and soteriology (The study of salvation). When I was able to connect a common thread through all of these disciplines, I sensed an amazing revelation of truth and something deeply profound.

From those who have read this manuscript so far, the predominant response lies in the area of theology and Christology, but it must be understood that while I am challenging concepts in these areas, my starting point has been primarily ecclesiology and its impact on soteriology. This is why the title of the manuscript is called “The Return of Elijah,” which takes its inspiration from Malachi 4:5,6. At the heart of this message is a restructuring of family (and I perceive) church leadership – the turning of the hearts of children to fathers and fathers’ hearts to children. If the reader seeks to assess this manuscript without these thoughts in mind, the main objective will be completely missed and the document will not be comprehended. It is conceded that there is a great deal of time spent addressing Christology and more specifically the nature of Sonship, but I find that Dr. Olsen has labeled the urgency of my search and study when he states:

¹ V. Norskov Olsen. *Myth and Truth Church, Priesthood and Ordination* (Loma Linda University Press, Riverside California, 1990) Page 3

The understanding of the nature of the church and the formation of any structure of the church and its ministry become – for better or worse – a test or expression of one’s understanding of Christ and biblical revelation.²

If what Dr. Olsen states above is correct, then it must be clear that current moves within the denomination to sanction the ordination of women to pastoral ministry as well as the ordination of women to eldership – whether for better or worse – must signify a change in our understanding of the person of Christ. Therefore, it must be noted that any intensification of attempted shifts in Church structure and governance must automatically mean an underlying shift, whether conscious or not, in the Church’s perception of Christ.

I confess that I have lived happily as a Trinitarian believer for over 20 years and never felt the need to systematically examine the foundations of this teaching; It was my understanding that the Divinity guaranteed by the Trinity was the only means of safeguarding the sacrificial atonement of Christ. When difficult questions arose, I rested content with its mystery. It has been the growing call for shifts in church governance that has brought me face to face with the question: “Who is Jesus Christ? Is He God’s true Son, or is He the second Person of the Godhead assigned/volunteered to the role of a Son?” The impacts on ecclesiology derived from this question are vast and far reaching. The Father/Son/Spirit structure is the benchmark for all structures; and all structures that work effectively and prosper benevolently must indeed be a reflection of God.³

I find it interesting that the rise and growth of the movement against the Trinity began around the same time as elements of the church were pushing for Women to be ordained to pastoral ministry at the 1995 General Conference Session. For at least a generation prior to this the church had been relatively silent on the topic of the Trinity. Is this a coincidence? No, it is simply a confirmation of the link between ecclesiology, theology and Christology. Though not stated explicitly,

² Ibid.

³ Col 1:17,18 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Fred Allaback seems to have instinctively made this link with the release of his book in 1995, “No New Leaders, No New Gods,” and while I would not support many of the claims made in the book both in regard to theology and concerning church leadership, the connection is still noteworthy.

With reference to the growing movement against the Trinity within the church I would state the following: It is my observation that many Adventists hold an anarchist view of sharing what they believe is truth and important for the church. I have witnessed several people seeking to hand out materials in church settings that are outside the established position of the church. Church leaders are side-stepped and new members are often targeted. It is my conviction that those who seek to present a view of Christ as the true Son of God and yet disregard his established authority structure do not know the Son of God at all. Christ does all things decently and in order. We as a people are to move as a body and not each man presenting his own views regardless of church governance.

On this basis, I must state clearly that anyone who would seek to use the material in this manuscript to undermine or destabilize the confidence of membership in the leadership of the Adventist Church is acting incorrectly and without my consent.

Others within the church have accused me of failing to submit to leadership by preparing this document before seeking guidance. Such fail to understand the tension between the principles of Protestantism and Gospel Order. We must move forward together as a body but no man’s conscience must be blunted when he comes to the Word. If one man is responsible for molding the thoughts of another regarding Scripture, neither can be considered Protestants. We must study, challenge and exhort one another regarding the truths of the Bible. A submission to Church Governance is not an agreement to become brain dead. So I hold these principles in tension – a firm determination to submit to Gospel order combined with a fervent desire to seek out all the truth of God’s Word.

Now for some personal comments.

For those of you that know me and share the common bond of love in Christ, I ask you to examine this paper with an open heart. If you find things that you believe are not scripturally correct, in the name of Jesus pray for me, and come to me in the spirit of love and sit with me, and together on our knees let us find the truth of God. Please do not throw

away your friendship with me by turning your back and refusing to talk to me and spreading reports about my name and character as several have already done. Follow the principles of Matthew 18 and come to me. I did not expect to be writing this paper and part of me cries out Lord – no, not me, but I was compelled by the matchless charms of Christ that I found in this message to write it down.

For those of you who don't know me well or not at all, I ask you to pray for me that God will guide my mind and that I will not bring dishonour upon his beloved church. I also pray that you will compare Scripture with Scripture and ask God in fervent prayer – “Are these things so?” Be like the Bereans and prove all things and hold fast to that which is good. I certainly do not claim to have everything correct in this volume, and some things I have written may need to be expressed differently to avoid confusion. Allow me the benefit of human weakness and inability to express things precisely before jumping to conclusions that you believe I hold when in fact I may not hold them.

As you read, please understand that I am submitting both objective elements as well as my subjective responses to you to examine. Some readers have incorrectly assumed that my emotional responses indicate that my mind is no longer subject to counsel or discussion. This is completely false. The subjective elements are submitted as part of the evidence. Please keep this in mind as you read.

To everyone who engages in this discussion, I have been reminded of some very important counsel.

Nothing frightens me more than to see the spirit of variance manifested by our brethren. We are on dangerous ground when we cannot meet together like Christians, and courteously examine controverted points. I feel like fleeing from the place lest I receive the mold of those who cannot candidly investigate the doctrines of the Bible. Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause”. 1SM 411

In late 2006, I had the great privilege of traveling to the United States and visiting many of the homes of the pioneers like William Miller, Joseph Bates, James and Ellen White. I stood in the foyer of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, I walked through the grounds of

J.N Andrews University and I thanked God for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. What a blessing it has been to my life. I love this church very much and am grateful to so many of its faithful leaders that have faithfully shared the Third Angels message. I considered it the highest honour to have been ordained as one of the church's ministers and I take seriously the charge that was laid upon me to be a watchman on the wall of Zion and feed the flock of God.

My heart and motive in this book is to build up the church of God and stir her to research this question in relation to the vital issues of righteousness by faith. Many of us are praying for the latter rain and are yearning for Jesus to come. Some of us are perplexed by the lowering of Bible standards and are pleading for our Saviour to intervene and save His church. I believe the issues contained in this book are directly connected to how we might finally see the latter rain fall. As Israel of old was challenged to clarify their understanding of the God they served, so I am asking each member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to study and clarify their position on this issue, so that in united earnest prayer, we might see the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit fall upon us and prepare us for the great harvest.

Yours in the Blessed Hope

Pastor Adrian Ebens

Ordained Minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

August 1, 2007

Introduction

If God tells us that His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8) how can we be sure that when we read the Bible, that we receive His thoughts and not twist them to our destruction? The thoughts of humanity are based upon the first deception given to man that he will not surely die, that he has an inherent life or power source.⁴ This lie, embedded undetected in our thinking, will twist everything God says to us.

Bible scholars often state with boldness that in their search for truth they have applied the most rigid exegetical principles, suggesting that exegesis will circumvent falsehood from creeping into one's work. But the question is, what is this exegesis based upon? Adventism grew out of a very specific Bible study method; that method was given to William Miller and has been the key upon which the truths of Adventism were developed. As the prophet of God clearly stated "Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted."⁵ This Bible study method is not taught in our schools or colleges, its legacy largely forgotten.

As Uriah Smith states:

All Scripture language is to be taken literally, unless there exists some good reason for supposing it to be figurative; and all that is figurative is to be interpreted by that which is literal.⁶

This is how Adventism was born. Men studied the Scriptures faithfully according to the rules laid down by Father Miller. When they could go no further then the Spirit of prophecy would show them where their assumptions were incorrect and where they needed to focus their attention. This was the exegesis of Adventism, the facts of Scripture searched out and placed upon a correct set of principles by the Spirit of prophecy, confirming the fact that truth comes by revelation; truth comes to us in our pursuit for a real relationship with God. Truth cannot be

⁴ E.J Waggoner . RH November 25, 1897. "He who receives Jesus Christ as the Life will not cut off the life which is in Him by the old serpent fable of Eden, "Thou shalt not surely die." In the light of God's presence in his Word the humble soul will acknowledge his sinfulness, and thereby his mortality, and look to Jesus Christ alone as the Source of righteousness and eternal life to the believer now, the Bestower of immortality at his coming."

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, November 25, 1884

⁶ Uriah Smith. *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation* (Review and Herald, 1897) Page 123

extracted by the will of man or any of his scientific methods apart from that yearning to know God and have God revealed to us.

I have attempted to form this study in that method, a literal method of interpretation that brings all the facts of Scripture together in a harmonious whole. In places of difficulty, I have sought explanation from the Spirit of Prophecy. This is in harmony with our Adventist founding fathers.

In this manuscript, I lay down a framework drawn from biblical principles that drive human assumptions. All Protestants agree in “the Bible and the Bible only”. We believe in the principles of Divine revelation and God’s preservation of His Word. Those things are a given. My question is: what assumptions do you work from, to interpret the facts of Scripture? Let me use a key issue of this manuscript as an example. When we say that Jesus is equal with the Father, how do we interpret the word *equal*? The word *equal* demands one to draw on their personal value system and make an estimation. It requires us to pull out our measuring rulers and make a calculation. I contend that the human heart influenced by the lie of the serpent has a faulty value system which directly affects our interpretation of the word *equal*. This faulty value system is so engrained, we don’t even realize that we are using it.

If you draw nothing else from this study, I would be content if you as a reader were able to sufficiently evaluate your own thinking for how you understand the word *equal*. Upon our understanding of this word hangs the very core of our belief in God and also our understanding of what constitutes human relationships in the family, the church and the community. Upon this little word (which was made controversially significant by Satan when he stated he “would be like [or equal to] the Most High”) rests the key to unlocking key elements of the Great Controversy.

In asking you to assess your understanding of the word *equal* I am asking you to closely evaluate your value system and whether it bears the scrutiny of Scripture. In the manuscript I contrast a relationship-based **value** system with a performance-based one. I am not contrasting a relationship focus to a performance focus; that is an entirely different matter. Many high achievers are very focused on relationships; they need them to succeed. Business men, sales men and network marketers all need relationships, but they use relationships to get value from their performance or achievements. Please note the difference as this seems to

have been missed by some readers. I am focusing on where value comes from, or to take a spiritual term, where “life” comes from.

The manuscript is laid out as follows:

The first section of this book reveals a biblical framework that contrasts a foundation based on the lie “You shall not surely die”, with the biblical foundation that we only receive life through a relationship with God. Understanding that life only comes from God profoundly affects our self-perception and worldview.

The second section addresses how a *performance-based value system*, or old covenant thinking, distorts and twists our ability to read Scripture as intended. The rigours of exegesis are not immune from this distortion. This is a critical point. In our attempt to reveal this distortion, we will look at several layers that affect human thinking and affect outcomes. This section is vital to grasp the proposals in the manuscript.

The third section looks at the impact of *performance-based-thinking* on various Adventist teachings. We will observe how that key Adventist doctrines cannot stand in the face of a *performance value system*.

The fourth section deals with logic issues or Scripture methodology. This discussion encompasses the issues of testing a premise by Scripture and the difficulties involved in doing this correctly, due to underlying assumptions that are connected to *performance value systems* that, while natural, will distort outcomes. I have gone to great lengths in this section to present how assumptions can lead to faulty outcomes and how this can occur without our even realizing it. This section also attempts to show the fallacy of one’s trust in what they perceive is purely exegetical, when one’s assumptions are not self-perceived.

The fifth section takes our discussion on *value systems* and logic issues into the Godhead debate. We test the premise of three Persons of the Godhead according to *performance* and *relational value systems* to assess which system will best harmonise statements from inspiration. The key issues addressed here are **identity**, **equality** and **authority** and how our value system affects these words.

The sixth section applies the principles of my findings to the issues of human relations and addresses the same issues of **identity**, **equality** and **authority**. The Father-Son relationship is the key relationship upon which humanity defines its own concepts of relationship. In this light it becomes obvious that our view of God deeply impacts family, church and

community values. Presenting God as the life source in earlier chapters lays the groundwork for the implications for righteousness by faith and preparation for the latter rain, and reveals why current understandings are potentially causing distortions on righteousness by faith and therefore preventing the promised blessings.

I have tried to keep my style of writing as non-technical as possible, especially in the first two sections, to provide as wide a reach as possible for those who might be interested in the discussion.

Dear Lord. May your Spirit be with this reader as they read this book.

Section 1 – Defining the Two Value Systems (World Views)

1. Life Source

A. Two Kingdoms

For forty days Jesus had been in the wilderness communing with His Father and preparing Himself for the great battle with His arch-enemy, Satan. The clash of these two kings⁷ was now brought head-to-head. Seeing an opportunity, Satan comes to Christ in an attempt to thwart His mission. The mission of Christ was to reclaim the lost dominion that Satan now claimed as his own.⁸ The path laid down for Christ to reclaim the lost dominion of the human race was the path of the cross.⁹ Satan is urgently trying to divert Him from His mission, and after two attempts to move Christ from the path Satan comes to his final temptation.

Matthew 4:8-10 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; (9) And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (10) Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Satan took Jesus on a tour of all the kingdoms of the world. He showed him their glory and power and says in effect, “I know you want to take the world from me, instead of going to all the trouble of sacrificing your life, I have a better plan. I will just give it to you for one small favour. It’s

⁷ Rev 12:7-9. “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought”

⁸ John 12:31. “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

⁹ Luke 9:51. “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem...”. Matt 16:21. “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”

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only a little thing – just bow down and worship me and you can have all of it.”

But what was Satan actually offering Christ? Jesus did not want Satan’s kingdom; He did not want Satan’s system of government and ways of doing things. Apart from the obvious blasphemous request of Jesus to worship Satan, what would have been achieved by the human race simply changing overlords from Satan to Christ? Satan was offering the world to Christ as an asset that any earthly king would have jumped at the chance to possess. But Christ was not interested in accumulating assets like Satan;¹⁰ He wanted the hearts and minds of men and women to be connected to His own. He wanted to restore a kingdom with a completely different *value system*;¹¹ a completely different system of relationships.¹²

While Satan probably showed Christ the magnificent temples and palaces of the world, I am certain he omitted to show him the true state of his subjects. He would have tried to hide from view the wretched state of mankind.¹³ The death, destruction and disease that enslaved the bodies and minds of men were kept well out of sight.¹⁴

Our Saviour completely rejected Satan, his kingdom and his blasphemous request directly by saying to him “Get thee hence.” I want nothing to do with your system of government; I will reclaim my subjects through the path to the cross.”¹⁵ Praise God!

¹⁰ John 18:36. “Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” Matt 16:23 “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

¹¹ Luke 12:15. “And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’”

¹² Luke 17:20,21. “...The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

¹³ 1 John 5:19 “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”

¹⁴ Dan 2:40; 7:7. “And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.” Dan 7:7 “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet.”

¹⁵ John 12:24. “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

B. The Results of Satan's Kingdom

Let us look a little more closely at the state of the human race after 6000 years of domination by Satan's almost universal rulership.¹⁶ Do we see evidence of a glorious and glittering kingdom?

In her opening address, the World Health Organisation's Director General Dr Gro Harlem stated: *"...initial estimates suggest that about 450 million people alive today suffer from mental or neurological disorders.... Major depression is now the leading cause of disability globally."*¹⁷

Try to grasp the enormity of this problem in the following statistics from 2011:

- 1 million suicides every year. One death approximately every 30 seconds or 2800 per day.
- For each individual who takes his/her own life, at least 20 attempt to do so. That is 60,000 per day.
- Worldwide, the suicide rate has gone up by 60% over the last five decades – mainly in industrialized nations.
- 60% of all suicides occur in Asia. China, India and Japan account for about 40% of all suicides, according to WHO.¹⁸

What on earth is going on? What is so depressing about life that millions of people are choosing to die rather than face another day? What are the key elements of Satan's kingdom that cause this reaction in the human race? To answer that question we need to go back to where it all began. We need to go back to the place where Satan's kingdom was first introduced to the human race in the Garden of Eden.

C. Roots and Philosophy of Satan's Kingdom

Suddenly Eve found herself staring at the forbidden tree. "Why has God forbidden us to eat from this tree", she wondered.¹⁹ The fruit looked so inviting, beckoning her forward. Suddenly she heard a voice coming from

¹⁶ Rev 13:3,4 "...all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

¹⁷ *The Mind Game* – Phillip Day

¹⁸ <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/234219.php>

¹⁹ "The fruit was very beautiful, and she questioned with herself why God had withheld it from them." PP 54

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the tree. Satan, seeing his opportunity, tempts her through the medium of a serpent: “Did God really say ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”²⁰ Satan is both enticing Eve to debate and placing doubt in her mind about the literalness of God’s Word. In the realm of debate and logic, Eve is no match for Satan. Add to this the unfamiliar weapons of deceit and darkness, and the contest will be devastatingly short should Eve signal her willingness to engage the contest by opening her mouth.

“We may eat of the fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”²¹ Eve accepts the challenge by repeating the words that God had spoken, but she is now deeply in trouble. Her own curiosity, combined with the opening challenge of Satan, left her unprepared for his following jaw dropping statement, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”²² What was Satan really saying to Eve with this statement?²³

When I was about eight years old my sister received a doll for Christmas that would cry and laugh and even drink milk. All you had to do was place a couple of batteries in its back and away it went. It provided hours of entertainment for my sister. I wanted to feed it to the dog because the crying became really annoying after a while, but thought better of it because I didn’t want to hear my sister cry for an hour. This baby had life by simply putting two batteries in its back, and this is precisely the idea that Satan was trying to get across to Eve. Eve, you don’t need to worry about what anyone else says, you have life in yourself. You can do as you please and you will suffer no harm because you have life in yourself. You will not surely die!

Could you imagine an 18 month old baby saying to its parents, “I think I can make it on my own now, I was just talking to the garden gnome in the backyard and he says that I have power inside of me that will keep me

²⁰ Gen 3:1. “And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”

²¹ Gen 3:2,3.

²² Gen 3:4,5.

²³ “Here the father of lies made his assertion in direct contradiction to the expressed word of God. Satan assured Eve that she was created immortal, and that there was no possibility of her dying.” Confrontation, p.13

alive and provide all my needs, so I don't need to depend on you anymore. Don't call me, I'll call you." This is exactly what happened to Adam and Eve in the garden. This concept "you shall not surely die" had snapped their sense of total dependence on their heavenly Father. It attacked the very foundations of who they were as individuals.²⁴ It confused their sense of *identity*²⁵ and consequently their *value* as God's children.^{26 27}

Notice Satan's suggestion that when they ate this fruit, somehow their eyes would be opened to a higher state of existence. The inference here is not only that you have power in yourself,²⁸ but that the material universe contains powerful objects that once you possess, can make you even more powerful. In Genesis 3:4,5 Satan is in full scale evangelistic mode to win converts to his new utopian kingdom. He offered a kingdom that

²⁴ Ps 11:3. "If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?"

²⁵ Rom 1:21,22 "because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools..."

²⁶ Matt 6:30-33. "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

²⁷ Luke 12:6,7. "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God.

But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."

²⁸ "Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. ***He persuaded them not to ascribe it [Strength] to God, as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness.*** He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power..." Antiquities Book 1 Chapter 4 Para. 2

"The soul of man is immortal and imperishable. – Plato";

The Vedic (Hindu) view of the world sees one true divine principle self-projecting as the divine word, 'birthing' the cosmos that we know from the monistic Hiranyagarbha or Golden Womb. <http://www.Orig.in/cosmology/cosmology.htm>

"We can prove that the soul of man is immortal because man's acts of intelligence are spiritual; therefore, his soul must be a spiritual being." www.truecatholic.org

promised power and satisfaction to all that would embrace it. This kingdom is based on two core principles:

1. You have life in yourself making you totally independent of any external benefactor or authority, which manifests in the rejection of authority.^{29 30}
2. Our environment contains people, objects and things that if possessed or associated with, can make us more powerful, more enlightened and more fulfilled in life. This manifests in an endless pursuit of wealth, power and possessions.³¹

It is important to remember that when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree, there was no inherent poison in it that made them afraid, sinful and rebellious. The Bible tells us that the fruit was good for food (Gen 3:6). The poison was the words that Satan spoke to Eve. The poison is the principles of his kingdom. Notice how Ellen White identifies the two key principles of Satan's poisonous ideology: rejection of authority and the pursuit of anything we desire, particularly the desire for things.

“There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in *yielding to appetite*. (pursuit of things) It was distrust of God's goodness, disbelief of His word, and *rejection of His authority*, (self-determination) that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. *It was this that opened the door to every species of falsehood and error.*” Ed 25

²⁹ The principles of Satan's kingdom are crystalised in the often quoted maxim, “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole law” www.dowhatthouwilt.com; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thelema

³⁰ Rom 1:30. “backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents...”

³¹ Ezek 28:16 ““By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned;””; Luke 12:18,19. “So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry."'; Mark 4:19. “...and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”; Luke 18:24. “And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!”

Some people raise the question: why do I have to suffer when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit? I didn't eat from that tree! The truth is that every time we distrust God's goodness, every time we doubt His Word and every time we try to act independently of God, we eat of that tree in exactly the same way that Adam and Eve did because we have swallowed the poison of Satan's kingdom.

D. The Reality of God's Kingdom – God is the Source of All Life

The idea that we could live apart from God may not seem that strange to many people, but the Bible makes it clear that this type of thinking is suicidal. We read the following about Jesus in Colossians:

Colossians 1:16,17 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (NIV)

Everything that we can see or perceive, and even things we can't see, were created and are now sustained by Jesus Christ.³² Notice carefully the wording of the final sentence. "And *in Him* all things hold together". The text clearly tells us that the life force that comes forth from the Son of God holds the whole universe together. Paul puts it another way in the book of Acts:

Acts 17:24-28 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth ... From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷ God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring'". NIV

We see here a God who is intimately involved with our lives. Paul begins with the big picture and then zeros down to the personal and intimate level:

³² "For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You." 1 Chronicles 29:14

1. He has determined the times and places of every nation.
2. He is not far from *each* one of us.
3. ...and finally Paul goes straight to the heart of the issue and says that *in Him* we live and move and have our being.

E. Complete Dependence on God; Physically, Mentally and Spiritually

If we live “*in Him*” then simple logic tells us we can’t live without Him.³³ Putting it another way, Jesus said “...apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5) Please understand that this means we can’t do anything physically, mentally or spiritually without Him.³⁴ We are totally and utterly dependent on Jesus for everything,³⁵ just like a little baby depends on its parents. Notice the following:

“Upon all created things is seen the impress of the Deity. Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind, brought in contact with the miracle and mystery of the universe, cannot but recognize the working of infinite power. Not by its own inherent energy does the earth produce its bounties, and year by year continue its motion around the sun. An unseen hand guides the planets in their circuit of the heavens. A mysterious life pervades all nature--a life that sustains the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, that lives in the insect atom which floats in the summer breeze, that wings the flight of the swallow and feeds the young ravens which cry, that brings the bud to blossom and the flower to fruit. The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. ***The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life.*** The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence

³³ V. Norskov Olsen, Page 8. Dr Olsen speaks in terms of the covenant of life.

³⁴ “The physical organism of man is under the supervision of God; but it is not like a clock, which is set in operation, and must go of itself. The heart beats, pulse succeeds pulse, breath succeeds breath, but the entire being is under the supervision of God. “Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building (1 Corinthians 3:9). In God we live and move and have our being. Each heartbeat, each breath, is the inspiration of Him who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life--the inspiration of the ever-present God, the great I AM.” 1SM 294

³⁵ “The natural world has, in itself, no power but that which God supplies.” 1SM 293

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that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.” (Emphasis mine) Ed 99

“As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of Divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart.” Ed 29

“The creation belongs to God. The Lord could, by neglecting man, stop his breath at once. All that he is and all that he has pertains to God. The entire world is God's. Man's houses, his personal acquisitions, whatever is valuable or brilliant, is God's own endowment. It is all His gift to be returned back to God in helping to cultivate the heart of man.” FW 22

Inspiration tells us that all life (spiritual, mental, physical) flows directly from God, the fountain of life.³⁶ “In Him we live” (Acts 17:28). But Satan tells us that it is inherent within us, it is simply part of the biological process that we possess as our own. “You will not surely die” (Genesis 3:5). This lie chokes the fountain of life/light to our souls. When the fountain is choked then only darkness is left and life dies. Later we will discuss the reason why we continue to live, but for now we want to grasp this fundamental issue of how we possess life. The question is, does it flow from God or does it come from ourselves?

There are many Christians who try to take a middle road on this issue and say “Yes, God made everything, but it is like a wind-up clock. He started it and let it run.” This is as if somehow God made batteries and placed them inside of us. The Bible does not teach this idea. We are intimately connected to him and totally dependent on Him every millisecond of every second of every minute of every hour of every day. God is actively, knowingly, lovingly supplying us the electrical charge that keeps our hearts beating. He is actively and knowingly inspiring our creative thought processes and actively and knowingly seeking to fill our hearts with love, joy, patience and kindness.

Do we consistently attribute creative ability to God?³⁷ Let's transport ourselves into the middle of a concert. The audience is held spell-bound

³⁶ “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.” Psalms 36:9

³⁷ A human artist receives his intelligence from God. He can only fashion his work in any line to perfection from materials already prepared for his work. In his finite power he

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as a talented young lady runs her fingers up and down the grand piano that stands impressively on the stage. She makes the piano literally sing – the touch of the master’s hand. She then builds to the climax, and we sense the end has come. We will her to continue – but the song ends and the crowd erupts into applause, awed by such elegance and grace, combined with passion and intensity. The young lady bows and inhales the aroma of praise and then walks from the stage.

There is something revealing about this common scenario. Every time something like this happens the audience should break out into “Praise God from whom all blessings flow” or something of a similar nature. The applause should be directed to God who gave the skill and wisdom and ability. The pianist’s heart should overflow with love and gratitude to God for the gift He has given her to use, but this is rarely the case. If we truly did act this way, we would not be elated by success or discouraged by failure; because the ability to perform does not originate with us, and if it does not originate with us then we can’t take credit when we succeed or experience “debit” when we fail. This is not to say we do not want to encourage someone when they reveal the creative gifts that God has given them. Encouragement is part of the blessing process that God gives to us to give to each other. But the actual talent and performance should be credited to God as the originator of such gifts.

Here lies the curse of believing the devil’s lie “You shall not surely die”. Imagine a young man experiencing the thrill of driving a car for the first time. The excitement and power that come from driving at high speeds becomes intoxicating. The young man begins to feel he is invincible. The more convinced he becomes that he is invincible, the more confidence he gains to drive faster and experience the supposed freedom that comes with the adrenaline and the exhilaration. The more enslaved he becomes to that feeling of power, the more certain becomes his chances of having a failure of driving skill and thus inevitable destruction. In the same way, the further we embrace the lie of our invincible inherent power, the higher the

could not create and make his materials to serve his purpose if the Great Designer had not been before him, giving him the very improvements first in his imagination.

The Lord God commands things into being. He was the first designer. He is not dependent on man, but graciously invites man’s attention, and cooperates with him in progressive and higher designs. Then man takes all the glory to himself, and is extolled by his fellow men as a very remarkable genius. He looks no higher than man. The one first cause is forgotten. . . . 3SM 311

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level and frequency of the destructive result when a “handling failure” occurs. How many hits have you received already? How many more can you take? It’s worth thinking about.

Let’s go to the next level. We have looked at the implications of physical and mental dependence, but what about spiritual and moral dependence on God?

The Bible tells us that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). This tells us that God is the source of love. It also refers to God as the God of hope (Romans 15:13). This idea is greatly expanded in Galatians:

Galatians 5:22,23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Let’s analyse this text for a minute. All of these attributes come from having the Spirit of God. This simply means that without the Spirit of God you cannot have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and so on. I was thinking about this biblical truth one day while I was walking in a park by a lake. It was calm and peaceful. I suddenly noticed a mother pushing her daughter on a swing. They were both laughing together and obviously enjoying each other’s company. The love that this mother was experiencing for her daughter was inspired by God. The thought to be loving and kind and gentle to her daughter did not originate within the heart of the mother but in the heart of God, and then was given to that mother who chose to express it and it became a mother’s love. In this sense, it is not really a mother’s love at all but God’s love expressed through the mother. That love became a part of the mother because she responded to the Spirit of God and expressed it. In the truest sense, there is no such thing as the love of a mother for her children or love between husband and wife that originates within the hearts of men and women. Human beings cannot create love, they can only express it under the influence of God.

I have presented this idea many times when preaching or speaking at seminars and it is interesting to see how the audience responds. Some people’s faces look as if I have just attacked the very foundation of the human race. For all the millions of love songs that have ever been sung and the billions of promises at the marriage altar that “I love you and will love you forever,” not one of those promises can ever be kept without God pouring His love into our receptive souls. Let’s place the attribute of love

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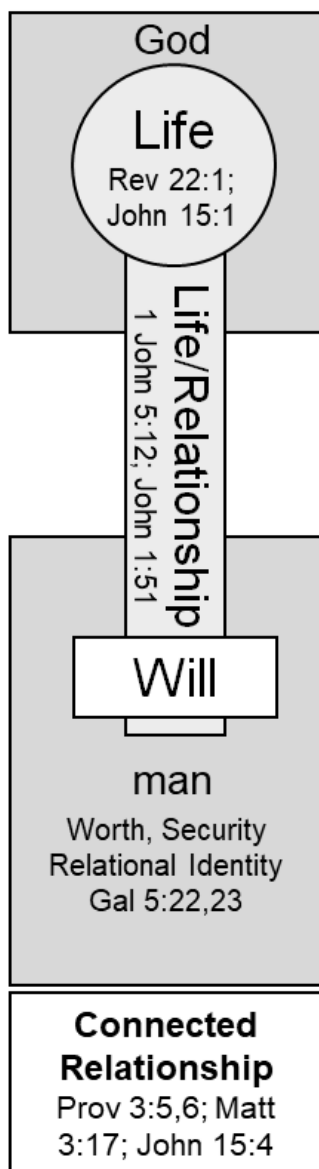
in a paraglider. Why do so many ‘fall out’ of love and crash to the ground? People who believe that love is originated in our own souls can often wake up in the morning and not ‘feel’ in love with their partners. They begin to doubt whether this relationship is right for them anymore and often begin to look for someone else to bring that feeling back. The lie that we can inherently produce love has been found out and we are left empty and wondering where we went wrong.

What about the sincere man who really meant his vows to love his wife forever and then suddenly he finds himself attracted to another woman? He may not want to feel this way, but he “can’t help it.” Love is confused with lust, and there is doubt as to his integrity. He then begins to withdraw from his partner because the sense of guilt from acting this way prevents him from believing he could still be lovable. He thought he could maintain the flow of love from his heart, but now his paraglider has stalled and comes crashing to the ground from where he launched, and his marriage is over. Is it any wonder that finding joy in marriage is so elusive for most people?

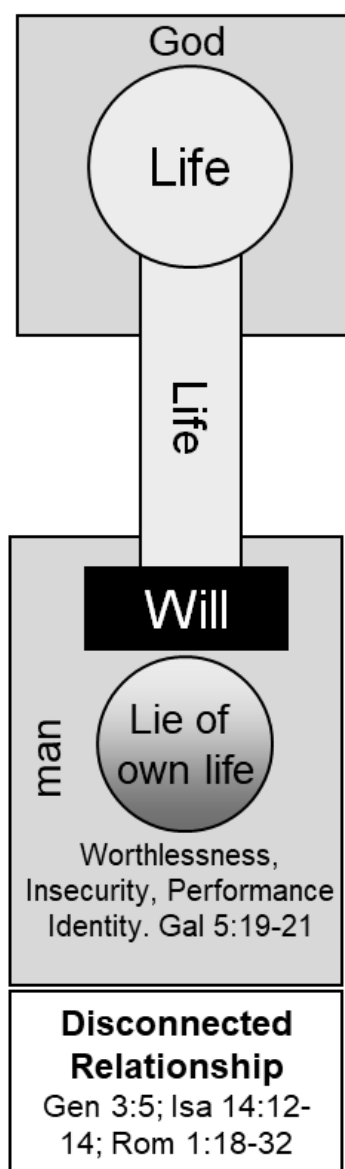
For the sake of those who are feeling like their marriage is not worth it anymore, remember that love originates only in the heart of God and is freely available to those who ask Him for it. If you feel you have lost that love for your partner, ask God to give it back to you. He will, He promised.

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (14) If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. John 14:13-14

God's Kingdom



Satan's Kingdom



2. Value System

A. My Beloved Son

As we hurried down the freeway at a greater rate of knots than normal, Lorelle's contractions developed into a pretty regular pattern. Not wanting to be caught out, we literally raced to the hospital. It was all very new and exciting; soon we would have our first child. We moved up to the labour ward as fast as Lorelle was able. The nurse took one look at us and said, "You're too happy, you need to go for a walk". Well that put dampener on our excitement. 45 minutes later we came back and now Lorelle wasn't smiling any more. Another 30 minutes and we landed right in the middle of labour. Yes, there is no other word to describe it: labour, hard labour. We tried to remember all the techniques from the prenatal classes, but it was hard to stay focused. Those contractions hit like a freight train coming head on. As soon as you had dealt with one the next one was straight on top of you. Finally, after 11 hours, we received our first born son, Michael.

There is a really interesting photo of Lorelle and I, just after she gave birth. It's absolutely amazing. She is sitting there just beaming as though it was all in a day's work. I am swaying in the breeze looking like I was about to collapse. I developed a profound new respect for womanhood that day. I must tell you ladies, watching your wife give birth is really hard work. When you finish laughing, I'll finish my point 😊. The emotional stress of watching the one you love in so much pain is incredible. For us men, we usually have a solution to a problem, but I had no answers this time and it hurt. I just prayed "God, I know there is a reason for all this pain, but right now I can't see it." How glad I was when it was over.

When I held my son for the first time, it was an eternal moment. I looked down into his eyes and he was looking straight back at me and it was magic. As I continued to look down in awe and wonder, I was gripped with this deep sense of fear. I knew that my son was stamped with the same nature as myself, a nature embedded with the serpent's lie – that we have a centre in ourselves and can find *value* in our achievements. I knew that I had the responsibility for guiding that will and training him to learn where the real fountain of life is to be found, so it would release in him real love, kindness, selflessness and obedience. After all this, I wondered,

would he be my friend? Would his natural desire to find a centre in himself come between us and separate us? I prayed right there: “Oh Dear Father in heaven, don’t let anything come between my son and I, may we always be close; and I pray that he will come to know who I am and be my friend.” The intensity of that prayer remains with me. I feel it often, and I still pray it believing that God will make it a reality.

Four years later I was spending a quiet Sabbath day walking and talking with the Lord, far away from the hustle and bustle of life. I was thinking about my Father in heaven and His love for me and how precious it is. All of a sudden, a memory came to mind of the birth of my son and I relived that intense desire to never be separated from him and that he would truly know me. The scene passed and in that moment, I heard a still small voice deep in my mind and it said, “That’s the way I feel about you.” I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry; I found it incredibly hard to accept. “But Lord,” I said, “you know what I am like, you know that I have done and said many wrong things.” I felt conflicted inside. I really was surprised with myself. I had accepted Christ as my Saviour and believed my sins were forgiven, but when God came that close to me and told me the way He felt about me, it was hard to accept. Finally I just cried out, “Oh thank you, thank you for loving me and thank you for all that you have done for me. I love you very much.” In a very real sense I felt like I was being held in His arms. I could not have been happier. It was an Enoch moment for me.³⁸ I realised my Father in heaven loves me so much that He doesn’t want anything to come between us, and it hurts Him to think that we could be separated and He is doing everything He can to stop that from ever happening.

B. Heaven’s Value System Revealed in God’s Loving Thoughts to Us

In this experience, the wonderful privileges of being a part of God’s kingdom were revealed to me at my heart level. Soon after I was led to

³⁸ But after the birth of his first son, Enoch reached a higher experience; he was drawn into a closer relationship with God. He realized more fully his own obligations and responsibility as a son of God. And as he saw the child’s love for its father, its simple trust in his protection; as he felt the deep, yearning tenderness of his own heart for that first-born son, he learned a precious lesson of the wonderful love of God to men in the gift of His Son, and the confidence which the children of God may repose in their heavenly Father. *Patriarchs and Prophets* p 84.

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some passages in the Bible that really opened my eyes and made me praise God even more. I pray that the significance of this text will burn into your heart and never leave you. Here is a very clear window into the kingdom of God.

Luke 12:6,7 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are *worth* more than many sparrows.

Jesus was explaining the principles of His kingdom. In these verses we have a formula for what makes people significant in that kingdom. What is it that makes them count, what makes them *worth* something, what makes them valuable. It was this text, combined with the experience of the birth of my son, that clarified my thinking that my centre truly was in my Heavenly Father. I had believed that with my mind for years, but all my knowledge in Scripture had not fully penetrated my *performance value system*³⁹ until now. Now I began to gain a clearer picture of the true issues confronting the human race.

Jesus states the *value* of two sparrows in human terms. The word penny there is actually *assarius*.⁴⁰ One *assarius* was equal to one day's pay for an average person. With two *assarius*, you could buy 5 sparrows. Thus in an earthly sense these sparrows have little *value*. Jesus then makes a contrast and says, "Yet not one of them is forgotten by God." The contrast here⁴¹ is that because God remembers the sparrows they are very valuable in God's Kingdom. Jesus extends this principle by comparing how much God thinks about us as compared to sparrows. "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered." If that is not 'up front, close and personal', then what is? Do you know anyone who wants to know so much about you that they even monitor the number of hairs on your head? Then comes the punch line: "Don't be afraid; you are *worth* more than many sparrows." Can you see how *worth* and significance is gained in God's kingdom? It comes from simply realizing that God lovingly thinks about

³⁹ The *performance value system* is born of the lie "you shall not surely die" and is the very core of spiritualistic philosophy. See GC 561.

⁴⁰ Strong's: Of Latin origin; an *assarius* or *as*, a Roman coin: - farthing. Thayer: an *assarium* or *assarius*, the name of a coin equal to the tenth part of a *drachma*

⁴¹ Strong's: Neuter plural of G243; properly other things, that is, (adverbially) contrariwise

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us continually.⁴² We are definitely on His mind: He is giving us life, making our hearts beat, and actively pouring His love and blessing into our lives so that we can enjoy life; and He imparts to us rich gifts, talents and abilities for our satisfaction, enjoyment and service for others.⁴³ Here is the secret of God's kingdom, the secret of significance. It is the key that unlocks the enslaving kingdom of worthlessness and depression. This principle of value through a relationship with our heavenly Father as opposed to value in power, position and performance is crystallized in the following verses:

Jeremiah 9:23,24 Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.

Here is revealed a clear contrast; do not glory, boast or find value in wisdom, might or riches, but glory or find value in knowing and understanding your Heavenly Father. This principle is stated over and over in scripture. In the book of Matthew the story of being of more value than little birds extends in to a whole series of statements that culminate in the familiar Matt 6:33 in which we are admonished to seek first the kingdom of God and not worry about the *things* of life. In verse 27, Jesus states "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?" The word stature can refer to height or length of life, but also can metaphorically refer to an attained state that makes you fit for something. A performance based value system involves a constant wondering and worrying of whether one has attained a correct level. Jesus knows the human heart and how it has been influenced by Satan's lie of self-existence and value through attainment. In verse 28, Jesus addresses the issues of security through possessions and how useless it is to think this way. In Luke 12:15 Jesus states it this way:

"...one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

⁴² This is the power of the Blessing. The Blessing that someone close and significant to us takes time to think about us in loving ways. Cf Psalms 8:4

⁴³ James 1:17. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."

C. Is There Anything Wrong with Performance?

Some raise the question at this point, “Are you saying that performance is a bad thing?” There is nothing wrong with performance or achievement in and of itself. God has established a framework for human existence that requires us to use His power to perform every day. It is not the performance that is the problem, it is the desire or practice of deriving value from what you achieve or possess that reveals that we have been seduced by the serpent’s lie.

D. The Relational Focuses on the Invisible

This emphasis on trusting our heavenly Father and his provision is also expressed in being concerned about the invisible over the visible.

Luke 17:20,21 “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

2 Corinthians 4:18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

John makes a clear distinction between the two kingdoms.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

A love of the world and the things of the world comes directly from a desire to “add height to your stature” by the possession and control of power, wealth and fame. Such desires are not found in the hearts of those who trust in the love of their heavenly father. They are not ruled by ambition to be better than others and be seen to be achievers. They have the ability to esteem others better than themselves because they do not need the world’s approval.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Phil 2:3. “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

E. The Clearest Revelation of God's Kingdom

The clearest and most penetrating statement of God's value system is revealed in the first time that the Father is recorded as speaking to the human race. Up to this point all communication between heaven and earth came through Christ, the Word of God. But now the Father speaks, and the words He speaks set forth the very principles of His Kingdom.

Matthew 3:17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Father sets the parameters of worth. Why should we listen to Jesus? The Father answers because He is my Son. Christ's value is revealed **in the relationship to His Father.**⁴⁵ The Father does not say, "Listen to this divine Messenger because He is your Creator and occupies the highest office in heaven," even though this was true.⁴⁶ The Father reveals His value through the family relationship. So simple, and yet so powerful in its ramifications for us. Christ is the Way to the Father,⁴⁷ and here we see revealed the platform of that way; through a trusting relationship in the Heavenly Father.

It is interesting to note that the first place that Satan speaks, and the first time the Father speaks, the hearts of their respective kingdoms are revealed. Satan speaks in Genesis 3:5 – "You shall not surely die" and the Father speaks in Matthew 3:17 stating – "this is my beloved Son whom I love." The contrast of value systems is clear and evident.

It is wonderful to know that God longs to be in a relationship with us, and Ellen White states in *Desire of Ages* page 113 that "The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, 'This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.'"⁴⁸ It is wonderful to know that our Father is

⁴⁵ Heb 1:3. "...who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person."

⁴⁶ This principle is expanded in Chapter 21

⁴⁷ John 14:6. "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

⁴⁸ RH June 28, 1892 "He who opens the Scriptures, and feeds upon the heavenly manna, becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He has no life or experience apart from Christ. He hears the voice of God speaking from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." That voice is assurance to him that he is accepted in the Beloved."

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ever thinking about us and wanting to be close to us. As the Psalmist states:

Psalms 40:5 Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

If our *value* is determined by the loving thoughts that God has towards us, then this text tells us that we are priceless, because it says His plans and thoughts for us are greater than can be declared or numbered. How does it feel to be priceless? ***But it can only be as good as your belief in the truth that God loves us so much regardless of how good or bad we are.***⁴⁹ ***And you can only embrace that truth if you allow the fountain of life to flow from the Father and not yourself.*** This is wonderful news and I am so thankful for it. So whenever you are tempted to doubt your *worth*, just look at the sparrows, believe and resist the temptation to hold your *treasure* or *value* in yourself.

F. Lucifer's Rejection of Heaven's Value System

Can you imagine when God first made Lucifer and tenderly held His new son? God had shared His very heart and soul with this angel. He had shown him nothing but love and given him the privilege of serving at the highest levels of His family government. Lucifer had held his *value* through his *relationship* with his Heavenly Father. But through the mystery of iniquity, he rejected the *value* he found in his Father and began to express words of anger and rebellion. Moving in the shadows of deceit and lies,⁵⁰ he poisoned the minds of many of God's other children. Can you imagine the sorrow? Lucifer, created so perfectly, was now filled with hate and murder. He was bent on destroying the eternal Son of God, for Jesus

⁴⁹ Rom 4:5. "But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness."

⁵⁰ Lucifer made the suggestion that holiness is something inherent in the angels that would guide them without the need for God's law. Notice this statement: "Leaving his place in the immediate presence of God, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint. Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will." GC 495

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reveals that Satan was a murderer from beginning⁵¹ The reality of this feeling was displayed on the cross of Calvary, where Satan hoped to eliminate Jesus.

It is crucial to remember, that in God's kingdom a person's *identity* and *value* are bound up in their *relationship* to the Creator God, our heavenly Father. This is due to the fact that a person's *value* or *treasure* is centred where their heart is.⁵² If our heart is centred on God, our *value* or *treasure* comes from Him. If our heart is centred on self, our *value* or *treasure* comes from ourselves.

When Lucifer stepped out of that *relationship*, he blocked the light of God's love and caused a flood of dark emotions.⁵³ Prior to Lucifer's rebellion, if you had asked him – "Who are you?" He would have said with calm assurance and confidence, "I am a son of God and He loves me." His heart or centre was his Father, and so there was his *treasure*. Once Lucifer rejected his Father, if you had asked him the same question, "Who are you Lucifer?" What could he say? He has lost his true *treasure* and *identity* as a son of God. Lucifer was now centred in himself, but he had no *life source* to fill his heart with joy and love. He had blocked that fountain when he traded *treasures*, and whatever *identity* he would seek to create for himself from that point forward would never fill that emptiness and sense of loss he experienced from breaking his close *relationship* with his Heavenly Father.

Lucifer, now Satan, stands alone. There is no one to hold him, no one to love him and no place to call home. Satan's fountain is a broken cistern; it's water is not cool and refreshing, and it is unable to give him the sense of peaceful security that the *value* the Father placed on him did. He is now animated by all the emotions of worthlessness: insecurity, fear, emptiness, jealousy, pride, self-justification, arrogance, rage, anger and a controlling

⁵¹ John 8:44. "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."

⁵² Matt 6:21. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

⁵³ The more Lucifer looked to himself as the source of power, the less grateful he became. "Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy. The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as the gift of God. and called forth no gratitude to the Creator" GC 495

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spirit.⁵⁴ He had traded the fountain of love, light and true *worth* for a fountain of hate, darkness and worthlessness.

Satan had lost his bearings. He had to redefine who he was and somehow smother the emptiness, worthlessness, and nothingness that he felt inside. Like any child who feels worthless, Satan carries all the marks of insecurity, fear, insanity and a desperate need for approval from whomever he can get it. He craves attention, and to satisfy that emptiness his perverted nature yearns to be worshipped, adored and praised; anything to take away the pain, the loneliness and the worthlessness.

Since Satan has rejected God as his Father and replaced his reliance on God with the belief that he had life in himself, he convinced himself that he did not need a *relationship* with God for life or *value*. All of that, he believed, came from within himself. Such a lie demanded continual attempts to prove that he had his own *life source*. He had to continually use displays of power to reassure himself and his followers that his lie was true. But where did his life come from to display such power? God continued to grant Satan life to allow him to demonstrate the principles of his new kingdom,⁵⁵ and thereby everyone could decide which kingdom was better.

To summarise briefly:

1. God is the source of life – physical, mental, spiritual. All our love and joy and creative ability and happiness flow from His throne and into our hearts.
2. Our *value* or *treasure* is where our heart or centre is.
3. Lucifer rejected God as his centre and shifted it to himself. He tried to move the fountain.
4. Shifting the centre destroyed the *treasure* of finding our *value* in our *relationship* with God.

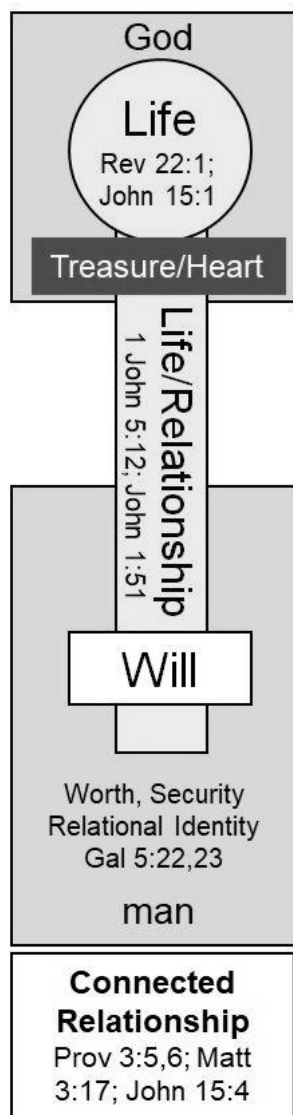
⁵⁴ “Satan stood in amazement at his new condition. His happiness was gone. He looked upon the angels who, with him, were once so happy, but who had been expelled from Heaven with him. Before their fall, not a shade of discontent had marred their perfect bliss. Now all seemed changed. Countenances which had reflected the image of their Maker were gloomy and despairing. Strife, discord, and bitter recrimination, were among them.” 1SP 27

⁵⁵ “God in His wisdom permitted Satan to carry forward his work, until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all.” GC 497

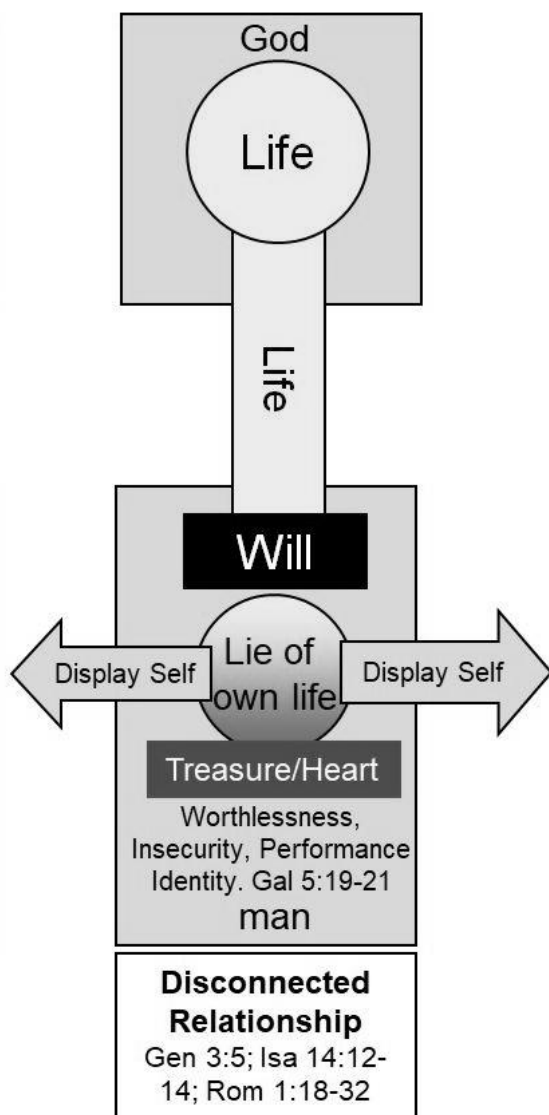
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5. Satan introduced the concept to Adam and Eve that everyone has life in themselves and this became our centre and *treasure*.
6. To cope with the loss of the true fountain of life and light and to keep the lie alive of the inherent power within, Satan established his kingdom on the principles of finding value through a display of power and *performance*.
7. Satan has therefore successfully embedded in the nature of man: (1) a belief that man has life in himself, and (2) a *value system* that is based on proving the existence of that life through *performance* and power display.
8. The ability to display power is only due to the fact that God grants us His life to give us time to see the flawed nature of Satan's kingdom. So in reality, gaining *value* from our *performance* is using the life of God and claiming it is our own. This is a clear case of theft.
9. Those living in God's kingdom certainly perform and achieve. The key is that they do not derive or obtain value from such performance and achievement.

God's Kingdom



Satan's Kingdom



3. Protecting God’s Life Source and Value System with the Law

A. Protecting Relationship to our Father/Life Source the Key

Once we realize that everything we possess – our love, our talents, and our life itself – all come from our Father in heaven⁵⁶; we realize more than ever the need to safeguard our *relationship* with Him. Our whole life revolves around that *relationship*.⁵⁷ Prayer and Bible study and sharing our faith are no longer things we try and fit in around our work and recreational activities, rather the latter become secondary to staying connected to our Father.⁵⁸

B. Relationship Protected by Correct Identification of Relationship Members

So how do we protect this *relationship*? The first thing we need to do in a *relationship* is determine exactly who are the two parties in the *relationship*; knowing who you are communicating with will dictate the content and manner of the communication. If both parties are not clearly identified, communication will break down. Let me illustrate with a story I read some time ago.

Two groups of allies were communicating on the radio during the war; one was American and the other was Canadian. Here is a transcript of the radio transmission between them:

CANADIANS: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

AMERICANS: Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the north to avoid collision.

⁵⁶ James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

⁵⁷ Acts 17:28 “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”

⁵⁸ John 15:4 “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”

CANADIANS: Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

AMERICANS: This is the captain of a U.S. Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

CANADIANS: No, I say again, you divert YOUR course.

AMERICANS: This is the Aircraft Carrier USS LINCOLN, the second largest ship in the United States Atlantic fleet. We are accompanied with three Destroyers, three Cruisers and numerous support vessels. I DEMAND that you change your course 15 degrees north. I say again that’s one-five degrees north or counter-measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship.

CANADIANS: This is the lighthouse. Your call.

The American ship was not aware of the true identity of the Canadian party. A conflict almost broke out between the two groups until at the last minute the Americans learned the true nature of the Canadian party. The light from the Canadian lighthouse was seen as a ship that was in the way of the American warship, while its true identity was to light the way for ships and prevent them from crashing on the rocks.

This story perfectly illustrates the tragedy that occurred when the human race embraced the lie of Satan that you shall not surely die. It altered man’s sense of who he really was, it changed his *identity* into a falsehood. It also changed his perception about God.⁵⁹ Satan’s lie caused man to see God’s character in a false light. It caused man to see God as self-serving and fearful of others accessing His power. This lie also destroyed man’s concept of God as his fountain, his *treasure* and centre of his life. In this terrible state, man could no longer communicate effectively with God because man had lost the identity of both parties: himself and God.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Rom 1:23 “And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”

⁶⁰ Isa 59:1,2 “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

C. Ten Commandments Identify Relationship Members, Protect Relationship

Did God have anything in place to prevent mankind from losing a sense of the *identity* of both God and himself? Yes indeed! It is the Ten Commandments. Psalms 119:93 tells us that through God’s precepts we are given life. Romans 7:10 tell us that the commandments were ordained to life. 1 John 3:4 says that sin is the transgression of the Law and Rom 6:23 says the wages of sin is death. Therefore the commandments were given to protect our life. This means that if the commandments protect our life, and our life comes through communion with God, then the Commandments should reveal the true *identity* of both God and man and also indicate the boundaries of that communication. Do the commandments tell us about God’s *identity*? Notice the following:

God’s Character		God’s Law	
1. Spiritual	John 4:24	1. Spiritual	Romans 7:14
2. Love	1 John 4:8	2. Love	Matt. 22:37-40
3. Truth	John 14:6	3. Truth	Psalms 119:142
4. Righteous	1 Cor. 1:30	4. Righteous	Psalms 119:144,172
5. Holy	Isa. 6:3	5. Holy	Romans 7:12
6. Perfect	Matt 5:48	6. Perfect	Psalms 19:7
7. Good	Luke 18:19	7. Good	Romans 7:12
8. Just	Deut. 32:4	8. Just	Romans 7:12
9. Pure	1 John 3:3	9. Pure	Psalms 19:8
10. Unchanging	James 1:17	10. Unchanging	Matt. 5:18
11. Stands Forever	Ps. 90:2	11. Stands Forever	Psalms 111:7,8
12. The Way	John 14:6	12. The Way	Malachi 2:7-9
13. Great	Ps. 48:1	13. Great	Hosea 8:12
14. Cleanses	Matt. 8:3, Ps. 57:2	14. Clean	Ezekiel 22:26

There are many places in the Bible that describe God with the same attributes as His law. This is very helpful in identifying the true person of

God. Ellen White says “God's law is the transcript of His character. It embodies the principles of His kingdom.” COL 305

Let’s have a closer look at each of the commandments and see what they tell us about God. As we look at each commandment we want to ask the question, “What does this statement tell me about the author?”

God’s Character	
1. I brought you out of bondage. You will have no other gods besides Me	Redeemer, Saviour, only God, <i>relational</i>
2. You shall not make any carved image	<i>Relational</i> , spiritual focus
3. You will not take the name of God in vain	Integrity, transparency, <i>relational</i>
4. Remember the Sabbath for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth	Creator, source of life, <i>relational</i>
5. Honour father and mother	Family/ <i>relational</i> focus, paternal
6. You shall not kill	Life is precious, <i>relationships</i> are forever, I am the source of life
7. You shall not commit adultery	Valid intimate <i>relationships</i> are forever
8. You shall not steal	Spiritual/ <i>relational</i> not material focus
9. You shall not lie	Integrity, transparency, <i>relational</i>
10. You shall not covet	Creator, source of life, <i>relational</i>

1. The first commandment tells us that God brought Israel out of the slavery of Egypt, which tells us that this God is a Redeemer and a

Saviour. When He asks me to have no other gods but Him, it tells me that He wants a close friendship with me.⁶¹

2. The second commandment tells me that God wants a heart-to-heart *relationship*. The worship of idols is not heart-to-heart worship. Neither is idolatry spiritual worship, meaning a connection of spirit with spirit, mind with mind.⁶²
3. The third commandment tells me that God is transparent in His *relationships*. If we enter into a *relationship* with him, He does not want us to pretend in the *relationship* thus rendering it useless or vain.⁶³
4. The fourth commandment is very special because it tells us that God is the fountain of life, that He created everything.⁶⁴ This commandment has a major impact on our perception of Him and greatly influences our manner towards Him. It is significant to note that the Sabbath commandment has the most amount of words of any of the commandments.
5. The fifth commandment is also special because it tells us how God’s life flows through earthly channels.⁶⁵ We will examine this detail in the “glory of children” and the “coming of Elijah.” This command promises us long life if we honour our parents. It tells us specifically that our parents, as our direct authority figures, tell

⁶¹ Prov 18:24 “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

⁶² Prov 23:26 “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.”

⁶³ Isa 1:13-15 “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

⁶⁴ Isa 40:12-18 “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? ... Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: ... All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

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

us something important about God, and in honouring them, we honour Him.

6. The sixth commandment tells us that God sees life as precious. It also tells us that God wants *relationships* to last forever.⁶⁶
7. The seventh commandment tells us that some *relationships* are dangerous. In respect to God, this commandment is a reflection of the first commandment to have no other gods. It is a reminder that God is our *life source*.⁶⁷
8. The eighth commandment tells us that God will provide our needs, that He will take care of us. It also tells us that God is not focused on things, but on *relationships*.⁶⁸
9. The ninth commandment is a reflection of the third. God wants transparency and integrity in *relationships*. A false witness destroys the *identity* of one or both parties and destroys communication.⁶⁹
10. The tenth commandment, in respect to God, reminds us that He is the fountain of life. We will want for nothing when we believe this.⁷⁰ It also tells us again of the *relational*-spiritual mind of God. Commandments 5-9 all can be seen and displayed, but this commandment is an issue of the heart. It is invisible. So this commandment is critical in understanding the nature of God’s Kingdom.

So in summary the Ten Commandments tell us that God is:

⁶⁶ Rev 21:4 “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

⁶⁷ Matt 6:24 “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”; 1 Kings 18:21 “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.”

⁶⁸ Matt 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

⁶⁹ Prov 11:9 “An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.”

⁷⁰ Phil 4:11-13 “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Chapter 3 – Protecting God’s Life Source and Value System with the Law

1. The fountain of life. There is no death in Him.
2. He is the creator. He is a builder, not a destroyer.
3. He is our redeemer and restorer.
4. He wants true heart-to-heart *relationships*.
5. He cares for us as a Father and supplies all our needs.

Knowing these things is vital in grasping a true picture of God that will help us to communicate effectively with Him. It will cause us to respect and reverence Him and love Him for all He does. It will help frame our communication in the form of trusting words and gratitude that He will do what is best.

Now we know a little of what the commandments tell us about God, what do they tell us about us?

Our Identity	
1. I brought you out of bondage. You will have no other gods besides Me	Redeemed, worship one God
2. You shall not make any carved image	<i>Relational</i> , spiritual focus
3. You will not take the name of God in vain	Integrity, transparency, <i>relational</i>
4. Remember the Sabbath for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth	Created, life comes from God, <i>relational</i>
5. Honour father and mother	Family/ <i>relational</i> focus, paternal
6. You shall not kill	Life is precious, <i>relationships</i> are forever, God owns everyone
7. You shall not commit adultery	Valid intimate <i>relationships</i> are forever
8. You shall not steal	Spiritual/ <i>relational</i> not material focus
9. You shall not lie	Integrity, transparency, <i>relational</i>
10. You shall not covet	God provides all needs

1. The first commandment tells us that God brought Israel out of the slavery of Egypt, a symbol of slavery to sin. It tells us we are redeemed.
2. The second commandment tells me that God wants me to have a heart-to-heart *relationship* with him. Heart-to-heart and mind-with-mind.
3. The third commandment tells me that we are to be transparent in our *relationships* and not pretend.
4. The fourth commandment tells us that we are created. It tells us that we are responsible to a greater power than ourselves. It invites us to rest in the arms of God and trust Him.
5. The fifth commandment tells us to respect family authority.
6. The sixth commandment tells us to see life as precious. It also tells us to consider *relationships* as lasting forever.
7. The seventh commandment tells us that some *relationships* are dangerous and that the family structure must not be destabilized, or it will affect the blessing and life flow from God through our parents or from us to our children.
8. The eighth commandment tells us not to be focused on things, but on *relationships*.
9. The ninth commandment protects our *relationships* from communication breakdown and reminds us of the blessings of honesty.
10. The tenth commandment warns us of the emptiness of self-centredness and the happiness we find in trusting God. It also tells us that we are to be spiritual because this is the only commandment of the last six that is invisible to human sight.

So in summary we found our *identity* defined as:

1. God is our Creator. We have no life in ourselves.
2. God is our Redeemer.
3. He supplies all our needs – physical, mental and spiritual.
4. We are *relational* beings with a yearning for heart-to-heart and mind-to-mind intimacy.

D. Ten Commandments Key to Life, Identity and Value

Certainly we can say with David that the “commandment is exceeding broad”.⁷¹ The commandments play the vital role of clearly identifying both God and man, thus ensuring intimate communion between both. Without the law there can be no life for us. Based on what we have examined, notice carefully the following sequence:

1. The Law reveals God’s true *identity* to us.
2. The Law defines our true *identity*.
3. Since communication between two parties requires the clear identification of both, the Law protects the *relationship* between God and man.
4. Since the Law clearly identifies both God and man, it ensures that man will find his *treasure* and centre in God and not himself. It is designed to protect him from self-centredness.
5. Since God is the fountain of life, the Law protects our life.⁷²
6. Since the Law centres us in God, the Law therefore protects our *value*.
7. Therefore the Law is the very foundation of the government of God.

Can you see then why the Bible says the following about the Law?

- God’s commandments stand forever (Psa 111:7,8).
- God’s commandments are holy, just and good (Rom 7:12).
- God’s commandments are the object/fulfilment of the New Covenant (Heb 8:10).
- God’s commandments are the Law of Liberty (Jam 2:12).

Can you see why Jesus said not one jot or title can be removed from the Law? (Matt 5:17,18)

E. Ten Commandments Centre of Satan’s Attack

Therefore whenever anyone says that the Law of God has been changed or removed they are saying in effect – I can’t really know God or myself,

⁷¹ Ps 119:96

⁷² John 12:50 “And I know that his commandment is life everlasting.”

I can’t have true *value* and *worth*, and I am destined to die and be cut off from the fountain of Life.

How could anyone want to change or remove the Law? How can anyone say that keeping the Law is legalism? Of course, it is true that in failing to grasp its meaning we may, indeed, become legalistic in our attempt to keep it. Thus, future chapters will focus on how Satan’s value system completely changes the meaning of the Law and makes it something fearful and enslaving. But for now we make the point that the Law of God protects our relationship with Him.

Since Satan rejected his relationship with God, the heart of Satan certainly rejects the Law. And that is just what he seeks to get us to do – reject the Law. Thus, as we will see, the system of obedience he imposes upon those whom he cannot lead to deny the law outright is really a system of disobedience masked as obedience.

Notice the following critical text:

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

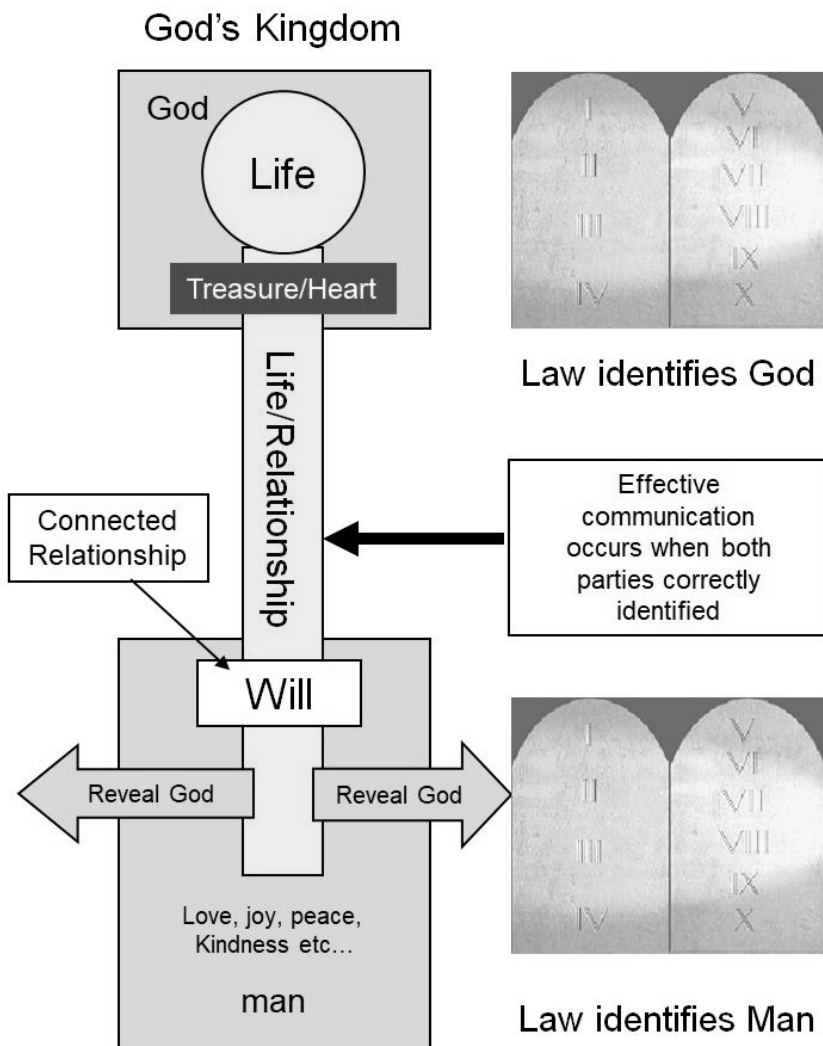
The carnal mind is a mind embedded with the lie of self-centredness, that it possesses life in itself. Such a mind will have contempt and hatred for the law of God which demands God-centredness. This being the case, then wherever the Law is attacked or attempts are made to change it, there we see the hand of Satan. Daniel 7:25 tells us that the little horn power will think to change times and law. While all the commandments are vital, the most vital commandment is the fourth commandment which most clearly identifies our true *life source*. That is why this commandment has come under the most forceful attack. There is so much more we could say on this topic but for now let us praise God for His Law. The Law protects our connection to God and such a connection will open the power of God to us so that we shall be like Him; this is faith that works by love. Can we say with David:

“How love I thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day” (Psalms 119:97).

Blessed is the man that ...[has] his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; (Psalms 1:1,2).

Chapter 3 – Protecting God’s Life Source and Value System with the Law

In the previous chapter, we noted that Satan shifted man’s thinking from God-centredness to man-centredness by telling us that we have life in ourselves. We will examine a little further in the next chapter the results of believing this lie.



Section 2 – Performance-Based Impact on The Bible

4. The Perversion of Self-Centredness

A. The Impact of Separation from God

We discussed in Chapter 1 the philosophy that Adam and Eve were embracing when they ate from that tree, and we discussed in Chapter 2 the tragic mixture of emotions that led Satan to concoct the concept that we can live without God and form an *identity* of our own by what we achieve. Even while the stomach juices of Adam and Eve were digesting the fruit, a sickening cloud of worthlessness and guilt was slowly enveloping their minds and shutting down the lovely, happy and joyful *relationship* between God and man. The curse of the serpent's lie had begun its insidious work, and within a short period of time Adam and Eve were engulfed by guilt and fear. They, along with Satan and his angels, had mentally and emotionally suicided. They attributed to God an identity that was harsh and tyrannical. They chose to believe that God would not forgive and that they must brave the consequences of sin.^{73 74} To Sin is to believe something about God that is not true. Therefore it is a transgression of His law which is the transcript of His character.

⁷³ The mighty revolter then declared that he was acquainted with God's law, and if he should submit to servile obedience, his honor would be taken from him. No more would he be intrusted with his exalted mission. He told them that himself and they also had now gone too far to go back, and he would brave the consequences; for to bow in servile worship to the Son of God he never would; **that God would not forgive**, and now they must assert their liberty and gain by force the position and authority which was not willingly accorded to them. {1SP 20.2}

⁷⁴ Christ looked upon our world before He came to it, and He saw that Satan's power was exercised upon the human family. And because of the transgression of Adam he claimed the whole human family. He pointed to their calamities and diseases and reflected [them] upon God. **He said God would have no mercy upon them and they might as well be under his control.** Jesus had enlisted to give His own life for the salvation of men. He laid aside His royal robe [and] royal crown that He might clothe humanity with divinity. He was a babe in Bethlehem. Again His love was exercised to bring human beings under His sway that they might not follow the example of Adam. {Ms16-1893.3}

Chapter 4 – The Perversion of Self Centredness

Adam and Eve had lost their *identity* and *value* through believing God was someone different to what He was. As long as they believed lies about Him there was nothing they could do to bring their *value* and *identity* back. They couldn't restore themselves to favour with a God they thought was a tyrant. They had broken the true *relationship* and only God could restore it. This fact is self-evident even as we reflect on our own experience. If someone violates a *relationship* with us, the power to restore that *relationship* rests with the non-offending party; the one who knows the truth. The offending party has surrendered their claim on the *relationship* by changing the identity of the other person in their mind to something false.

At this point it is important to remember what we looked at in Chapter 1. God is the source of life, wisdom and joy. Adam and Eve have now cut themselves off from that source by believing the lie that they possessed all this in themselves, thus making God appear controlling in presenting the commandments to them. Their reasoning powers could no longer be used selflessly or objectively. Their minds were totally in harmony with Satan. They had no ability to unmask the lies Satan had told them. Satan begins to fill them full of false theories about God's character. At the same time, Satan tells Adam and Eve that they are bad. He tells them they deserve to die and that they are worthless individuals. Satan is still hell-bent on destroying our sense of *identity*, and he does this by telling us lies about God and lies about ourselves. As long as we believe the lies about God and ourselves we can never hope to be in a lasting relationship with Him. For since those lies strike at the very heart of His law, the very believing of them is to break it and deny the relationship provided therein.

In Eden, Satan, the stranger, has separated the best of friends. When God comes visiting and calls their names, the voice Adam and Eve once regarded as the sweetest in the universe now sends them into hiding with fear and desperation. Satan's programming has done its work!

Imagine coming home one day from work, joyfully anticipating the happy ritual you have developed with your child. Each afternoon your child comes running out the front door singing "Daddy, Daddy" and then throws himself into your arms with a tender hug. As you approach home you find that your beloved child has not come to greet you. Puzzled, you enter the front door and you hear this shriek of terror and little footsteps running quickly into the garden to hide. Something has broken the *relationship*.

Chapter 4 – The Perversion of Self Centredness

Where there was love, there is now fear. No real father enjoys having his children run away at the beckoning sound of his voice. It hurts. It is a tragedy that sin can make us afraid of the most loving, generous, patient, freedom-loving Person in the universe.

God is faced with a very serious dilemma. How does He approach them now that they are listening to another voice? Every word that God utters is now interpreted in an evil light. This would have serious implications for the human race when God gave us the Bible later in history. Adam and Eve know they are guilty, but they now have no security or *worth* to accept that they are wrong, having accepted wrong ideas about God, the source of life and wisdom. Controlled by a spirit of guilt and insecurity they have become defiant. They have lost the power to reason honestly.

I marvel at the love of God displayed in his patience. God calls out to Adam, “Where are you?” not because He didn’t know, but to allow Adam to face the issue. Where is your mind Adam? What has happened to your *identity*? The physical always represents the spiritual, and the physical hiding of Adam and Eve clearly reveals the hiding that is going on in their minds. They have clothed themselves in deception and deceit to prevent themselves from having to face the truth which seems so frightening. God is trying to help them diagnose the problem so he can bring the blessed solution to them.

B. The Prison of Self-Centeredness

Adam responds to the question by telling God that he was afraid because he was naked. This confession is interesting in the light of Genesis 2:25: “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.” Adam was naked before he ate the fruit but he was not ashamed. The inference here is that Adam is now ashamed. The Hebrew word (*buwsh*) also means confused, and confounded and disappointed. Adam was full of confusion, guilt and disappointment. He was confused about who he was and he felt guilt about what he had done. God now seeks to put His finger on the intensity of Adam’s pain. “Who told you that you were naked?” Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” God doesn’t ask Adam, “How do you know you are naked?” He asks Adam “*Who told you that you were naked?*” God is trying to point Adam to the instigator of the lies he was told. In other words, “Who is causing you to run away from me?” “Who has come between you and me?”

Chapter 4 – The Perversion of Self Centredness

Adam is addressed directly, “Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” This is a simple question that demands a simple yes or no. Now that Adam’s mind pictures God as selfish and revengeful and himself as being stupid and worthless, he puts two and two together in his mind and gets 64 instead of 4. Adam believes that if he says yes, he is going to be punished, and if he says no, he will be punished twice as much, once for eating from the tree and once for lying. Believing there is no way out, and having given up the truth that God is forgiving, Adam does not even ask for the one thing he needs. The Bible says that God is ever merciful and would have freely forgiven Adam without any retribution. Sadly, since Adam believed the serpent that God would not forgive, he never asked for forgiveness, nor admitted his mistake. Instead he cast the blame on his wife and God.

“The WOMAN whom YOU gave to me, SHE gave to me of the tree and I did eat,” he accused.

Adam believed that God wanted to kill Adam for taking the fruit. This is why he hid in the Garden. In blaming Eve, he was offering her as a sacrifice, and in blaming God we have evidence of the murder that existed in the heart of Adam. This seed would manifest in the death of Christ 4000 years later.

Can you imagine Eve’s shock at this man who had only shortly before pledged to face with her whatever would come, but at the first hurdle he reveals complete cowardice! Sin cannot produce a heroic figure that gives himself selflessly to help and support others. It always results in every man for himself.

We don’t want to miss the process going on here. Adam’s reactions are being driven by his guilt and insecurity, combined with a false conception of the character of God, all stirred together with a large helping of pride from the lie of an independent *life source*. Here is the great heartbreak of sin: how does God show Adam that he has a false picture of his Father and that he is not worthless? How can Adam be given a true assessment of his situation when he has lost the power to reason objectively? God is the only source of true wisdom and Adam has disconnected himself from that source. And even when Adam does reason, how could his reason be freed from his new *performance-based value system* that fiercely rejects anything resembling truth? Adam can’t handle God telling him he is

Chapter 4 – The Perversion of Self Centredness

wrong, even if it is done in love for his own sake, because his self-centredness and pride controls his reason.

Many people have asked me, “How can we have one Bible with one message and have thousands of different churches all professing to have the truth of that Book?” It all goes back to the garden and the serpent’s lie. Human nature received a *life source* model and a *value system* that would naturally distort everything God says. God speaks to us from within a kingdom that has Himself as the only fountain of life and our only source of *value*. Humanity comes to the Bible with man having his own *life source* and a *performance-based value system*. This *performance-based value system* has twisted every teaching of the Word of God. The truth of God is turned into a lie (Romans 1:25). This is why God says to us:

Isa 55:8-9 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

And Paul states it this way:

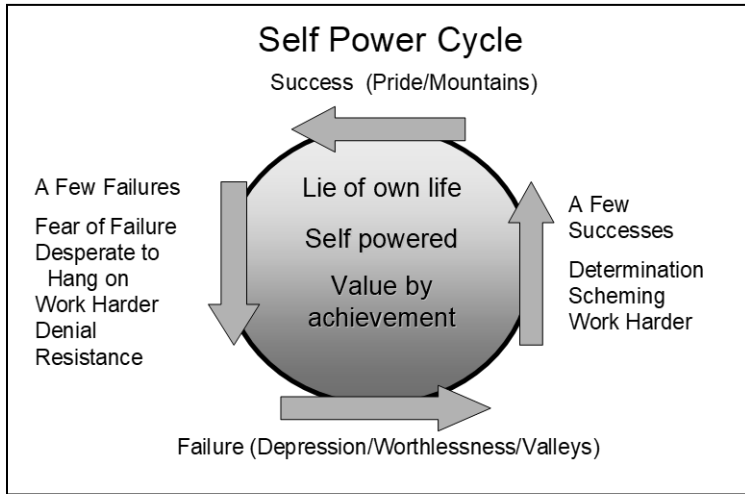
1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Performance-based-thinking or carnal nature sees everything through the lens of the power within. It drives us up the mountain of pride⁷⁵ when we succeed and drops us into the valley or ditch of despair when we fail. It causes us to ask the wrong questions, like “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of God?” (Matt 18:1) and “What must I *do* to inherit eternal

⁷⁵ Anciently, when a king journeyed through the less frequented parts of his dominion, a company of men was sent ahead of the royal chariot to level the steep places and to fill up the hollows, that the king might travel in safety and without hindrance. This custom is employed by the prophet to illustrate the work of the gospel. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low." When the Spirit of God, with its marvelous awakening power, touches the soul, it abases human pride. Worldly pleasure and position and power are seen to be worthless. "Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" are cast down; every thought is brought into captivity "to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5. DA 135

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life?” (Mark 10:17) or “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” (John 7:15) Notice the following diagram:



This *performance-based* lens will always turn the truth of God into a lie. Notice the following:

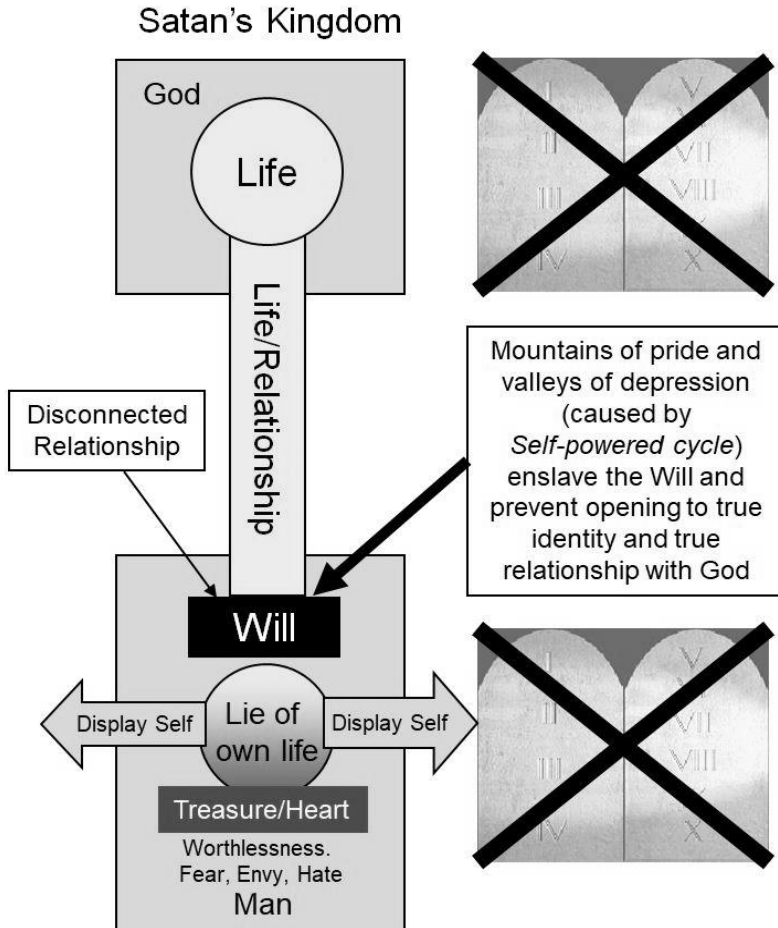
1 Corinthians 8:1-2 Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

In a *performance-based system*, the knowledge of the truth will actually puff up. It will drive a person up the mountain of pride. This is the core problem for the church of Laodicea. She has been given so much truth that she feels rich and increased with goods and feels need of nothing (Rev 3:17). When we see others in the church doing ministry and great works for God, we often can get feelings of inadequacy and a sense of despair. All of this is *performance-based-thinking*. This issue is so important that I want to devote the next chapter to it, because *performance-based-thinking* never completely dies when we are first baptized and enter the church, it often continues to live for decades in the lives of professed Christians.

Indeed, conversion is the process of learning how to think and initiates a process of self-discovery of His unfailing love. We are continually digesting how amazing His offer of His righteousness is in comparison to the unfathomable depths of our own pride; and of learning to look to and

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depend upon Him rather than on ourselves. It is because we fail to grasp this that we are so often caught up in guilt and fear that drive us to self-centered behaviors.



5. Same Gods, Different Names

A. A Radical Transformation

The room was alive with activity, laughter, music and youthful excitement. Towards the front of the room were two large speakers pounding out driving rhythms with screeching guitars. I had organised a party to celebrate with a group of my friends – well at least I tried to. I went and sat in one corner of the room where an animated teen was describing a scene out of one of the latest movies. I settled down and tried to soak in the atmosphere, but something just wasn't right. I got up and went out the back to the patio and joined in with some young Romeos who were discussing their latest exploits in capturing the women of their dreams. No, I just couldn't get into that either. Wow, what was wrong with me? The music was starting to get on my nerves and I glanced across the room and saw a scene in the video which was playing that I found very offensive. The thought struck me like a freight train: I hate this stuff!

My mind accelerated with possible scenarios. Up till now this had been my definition of fun and now I couldn't take it anymore. Something had taken hold of my heart and made it impossible to maintain the status quo. Somewhere out of the abyss came the hideous thought that my life of fun was over and that I would never be able to enjoy myself any more. The fear was so great that I experienced a strong temptation to stop submitting to my Saviour and return to my old life. Thankfully, Jesus patiently guided me through this and we continued to walk lovingly together.

It was a few weeks after my Damascus road experience with Jesus. My life was turned upside down. I had never felt so much peace in my life and the Bible just started to come alive. I was drinking it all in and experiencing a freedom I had never known before. When Jesus came into my life, He brought an amazing transformation. Suddenly, I became aware that some of my language was inappropriate, that some of my jokes were quite vulgar and that certain aspects of my lifestyle were incompatible with the new direction I was now headed. I was on a journey to the new kingdom. It was like going to a totally foreign country and learning the language and customs from scratch. I wanted to learn because I loved the Lord of that kingdom, but I had been schooled in a different kingdom and it was going to take some time to adjust.

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It was not until the night of that party that I realised how radical a transformation was taking place. Since Jesus had captured my heart by His love, I could not resist Him when he called. So on the night of the party when I was doing what I thought was ok, I could sense that He was calling me away from that type of life. Since I didn't know anything else, I had become afraid that what would replace it would not be as good. It is so easy to be afraid of the unknown even when we know it is right. Thankfully I chose to trust Jesus that He would take care of me and it was better to trust Him than my feelings.

When I accepted Jesus as my Saviour, I just felt such wonderful peace for weeks. I sensed a special closeness to Him that has remained with me till this day. Jesus had opened for me the gates of heaven, but now he must help me to remove the seeds of *performance-based-thinking*. He must help me root out that philosophy of life that made my *performance* and *achievement* the centre of my *value system*. It is a journey that every child of Adam must take. The only way we can be successful is to keep our eyes fixed on the light of the cross and boldly step into the principles of the new kingdom.

I started attending a prayer meeting with my friends. On that first night as we knelt together I felt the sweet Spirit of God around us, but there was another spirit from my old *performance-based* life that was harassing me. As we prayed around the circle a thought struck me, "I can't pray like these people pray, they are so eloquent". My mind seemed locked into this thought, and as the prayer circle moved closer to me my heart began to race faster. Soon I would be in the spotlight and everyone would be listening to me. But wait a minute; this was a prayer meeting about Jesus, not about me!

B. The Old Life Dies Hard

Here is the curse of *performance-based-thinking*. Even though I had given my heart to Jesus and was seeking to follow Him, the principles of my old life were still ready and willing to drag me back to making myself the centre of everything; to make my *performance* in prayer the issue, as opposed to my *relationship* with God in prayer.

When I first began to study the Bible I often felt inadequate because, even though I was raised in a Christian environment, I realised that in biblical terms I had not graduated from kindergarten. I loved listening to what I

Chapter 5 – Same Gods Different Names

was taught, but in the back of my mind something kept niggling me saying, “how can they just look up those verses so easily, I could never do that”. I was fumbling around trying to find the book and verse and I just prayed I would not be last so everyone would be waiting for me – how embarrassing! The years of training I had received in comparing myself with others began to surface in my new Christian journey. It was fairly easy for the Spirit of Christ to convict me about my language and lifestyle, but it would take time for me to realise how deeply rooted the tentacles of *performance-based-thinking* run.

As I continued on my journey I developed a deep love for the Bible. It was one of the best ways to learn about my Beloved who gave His life for me. I just loved studying about Jesus and it was such a blessing, but my old life was ready to snare me. In time I began to notice that people around me had far less knowledge than I did about biblical things. This gave me more confidence to speak, and soon I was taking small groups and then large groups in Bible study. Again, this was such a blessing to me and those around me, but I was slowly, steadily moving back onto a platform of *value by performance* rather than *value by relationship*. It happened slowly and imperceptibly, but it happened. In hindsight I see that, for many of us, we have the same gods but with different names. We graft the Christian faith into our *performance-based* root stock.

If you look at the table below, you can see how easy it is to believe in the Bible but live like the world. I don’t mean living a wild lifestyle, I mean gaining *value* by what you do.

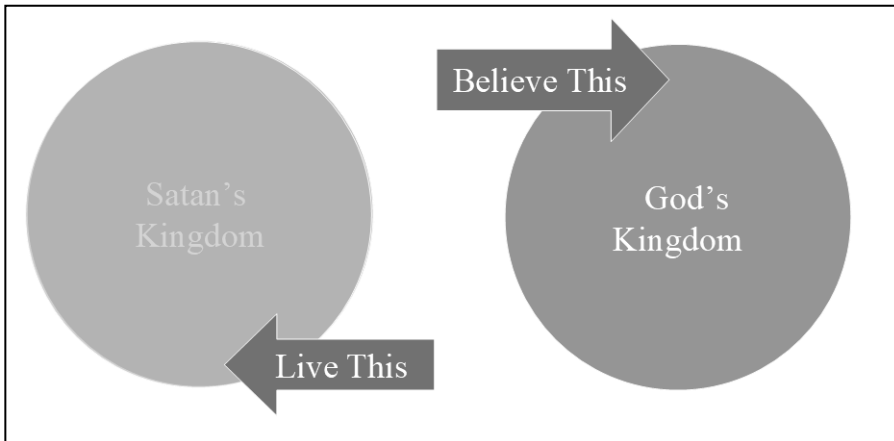
In the World	In the Church
Education	Bible Knowledge
Athletic Ability	Public Speaking Ability
Job Status	Church Office
Artistic Ability	Music Ministry
Possessions	Spiritual Gifts
Physical Appearance	Church Fashion Parade
Nationality	Conservative/Liberal Theology

For many of us our walk with Jesus is hijacked by the insidious power of the serpent’s lie. As I look around the church today I can see that the gods

we sought to escape in the world have found us in the church. They have clothed themselves in garments of light and we have embraced them as good friends. The inevitable result is anger, bitterness, and fighting in the church.

C. The Gap Between Belief and Action

It's so easy to look pious in church, but what about the person sitting on the other side of the church that won't talk to you because you said something about them behind their back and they heard about it? What about the pianist that went to another church because she was told her playing was sub-standard? What about the doctrinal police that roam to and fro through the church seeking out those that don't subscribe to their definition of orthodoxy, so that they might expel them from the church? What about those "free spirits" that seek to hijack the worship committee and force their new worship style on everyone and too bad for those who don't like it? The list is endless, and the great enemy of our souls knows that as long as he can keep us dancing to this tune, then we are essentially still subjects of his kingdom. We may believe in the teachings of Christ but still live like the devil with *performance-based-thinking*. We get caught between.



The strongest evidence that we are still crippled by the principles of Satan's kingdom is the high level of disunity and lack of Christian love in the church. If we did regard our *relationships* the way God regards His,

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there would be a lot more love in the church and a lot more care about how we deal with each other.

It is very interesting that this subtle transfer of gods from the world to the church in our personal experience has also occurred in the church's corporate experience. In the fourth century when the emperor Constantine "embraced" Christianity there was a whole range of changes that took place in the Christian church. One point that is particularly interesting is that many of the statues of the pagan gods that were in the Pantheon in Rome were transferred to the Christian church, and the names were changed to biblical characters like Moses, David, and Peter. Same gods, different names! It does not matter how you dress it up, it is still pagan and what can we say today? It is one thing to attack the corporate church for its apostasy from apostolic truth. It is another thing to see the same principles at work in our own lives. Let us make sure that we deal with the log in our own eye before we seek to remove the speck from our brother's eye.

It is interesting to study the journey of the most ardent followers of Christ – His disciples. The issue of power and position was often raising its head. Let's notice a few passages of Scripture:

Matthew 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

There is one reason and one reason only why the disciples were asking that question – self-centredness. The disciples believed Jesus to be the Messiah, the Christ. They were excited and passionate about their belief in Him; some were even willing to die for Him, but just like when I was preparing to pray and my mind shifted from my *relationship* to my *performance* in prayer, the disciples moved from their *relationship* with the Messiah to their position in His new kingdom.

Mark 10:35-37 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."

The god of position and status had so overtaken the new kingdom principles that James and John were learning that they asked Jesus if they could sit at His left and right hand in His kingdom. Thankfully Jesus

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never wearied with their continual failure to let go of old kingdom principles. He understood that it takes time for us to see how deeply rooted the principles of Satan's kingdom really are. The problem we face is that when we allow old principles to take over, the following happens:

Mark 10:41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.

When we allow the old kingdom principles to rule us, contention will always be the result. What James and John did made the other disciples angry. Why? Because they were sending a message, "we are better than you". They may not have meant to do that, but that is nearly always the result. Jesus took this opportunity to try and expand their understanding of how God's kingdom is different to the one they had grown up with. They would have to learn to think differently.

Mark 10:42-45 And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Let these words forever ring in our ears! If you wish to be great in God's kingdom then learn to enjoy serving others, rather than manipulating and controlling them. Jesus tells us that the pagans (Gentiles) lord it over others and enjoy exercising their authority and showing who's boss. Strangely enough, this same spirit often rules the church with various members seeking to impose their will and authority on the church.

Why is it that the enemy of our souls finds it so easy to drag us back into our old way of thinking? As we have stated earlier, it is our deep sense of insecurity that makes it easy for Satan to tempt us to prove ourselves. Unless we remember how we obtain our *value*, we will find it impossible to resist trying to turn stones into bread to prove that we are something.

There is something I find very frightening about this *performance-based* principle that tenaciously clings to us. Jesus was the best teacher this world has ever seen. He spent over three years with the disciples teaching them as much as He could about the kingdom of heaven, and even after all this we find that even on the very night of his crucifixion, the disciples were still being controlled by the principles of the old life.

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Luke 22:20-24 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with me on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him.” They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this. Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.

On the very eve of the greatest demonstration of love the universe has ever seen, those closest to Jesus, who knew more of His kingdom than anyone else, were arguing about which of them was the greatest. The sorrow Jesus experienced at that point must have been immense! Could those of us who claim to be followers of Jesus be repeating the mistakes as the disciples – fervent followers of Jesus, yet jostling amongst ourselves as to who is the greatest?

There is only one thing worse than being controlled by *performance-based* principles in the world; it is being controlled by them in the church. Are you absolutely sure that your Christian experience is not ruled by this thinking in some area? Are we sure that none of our beliefs have been forged in the crucible of *performance-based-thinking*? Are we sure that none of our teachings have been distorted by *performance-based-thinking*? Let us search through the Bible on our knees and plead for God to teach us the truth, so that the seed of Christ will not be choked by the weeds, or fall on the rocks of pride, or taken by the birds of fear, but go into the good soil of *relation-based-thinking* founded on God as our *life source* and *treasure*.

6. How Do You Read?

A. Context is Everything

Today is going to be a special day. You are full of anticipation and excitement at the potential prospects that lie ahead. The head of a large manufacturing company is interested in a special design you have worked on and is seriously contemplating manufacturing it and exporting it around the world. You both decide to meet for lunch at a nice little local restaurant. Having never met before, you nervously look around trying to identify this person who is going to transform your dream into reality. At last he arrives, and you shake his hand vigorously, and then you both move into the restaurant and find your place. To get acquainted your dining partner asks you a bit about your family and where you live and how your children are going in school. Everything is going along nicely except for the fact that just behind you there is a guy who has developed a real art of slurping his soup. At first you brush it off, but after a while it gets a little annoying. “Some people need to learn a few manners,” you think to yourself, but brush it off so you don’t get distracted. The conversation with your potential business partner is going well, and you are right in the middle of discussing some of the extra benefits of your design when, all of a sudden, the man behind you releases a horrendous burp that nearly rattles the cutlery on your table. All eyes are suddenly transfixed on this unusual individual that seems to have no manners at all. The room fills with sounds of snickers and muffled laughter combined with horror and disgust. Finally, the owner of the restaurant comes out and asks the man to leave, saying that his types aren’t welcome in the restaurant.

The thing that is really amazing is that if this same man was sitting in a restaurant that reflected Chinese culture, no one would blink an eye. In fact, the host and hostess might be disappointed if you did not make these gestures, which show that you are satisfied and are taken by the chef and host as compliments. Also in Chinese culture if you sought to shake the hand of someone you had not met before, or talked about family issues over dinner, you would be considered quite rude.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ <http://www.chinawestexchange.com/Chinese/Culture/customs.htm>

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It is amazing how the same actions can be interpreted in completely different ways depending on which culture or worldview you come from. This fact is no different when we look at the two different cultures of the kingdom of God versus the kingdom of Satan.

The Christian faith has one foundation – Jesus Christ, and yet as we examine the plethora of groups that take the name of Jesus, we are puzzled to find that so many contradictions can exist on one foundation. The journey into the kingdom of God involves a transfer of culture and a transfer of worldview. In our last chapter, we described the difficulty that we often face in learning to think in the ways of heaven.

The greatest difficulties of the Christian walk revolve around how we approach the Word of God, the Bible. We come out of the world, where we have been schooled in achievement and position, but as we move into the kingdom of God it is absolutely vital that we surrender our opinions and let the Spirit of God teach us how to read God’s Word. Sadly, this has not often been the case, and the many contradictions, heresies and contentions found in Christian faith and history come directly from reading the Bible with a *performance-based* context rather than a *relational-based* context.

Jesus gently makes this point in His discussion with a lawyer in Luke chapter 10. The lawyer asks Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answers, “What is written in the law?” and to get to the deeper issue he asks, “How do you read it?” (Luke 10:25,26). Jesus does not ask *what* do you read, he asks *how* do you read, or how do you interpret what you read? This is the key question for anyone wishing to take the journey from *performance-based* to *relational-based-thinking* – How do you read?

B. Beliefs Based on Several Layers of Thought

When a person makes a statement of faith, it is usually based on several layers of thinking. As an example of this, let’s look at a statement related to the subject of the law of God. Take this statement:

“Trying to keep the law is legalism”

Let’s take a look at this from a typical protestant context. This statement we call a *premise*. But this premise is based on an assumption. That

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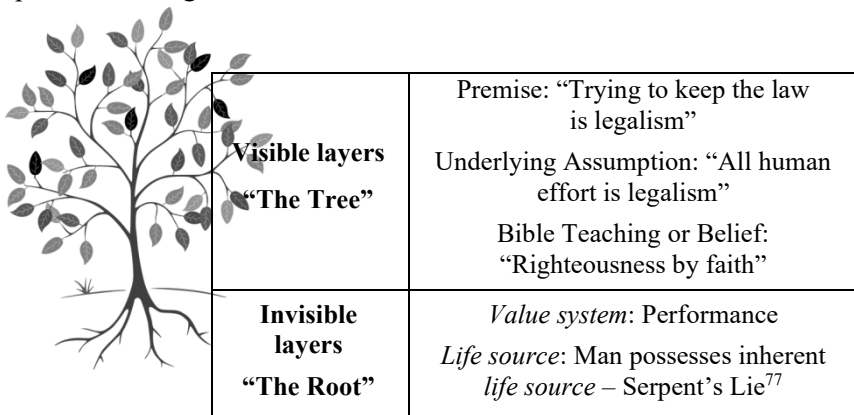
assumption is “All human effort is legalism” which is based on a Bible teaching called “righteousness by faith”. Putting this all together we see:

Premise: “Trying to keep the law is legalism”

Underlying Assumption: “All human effort is legalism”

Bible Teaching or Belief: “Righteousness by faith”

Following the logic sequence, it makes complete sense, but there are some Bible statements that seem to disagree with this premise. In Section 4 I will do a complete exercise on following through a premise with regard to the Sabbath, but back to our premise here. The three layers described are the visible part of our ‘belief-tree’. From this point it appears quite flawless, because the Bible says that we are not righteous by our works and that salvation is not of works; but it also says if you love me keep my commandments and anyone who says he loves God and does not keep His commandments is a liar. So there seems to be an apparent contradiction. This contradiction is related to the hidden thinking layers that are below visibility. They are layers embedded in our *performance-based* nature. When we add these hidden layers it becomes quite interesting:



⁷⁷ “Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden, ‘Ye shall not surely die.’” GC 561. “Satan commenced his deception in Eden. He said to Eve, “Ye shall not surely die.” This was Satan’s first lesson upon the immortality of the soul, and he has carried on this deception from that time to the present, and will carry it on until the captivity of God’s children shall be turned.” EW 218

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The invisible layers affect our thinking about righteousness by faith. Our *performance-based-thinking* unwittingly twists the statements of Scripture into a lie. Take the following Bible verse:

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Since the invisible or sub-conscious layers inform our thinking that we possess a life or power source, all power that is demonstrated in our lives will be seen as human effort which is therefore interpreted as legalism. The root of the tree feeds the branches of our belief system and we unwittingly twist the Scriptures to our destruction.

This is the power of Babylon in the church. It combines the truth of righteousness by faith with the lie of a *performance-based value system* and produces a rejection of the very law that is our only hope for life and *value* as we saw in Chapter 3.

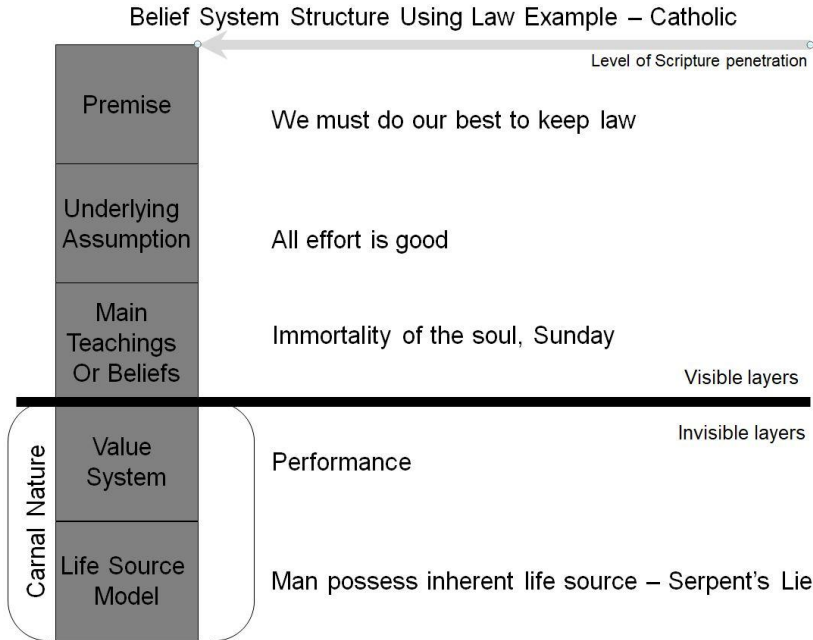
C. An Example of Layered Thinking

Let us illustrate these five levels in different contexts and see if we can get a tighter grasp on these layers of thinking. *In the following diagrams, dark grey represents thinking that has not been penetrated by Scripture. White represents thinking that has been penetrated. Watch the light grey line of Scripture penetration move towards the bottom through the succession of charts as we progress through the diagrams.*

Let us take a Catholic view of the Law and document the five layers and see how much Scripture penetration we get into the five layers.

The Catholic based model as shown in the following diagram agrees that the Law of God must be kept and attributes any effort by man to keep God's requirements as meritorious. From a biblical point of view this is straight legalism and is simply man seeking to keep the law in his own efforts. Catholics would say grace covers the whole process, but since they understand works as meritorious, it is plainly erroneous.

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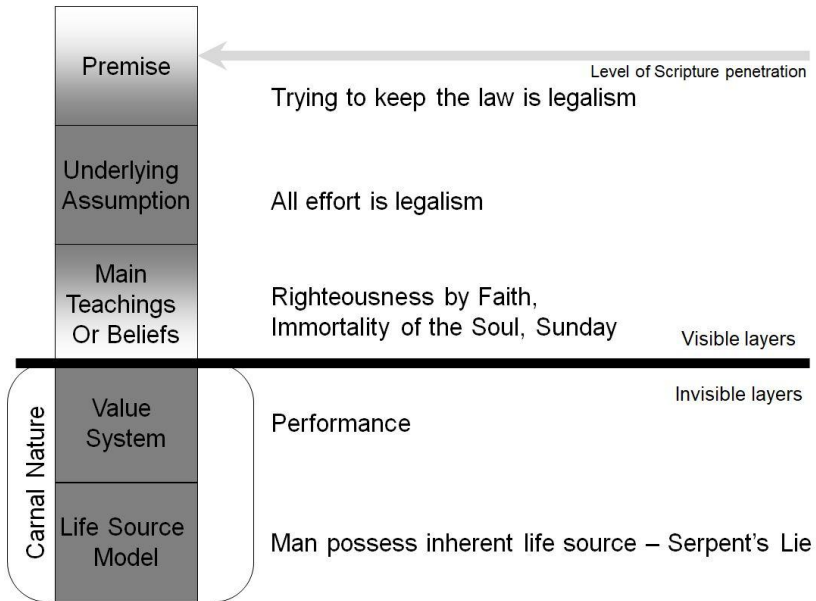


Let's now have a look at the typical protestant view again. This system is a bit more complex because it introduces more truth than the previous example. The higher the level of truth combined with error, the harder it becomes to detect inconsistencies.

As we discussed, earlier, the Protestant church grew out of the Bible truth that a person is righteous by faith alone and not of works. This truth is now injected into the previous non-scriptural Catholic understanding of Christian faith. The injection of truth at the belief level makes our premise partially true, but since the invisible layers are still *performance-based* then it also makes the premise partially false. The false element of the premise causes a person to reject the keeping of the law as part of the gospel.

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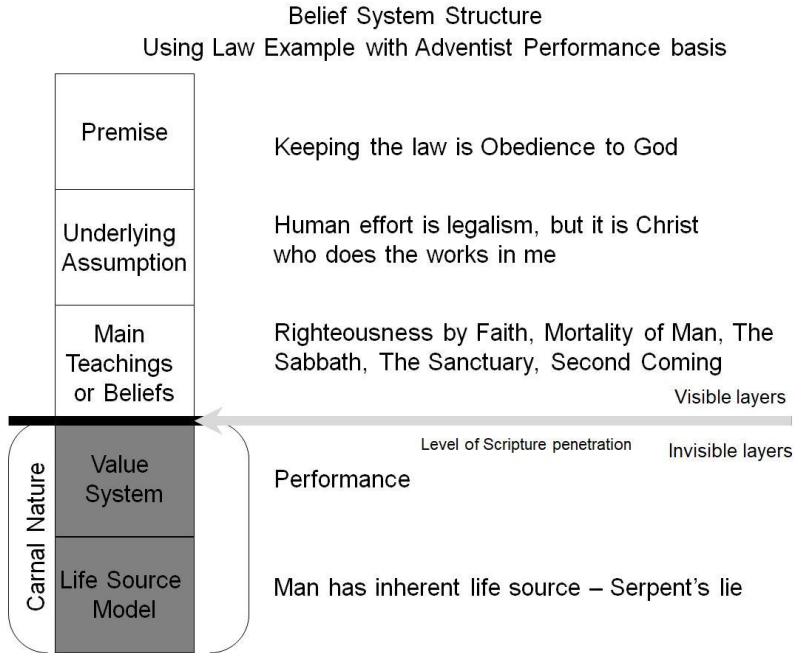
Belief System Structure using Anti-Law Example - Protestant



The only way the Protestants can continue to harmonise statements on the law is to change what the law is. The law becomes the new commandment to love one another, and so rather than alter our *performance-based-thinking*, we change the law to fit our premise and layers of thinking.

The Adventist understanding of the law is based on the pillar beliefs of the Sabbath, the Second Coming, The Sanctuary and the State of the Dead. These doctrines combine into the doctrine on righteousness by faith that includes the keeping of the law as part of the new covenant. The true teachings correct the underlying assumption, but since the invisible layers have not changed we get quite confused human effort. Our mind tells us that it is Christ who works in me, but my nature will take merit when the works are performed. We believe in righteousness by faith, but we demonstrate righteousness by works. This is a very nasty spot to be in. So many of us have tried to be good Seventh-day Adventists and follow the teachings of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, but many of us are empty because *performance-based-thinking* still controls us. We still are affected by the mountains and the valleys of pride and despair, and the pressure builds to the point where something has to change.

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To cope with this pressure, some Adventists, individually or banded together with others, give much time and attention to exposing the sins of the church, with no realization that this is a substitute for dealing with their own guilt and often despair.

On the other hand, I have heard several stories of evangelists that have preached the love of Jesus in outreach programs and verbally abused their workers for not doing things correctly and keeping pace. Our protestant brothers and sisters can see the speck in our eyes over this issue, but many of us have not found the log, we are blinded to it by the hidden layers of *performance-based-thinking*.

When the *performance-based-thinking* goes on undetected, then something will have to change to relieve the pressure resulting from this inconsistency. Since Adventists know the law stands forever, then we would never change that. So what doctrines have changed? Some have tried to change Righteousness by Faith and the Sanctuary. *Performance-based-thinking* on the law has demanded a change in our views of how to keep that law. The introduction of forensic justification in the late 70's and early 80's helped to relieve the pressure. It removed the pressure of overcoming sin. We could be

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covered by a blanket of grace that negated the need for Christian perfection. The change of emphasis on the Sanctuary came through a change in the teaching of the investigative judgment. The typical approach to the investigative judgment doctrine, as placed on a *performance*-base, is almost as scary as an eternally burning hell. Many in our church have discarded the teaching altogether because they have not penetrated the hidden layers of *performance-based-thinking*.

So now we have at least two versions of righteousness by faith in the church, both are based on *performance* in the invisible layers. Some swing from side to side trying earnestly to find some relief, but it will never come. If only we could allow the Word of God to penetrate the invisible layers and truly convert us, how much pain would be saved?

Why has God allowed us to wander down this path that makes being a Seventh-day Adventist so difficult? The only explanation I can find is in the rejection of the message that came to us in 1888. Notice the following quote:

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His Divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” TM 91,92

The 1888 message presented to us righteousness by faith through an uplifted Saviour that allowed us to keep all the commandments of God. It directed us to make Christ the centre and not ourselves. It pointed us to the *life source* where rich currents would flow to us and fill us with the Spirit of Christ.

Clearly we have not come to this point, otherwise Christ would have come before now. We have not discovered our *performance-based-thinking* with deep soul searching. Notice the following:

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“No man can know what it means to be sanctified to God, unless he seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. He must humble his soul before God, be ready to sacrifice anything and everything rather than the favor of God. Cultivate love and affection for religious devotion. Better far give up earth than heaven. *You need now to look well to your ways, that your feet slide not. The character of every desire and purpose, is as clear you well know before God as the sun in the heavens. You have my dear brother in Christ not cultivated spirituality and grown in grace. Self in you must die. Self-importance must be laid in the dust.*” 1888 Materials p. 1189

Have we looked well to our ways? Has self died? Are we easily offended? Do we bristle under rebuke? Do we compare ourselves with others? Do we seek a higher position in the church? Do we pride ourselves that we are doing the work of God? Is self laid in the dust? How do we do this?

“But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul.” COL 159

“The nearer we come to Jesus and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly we shall discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the less we shall feel like exalting ourselves. Those whom heaven recognizes as holy ones are the last to parade their own goodness. The apostle Peter became a faithful minister of Christ, and he was greatly honored with Divine light and power; he had an active part in the upbuilding of Christ's church; but Peter never forgot the fearful experience of his humiliation; his sin was forgiven; yet well he knew that for the weakness of character which had caused his fall only the grace of Christ could avail. He found in himself nothing in which to glory.” COL 160

While we may recognize the need for a faithful searching of the heart, *performance-based-thinking* can make this work unbearable. There is only one way we can commence such a work and not give up in despair; and that is to undertake the work as a son and not a servant. When we embrace sonship, our *value system* begins to shift from *performance-thinking* to *relationship-thinking*. Then and only then we can begin to face the painful

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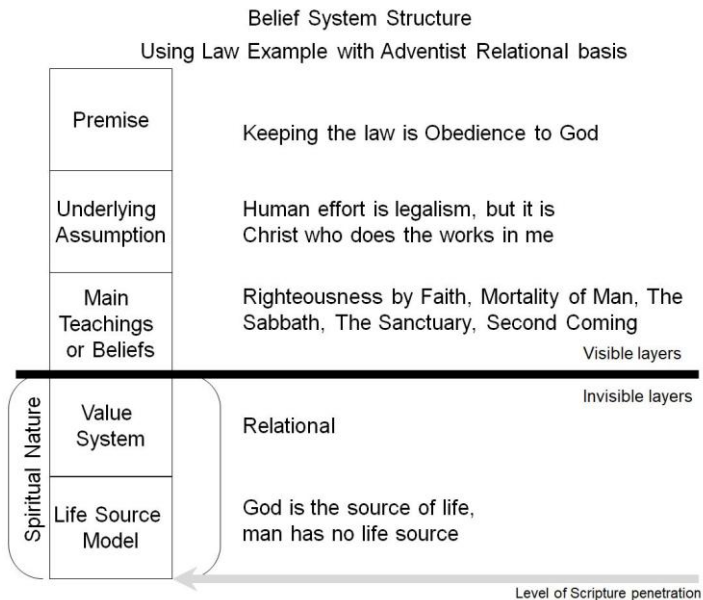
work of soul searching to fully remove the invisible layers of our *performance-based-thinking*, remove the inconsistencies of our understanding of the law, and save us from false views of justification, sanctification, the sanctuary and many other teachings.

Dear Father in heaven

Forgive us for being slow of heart to believe what has been written by the prophets. Help us to overcome our prodigal thinking of believing you would only take us back as servants. Forgive us for focusing on the fact that we are no longer worthy to be your sons. May we embrace the full benefits of sonship and accept the rich currents of your righteousness that you wish to pour upon us through the spirit of Christ.

We thank you, in Jesus name. Amen.

In the next chapter I want to unpack more fully the critical need for a transfer from servant to son thinking that will allow us to transform the invisible layers of *performance-based-thinking*



7. No Longer a Servant

A. The Supreme Sacrifice

There was a long pause as they both held each other. The intensity of emotion runs deep, but they both knew the time had come. Throughout the eons of time, Father and Son had always had close communion with each other and now that communion was soon to be broken. The Son of God is now to embark on the mission to reclaim His human sons and daughters. Both Father and Son understand the risks and the cost involved, but love drives them on.

For a brief moment, the Father and Son look into the future and with prophetic eyes watch the mission unfold. The scorn, the rejection, the hatred, the spitting, the kicking, the lash, and the nails all pale into nothingness compared to that one horrid moment in time when heaven and earth stand still and behold the separation of Father and Son. The Son observes the millennia of guilt, suffering, rebellion and worthlessness to be rolled upon Him and watches to see Himself shaken like a leaf, ripped and torn by the sense of the Father's hidden face caused by sin. The Father is with His Son in the darkness but it's the Son who carries our sense of abandonment into the horrors of *the* death. (Hebrews 2:9).

The embrace tightens – How can the Father give Him up to this fate? At a deeper level, they both wrestle with the possibility of failure and loss to the power of sin. The Son of God would take human nature upon himself, providing a window of opportunity for His arch rival Satan to overpower Him. There were no guarantees of success. How could they plan together such madness, such risk? How could they even entertain such an absurd plan? Yet love drives them on.

That long pause which seems like an eternity finally ends; they both resolve to carry out the plan. The Son steps to the edge of heaven, one final look into the loving face of His Father and then He is gone.

B. Plan of Salvation Breaks Cycle of Worthlessness

We observed in chapter two that the development of Satan's kingdom meant the breaking of our *value* or *treasure* being centred in God. The lie of the serpent shifted the centre of life to ourselves, and our *value* then came from *performance-based-thinking*. We noted in chapter four that

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this shift locks us into a cycle of pride and depression based on the level of our success. Any attempts by God to talk to us while we are in this state will cause us to twist and pervert His words. Therefore, the cycle of worthlessness must first be broken before we can correctly hear what God is trying to say to us. Notice carefully:

If Jesus was to break that power, He must break that sense of worthlessness, He must reconnect our sense of *identity* as children of God and overcome the false *identity* conceived by *performance-based-thinking*. Then and only then will our centre begin to shift back to God rather than centering in ourselves.

The life of Jesus can be summed up in the words of John 8:29 (NIV): “The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him”. It did not matter what Satan did, he could not break that sense of dignity and confidence. Christ clung to his Sonship with a tenacity that even awed the prince of darkness. Satan must have been enraged at his futile efforts to move Christ to sin. At last, someone who could resist Satan. After four thousand years of success with every single person, Satan slams into the rock-solid wall of a human soul that is confident in his Sonship to God. Sonship was the key to victory, sonship was the surest fortification against that torrent of worthlessness that was drowning the human race, and therefore sonship must be the focal point of the war between the two rivals.

The town of Nazareth pulsed with excitement. News of the Baptiser spreads rapidly. The forerunner to the Messiah had come, and as the message reaches the lowly carpenter’s shop, Jesus knew that the time for battle had come. He lays down his chisel and saw, embraces his mother, and heads towards the Jordan.

Jesus is confident in his Sonship, but the coming battle in the wilderness will test him like no man has been tested before. The gates of human woe will be released upon him like a bursting dam. Jesus must face the full force of human worthlessness and remain like the rock of Gibraltar. If he can stand firm, then for the first time someone will have broken the chains of *performance-based-thinking*. The spoils of this victory would become the inheritance of those who believe on Him.

C. Conflict in Wilderness Foundational to the Work of the Cross

The battle in the wilderness was foundational to the work of the cross. What use is the offer of pardon if the human soul cannot break the chains of his nothingness? What use the most powerful demonstration of love if no man, woman or child had the power to embrace that gift? The worthlessness and nothingness of *performance-based-thinking* must first be overcome and the spoils of victory placed in the hands of the human race so that all can be empowered to embrace the matchless gift of the cross.

The Father knows what is coming and he will strengthen the hand of His Son for the battle, not by a powerful display, not by some supernatural force or weapon, because none of these things would meet the coming foe. God offers His best weapon – the empowerment that comes from their *relationship* to one another. As Jesus comes up out of the water and the dove descends, the heavens open and Jesus hears audibly the voice of His Father: *This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased*. These words are the sharpest sword that the Father could have handed to his Son to do battle. They comforted Him with the thought of where His centre and *treasure* were. Safe in the *Word* of His father, He will battle the wiley foe and break those chains on our behalf that we could never break.

The significance of this statement goes far deeper than most would imagine. The fact that God is accepting a member of the human race offers incredible hope to the rest of us. Through Jesus, God reaches out to each one of us and tells us that we are His beloved children. If we ever hope to accept the gift of the cross we must first hear those precious words, “You are my beloved child in whom I am well pleased”. It is impossible to accept a gift from an enemy without wondering if it is booby trapped or has strings attached, but a gift from a loving family member can be accepted for what it is – a gift, pure and simple.

There is no way to approach the cross other than across the bridge of a solid belief in our sonship or daughtership to God. Any other path will cause us to twist the gospel, with our human-centred thinking, into legalism or license to sin.

Those words from heaven must have enraged Satan. A reminder of something that he was but now is not – a son! It was a reminder of his nothingness and futility. Yet pride does not die easily, and so Satan

prepares to unleash his barrage of temptations upon Jesus in the wilderness.

The Bible record says that Jesus “was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan” (Mark 1:13). I think most people would find 10 minutes of constant temptation overpowering, let alone 40 days! Satan had had 4000 years of testing practice to get it right, and you can be assured that Jesus was *made the mark of every weapon of hell*. (Desire of Ages p 116.3) Who can comprehend the depth of this conflict? The whole universe held their collective breath as Satan laid blow after blow upon the Son of God. As for us, we were fast asleep, oblivious to the heroic stand made by Jesus to set us free. If Jesus failed here, we would have all been crushed by the chains of our nothingness. Jesus was our one and only hope to pierce the darkness.

You know, I get to a point like this and I just have to stop and think about Him. I mean what can I say? My heart just brims with grateful joy at the determined unrelenting effort of this God-man to redeem us from our helpless situation, just like a father or mother who would run through a burning house to save their child. He was mentally bashed senseless by Satan, but he would not let go. As I meditate on Jesus in the wilderness and realize what He is doing for me, the foundations of my self-centredness begin to crack, an immense tide of love begins to lift my *value* from myself back to my Father in heaven.

D. The Belief in Sonship Restores Identity and Breaks the Cycle of Worthlessness

When Jesus is at his most vulnerable point, tired, hungry and lonely – all the things that drive humanity into compromise – Satan comes to the crux of the issue. “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread” (Matthew 4:3 NIV). What else would the test be except on the nature of His Sonship? Was His Sonship based on His *inherent power* to do miracles, was it based on an inherent Divinity that made him worthy to be a Son, or was it based in His Heavenly Father’s word, based on His *relationship* to the Father? How Jesus answers this question directly impacts us. He is our example in everything. His *relationship* with the Father is the Way and the Truth and the Life. If we misunderstand the nature of Christ’s Sonship, we will misunderstand the very heart of removing *performance-based-thinking*.

Chapter 7 – No Longer a Servant

Satan used the medium of appetite to try and break the faith of Jesus in His Father's Word. Forty days earlier, God said "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". If Jesus turns stones into bread then He is effectively doubting the word of God, and that doubt would be enough to confuse His *identity*. If He had responded to Satan, he would have acknowledged that who I am is determined by what I can perform; who I am is determined by the power that is in me. Such a demonstration would destroy our understanding of sonship to God. Thankfully Jesus clung to His Sonship and thus secured the relational identity system.⁷⁸

Is it possible that Satan could tempt us to ask Jesus to turn stones into bread? When we are examining who He is, do we ask Him to define His Sonship by His inherited *relationship* to His Father or by His own inherent Divinity? This question is critical, and we will come back to this later in the book.

How many of us have not fallen for this trap of proving our *worth* by what we achieve? Driven to show that you have what it takes to reach the top, ignoring sleep and relaxation and most of all prayer time and Bible study, staying late at the office and missing vital family time – just to get that promotion or bonus. Why do we push ourselves so hard? In many cases I believe we are responding to that question, "If you are a son or daughter of God, perform some great act to prove it. Show me the power that is centred inside of you".

Do you find that when you awake in the morning and you want to spend some time to meditate and be with God, that your head just begins to fill up with all the things that need to be done that day, until you can't take it anymore and you just compromise with a 5 minute prayer and then you are off into the day? Does this happen to you? Why? If you get to the end of the day and find that you have not achieved very much, are you still content and happy? Or do you feel disappointed and a bit depressed? Do you get agitated at "wasting time" lying in a sick bed, when you could be crossing things off your "to-do" list? All of these things point to the fact that without exception all of us fall for Satan's temptations to prove our *identity* and *worth* by what we do. Due to the fact that deep down inside we carry that insecurity factor passed down to us by Adam and Eve, we

⁷⁸ "Armed with faith in his Heavenly Father, bearing in his mind the precious memory of the words spoken from Heaven at his baptism, Jesus stood unmoved in the lonely wilderness, before the mighty enemy of souls." 2SP 93

Chapter 7 – No Longer a Servant

are easy targets for needing to create spiritual and mental fig leaves to cover ourselves. A person centred in themselves will always respond to a challenge to their *identity* by displaying what is in them, whereas a secure person centred in their heavenly Father will cling to their *identity* as a son or daughter.

It is for this very reason that Jesus had to enter the wilderness of temptation. The human family needed a person who could demonstrate that he believed he was a child of God simply because God said it, rather than through proving it by what he did.

The apostle Paul picks up this reality by contrasting the identities of a son and a servant.

Galatians 4:1 Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a servant, though he is master of all.

Paul explains to us how we can be released from many of the perplexities of life and questions about God's dealings with us. When we truly comprehend that God is our Father and that He is preparing us to enter His kingdom and that He loves us intensely, then our *relationship* to God starts to make sense. The rules and regulations are no longer seen as opportunities to prove to God we are His children, instead they become doors of freedom that reveal God's tender regard for us and His yearning desire for us to receive our full inheritance as children of God. Paul explains it this way:

Galatians 4:3-7 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "*Abba, Father.*" So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. (NIV)

These are some of the most beautiful words in Scripture. As we recognise the sacrifice of Jesus in securing our adoption as God's children, we are released from the slavery of Satan's kingdom. We break free from the tyranny of *performance-based-thinking* and we stand strong and noble as sons and daughters of God, knowing that because Jesus will always be accepted as a Son, in Him we will always be His beloved children.

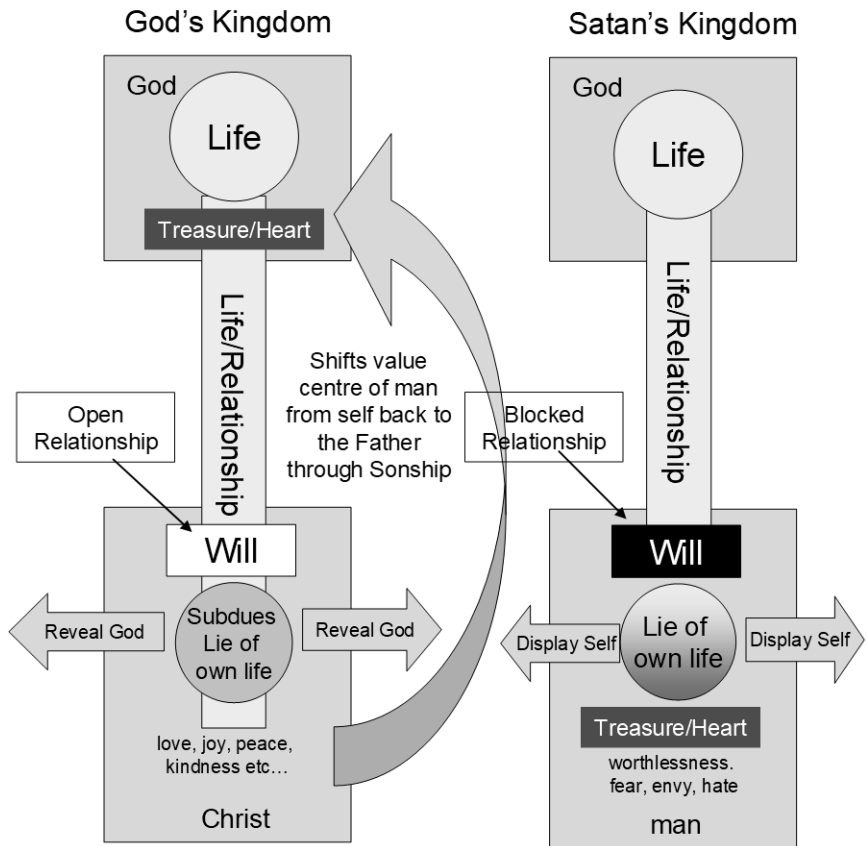
Chapter 7 – No Longer a Servant

Has the Spirit of God cried out in your heart “Abba Father” – Daddy, Daddy? Do you feel so secure in His love that you can run into His arms and know you are not only welcome but deeply desired by Him? Have you returned to the childish adoration of your Father that beams when He is near? Until you experience this freedom, you will always remain a servant that lives with the uncertainty of what God is really trying to say in His Word. The servant’s *relationship* is based alone on his ability to work for God and this *relationship* will wrest the Scriptures to destruction.

As God’s children, our inheritance is sure. We can boldly come to Him and make our requests, we can confidently trust Him that He knows what is best for us and that everything that happens to us in life is to help us grow into a deeper understanding of the values of God’s kingdom. We can then break the slavery of *performance-based-thinking*.

In our next chapter we want to look at the impact of reading the Scripture only as a servant of God, as opposed to how we would look at it as a son of God.

Christ Restores Heavenly Value System



Section 3 – Doctrinal Implications of Performance-Based-Value-System-Thinking

8. Impact on Doctrines

In this section we will look at a number of teachings that have been twisted or distorted by *performance-based-value-system-thinking*. This list is not exhaustive but will cover some key areas.⁷⁹

A. The Central Pillar and Foundation of our Faith: The Sanctuary

Our Adventist Pioneers considered the teaching of the sanctuary to be the central hub of understanding in our faith. Listen to what Uriah Smith says:

“As it is perhaps natural, the enemy of truth seems most persistent in trying to trouble and unsettle minds in reference to the sanctuary; for it is the citadel of our strength.” RH August 5, 1875

Ellen White wrote:

“The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary, is the foundation of our faith.” 8MR 245

“The Scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’” GC 409

Just as Delilah was determined to find the secret of Samson’s strength, so Babylon was determined to find the source of our strength and cut off our beautiful locks of hair and leave us *miserable, poor, blind and naked*. This indeed she has done. The daughters of Babylon can never understand the true teaching on the sanctuary because of their foundational pillars of the immortality of the soul and Sunday observance which intensify *performance-based-value-system-thinking*. The daughters of Babylon, while professing righteousness by faith, cannot live in the gap between the altar of sacrifice and the Ark of the Covenant; they don’t trust in the priestly ministry of Christ to carry them all the way between the two points. They cannot live with the teachings of final atonement,

⁷⁹ At a later time I wish to address the mechanics of righteousness by faith more fully by defining and addressing the subjects of law, sin, justification and sanctification.

investigative judgment, character perfection and close of probation. All of these teachings, rooted in the sanctuary doctrine, require *relational-based-value-system* or *new-covenant-based-thinking* for them to stand. Let us now look at each of these teachings and see why Babylon can't live with them.

B. Atonement/Final Atonement/Investigative Judgment

When the prodigal son realised his lost condition, he determined to return to his father. He glimpsed enough of the father's heart to think he could return, but not enough to grasp that he would be accepted as a son, for he said he would ask his father to hire him as one of his servants (Luke 15:19). He had not the faith to believe he could be a son, but felt he could be accepted as a servant. The prodigal was still a legalist at heart, he still was diseased by *performance-based-value-system-thinking*. It also reveals that he does not truly know his father's character and is confused about the atonement through his desire to work or earn merit with his father.

When he returns to the father, the father allows him to express his unworthiness, but before the son offers his "Hagar"⁸⁰ solution, the father throws his arms around him and welcomes him as his son. He is forgiven and reconciled to the father. They throw a party and the fatted calf provides the symbol of sacrifice to confirm *for the son* that atonement with the Father is assured and the sins of the son are truly forgiven.

The story does not tell us whether the son willingly accepted his position as a reinstated son. He came with the intent of being a servant. It is possible that even though the father accepted him as a son, the same principle that led him to reject his father's pleas to stay the first time, could also have caused him to reject his father's acceptance as a son. The situation could have been that the Father saw his son *as* a son, while the son still sees himself *as* a servant because of the shameful things he did. He still might not have accepted sonship in his heart, thus causing complete at-one-ment to be unfulfilled. How can this situation be resolved?

As a Jewish family, they would have observed the Day of Atonement at Jerusalem where a final atonement is made for the sins of the past year

⁸⁰ Hagar symbolizes an inappropriate relationship that leads to old covenant legalism.

Chapter 8 – Impact on Doctrines

and the sins are completely blotted out. While the son was forgiven by the father when he first came home, his sin was not blotted out until the Day of Atonement. What is the meaning of this? The time gap between forgiveness (daily atonement) and blotting out (final atonement) provided the son the time to see the full extent of his error and fully believe he is forgiven. Can he really believe the father's words that he was indeed a son in the face of all his failure? The complete recovery from sin is a gradual process. The awareness of our sinfulness grows as we discern more and more of the beauty of the Father. The more beautiful we see Him, the greater the test as to whether we could believe we are forgiven. Thus the judgment reveals all of our sins to us that we might know if we truly believe we are forgiven.

If the son had not truly believed the father's words, then in the gap between initial forgiveness and the Day of Atonement his invisible *performance-based-value-system-thinking* would begin to surface. He would be plagued with doubts about whether the father really loved him. He would be fearful or resentful of his brother's sarcasm. The time between initial forgiveness and the blotting out gives time for the *performance-based-value-system-thinking* to surface and for him to realise that he had not truly believed the father. During that time, he would have the opportunity to learn what his father is really like and how loving and gentle he is. As he learns to love his father, he would obtain the courage to really believe he was his son again despite the wicked thing he had done to his father. The Day of Atonement provides an opportunity to search the invisible layers of *performance-thinking* and be rid of them. Thank God for the Day of Atonement!

A "son" who has in the past become habituated in having his way and serving his father as a servant, unless he truly accepted his relationship as a son, would be disturbed by the Day of Atonement. Acting as a servant, seeking to please his father to obtain merit and still carrying the guilt of his sin, he would surface these fears through further sinning. With no assurance of sonship he must create some concept that would give him a sense of security -- security which is truly provided only in a sonship relation.

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A doctrine of predestination⁸¹ which destroys the need for and the meaning of the concept of the Day of Atonement, thus seeming to offer the security he sought. Indeed, he might expand this approach with a forensic justification concept of having been justified at the cross, which goes so far as to make a future judgment appear a blasphemous denial of the cross. Or he might simply create the less radical doctrine of forensic⁸² justification that reduces the Day of Atonement to simply an extension of his original forgiveness. Then he can quiet his conscience and never have to face the searching scrutiny of the soul. He can stay a servant.

But how sad for the son not to be able to simply accept the father's love and rest in its assurance. Then, having searched his heart to assure his soul regarding his relationship, he could humbly and thankfully go up to the temple on the Day of Atonement, believing in the love and forgiveness of His father and being assured of having his sins blotted out. The gap between daily and final atonement is an essential part of God's plan to write his law on our hearts. It not only tests but provides us opportunity to learn how to rest in the Father's arms in the face of scrutiny and believe that we are indeed forgiven at all layers of our thinking.

God does not test us to terrorise us, but because he loves us and wants us to realise the depths of our *performance-based-thinking*. Why? Because He can only receive sons into His eternal kingdom. For servants are always seeking to prove their worth, and in doing so their focus upon self blocks the flow of God's love and results in anxiety, fear, and self-defence that reflect the principles of Satan's kingdom.

As Seventh-day Adventists our foundations were laid on the belief that the gospel of the new covenant is based squarely on the shadows and types of the Old Testament sanctuary service. Notice the statement of belief on the Sanctuary made in 1872:

“That the sanctuary of the new covenant is the tabernacle of God in Heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8, and onward, of which our Lord, as great High Priest, is minister; that this

⁸¹ The doctrine of predestination teaches that when we accept Christ, we give evidence that we were pre-selected to be saved by God and that nothing we can do can change that. For Christians this is supposed to give them assurance of salvation.

⁸² Forensic or legal justification. Declared righteous objectively completely outside of you. Has no subjective or relational component and has nothing to do with a change of heart.

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sanctuary is the antitype of the Mosaic tabernacle, and that the priestly work of our Lord, connected therewith, is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation. Heb. 8:1-5, c.; that this is the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days, what is termed its cleansing being in this case, as in the type, simply the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place, to finish the round of service connected therewith, by blotting out and removing from the sanctuary the sins which had been transferred to it by means of the ministration in the first apartment, Heb. 9:22, 23; and that this work, in the antitype, commencing in 1844, occupies a brief but indefinite space, at the conclusion of which the work of mercy for the world is finished.” (A Declaration of Fundamental Principles taught and practiced by Seventh-day Adventists. belief #10).

In 1887 Uriah Smith wrote a five point summary of the sanctuary as understood by Seventh-day Adventists:

1. That the sanctuary and priesthood of the Mosaic dispensation represented in shadow the sanctuary and priesthood of the present or Christian dispensation⁸³ (Heb 8:5).
2. That this Sanctuary and priesthood are in heaven, resembling the former as nearly as heavenly things may resemble the earthly (Heb 9:23, 24).
3. That the ministry of Christ, our great high priest, in the heavenly Sanctuary is composed of two great divisions, as in the type; first, in the first apartment, or holy place, and secondly, in the second apartment, or most holy place.
4. That the beginning of his ministry in the second apartment is marked by the great prophetic period of 2,300 days (Dan 8:14), and began when those days ended in 1844.
5. That the ministry He is now performing in the second apartment of the heavenly temple, is “the atonement” (Lev 16:17), the “cleansing of the Sanctuary” (Dan 8:14), the “investigative judgment” (Dan 7:10), the “finishing of the mystery of God” (Rev 10:7; 11:15, 19), which will complete Christ’s work as

⁸³ Although the pioneers received light on the Sanctuary, they placed it incorrectly within the dispensational view of the covenants. This error was challenged in 1888 by the message of Jones and Waggoner. See *Discarding Augustine’s Covenant Glasses* on Maranathmedia.com for more details.

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priest, consummate the plan of salvation, terminate human probation, decide every case for eternity, and bring Christ to his throne of eternal domination (Uriah Smith, “Questions on the Sanctuary”, *The Review and Herald*, June 14, 1887; quoted from *The Sanctuary Doctrine*, pp. 1, 2).

It is clear from these statements that our foundations were laid on a belief that an atonement was carried out in 1844 for the blotting out of sins. Ellen White states it simply as follows:

“The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement.” PP 357

“When Christ, the Mediator, burst the bands of the tomb, and ascended on high to minister for man, He first entered the holy place where, by virtue of His own sacrifice, He made an offering for the sins of men. With intercession and pleadings He presented before God the prayers and repentance and faith of His people, purified by the incense of His own merits. He next entered the Most Holy Place, to make an atonement for the sins of the people, and to cleanse the sanctuary. His work as high priest completes the Divine plan of redemption by making the final atonement for sin.” 10MR 157

Statements such as these have confused other churches in the past and led them to believe that 7th Day Adventists did not believe in the atonement of the cross. This is completely false. Note what Ellen White wrote:

“After Adam fell, Jesus entered upon the work of redeeming man. In every part his sacrifice was perfect; for he could make a complete atonement for sin.” YI June 14, 1900

Why is there such a difficulty in seeing atonement as a process that encompasses the Cross and the work of Christ in the Sanctuary? The word “atonement”, *at-one-ment*, was a word coined by William Tyndale for reconciliation. Atonement is the process of restoring the relationship between God and man. It is vitally important when considering the concept of atonement that we ask ourselves, “Is our view of the atonement performance-based or relationally based?” What do I mean by this?

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We might look at the sacrifice of Christ as a deed that God required to be paid to simply fix what man had done, to cover for his wrong doing. A performance-based concept of atonement could very easily focus on the *act* of Christ on the Cross as a ritualistic process to make satisfaction to the Father for the sins of mankind. A deed to be done and completed, and once done then it is all completed and there is nothing left to do. Some aspects of protestant theology give you the impression that atonement is essentially that, a deed to be completed for the satisfaction of the Divine Will.

But Atonement placed in the context of a relationally based system focuses on the entire process of a restored relationship from beginning to end. How does the cross restore this relationship? The cross reveals the immense love of God and exposes the lies of Satan about God. It also reveals the wickedness of the heart of man in killing the Saviour of the World. The basis of reconciliation involves the restitution of correct identities for both God and man. The cross is the most powerful demonstration of the Father's heart for His children. It tells us He was willing to give up everything to get us back; He even risked the eternal loss of His own Son.⁸⁴ The revelation of such love is the powerhouse of the atonement. It confronts the human race with the reality of God's true character.

The atonement made on the cross is the objective demonstration of God's acceptance of us, just as the father ran to his prodigal son and embraced him. The atonement in the sanctuary involves the subjective process of fully embracing that acceptance and truly believing we are sons and daughters of God. A performance-based view of atonement through a protestant lens sees no necessity for the subjective element of atonement. It is content to accept the ritualistic view of acceptance with God. It feels no need of such subjective heart searching and therefore rejects sanctuary based atonement.

Our pioneers laid a solid platform for the atonement doctrine. While there were some who tried to push the atonement towards the most holy place

⁸⁴ God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss. {DA 49.1}

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ministry only, the leadership embraced both cross and sanctuary aspects of the atonement.⁸⁵

While the church laid a solid platform, living the realities of this doctrine in a relational context has been a struggle. During the period from 1852⁸⁶ up to 1888⁸⁷, Ellen White had expressed the view that the Church was in the Laodicean state and lost its first love. A spirit of debate prevailed amongst many ministers and sermons were often as “dry as the hills of Gilboa”.⁸⁸

The 1888 message challenged the church to engage the relational reality of the atonement and be reconciled to God and fully embrace His righteous character. The church struggled to accept the message⁸⁹, and by the time of the 1920’s the church became influenced by the rise of fundamentalism that

⁸⁵ See Questions on Doctrine Revisited Chapter 13 “Pioneers avoid Crosier’s Error” by Leroy Moore.

⁸⁶ As I have of late looked around to find the humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, my mind has been much exercised. Many who profess to be looking for the speedy coming of Christ are becoming conformed to this world and seek more earnestly the applause of those around them than the approbation of God. They are cold and formal, like the nominal churches from which they but a short time since separated. The words addressed to the Laodicean church describe their present condition perfectly. EW 107 (RH June 10, 1852)

⁸⁷ In the Laodicean state of the church at the present time, how little evidence is given of the direct, personal guidance of God! Men place themselves in positions of temptation, where they see and hear much that is contrary to God, and detrimental to spirituality. RH June 19, 1888

⁸⁸ RH March 11, 1890

⁸⁹ “Those who realize their need of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, will have contrition of soul, will repent for their resistance of the Spirit of the Lord. They will confess their sin in refusing the light that Heaven has so graciously sent them.” RH August 26, 1890

Dear Bro. Olsen: The enclosed testimony I sent to the Ohio Conference especially, but the Lord has shown me that the very same evils which are reprov'd in that conference exist in other conferences. Churches are in need of personal piety and a deeper, far deeper experience in the truth and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The spirit of resistance that has been exhibited in presenting the righteousness of Christ as our only hope has grieved the Spirit of God, and the result of this opposition has required the delivery of this matter the more earnestly and decidedly, causing deeper searching into the subject and calling out an array of arguments that the messenger himself did not know was so firm, so full, so thorough upon this subject of justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ as our only hope. The subject has been brought before many minds. The sad part of the matter is that some who ought to have stood in the clear light on this subject were working on the enemy's side of the question. 1888 Study Materials 703. 1890

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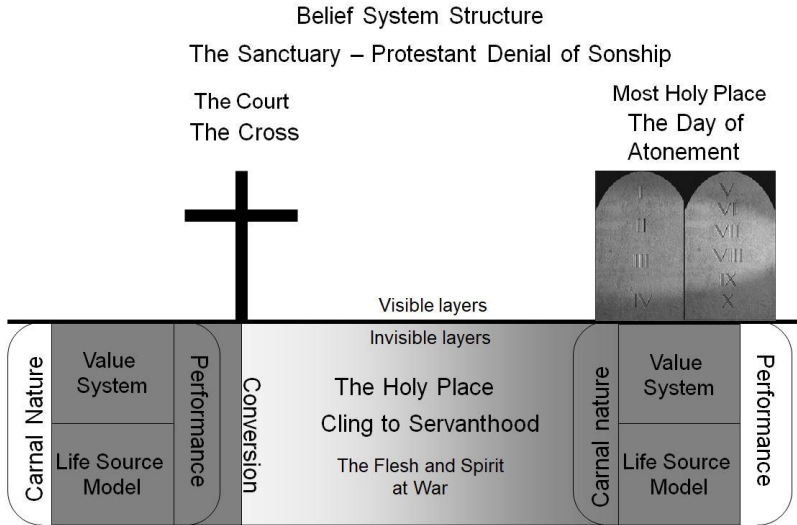
was sweeping protestant churches across America.⁹⁰ During the era of the 1930's and 1940's M.L. Andreasen developed his final generation concepts in the context of the Day of Atonement. Andreasen's emphasis on overcoming sin and the perfection of the saints in the context of the day of atonement increased the danger of *performance-based-value-system-thinking* in relation to the investigative judgement.⁹¹ Andreasen's views moved the church heavily to the right and tension mounted until the release of the book *Questions on Doctrine*. This book pushed Adventist concepts of the atonement strongly towards the evangelical principles of penal substitution; an event-based atonement that supposedly satisfied God's justice. This emphasis on the question of the atonement undermined the Adventist platform of final atonement in 1844, placing it in an oppositional framework where the atonement of the cross is theological antagonistic to the need for a final atonement. Andreasen's heavy final atonement focus placed such tension on the church that, in an attempted correction, men like Desmond Ford developed a doctrinal platform that overcorrected to the point of a complete denial of the investigative judgment message. Ford's message was heavily influenced by Evangelical thinking, but Evangelical thinking will always deny a sanctuary atonement concept because of its penal substitution emphasis. But the reality is that the source of the atonement revealed at the cross is to be magnified and expanded in the 1844 final atonement.

The doctrine of righteousness by faith as expressed by Protestant faith is underpinned by the immortality of the soul, which reinforces the lie of the serpent of an internal *life source*. Such righteousness cannot abide the scrutiny of the Most Holy Place. They can't go into that apartment. Their Scripture level of penetration is not deep enough to grasp these doctrines in a logical framework. The false life source system of Protestants inadvertently causes a rejection of the testing of full sonship through investigation. They unknowingly remain a legalist prodigal in their hearts and therefore change the gospel so that they can remain a servant, unwittingly seeking to earn their salvation even while protesting efforts to obey as attempts to earn salvation, which they correctly declare cannot be earned.

⁹⁰ Graeme Bradford, *People are Human* (Signs Publishing Company, Victoria, 2006) 45.

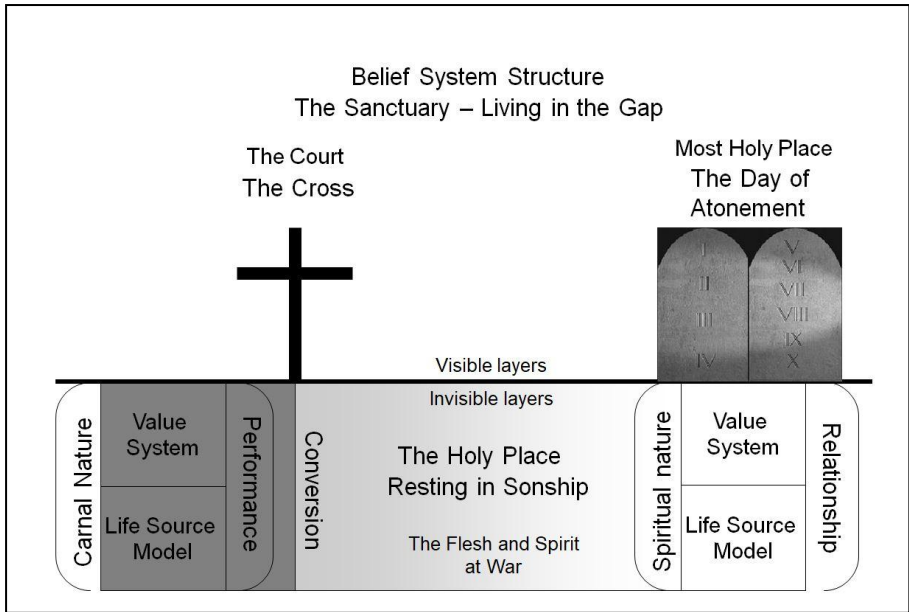
⁹¹ Leroy Moore, *Questions on Doctrine Revisited*, page 256-260

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During my theology training, I was told that the final atonement/investigative judgment was something that would essentially be a five minute ritual as the focus of the atonement was all in the cross. I appreciate the fact my lecturer tried to hold onto some sense of the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment, but the atonement of *Questions on Doctrine* can only provide window dressing to final atonement. At a deeper level, it appears to me that such a view is a reaction to the *performance-based-value-system-thinking* developed by Andreasen's final generation emphasis. I feel an immense sense of sadness for our church. A relational focus on the atonement, as expressed through the lens of the prodigal story we discussed earlier, sees no conflict between cross and sanctuary atonement. The second is a channel and magnification of the first. I believe that a relational emphasis would have saved the right and left distortions of men such as Andreasen and Ford.

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The reason for the investigative judgment is easily found in the story of the prodigal son.

Luke 15:18-19 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, (19) And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

When the son returned home, he himself judged and sentenced himself. The father did not judge him, but embraced him.

Luke 15:21-22 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. (22) **But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:**

The father embraced him and clothed him and freely forgave him. Yet the self-condemnation of the son is echoed by his brother.

Luke 15:30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

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The reason the investigative judgment must take place is for the satisfaction of man. The Bible clearly states that God and His Son never judge and condemn anyone.

John 5:22 **For the Father judgeth no man**, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

John 8:15 Ye judge after the flesh; **I judge no man.**

John 12:47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

If God does not judge His children, why must there be a judgment?

Luke 12:14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

Matt 7:1-2 Judge not, that ye be not judged. (2) For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

When the prodigal son came to his father, he himself judged himself unworthy of being a son to the father. He judged himself only worthy to be a servant. This spirit of judgment had to be exposed. How does the gospel deal with these things?

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

The self-judgment offense of the prodigal had to abound and be magnified, in order for it to be revealed and confessed. God allows himself to be presented as a judge, for this is what the prodigal imagines the father thinks towards him. The prodigal only dares to hope that the father will condescend to grant him the position of a servant. God allows this process to abound and be magnified in order to reveal what is in the heart of man.

God permits His Son to be delivered up for our offenses. **He Himself assumes toward the Sin Bearer the character of a judge**, divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father.
{TM 245.2}

Notice that at the cross, the Father assumes toward the Sin Bearer the character of a judge. He does not actually judge, but assumes this position that men themselves might have satisfaction that atonement has been

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made. *The assumption of the position of a judge is magnified and expanded into the investigative judgment.* For the children of God who truly accept their relational position to the Father, they begin to realise that in the judgment they must overcome their own self condemnation that they believe exists within the Father.

John 8:7-9 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. (8) And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. (9) **And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one,** beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

When we see the Father as He really is, then we cease to fear our own judgment and the judgment of others. When the record of our sin comes up before us in our minds, we cling to the assurance of the Father's love and the length to which the Father went to forgive us in offering up His Son. The perfect life of Christ prevents any person from imagining that their sins of the past are not so black.

John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Romans 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ because of our own self-condemnation and for all the judging we do of others.

Those who reject the teaching of the judgment in 1844 deny the problem that exists within their own hearts. God has allowed for the judgment to take place to draw out of man his own judgmental nature and encourage him to fully accept the forgiveness freely offered him. Those who enter into the judgment with the same mind as the prodigal, refusing to come into full sonship, will be overcome with a sense of self-condemnation and take the judgment seat against themselves. Those who deny the investigative judgment will not learn their true condition and need before

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God and therefore will be overwhelmed with self-condemnation when they discover their true character in contrast to the character of God.

In the relational value system, the judgment is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ and to truly accept the Father's forgiveness.

The legacy for our church is that today many people in the church have either embraced the evangelical view of the atonement, which confirms the idea that God demanded death to satisfy justice. They are unprepared to meet their own judgmental attitudes, which they will have to do when they see themselves in the light of Christ's true beauty. Many Adventists sadly sing with other evangelicals that when Jesus died, He threw our sins into the depths of the sea rather than transferring them to heaven into the Sanctuary. This takes away the precious soul searching of the Day of Atonement that could surface faulty *performance-thinking* and get rid of it, enabling us to handle the glory of our holy maker.

For Adventists who follow Andreasen's path into the investigative judgment and final generation theology, there is an overwhelming sense of condemnation. Such condemnation has the potential to turn a person to find the relational understanding of the judgment, because the teaching of Andreasen causes the sin of judging others to abound. It does the work of the Old Covenant to bring us to Christ. Sadly, most people who walk this path will not be able to endure the judgment because of the failure to embrace the 1888 message of true righteousness by faith which would show them the Father as one that does not condemn them. A true relational understanding of the judgment would enable them to face their sins in their entirety and still trust that the Father accepts them. Once they have faced their sins and refuse to condemn themselves, then they are ready to be sealed.

As a result, several Adventist theologians have attacked the investigative judgment for undermining of the certainty of salvation. Why can't they say with David, "The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged." (Psalm 37:33)? When will we realise that for many people in our church the central pillar is missing? Such is the result of *performance-based-value-system-thinking*.

C. The Nature of Christ

The doctrine of the nature of Christ has been a source of great controversy in the Adventist church, especially since the release of the book *Questions*

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on *Doctrine* in 1957. As so many books have been written on the subject, I will refer you to those books for further research. Here is a list of recommended reading:

- *General Conference Bulletin 1895 Sermons* by A.T Jones
- *Christ and His Righteousness* by E.J Waggoner
- *Touched with our feelings* by J.R Zurcher

I will mention briefly from Scripture, Spirit of Prophecy and our pioneers, the following:

Hebrews 2:14-18 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on *him the nature of angels*; but he took on *him the seed of Abraham*. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

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

“Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His Divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the

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character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect." DA 311

"He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor those that are tempted." MM 181

"A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man, in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it is sinful man that He came to redeem." (*Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 26 by E.J Waggoner)

"But to be the Redeemer He must be not only able, He must be a blood-relative. And He must also be not only near of kin, but the nearest of kin; and the nearest of kin by blood-relationship. Therefore, "as the children" of man—as the children of the one who lost our inheritance — "are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same"—took part of flesh and blood in very substance like ours, and so became our nearest of kin. And therefore it is written that He and we "are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren."" (*Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 25 by A.T. Jones)

The human nature of Christ was the very centre of the message of righteousness by faith given by Jones and Waggoner. Ellen White says this about their message:

"The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world." TM 91

In the 1957 release of *Questions on Doctrine*, the Adventist church, without adequate discussion or vote, presented a view on the nature of Christ inconsistent with the view held since the churches foundational pillars were laid. Notice this statement:

"He sojourned on earth, was tempted and tried and was touched with the feelings of our human infirmities, yet He lived a life wholly free from sin. His was a real and genuine humanity, one that must pass through the various stages of growth, like any other member of the race. He was subject to Joseph and Mary, and was a worshiper in the synagogue and Temple. He wept over the guilty city of Jerusalem, and at the grave of a loved one. He expressed His dependence upon God by prayer. Yet all the while He retained

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His deity-the one and only God-man. He was the second Adam, coming in the "likeness" of sinful human flesh (Rom. 8:3), but without a taint of its sinful propensities and passions."⁹²

You will notice the word *likeness* is put in quotes. Why take the literal words of Scripture and put them in quotes to suggest it is metaphorical or symbolic in some way? He is introduced as humanity that took body weaknesses but not our moral degeneracy in human nature. Then is listed many EGW quotes to show his sinlessness. There is no doubt Christ was sinless, that is our only hope. But if he did not take our (yours and my) nature then he really did not reach us where we are. But Ellen White states:

"For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation." DA 117

Note that Ellen White declares that the moral degeneracy Christ took (not spiritual degeneracy, but the impact of generations of sin upon the higher faculties) included moral worth. Why did we have to change our teaching on the nature of Christ? What changed in our church before 1957 to cause a need to change the nature of Christ? We will look at this in depth in a later chapter, but for now I want us to consider how *performance-based-thinking* will not allow it.

As we have stated many times already, humanity is infected with the lie of the serpent – "you shall not surely die". This lie has embedded in the heart of man a belief that he has power or life in himself. The truth is we have no power at all⁹³. All power and life come from God, but when we receive it, it passes through the lie of the serpent in our mind and we are unwittingly beguiled into thinking it is our own power and strength.

A clear example of this is our constant tendency to compare with others. When others do well are we able to rejoice in what God has done in them, without the feeling that we are not doing enough for the Lord? If we

⁹² Questions on Doctrine, Page 20, PDF Version found at maranathamedia.com

⁹³ As a point of clarification, man does not have generative power, the power to create from himself. Man does have the power of the will, the power to choose, but this ability should not be confused with the power of life.

preach or sing well and no one makes a positive comment, why are we tempted to feel discouraged? If we were inspired by the Lord and gifted by Him and did it for Him, why should we be tempted to feel discouraged? These are all subtle implications of the lie “you shall not surely die”, which we might mentally reject, but our behaviour gives evidence that we are still being affected by it.

This lie actually gives an active power to human nature. It unwittingly guides our thinking to believe that when we do evil, it is actually something that has been independently created by us. It makes our nature active.

The reality is that darkness is the absence of light. It is not a creative principle but a *passive principle*.⁹⁴ This means that human nature in its fallen state is passive, not active and generative.

If human sinful nature were active – meaning it creates evil inherently – then Christ could never have taken that kind of nature. But if human sinful nature is a passive state, then it is quite possible to do so. We have shown again and again that we as a church have not eliminated *performance-based-value-system-thinking*; thus, to remain consistent either we had to remove it or change our view of the nature of Christ. So instead of us changing, we “changed” Christ.

Why was this change deemed necessary when the Spirit of Prophecy and the 1888 message makes it abundantly clear that Christ took upon Himself our fallen nature?

The atonement as understood by the daughters of Babylon required the best sacrifice that can be offered to satisfy the justice of God. If Christ is understood to be defective through having fallen human nature upon Him, then this could negate the sacrifice. Therefore it must be certain there is no taint of fallen humanity upon Him. This is the *performance-based-*

⁹⁴ Based on the definition of sin given by Ellen White: “Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is “the transgression of the law;” it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.” GC 492 Sin is the *outworking* of a principle at war with the great law of love. Human nature contains the *principle* at war (the principle being created by the lie “you shall not surely die” thus providing the basis for the deception of human independence), not the *outworking of the principle* at war with the great law of love.

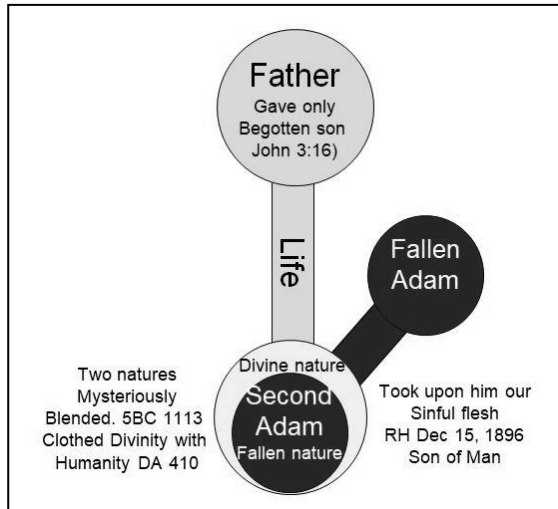
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value-system-thinking of the atonement as expressed in the nature of Christ.

When it is understood that Christ came to reveal what the Father is truly like and thus turn our hearts towards the Father in confidence, the most important thing with regard to the nature of Christ is that He understands us and knows what it is to wrestle with sinful nature. In order to be a perfect mediator to reveal the Father, He must meet us where we are rather than where unfallen Adam was.

But for those conservative Adventists who hold the fallen nature of Christ and protest the change made by *Questions on Doctrine* authors need also beware. For Conservative Adventism is also operating in *performance-based-value-system-*

thinking. A fallen nature of Christ theology in that context requires man to copy Christ and overcome as a servant without the assurance of sonship. This often leads to the experience of the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son. A focus on standards and doing the right thing leads to the condemnation of



others for their failures. People tend to become critical in attitude.

In the past my thinking has been just as *performance-based*, and therefore taking a fallen nature view of Christ drove me to focus more on Christ as my example than my substitute. One of my lecturers lovingly and kindly tried to warn me as he obviously could see the spec in my eye, but I could not see the log. So *performance-based-thinking* in conservative ranks will unwittingly push a person towards legalism, a legalism that I personally have tasted and lived amongst. The liberal elements of the church can clearly see this and rightly reject it. The truth is that the nature of Christ will never be truly sweet to us while we hold *performance-based-*

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thinking. As Christ is truly God, so He is truly man who is touched with our feelings.

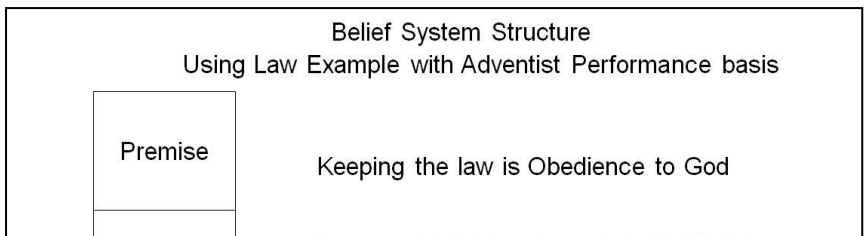
D. Character Perfection

It should be quite clear by now that character perfection is complete anathema to Protestant *performance-based-thinking*. The whole concept of character perfection screams *performance* and as we noted previously, the Protestant premise is: trying to keep the law is legalism. In the next section I will examine the concepts of legalism more fully. For now let's look again at the five levels of typical Protestant thought.

This belief structure will have to twist every statement in Scripture regarding victory over sin. The *inherent life source* and *value system* demand it. None of the main Protestant churches, that I know of, teach that we can have a victorious Christian life in this world. They simply don't have the doctrinal framework to support it.

From my personal experience and study the Adventist church is confused on this issue. We have previously discussed the underlying issues of perfection through the concepts of righteousness by faith. The undetected layers prevent the total freedom of victory in Christ. Currently we either change the doctrine of perfection to maturity and encourage ourselves that we do our best and "Christ makes up the rest", or we focus on other people's sins to avoid thinking about our own. Again, in terms of history this is a pendulum swing. Fifty years ago, the press for perfection was much higher and so was the despair level and fear. These traits don't make for happy holy Christians.

But since we capitulated to the evangelicals on the atonement and investigative judgment, it is inevitable that we would sooner or later do the same with this teaching on character perfection. As we stated previously, if atonement means satisfying God's justice, then the only thing that is needed is the death of Christ. The actual need to be fully transformed becomes irrelevant. For Adventists that continue to hold the belief in victory over sin, the confusion about our need to do things right leads people to despair or to blame other people for the reason they fail.



During my theology training, one of the lecturers asked people to stand who believed in victory over sin. Out of a class of 16, two of us stood. The lecturer spent the rest of the class showing how absurd this idea was. The concepts of character perfection have not been taught at our theological schools for many decades. There would only be a small number of ministers who teach it these days.

It is so sad that it has to be this way. A correct understanding of *life source* and *value system* makes it not only a possibility but a joyous certainty. Christ in you the hope of glory, what a wonderful thought. I have heard people tell me they will sin until Jesus comes; and I wonder if they are comfortable with living apart from a close *relationship* with Jesus, and whether it bothers them at all the pain their sinning causes their Saviour. We may stumble and fall along the way, but to justify sin by saying, “we will sin until Jesus comes, you can’t be perfect” is so very sad.

A plain reading of the Bible is clear:

1 John 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

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

Titus 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Jude 1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

1 Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 Peter 1:3-4 According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We could list more, but to any candid reader it is fairly plain. Those still trapped in a *performance-based-thinking* will unwittingly twist these texts into the objective work of Christ only and this is how God sees you through Jesus. But listen to the Spirit of Prophecy:

“"The prince of this world cometh," said Jesus, "and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with Divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the Divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the Divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character.” DA 123

“None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been

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made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through co-operation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory.”
AA 531

Isn't it wonderful to know that when we embrace *relational-based-thinking*, God's commandments are 10 promises and that Christ's victory is mine. I can commune with Him as Enoch and Daniel did of old. What a wonderful hope to know I can stop hurting my friends and family through Christ who strengthens me.

E. Eldership and Ordination

With regard to the issues of the investigative judgment, the nature of Christ and character perfection, the church has wrestled with spiritual realities that are not observed by the human eye; none of them can be seen and handled by the church. But when it comes to the issues of church leadership and the roles of men and women, we move into a very literal and tangible arena. Since its inception the leadership of the church had been led and administrated by men, but in the last few decades this practice is changing and in fact now is being overturned under the demands of equality.

I will come back to this issue in section six with a much broader stroke, but for now we want to touch on the issues of *performance-based-value-system-thinking* and the roles of men and women.

Performance-based-thinking demands advancement through human ranks. The question of who holds key positions of authority has been with the Christian Church since its inception.

Mark 10:37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

Performance-based-thinking places *value* in position. The higher the position, the higher the *value* a person obtains. Satan himself expresses this key principle himself when he states:

Isaiah 14:13-14 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also

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upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Human thinking does not naturally entertain a downward path of position; it is usually the upward drive to make it to the top. The higher you go, the greater the sense of *value* is obtained. In many cases the net effect of this is that those who are the most insecure and the most lacking in *value* are the most determined to get to the top. In the world of *performance-based-thinking* the most insecure individuals will often hold the reigns of power. This is why it says in Daniel 4:17 that God sets over the kingdoms the basest, or lowest, of men.

This drive to be in top position is not limited to church and business structures. This striving occurs in many marriages; the subtle struggle for control; who will lead and who makes the final decision? All of us have experienced or been exposed to this type of struggle. This struggle is the natural effect of *performance-based-thinking*.

The biblical principle of headship cannot be grasped or appreciated by *performance-based-thinking*. The biblical view of headship is based on the concept of a fountain-source and an outlet-channel. God is the fountain and He has structured human families and communities in a way to allow the flow of His blessings to be shared in a *relational* context.

The biblical principle of submission is the placing of oneself in the stream of blessing. God has created within humanity the two principles of seed/source (generation) and nurture/magnification (growth). The masculine principle is generative and the feminine is nurturing. Both work together to create and nurture children in a family context. As the Father is the generative principle, He holds the headship position as a source or spring of blessing. This is why the Bible tells us:

1 Corinthians 8:6 But to us there is but **one God, the Father, of whom are all things**, and we in him; **and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things**, and we by him.⁹⁵

It is this principle that caused the patriarchs to bless their children. The Father not only imparts physical seed, he also imparts spiritual seed. The words of his mouth under the inspiration of God seed the mind of his

⁹⁵ For more on this see the book *Divine Pattern of Life*.

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children with a sense of meaning, purpose and *value*. This is why the Bible says that the glory of children is their father (Proverbs 17:6).

This stream of blessing that flows from the fountain of God will only operate properly when people see God as the only *life source* and His Son as the only channel for that Life. If the serpent's lie infects our thinking, the channel of blessing will be broken.

The Bible instruction on Church leadership is self-evident and quite simple:

1 Timothy 3:1-5 This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. **A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife**, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; **One that ruleth well his own house**, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (**For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?**)

An Elder in the church is to be the husband of one wife. The scoffers say this should read an elder should be married to one spouse, and of course *performance-based-equality* demands such a response. The text also says that he should rule his house well. Here Paul alludes to the text in Genesis 18:19 where the spiritual blessings promised to Abraham were dependent on the right ordering of his family and his responsible leadership. As man represents the generative principle or spring/source of God's blessing to his family, we would naturally expect that he occupy the leadership role to shower those blessings on his family. If a wife becomes the leader of the home then the source of the spring is placed under the nurturer, and this distorts the channel of blessing. The qualifications for an elder must be that he rules or oversees his home. If a wife rules her home then the channel of blessing is cut off. Notice:

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

This text establishes the flow of the blessing. This fountain and channel principle makes it urgent that eldership be reserved for the male or generative principle, for the church is an expansion of the home. For more on these issues refer to section six.

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In summary, the push to make women elders and pastors is based purely on the principle of *performance-equality*. If positions do hold power and *value* then it would be wrong to withhold the positions from women, but God does not base equality on *performance*, He bases it on a structured series of *relationships* that preserve a channel of His blessing.

The fact that a majority of church leadership today feel it is vital to right the injustice of not allowing women to be pastors and elders suggests that these men and women are potentially blinded by *performance-based-thinking*. From a worldly context I totally agree with their desires for equality, but God's ways are not our ways. His kingdom does not operate on such principles.

The commissioning and eldership of women to leadership positions will take the glory of children away and de-stabilise the future prosperity of the church. In Isaiah 3:1-12⁹⁶ we see the emergence of female leadership as a mark of apostasy. Many people say we can't find men to fill positions in the church. This is all part of what God told us He would do if we try to rearrange His blessing structures. In Isaiah 3:1-2 God says He will allow all the good men to be replaced with weak male leadership, and then to be replaced with women who will rule over them.

Despite the resistance to the biblical reality of male leadership, the Spirit of Elijah will come in these last days to restore the blessing system.

Malachi 4:5-6 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The restoration of male leadership is a key piece of the foundation to see the spiritual promises to Abraham fulfilled (Genesis 18:19). Such a restoration will restore the fathers we need to seed resilient children to face and drive back the forces of the enemy.

F. The Word of God and Education

At its simplest level, the Bible tells us that “knowledge puffs up” (1 Corinthians 8:2). The Bible has the greatest source of knowledge of any

⁹⁶ For more on this topic, download the sermon “The Downward Path” found on maranathamedia.com

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book on the planet. This book can be used via *performance-thinking* to make one very powerful. I think we all have seen plenty of examples of teachers and preachers who have used the power of their knowledge to advance themselves.

The study of the Word of God is a process of education, and when you combine *performance-based-thinking* in education with *performance-based-thinking* of the Bible, you get a deadly cocktail. While there are many people that go through the ranks of educational institutions and maintain their sense of humility, there are others who succumb to the intoxicating power of education. The entire western world uses education as a *performance-measure*. The very concept of grading and degrees is inherently *performance-based*.

Men and women are often referred to as having great intellect and insight, but it is usually expressed in a way that honours them rather than the God who gives these abilities. Ellen White makes an amazing statement concerning the focus on intellectual greatness of a person that bears careful consideration.

In the estimation of Heaven, what is it that constitutes greatness? Not that which the world accounts greatness; not wealth, or rank, or noble descent, or intellectual gifts, in themselves considered. If intellectual greatness, apart from any higher consideration, is worthy of honor, then our homage is due to Satan, whose intellectual power no man has ever equaled. But when perverted to self-serving, the greater the gift, the greater curse it becomes. It is moral worth that God values. Love and purity are the attributes He prizes most. *Desire of Ages* p. 219.

As we stated before, it is often the most insecure individuals – who feel their need to obtain *value* – that are the most determined to hold positions of high rank in the church. If as a church we hold our highest positions in the church for degreed individuals, then we have created a weakness to allow the most needy and most insecure to get there. God has placed His humble servants in positions also, but the more we structure our church around *performance-recognition*, the more susceptible we become to *performance-based-thinkers* leading our church and making many decisions about the direction of institutions and policies. My experience in our colleges and schools indicate that there are many who are intoxicated with the power of education. I certainly have not been exempt from this power. It has been a challenge to become sober, that is for sure.

There are many in the church that recognize these dangers and actually espouse the virtue of non-education. However, this is simply the reverse side of the coin. We want educated people; we want the best thinkers that are not merely the reflectors of other men's thoughts.

It all comes down to the kingdom principles we operate by. Will we take our Bible as it reads and be converted by it, or will we convert the Bible into a tool to make ourselves powerful?

G. The Sabbath

The Sabbath is one of the most misunderstood institutions in the church. From a *performance* perspective this teaching is a minefield. One example I love to bring up when discussing a person's understanding of the Sabbath is to ask them, "Is it wrong to swim at the beach on Sabbath?" There is an immediate chorus supporting both for and against, but more against. Then I like to add that "sometimes it is safer for me to be in the water with the fish than to be on the beach with all the barely clothed people around me." For many people they have a list of what is right or wrong based on an artificial *performance* standard. When there is nothing specific in Scripture on the issue I like to ask one question, "Does it draw me closer to Jesus or not?" The Sabbath is a *relational* institution, therefore the questions asked of it must be *relational*. We don't want to make the Sabbath a burden for our children with extensive restrictions. This is a difficult issue and requires much prayer and wisdom, but I am sure the Lord can help us.

As in many cases, the pendulum has swung for many on this issue too. The excessive Sabbath restrictions and *performance-thinking* of the 50's and 60's has driven many people to be very lax about the Sabbath and totally lose its sanctity.

One of the areas of laxness we see is in the operation of some of our institutions on the Sabbath. I also question the links between our health food company and the sponsorship of cricket players and football players who play on Sabbath. We promote these people as role models, yet these role models play sport on Sabbath, let alone the morality of some of these players. Is the Lord really pleased with these things?

It is very hard to see how, when the Sabbath message goes forward with great power in the future, people will be willing to sacrifice all for a day that holds little sanctity.

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There are many other areas we could address, but I think the point is made that *performance-based-thinking* has affected many doctrines and practices of the church. In our next chapter I want to look at the process of determining beliefs and the process of how we prove positions; this will then lead us into our discussion on the Godhead.

Section 4 – Performance-Based Impact on Methodology

One of the greatest tests of what *value system* we operate by is the process by which we arrive at or defend our conclusions. For many of us who have been raised in a church environment, Bible teachings have been embraced uncritically, meaning we have not thoroughly tested them for ourselves. If we have held a belief for many years uncritically, we become susceptible to using Scripture to reinforce our beliefs so we can continue to enjoy the comforts of orthodoxy⁹⁷, rather than test everything we believe by Scripture. *Performance-based-thinking* will tend to subordinate Scripture to our own thinking. The Scripture becomes subject to us, rather than we to it.⁹⁸

The temptation to subordinate Scripture to our thinking is highest when we encounter passages and texts that seem to conflict with our established views. Will we truly become open to all of Scripture and be diligent to harmonise every passage of inspiration, letting every passage have its proper weight? *Performance-based-thinking* makes it very hard in the face of longstanding tradition. One's identity becomes attached to the tradition, and if the tradition is wrong it means our attachment to it was wrong, hurting our pride and making us feel like we have lost value. For the purposes of our next section, I thought it would be helpful to work through the typical process of forcing a premise without testing underlying layers.

I also wanted to include this section to raise awareness that everyone operates by a value system, or world view, when they approach scripture. I have found at times that people will honestly say they just take the Bible at face value, but it is apparent that they are not even aware that they are operating through a value system that skews the texts of the Bible. To

⁹⁷ The power of orthodoxy on our thinking is often much greater than we could imagine. It raises questions like “How could Pr. X, who is such a loving Christian, be wrong?” “How could the whole church be wrong?” “What would happen to me if I accepted this view now?” When it is right, Orthodoxy can accomplish great good, but when it is wrong it proves a deadly barrier to truth.

⁹⁸ “We are not to set our stakes, and then interpret everything to reach this set point. Here is where some of our great reformers have failed, and this is the reason that men who today might be mighty champions for God and the truth, are warring against the truth.” {1888 44.1}

Chapter 9 – Proving that Sabbath Keeping is Legalism

approach the Bible without being aware of the worldview used renders dialog impossible with those of a differing model.

9. “Proving” that Sabbath Keeping is Legalism

Many Christians believe that proving that Sabbath keeping is legalism is quite simple. It just requires three simple steps:

1. A premise.
2. Prove your premise from the Bible.
3. Apply your proven premise to difficult passages that appear to disagree with your premise.

1. With reference to Sabbath keeping, we can apply the following premise:

Law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel.

2. Now let’s see if we can find evidence for this premise in the Bible.

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Romans 10:4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Ephesians 2:8,9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Galatians 3:1-3 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Romans 4:14 For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

Listed above are just a few of the wonderful texts that many Christians use to prove that law keeping is legalism and therefore apparently anti-gospel. If law keeping is legalism, as it would appear that we have proved from the above texts, then it only follows that if the Sabbath is a part of the law then any attempt to keep the Sabbath is an attempt to keep the

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law, which is anti-gospel. The gospel is the good news of freedom from having to offer works to God to be accepted. We are saved by the works of Jesus, not our own.

3. Many would conclude that we have easily proven that law keeping is legalism so that “even a child can understand it”; let us now look at some difficult passages that may suggest otherwise.

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Since it appears that we have already proven from the Bible that law keeping is legalism, we need to examine this passage closely. Once a person is locked in the premise then there is no possible way that the above verse could teach that the law is still in force, otherwise Jesus would be encouraging legalism and “we know” He does not teach that. So, as many suggest, “the answer must lie in His word *fulfill*. To fulfill something is to complete it, and since Jesus fulfilled all the requirements of the law, then this text is saying that Jesus fulfilled the law for us and therefore we don’t need to keep it.” I have heard this argument many times. Locking in the premise prevents the text from being understood any other way than Christ fulfilled, or removed, the law. Let us look at another problem text.

1 Corinthians 7:19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

An immediate response sequence could go as follows: “since we have proven from other passages that law keeping is legalism, this text cannot teach the keeping of the law.” “There must be another explanation.” “Jesus gave his followers a new commandment in John 13:34 to love one another.” “Since this commandment fulfills the law, as stated in Rom 13:8, then the keeping of the commandments here is the commandment to love one another.”

Once again, the premise determines the outcome of the meaning. The meaning of the text is predetermined by something that is considered immovable. Notice another “problem” text.

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Luke 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

Again, a response sequence could go as follows: “Since we have proven that law keeping is legalism, this text must mean something else.” “Since Jesus was speaking to a Jew before He died on the cross, the law was still in force for the Jews and applied to them at that time.” “Once Jesus died the gospel went to the Gentiles who were not required to keep the law. So this text does not apply to us.”

I have heard this exact argument a number of times. It is a premise-forcing response to the text. The Word of God becomes subject to the will of man. Consider another example.

1 John 2:4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

What is the typical response? “Since we have proven that law keeping is legalism, this text is obviously referring to the new law that Jesus mentioned in John 13:34.”

Matthew 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

I have heard some very creative responses to this text. Here is one of my favourites. “Since we have proven that law keeping is legalism, and the Sabbath is a part of the law, then this text cannot be a defense of the Sabbath. The word *Lord* means ‘master over.’ Since Jesus is master over the Sabbath, he has power to change it or do whatever he wants with it.”

I want us to notice a crucial point as to how the clear thrust of Bible passages concerning the law are able to be altered in their meaning. The key to removing the binding nature of the law is to segment it. I mean by this, the law given to the Jews is different to the law given to the New Testament Christians.

When the law is segmented or changeable it is no longer the universal reflection of God’s character, identity and government, but a transitory tool needed for a specific purpose for a certain length of time. Therefore one of the key elements of premise-forcing is segmentation of universal subjects revealed in Scripture.

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If something revealed in scripture is understood to be constant in relation to humanity, then it will be binding – it defines our limits. If something in Scripture is broken up across time, its identification is fractured or segmented, and then we (humanity) must determine its application and limits.

The constant universal Law			
Identity of law (Reference Point)	Law is consistent expression of God and His kingdom		
Time Segment	Genesis to Moses	Jews Pre-cross	Christians Post-Cross
The law binds humanity because it is constant and universal.			
The segmented changeable Law			
Identity of law (Reference Point)	Nothing specific stated	Ten Commandments	New Commandment love one another
Time Segment	Genesis to Moses	Jews Pre-cross	Christians Post-Cross
Humanity binds the law and dictates its limits because the law is segmented and changeable			

Returning to our premise forcing exercise, we see that it is possible to “prove” from the Bible that law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel, and that any texts that seem to indicate we should keep the law fall into one of the following categories:

1. The law keeping mentioned applies to Jews and not to Gentiles.
2. The law mentioned is the new commandment Jesus gave us, not the old Jewish law.
3. The law mentioned was fulfilled by Christ and therefore completed. As the Bible states, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Rom 10:4.

Notice the limiting and segmentation of the law occurring in the points above. This process is fairly water-tight for millions of Christians, and while the responses to difficult texts vary, the logic sequence is the same:

1. A premise.
2. Prove your premise from the Bible.

3. Apply your proven premise to difficult passages that appear to disagree with your premise.

10. “Proving” that the Sabbath is not Legalism Using the Same Logic Sequence

One of the major problems with the previous logic sequence is that the premise is supported by a select series of passages, but not tested by a fair cross-section of Scriptural evidence. Because the selected texts *seem* to provide sufficient proof, the premise is seen as self-evident and logical; therefore it is never really tested by a full range of passages relating to the issue. Let us look a little more closely at this premise we have used.

Law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel.

What if we changed our premise to the opposite and used the same three-step process? Let us look at this premise:

Law keeping is obedience to God and is the object of the gospel.

Now let's apply step two to find some texts to support this premise. Many of these will be the problem texts for the previous premise we used.

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

1 Corinthians 7:19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

Luke 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

1 John 2:4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

James 2:8-12 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and

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yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Matthew 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Listed above are just a few of the wonderful texts that prove that law keeping is obedience to God and the object of the gospel. If law keeping is obedience to God, as we have *seemingly* proved from the above texts, then it only follows that, if the Sabbath is a part of the law, then any attempts to ignore the Sabbath is an attempt to ignore the law, which is the object of the gospel. The gospel is the good news of restoring the image of God in man as revealed in the new covenant of Hebrews 8:10. The creative power of the Lord (of which the Sabbath is a memorial) is revealed in our lives and remakes us in the image of God.

It *appears* that we have easily proven that law keeping is obedience to God so that even a child can understand it. But let us now look at some difficult passages that may suggest otherwise.

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Since we have *apparently* proven that the keeping of the law is obedience to God and the object of the gospel, then this text is not a negation of the law but simply means that we can't keep the law in our own strength. The law brings us to Christ (Galatians 3:24) and, since we are crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20), it is Christ who does the work in us (Colossians 1:27) and therefore a fulfillment of the new covenant of Hebrews 8:10.

Romans 10:4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Since we have proven that the keeping of the law is obedience to God and the object of the gospel, then we need to closely examine this text. The word *end* in Greek here is *telos* which means goal or definite point. So we can say Christ is the goal of the law for righteousness, which is exactly what we stated in our premise.

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Ephesians 2:8,9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

The Bible says that Sabbath is a sign between us and God that He sanctifies us (Ezekiel 20:12,20). The Sabbath is a memorial of the power God uses to transform our lives. Grace is the power of God received by man through the exercise of faith as it says in Philippians 2:13.

Ephesians 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

The law mentioned here is the law of sin and death. It is the commandments of God viewed through the carnal mind. When we are born again, the law of the Spirit of life makes us free from the law of sin and death.

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

When we are crucified with Christ we cease to use the law as a means of gaining merit with God, and thus we find peace.

Galatians 3:1-3 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Romans 4:14 For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

These texts are stating the same thing as Romans 3:20, and we offer the same answer here. No one is saved by their own law keeping but by Christ keeping the law through us.

So in summary, we have *proven* from the Bible that law keeping is obedience to God and therefore the object of the gospel. Therefore any texts that seem to indicate we should ignore or dispense with the law fall into one of the following categories:

1. A reference to the ceremonial law of Moses which pointed to the plan of salvation.

2. A confusion over how the work is done. God does the works through us; It is His power combined with our will. We do not do the works in and of ourselves.

11. Comparing the Two Premises

In our pursuit of truth the question that we need to ask is which of the two premises harmonises the Scripture more clearly. Observe the two premises once again:

Premise 1: Law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel.

Premise 2: Law keeping is obedience to God and is the object of the gospel.

The first premise is correct on the assumption that it is the individual that is trying to do the works. In fact, this system of logic presupposes that *all* effort is legalism and against the gospel. The difficulty with the premise is that the underlying assumption is hidden and assumed to be naturally understood. The visual part of the premise is supported by Scripture, but (and a big BUT) the underlying and hidden assumption is not tested by Scripture and is indeed false. It makes no allowance for the fact that God can, by His power, keep His law in and through us. This truth is revealed over and over in Scripture. But sadly these truths are negated by a premise that has an underlying assumption that is false. So let us summarise the first premise again.

Premise: Law keeping is legalism and therefore anti-gospel (Partially True).

Based on Underlying Assumption: All effort is legalism (Totally False).

The falseness of the hidden assumption has a disastrous effect on the object of the Gospel in that it supports lawlessness and takes the hope of a victorious Christian life out of the grasp of the sinner. Therefore it is a premise that will lead to death and not the fulfillment of the new covenant, where God states He will write His law on our hearts. Let us now examine the second premise again:

Law keeping is obedience to God and is the object of the gospel.

This premise is correct on the basis that the individual recognises that the works come from God and not the individual. If the underlying

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assumption is understood, then this statement is entirely true and will lead to a correct understanding of the gospel. If the person has studied this subject from the Bible, then it is no longer an untested assumption but simply a second premise that is being built upon. If this Bible study has not been done then it is an untested assumption. If the underlying point is not understood the person may be led to legalism, because it is not clear to that person that all power comes from God to keep the law.

Visible Premise: Law keeping is obedience to God and is the object of the gospel (Partially True).

Underlying or Hidden Premise: It is God who does the work through you, not you yourself (Totally True).

In this case if both the visible premise and the underlying or hidden premise are understood, then we have found the joy of the new covenant. But the great danger here is that the underlying premise is not something that is naturally entertained. Learning to allow God to work in you is a process that is practiced and understood by mature Christians through a continual process of learning **NOT** to try and do things themselves. As humans, we are so prone to try and do things ourselves, as revealed in Sarah seeking to fill God's promise of a child through Hagar, and Israel promising God they would keep His commandments without any sense that it was impossible for them to do it.

So, the above visible premise is actually very dangerous without the underlying premise. *A premise does not have the power to stand alone*, for the Bible teaches us:

2 Corinthians 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. **In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.**

It is for this reason that many Sabbath keepers are in fact legalists, and this is clearly seen by non-Sabbath keeping Christians. Legalism is indeed anti-gospel and will lead to death.

So every premise must be witnessed or backed by another premise. This is the Divine Pattern principle. Every expressed premise must be sourced upon another premise – except for one premise.

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

This is the original source of all things.

12. The Common Denominator.

Let us look more closely at the underlying assumption of the first premise:

Underlying or Hidden Assumption: All effort is legalism.

Why is this assumption hidden? Something is hidden from view when it is assumed to be completely obvious. We don't need to mention it because it is so obvious. This principle is quite true in regard to texts referring to the Sabbath in the New Testament. Why would you keep telling people to keep the Sabbath when the necessity of keeping the Sabbath was so plainly understood by everyone? This is easily proved by the fact that when Paul began to teach that circumcision didn't mean anything (1 Corinthians 7:19) – it put the Jews into an uproar. We see many places where Paul is explaining no need for circumcision. See Romans 2:28-31 for example. If Paul had said the Sabbath was no longer an issue, the New Testament would have been littered with hundreds of texts making the case, but we do not find a single text that supports this. The Sabbath is a legitimate hidden assumption of the New Testament because it should be totally obvious it was always meant to be observed.

So what causes people (Protestants mainly) to think that it is completely obvious that all effort is legalism? It all relates to the universal lie stated by the serpent to Eve in Genesis 3:5 – “You shall not surely die.” The assertion that man would not surely die forms the basis of the immortality of man and that man has life in himself. This concept was developed and expanded by Nimrod, the founder of Babylon. Quoting Josephus:

"Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. **He persuaded them not to ascribe it [Strength] to God, as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness.** He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power..." *Antiquities Book 1 Chapter 4 Para. 2*

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This is the wine of Babylon, the concept that man has a *life/power source* either apart from God or given to man by God so that he can live and move and have his being without the need of being in an intimate *relationship* with God.

Jeremiah 51:7 Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

We see the self-power/effort manifested in the words of Nebuchadnezzar in the following verse:

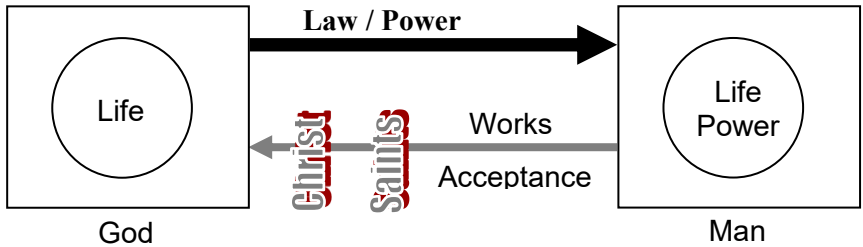
Daniel 4:30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

The wine of Babylon consists in the drunkenness of reveling in the works of your own hands, based upon the belief that the power of life originates within you; or secondly that God gave it to you and you attribute that gift to yourself and for your own purposes, as we see Israel did to God in Ezekiel 16:8-17.

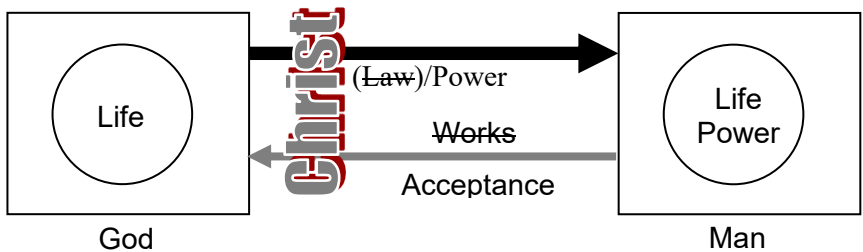
We see that both spiritual Babylon and spiritual Israel experience the same problem in the last days. Babylon is mighty through her riches and wealth (Revelation 18:7, 12-13), and Laodicea trusts in her riches and goods and attributes them to herself (Revelation 3:14-17). The really sad thing for spiritual Israel is that even though she is a virgin and holds the truth that the soul is not immortal, she still is affected by the wine that she glories in her own works – this indeed is a great mystery. Somebody must have spiked her drink! Indeed, as we shall see later, her drink has been laced with a mystery. A high price to pay for visiting a Babylonian pub and feeling safe in just drinking her grape juice, never dreaming her drink would be spiked while her back was turned.

So how does this logic process cause Protestants to see all work as legalism? To answer this question, let us first look at the Catholic view of works. Let's remember that those who express a belief in God will naturally dedicate their inbuilt power to winning the favour of God, rather than choosing the atheist life of just pleasing themselves. While Catholics and Protestants both believe in the immortality of the soul, they differ on their view of works. The following diagram gives a basic outline of a Catholic model of works.

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In this system God gives to man His law to be obeyed. Since man has immortality in himself, he attempts to keep and follow that law. Good works flow from man towards God, and these are accepted through Christ and the saints who make them more acceptable to God. Such acceptance with God causes Him to give us added power to perform more works until we also can become a saint, or at least escape hell. Since man has a life or power source, all power given to man by God cycles through man's power source and is seen as his own power and effort. This is completely acceptable in a Catholic model of grace. From a biblical stand point it is indeed legalism (righteousness by works). But Protestants have placed their foundation on faith alone without works. Notice the following diagram.



Any attempt by man to respond to the law will be seen as an attempt to gain merit. Since Nimrod's system promotes displays of power and effort to gain *value* or merit, then in a Protestant system any attempt to keep the law will be seen as seeking merit. There are two ways to deal with this:

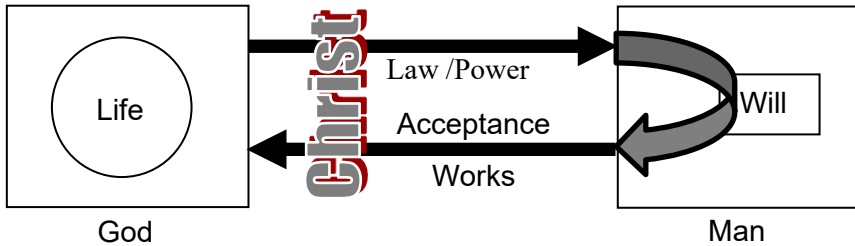
1. Change your view of man.
2. Change your view of God's requirements.

These are the only two options. Since Protestants would not change their belief that the soul is immortal, they changed God's requirements. For many the law is removed, thus ensuring no possibility of legalism. For others they say, "Christ keeps the law for me and that is enough." "He

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covers me and will always cover me.” “I know that I will always sin, but because Jesus loves me it does not matter.” “He knows I can’t keep the law, so He just asks me to love everyone as He loved us.”

Rather than take the bold step of changing God’s requirements, we can change our view of man and reject the serpent’s lie that man is immortal. This will then remove the *life source* as being inherent in man. Notice the following:



In this system, works are not man’s works (legalism), but God’s works revealed in man. God’s power engages man through his will by a *relationship* that is then manifested in good works. In this model, a person understands that they have no power to do anything, and therefore any display of good works will automatically be understood as God’s works and not their own legalistic efforts.

So the hidden assumption in the first premise; “trying to keep the law is legalism”, is based on the serpent’s lie that “you shall not surely die”. In other words, the doctrine of righteousness by faith is distorted by a belief that the soul is immortal and that any good works attract merit.

The problem for the second premise; “Law keeping is obedience to God” is that when a person begins to see the valid requirements of the law, his natural tendency will be to try and keep them. Even if we mentally understand that works do not grant us merit with God (hidden assumption of the second premise), when God’s requirements are presented to us, many of us will naturally seek to keep those requirements in what we falsely understand is our own strength because of the universal principle of *inherent life source*.

So in conclusion, the danger linked with both premises is the concept of life being inherent in man that attracts merit for the soul, which is based on the serpent’s lie “you shall not surely die.”

13. Build Your House on the Rock of Truth

One thing that should be clear now is that when you hold a premise that appears to be partially supported by Scripture, but at the same time there are several texts that appear to oppose your premise, look for the underlying or hidden premise. The underlying premises are the foundations upon which you make your premise.

1 Corinthians 3:11-13 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

We must lay our foundation on the Rock, which is Christ the Truth (John 14:6). If our foundation is made of hay or stubble, it will be burned up in the fire of examination. The house we build may be built with the materials of truth, but if we build it on a swamp or on the sand then all will be lost. We will become victims to a fatal assumption.

We cannot assume anything. We must prove all things and hold fast to that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Instead of bending the problem texts to your premise, first look for hidden assumptions and bend the framework of your premise to the texts.

Finding a hidden assumption can be difficult because it is often assumed to be so obvious that it is not mentioned. Here is the test of seeking the truth with all your heart. The experience of the disciples understanding of the Messiah's coming kingdom is an important warning to us. Notice the following:

Premise: When Messiah comes He will establish His kingdom
(Partially True).

Hidden Assumption: This kingdom will be a visible earthly kingdom
(Totally False).

Their premise was partially correct, but it needed the word *spiritual* added to it. Christ was going to establish His spiritual kingdom. It was assumed as totally obvious that the kingdom was going to be earthly and political.

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The belief that the kingdom would be earthly was fueled by the pride of the Jewish people. This pride was fueled by a desire to be *valued* by their position in the world above their *relationship* to God. And this desire of course was fueled by the lie, “You shall not surely die”. Error flows from the point where error begins.

This false assumption caused the disciples bitter disappointment and ended in the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. The assumption proved fatal.

This is a warning for us upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Isa 28:10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept;
line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

Each precept or premise must be upon precept. It must be built line upon line. Every piece needs to be checked and fitted together.

The Bible contains all the principles that men need to understand in order to be fitted either for this life or for the life to come. And these principles may be understood by all. No one with a spirit to appreciate its teaching can read a single passage from the Bible without gaining from it some helpful thought. But the most valuable teaching of the Bible is not to be gained by occasional or disconnected study. Its great system of truth is not so presented as to be discerned by the hasty or careless reader. **Many of its treasures lie far beneath the surface, and can be obtained only by diligent research and continuous effort. The truths that go to make up the great whole must be searched out and gathered up, "here a little, and there a little." Isaiah 28:10.** When thus searched out and brought together, they will be found to be perfectly fitted to one another. Each Gospel is a supplement to the others, every prophecy an explanation of another, every truth a development of some other truth. Education p. 123.

It is with these principles in mind that we now turn to the most critical subject of all – the God we worship.

Section 5 –Performance-Based-Thinking and the Doctrine of God

14. The Trinity

I want to now look at the subject of the Trinity, because our view of God affects the way we view every other doctrine.⁹⁹ Also, this subject is directly related to the Sabbath/Law/Righteousness debate, as we shall see. Notice the following premise and underlying assumption:

Premise: There are three Persons of the Godhead.

Hidden/Underlying Assumption: Position of Divinity is only ascribed to beings of highest *inherent power*.

The above combination of premise and underlying assumption will demand that if there is more than one Divine Being (as our premise states), then those Beings must be co-equal and co-eternal, otherwise they would lose the title of Divine.

Even though at this point we should examine the hidden or underlying assumption, for the sake of the exercise let us follow along in the same sequence as our Sabbath discussion and seek to find texts that will support our premise.

Matthew 3:16,17 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Here we see (1) The Son being baptized (2) The Holy Spirit descending as a dove and (3) The Father's voice calling from heaven.

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

This appears to give very direct evidence of three Persons in the Godhead.

1 Peter 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and

⁹⁹ Review and Herald, Feb 13, 1919, *The Personality of God* page 4. "The greatest truths of Christianity are all bound up in the doctrine of the personality of God."

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sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Here we see all members of the Godhead active in our salvation – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Revelation 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Here we find a greeting from the Father (was and is and is to come) and the Holy Spirit (Seven or complete Spirit of God) and Jesus Christ. Three greetings indicate three Persons.

1 John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

This text appears quite explanatory – there are definitely three Persons.

Let us add some supporting evidence from the writings of Ellen White.

“There are three living Persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers --the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.” Ev 616

“The eternal heavenly dignitaries--God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit--arming them [the disciples] with more than mortal energy, . . . would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin.” Ev 616

“You are born unto God, and you stand under the sanction and the power of the three holiest beings in heaven, who are able to keep you from falling.” 7MR 267

“Just call upon the three great Worthies, and say; You know I cannot do this work in my own strength. You must work in me, and by me and through me, sanctifying my tongue, sanctifying my spirit, sanctifying my words, and bringing me into a position where my spirit shall be susceptible to the movings of the Holy Spirit of God upon my mind and character.” 7MR 268

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“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption.” CH 222

At this point of the investigation it appears fairly conclusively proven that the premise that there are three Persons of the Godhead is valid. Let us now look at some potential problem passages. I will list a number of them in sequence.

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

Proverbs 8:22-25 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**:

Micah 5:2 (NLT) But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, **One whose origins are from the distant past.**

Mark 12:29-32 **Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one:** (30) and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. (31) The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. (32) And the scribe said unto him, **Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he:**

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave **his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do:** for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

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

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John 8:42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: **for I proceeded forth [exited out of] and came from God;** neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you **another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; *Even* the Spirit of truth;** whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. **I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.**

Galatians 1:3 Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

Note: Nearly every letter of Paul in the New Testament is stated with the formula from Galatians 1:3. He offers grace on behalf of the Father and the Son. He does not mention the Holy Spirit directly in his greeting.

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

1 Corinthians 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Hebrews 1:1-4 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person,** and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Each of these texts proposes potential problems for a Trinitarian concept. Since we have clearly proven that there are three Persons of the Godhead, then it would be natural at this point to begin to apply the premise that we have already established. Before we do that let's look at some Ellen White statements that also may cause a problem to a standard Trinitarian view.

“The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. **He had an associate--a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes**, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." John 1:1,2. **Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father--one in nature, in character, in purpose--the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.** "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. **And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . .** When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Proverbs 8:22-30.” PP 34

“To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of **that master mind, which, next to Christ's, was first among the hosts of God.**” ... The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence **He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings.** The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and **the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both.** About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng--"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared **that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will.** PP 36

“The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that **it was ordained by himself that Christ, his Son, should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the**

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presence of his Son, it was as his own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was his Son to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out his will and his purposes, but would do nothing of himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in him.” 1SP 17

“Christ had been taken into the special counsel of God in regard to his plans, while Satan was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was he permitted to know, the purposes of God. But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of Heaven, his power and authority to be the same as that of God himself.” 1SP 18

“After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. **And now God says to his Son, ‘Let us make man in our image.’**” 1SP 24

“God, in counsel with his Son, formed the plan of creating man in their own image.” RH 24 Feb 1874.

“In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, **the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.** And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

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

Each of these statements poses serious problems to a candid reader if we accept them at face value. Again, for the purpose of the exercise, let us

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follow the logic sequence of enforcing the premise without questioning its hidden assumption.

15. Applying the Trinitarian Premise

Here is our premise and underlying assumption again:

Premise: There are three Persons in the Godhead.

Hidden/Underlying Assumption: Position of Divinity is only ascribed to beings of highest *inherent power*.

Let's apply this premise to the problematic passages of Scripture.

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

Because we have *apparently* proved our premise that there are three Persons of the Godhead, then here is a suggested response: The Lord (Singular) our God (Plural) is One (Singular) Lord. The plural indicates the trinity, and the word *one* “Echad” is the same word used as for Adam and Eve being one *flesh*. So this text is indicating that there are three beings who are one in purpose and fellowship.

Proverbs 8:22-25 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 I was brought forth:

This passage refers to wisdom (Proverbs 8:1). Some people combine this passage with 1 Corinthians 1:24,30 where Paul refers to Christ as Wisdom. Based on our premise that there are three Persons of the Godhead, applying this passage to Christ would appear to make Him inferior to the Father. So this passage has to be *restricted* to simply the personification of wisdom.

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

The word *begotten* (birth, begat) is *limited* to when Jesus was incarnated as a human being. The word *begat* can also be used to mean unique or one and only, rather than born or begat.

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he

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seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Since this premise presents Jesus as the second person of the Godhead and equal in position with the Father, this passage is *restricted* to the time when Christ came as a man. Christ has power to do whatever He wishes, but He chooses to use His power in conjunction with the Father. When Christ came to earth He determined not to use His own power, but only His Father's power to be an example to all mankind.

Here is another view on this by Adam Clarke: "The Son can do nothing of himself - Because of his inseparable union with the Father: nor can the Father do any thing of himself, because of his infinite unity with the Son."¹⁰⁰

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

Since Jesus is equal with the Father, this *cannot be a universal statement* regarding the person of Christ. Christ has in Himself life original, unborrowed and underived. He is the almighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace. This statement must be *restricted* to His work as Messiah, the actual use of the Father's life to work miracles, teach etc.

John 8:42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

The word *proceed* can mean 'come out of'. Again, if we infer Christ came out of the Father at some point, then we assume this makes Him inferior to the Father and therefore not Divine. So *proceeded* must simply mean proceeded forth from the heavenly presence of the Father.

John 14:16-18 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth

¹⁰⁰ Adam Clarke Bible Commentary used from E-sword.

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with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

On the basis of our premise, the word *another* must be speaking of another separate person – the Holy Spirit. When Jesus says He will not leave us comfortless, He is saying He will send the Holy Spirit as His representative, and the Holy Spirit as a separate Person brings the Person of Christ to us. If we favour an Athanasian creed-based view as Pr Max Hatton¹⁰¹ does for example, then since Father, Son and Spirit are three Persons in one substance, the Spirit can easily represent the Son because He is part of the same substance. If we take the more common Adventist approach – three separate Beings who are one in purpose and fellowship as presented in Vance Ferrell’s – *Defending the Godhead*,¹⁰² the Spirit represents Christ because He knows Him so well He can reflect the person of Christ.

Galatians 1:3 Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

Since it is understood that there are three Persons, this statement is reflecting the source of grace: from the Father and Son. It must be clearly evident that such grace comes to us through the Spirit. This is apparently so obvious that Paul does not need to mention it.

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

Since it is understood that there are three equal Persons, this statement would reflect the roles of the Father and the Son in the plan of salvation. The Father acts as the source and the Son acts as the channel. These roles are the work of Father and Son, but we must assume that this does not reflect the Person of Father and Son in their equality.

1 Corinthians 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

¹⁰¹ Max Hatton, *Understanding the Trinity*, Autumn House, Alma Park, Grantham, England, 2001.

¹⁰² Vance Ferrell, *Defending the Godhead*, Harvestime Books, Altamont, Tennessee, USA, 2005.

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Here is what Adam Clarke comments on this passage:

*“The Son also himself be subject - When the administration of the kingdom of grace is finally closed; when there shall be no longer any state of probation, and consequently no longer need of a distinction between the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory; then the Son, as being man and Messiah, shall cease to exercise any distinct dominion and God be all in all: there remaining no longer any distinction in the Persons of the glorious Trinity, as acting any distinct or separate parts in either the kingdom of grace, or the kingdom of glory, and so the one infinite essence shall appear undivided and eternal. And yet, as there appears to be a personality essentially in the infinite Godhead, that personality must exist eternally; **but how this shall be we can neither tell nor know till that time comes in which we shall See Him as He Is.** 1Jo_3:2.”*¹⁰³

This view obviously reflects three Persons in one substance who only divided for the plan of salvation. When the plan of salvation is finished, then there will be no more separate roles and it will be only one substance again. Jesus will no longer exist as a separate Being.

The Adventist commentary reflects the ‘three Beings in unity’ concept.

“In the Divine plan for the redemption of the world the Father committed everything into the hands of the Son (see on Matt. 11:27; Col. 1:19). When Christ’s mission is completed and the enemies of God subdued, then the Son will deliver “up the kingdom to God, even the Father” (1 Cor. 15:24). This act implies no inferiority of the Son compared with the Father. It is a demonstration of the unity of purpose among the members of the Godhead, whereby the activities of one are seen to be but the carrying out of the united will.”

In essence this appears to be saying that Christ will maintain a subordinated role throughout eternity even though they both possess equal power.

Hebrews 1:1-4 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the

¹⁰³ Adam Clarke Bible Commentary found on E-Sword

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brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his Person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

With reference to the concept of inheritance, the Adventist Bible Commentary says briefly: “*By inheritance*. Christ has been "appointed heir of all things" (see on v. 2). With this inheritance He was also given "a name which is above every name"”.

The inheritance here is perceived through the appointment or role taking. So it is a symbolic inheritance rather than a literal inheritance.

In summary, when we encounter problematic texts, they apply to one of the following situations:

1. They are *restricted* to the incarnation of Christ in this world.
2. They are a literary device as in the case of the personification of wisdom.
3. They are symbolic or metaphorical in nature.
4. They apply to roles rather than the actual Person of the Godhead mentioned.

Let us have a look at some of the Ellen G White Statements that are problematic.

“The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate--a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father--one in nature, in character, in purpose--the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by

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Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Proverbs 8:22-30." PP 34

This paragraph presents Christ as the following:

1. As begotten before His incarnation.
2. As the only Being that could enter into the purposes of God.
3. That Christ is described in Prov 8:22-30 and therefore was *set up* from everlasting.

Personally at this point I find it quite hard to answer this paragraph and maintain the premise with its underlying assumption. There are some possibilities that have been suggested, such as Christ was the only Person who could enter into the purposes of God because the Holy Spirit operates on a different level and also was not visible to the angels. Suggestions have also been made that Ellen White has grown in her understanding of the Trinity and her later statements are a lot clearer while earlier statements are less specific; but this idea opens the door to choosing what statements of inspiration you want to believe. This statement was published in 1890, 46 years after her ministry began. Apart from these things, this statement is very specific and the concept is repeated in several places.

At this point, if you accept the writings of Ellen White on face value you should be faced with a serious dilemma. Personally, this dilemma was so great for me that it has taken 14 years to begin to come to terms with it. If I begin to open my mind to the possibility that the three Persons of the Godhead are not equal in the sense of a Trinity, then a number of emotional barriers immediately confront me. I could face isolation from my friends, or "I could be faced with removal from the church." These emotional realities can place incredible stress upon a person's mind, especially for someone who has been a part of the church all their life. So there has to be an answer but we just can't see it, so we leave it unanswered and just keep applying the premise and find other passages to reinforce our thinking. I have heard many people simply respond, "there are too many 'threes' statements", or "it's a mystery", or "why are you focusing on this, we have to get the message out, you are just causing confusion with these questions" or simply quote a passage like this:

"Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God.... In speaking of his pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless

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ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him.--Signs of the Times, Aug. 29, 1900. He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. . . . He is the eternal, self-existent Son. -- Manuscript 101, 1897.” Ev 615.3

Placing these two statements side by side, based on our premise with its underlying assumption, it will be impossible to the candid mind to harmonize them. We must either examine the foundation of the premise or simply wait for God to reveal the unresolved contradictions.

Let us look at a few more statements from Ellen White.

“To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ's, was first among the hosts of God.” PP 36

Ellen White makes this comment in a few places that Lucifer was next in honour to Christ. The only way to make sense of that in terms of the Godhead is to assume that the angels did not know about the Holy Spirit or that he acted in a separate line of command. This makes a Godhead model that is extremely complex and without clear Bible testament to affirm the claim. Let us look at another statement.

“In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

Ellen White explains that life flows out of the Father, through the Son, out to the universe; and then returns through Christ to the Father. She states it is the law of life for the universe. Why is this the law for the universe? Why does she not say it is the law for this world because of the plan of salvation? Why is it *all* created beings and not just human beings? If God is a Trinity, then is He portraying himself in the roles of Father, Son and Spirit to all created beings and not just to humanity? And if so, why? Why do unfallen beings need to receive life through Christ in the same way that fallen beings do? We

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might answer, “this is just the way they decided to do it,” but nonetheless it is an interesting passage if we are willing to really engage it.

Finally let’s look at this passage:

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

The most important section of this statement is:

“The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity”

Who is the **Himself**, is it Christ or the Holy Spirit? Does it make sense to say that the Holy Spirit is divested of the personality of humanity? How can He be divested of something He never possessed? Only Christ possessed humanity and only Christ could possibly be divested of it. If we say the **Himself** is the Holy Spirit, then the passage does not really make sense. If we say that it is Christ, then it is stating that the Holy Spirit is simply Christ in a different form. But this would completely destroy the premise of the Trinity. This statement leaves no option but to question our underlying premise. This only makes sense, as every statement and assumption we embrace must harmonise with Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. Let us look at the premise again.

Premise: There are three Persons of the Godhead.

Hidden/Underlying Assumption: Position of Divinity is only ascribed to beings of highest *inherent power*.

I believe that we can say that our premise is true, but without testing the underlying assumption by Scripture we cannot say it conclusively and we are in danger of building on the sand. It is a partial conclusion. From the above statements, there must be a high degree of uncertainty with our underlying assumption. So at this stage we have the following.

Premise: There are three Persons of the Godhead (Partially True).

Hidden/Underlying Assumption: Position of Divinity is only ascribed to beings of highest *inherent power* (Unproved).

16. *Brief Examination of the Arian Position*

Arius was the opponent of Athanasius during the great Trinity debate of the 4th century within the Catholic Church. Both men were from Alexandria, a place renowned for the experimentation with allegorical views of Scripture. Athanasius held a Trinitarian view based on the principle of *inherent power* of co-equal, co-eternal beings. Arius took the logical opposite based upon the same principle of *inherent power*, and held that the position of Christ was created and He had a beginning, whereas the Father did not have a beginning and was the one true God. Here is a section of a letter he wrote stating his position.

“But what we say and think we both have taught and continue to teach; that the Son is not unbegotten, nor part of the unbegotten in any way, nor is he derived from any substance; but that by his own will and counsel he existed before times and ages fully God, only-begotten, unchangeable.

And before he was begotten or created or appointed or established, he did not exist; for he was not unbegotten. We are persecuted because we say the Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning.” (*Documents of the Christian Church*, Selected and Edited by Henry Bettenson, 2nd Edition, 1963. p.39. Oxford University Press.)

We might represent Arius’s position as follows:

Premise: There is one true God (Partially True).

Hidden/Underlying Assumption: Position of Divinity is only ascribed to Beings of highest *inherent power* (Unproved).

The Arian position holds a different premise, but it is based upon the same underlying assumption. Since Christ is “begotten”¹⁰⁴, or created, and has

¹⁰⁴ The Arian use of the word begotten appears to be equivalent to the word created. Ellen White and the pioneers certainly did not see it this way. ““God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,”-- *not a son by creation*, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, *but a Son begotten* in the express image of the Father's person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and Divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” ST, May 30, 1895 par. 3 Emphasis mine. It seems Arius could not distinguish between begotten and created because he felt that being begotten in the manner which Ellen White and the pioneers understood it was impossible for an “incorporeal God”. The Corporeality of God was of major importance to the Pioneers. Notice this from another of Arius’s

a beginning, He does not have the same level of *inherent power* that the Father does and therefore the quality of His Divinity is less. He is a lesser Being. This view is characterized by movements such as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

While it would be interesting to try and prove the premise and deal with difficult texts, this position clearly denies the Divinity of the Son of God. The Bible is very clear that Christ is not a created Being.

From a Trinitarian position – any view that is less than co-equal or co-eternal must be seen as a form of Arianism. Is there any possible ground between Trinitarianism and Arianism that could better harmonise statements of Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy? The only place we could find this is in examining the underlying assumption.

17. Using a Power-Based Underlying Assumption

Taking the Trinitarian premise that there are three Persons of the Godhead, the underlying assumption places the focal point upon the question of the nature of equality. From a Trinitarian view, equality is presupposed to be that of *inherent power*.

As we have seen above, the process of securing the premise to a Trinitarian view is the process of proving the Son and Holy Spirit as inherently equal to the Father. Every statement will be interpreted in that light. But is this biblical?

The same issue that caused confusion over Sabbath keeping is at play here. That old lie told to our parents in the Garden of Eden is the driving force behind the desire to determine equality by inherency. Let me explain.

letters: "But if the expressions from him [Rom. 11:36] and from the womb [Ps. 109:3 (LXX), 110:3 English] and I came from the Father, and I have come [John 16:28], are understood by some to mean that he is part of him [the Father], one in essence or as an emanation, then the Father is, according to them, compounded and divisible and alterable and material, and, as far as their belief goes, the incorporeal God endures a body." <https://www.fourthcentury.com/urkunde-6/>

Chapter 17 – Using a Power-Based Underlying Assumption

The statement “you shall not surely die” told Adam and Eve, in effect, that “you possess your own *life source* inherently.” “Maybe God gave it to you, but now it is yours to do with as you wish.” “You can survive without being in an intimate *relationship* with God because you are immortal.”

The shift of power source caused a shift in value system. If man can only have life through a *relationship* with God, then his *value* and purpose as a person is bound up in the *relationship* with God. Whereas if man possesses life in himself, his *value* and purpose as a person is bound up in that power found in himself, and he will project this view onto the God that he worships. This means the *value* of the God we worship is measured only by the power He possesses.

The contrast of these two systems is found in Jeremiah 9:23,24.

Jeremiah 9:23,24 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

We see here a clear contrast between a man seeking glory (*value*) in the things he does or performs as opposed to seeking glory (*value*) in knowing his Creator. The key point we are making here is that the lie embraced in Eden shifted humanity’s perception of *value* from *relationship*, to *value* by *inherent power*. Notice the following passages:

Matthew 18:1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

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Luke 22:25,26 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

Again and again in Scripture you will discover the principle that true greatness comes through a *relationship* with God, not through your own efforts and abilities. It is not about power, it is about character. This is clearly expressed by Jesus when indicating that the greatest among you should be as the younger.

18. The Core Issue

This brings us to the core issue of determining equality. When we seek to prove that Christ is inherently equal to the Father, whose methodology are we using? Who is the one that introduced such a concept of ascertaining *value*? Was it not Satan in the Garden of Eden?

God tells us clearly:

Isaiah 55:8,9 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

It is not God's thoughts that drive man to attribute His Son with divinity and consequent *value* by *inherent power*, but the thoughts of His enemy. Since God's kingdom is *relational*, should we not *value* Christ in respect to His *relationship* to His Father, rather than seeking to prove His *value* and Divinity by His *inherent power*? Does not the Bible tell us clearly that Christ received all things through a *relationship*?

Hebrews 1:1-4 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his Person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; **Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.**

"Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Heb. i. 4. **The Son must inherit the name and titles and estate of the Father. Whatever titles belong to God the Father belong equally to Christ. They are His by right. By birth He is "heir of all things."** The Apostle Paul writes of the glorious appearing "of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus ii. 13. The Father Himself addresses the Son as God, saying to Him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Heb. i. 8. E.J Waggoner, *Present Truth UK*, October 24, 1895

Therefore it is further written of Him that He was "made so much better than the angels, **as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.**" **This more excellent name is**

the name "God," which, in the eighth verse, is given by the Father to the Son: "Unto the Son He [God] saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." A.T. Jones Consecrated Way p. 14, 1905

The Bible clearly tells us that Christ's excellent name is by inheritance – meaning through a *relationship* with His Father. For him who has ears to hear, let him hear.

The Son of God was begotten by the Father in eternity (John 3:16; John 1:1). He proceeded and came forth from the Father (John 8:42). He is the express image of His Person (Hebrews 1:2) and therefore was given to have life in Himself as the Father has life in Himself (John 5:26).¹⁰⁵

At this point many say, "You are saying Christ is not eternal!" Christ certainly possesses eternality because He was set up from everlasting. The word everlasting means veiled, vanishing point or time out of mind. He has come forth from the *time* of eternity – the time that is out of mind. So there never was a time that Christ was not in close communion with the Father, because the only time we have in our mind is the time that starts "In the Beginning", beyond that we have no concept of time. *At any rate, this is not what makes Christ valuable to us or Divine. It is simply that He is the express image of the Father and has received all things by inheritance.* The divinity of the Son is assured by the Word of the Father. The divinity of the Son is not proved through independent, inherent power and position, for the Bible never speaks in this way.

Having been released from the enslaving principle of trying to prove Divinity by *inherent power*, we are free to allow Bible passages and Spirit of Prophecy statements to read plainly.

Notice the following:

¹⁰⁵ "The controversy between Christ and Satan began in heaven (Rev. 12:7) in a face-to-face combat. Satan was not content with the position which he held as Lucifer (Isa. 14:12), or light-bearer, as the name signifies; but he indulged the ambition to "be like the Most High," and thus to be light itself (1 John 1:5) and the source of light. Since light is only a manifestation of life (John 1:4), this was the demand of a created being (Eze. 28:15) **to be a source or fountain of life, which could only be granted to the begotten Son (John 5:26), one with the Father, the real Fountain (Ps. 36:9).**" SDA Sabbath School Lesson 1902 April 19 Page 13,14

Chapter 18 – The Core Issue

“The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ, his Son, should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host.” 1SP 17

It is important to note what exactly transpired in this meeting. Did God at this meeting confer special honour upon His Son? Was this the point where He was exalted? Notice again:

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings.
PP 36

And then a little further down it states:

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. PP 38

This being the case, in the meeting assembled by the Father it was made known to the heavenly host what the Father had ordained from the beginning.

The key point here is that the power and authority that Christ possessed was given to Him by His Father. ***It was the equality that the Son possessed in relationship that enabled Him to possess equality of power and position – not the other way around.***¹⁰⁶ Christ does not have to prove His pedigree to be considered equal. His *relationship* with His Father and His Father’s Word is enough. Christ lives by every word of God. (Matthew 4:4)

¹⁰⁶ One point that I believe is important to distinguish here is that Christ’s ability to have equality of relationship with the Father; meaning that Christ could fully understand His Father, required Him to possess the Father’s divine nature. I suggest that this is why Christ was begotten and not created. The divine nature was essential to the equality of the relationship, but the divine nature possessed by Christ was not the basis of equality but provided the ingredients for relational equality.

Chapter 18 – The Core Issue

This battle between Christ being the Son of God by *relationship* as opposed to being the Son by *inherent power* is clearly revealed in the Baptism of Jesus and the Temptation in the Wilderness.

The Father says in Matthew 3:17, “This is my Son in whom I am well pleased.” Christ was approved by His Father simply by His *relationship*. When Satan came to Him in the wilderness he demanded that Christ prove His Divinity by His *inherent power*. Christ absolutely refused to do so, and yet every time we seek to prove that Christ is equal with God by His *inherent power* it is as if we would seek to turn stones into bread for Jesus to satisfy Satan’s request!

We could spend much more time on this, but I assert that to seek to prove the underlying assumption that position of Divinity is only ascribed to Beings of highest *inherent power* is false.

19. Using a Relational-Based Underlying Assumption

So, let us return to our original Trinitarian premise with a realization that the underlying assumption is false and actually based on human reasoning flowing from the lie, “you shall not surely die”.

Premise: There are three Persons of the Godhead (Partially True).

Hidden/Underlying Assumption: Position of Divinity is only ascribed to Beings of highest *inherent power* (Totally False).

Since the underlying assumption is totally false, this will make the understanding of the premise false and turn the truth of God into a lie. Such a lie will lead us to worshipping the creature more than the Creator (Rom 1:25).

Let us restate the case with a *relational* underlying premise. I say premise because in seeking to confirm the assumption of inherent power we have proved the opposite.

Premise: There are three Persons of the Godhead (Partially True).

Underlying Premise: Positions of Divinity are only ascribed by the Father through *relational* inheritance (True).

In this scenario it is God who determines who and how someone or something is Divine. It is His right alone to determine this; man has no right to impose his ideas of Divinity onto God. Such imposition is suggestive of idolatry.

Notice the following statement:

“In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

This statement makes complete sense based on the underlying premise of relational inheritance. The Father is the fountain of life (Jeremiah 2:13). This life flows out of the Father, through the Son, and out to the universe. This is clearly revealed in 1 Corinthians 8:6.

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

When we compare the above passage with another in Ephesians, the picture is even clearer:

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

The one God is clearly the Father and the one Lord is Jesus Christ. Some have tried to refute this by claiming that if Jesus is the one Lord, then the Father is excluded from being Lord. Again, this reasoning is based on independent inherent life source thinking. Jesus is Lord because Lordship came from the Father. The Son inherited this Lordship and executes this office on behalf of the Father. To try and show a co-eternal Trinity from the above verses creates confusion and unfaithfulness to the text.

A passage that is often used to show Christ possessed an inherent and independent divinity from the Father is this:

“In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). This is the open fountain of life for the world.” 1SM 296

My previous understanding of the passage above was that Christ had life separate and sourced independently from the Father. The terms “life original, unborrowed and underived” seemed quite conclusive, but in the past my underlying assumption was hidden. I interpreted this passage through the lens of *self-originating inherent power* rather than *relational inherent power*.

Notice how it says that IN Christ WAS life original, unborrowed and underived, but it does not say how that Life got there. Since it does not tell us how it got there, our underlying assumption is immediately revealed as to how we will understand it came to be there. Putting it another way, the words “original, unborrowed and underived” will either

have a performance-based or a relationship-based assumption attached to them. If we adopt a performance-based approach, then this passage will certainly demand that Christ has originated a second and separate life source to the Father. If we adopt a relational model, then the life flowing from Father to Son is maintained as original, unborrowed and underived because they share it in the intimacy and oneness of their relationship. This becomes a statement of the closeness of the relationship of Father and Son, and the fullness with which the Father has given the Son. Again, remember that Ellen White did not say “Christ originated in and of Himself, separate to the Father, life original, unborrowed and underived.” It simply says that “IN Christ was Life original, unborrowed and underived.” We must not read into the passage a false underlying assumption.

John 5:26 tells us – As the Father has life (original, unborrowed and underived) in Himself, so He gave to the Son to have life (original, unborrowed and underived) in Himself. Therefore it is inherent in Christ, but the Father gave it to Him as part of His inheritance. We, as created beings, don’t have it inherently, but we can receive it from the fountain of life through a *relationship* with Christ. This is exactly what Ellen White says. What a wonderful statement.¹⁰⁷

Again this truth is brought forth in the following statement:

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. PP 36

This statement speaks of the Father *setting forth the true position of His Son* and shows the relation the Son sustained to all created beings. This must surely then present who the Son of God really is. Here is the point where Ellen White should mention the counsel of the three members and the roles that they took to display the love of God – if this idea has any

¹⁰⁷ This same principle applies to the concept of wisdom. Some argue that if Christ is begotten and that Christ is wisdom, then God was not wise until Christ was begotten. This argument denies the flow of blessing from the Father to the Son. To bring forth wisdom requires the one who brings it forth to possess it Himself. The Son is the pinnacle of wisdom because He is the highest *expression* of the wisdom of God in establishing His kingdom.

merit. But none of this is mentioned. Rather, Ellen White makes the unmistakable comment that “*The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both.*” Surely the self-existent One must refer to the Father and that the glory of the Father encircled the Son, meaning that to the Son was given Life as the Father has Life. There is no other possible way to read these statements within the bounds of the normal reading of the English language.

But in this context Ellen White makes more statements that cannot possibly align with a co-equal Trinity. She continues:

Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. PP 36

Christ is referred to as the Only Begotten of God in the context of what transpired before the creation of the world. She then states that Christ alone could fully enter into His purposes. These statements were penned in 1890. They are post 1888 and are clearly not Trinitarian. There never has been an attempt to correct or alter them or confess that these statements are wrong. The honest and candid reader cannot read these statements and believe that Ellen White was moving towards a Trinitarian belief. Such a view is ignorant at best and defiant at worst.

Returning to the statement concerning life unborrowed and underived, some have claimed, as I have in the past, that because this statement converted M.L. Andreasen from being a Pioneer-based Godhead believer to a Trinitarian, it must indeed be a Trinitarian statement. Andreasen went all the way to visit her to check if she actually wrote this statement and spent three weeks in her home checking its truthfulness. But can we use Andreasen's conversion as the basis of what Ellen White meant? If she did tell Andreasen that she meant it in a Trinitarian context and was herself a Trinitarian, then she must have forgotten to tell her son (who spent much more time with his mother than Andreasen) that she thought this way. In 1935 Willie White wrote:

“In your letter you request me to tell you what I understand to be my mother's position in reference to the personality of the Holy Spirit. This I cannot do because I never clearly understood her teachings on the matter. There always was in my mind some

perplexity regarding the meaning of her utterances which to my superficial manner of thinking seemed to be somewhat confusing. I have often regretted that I did not possess that keenness of mind that could solve this and similar perplexities, and then remembering what Sister White wrote in ‘Acts of the Apostles,’ pages 51 and 52, ‘regarding such mysteries which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden,’ I have thought best to refrain from discussion and have endeavored to direct my mind to matters easy to be understood. As I read the Bible, I find that the risen Saviour breathed on the disciples ‘and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’ The conception received from this Scripture, seems to be in harmony with the statement in ‘Desire of Ages,’ page 669, also Gen. 1:2; with Luke 1:4; with Acts 2:4 and also 8:15 and 10:44. Many other texts might be referred to which seem to be in harmony with this statement in ‘Desire of Ages.’ **The statements and the arguments of some of our ministers, in their effort to prove that the Holy Spirit is an individual as are God the Father and Christ, the eternal Son, have perplexed me, and sometimes they have made me sad.** One popular teacher said ‘We may regard Him, as the fellow who is down here running things.’ My perplexities were lessened a little when I learned from the dictionary that one of the meanings of personality, was characteristics. It is stated in such a way that I concluded that there might be personality without bodily form which is possessed by the Father and the Son. **There are many Scriptures which speak of the Father and the Son and the absence of Scripture making similar reference to the united work of the Father and the Holy Spirit or of Christ and the Holy Spirit, has led me to believe that the spirit without individuality was the representative of the Father and the Son throughout the universe, and it was through the Holy Spirit that they dwell in our hearts and make us one with the Father and with the Son.”** {Letter, W. C. White to H. W. Carr, April 30, 1935}

Clearly Willie White did not believe in the Trinity of three co-equal and three co-eternal beings. To use Andreasen’s conversion to Trinitarianism as a proof that Ellen White meant the statement “original, unborrowed and underived” to be seen as a Trinitarian statement would be unwise, as there is no place where Andreasen states that “Ellen White told me she was a Trinitarian and so I converted”.

As we have done above, when we look at statements that appear to place Christ as co-equal and co-eternal with a separate *life source*, **we need to**

question “what is our underlying assumption?” Is it *self-originating-inherent-power-based* or *relational-inheritance-based*?

Most of our problem passages of Scripture and E.G.W. quotes are solved when we do this, and we can read them in the plainest and most universal context. This in itself is a principle of Bible study that all should remember.

The framework of understanding that allows for the plainest reading of Scripture and most universal application is the more correct position.

The Trinitarian position requires us to *restrict* passages and regularly assign symbolic meanings to texts to make them fit. Some examples:

1. Restricting Proverbs 8 to the personification of wisdom.
2. Restricting the term *begotten* to the incarnation.
3. Restricting the passage John 5:26 that Christ was given life in Himself to the incarnation.
4. Using the term *one* in a symbolic rather than literal sense.
5. Seeing the roles of Father and Son as more symbolic than a more literal sense.

The same principles are used by Sunday keepers in refuting the Sabbath:

1. Restricting the keeping of the Ten Commandments to the Old Testament.
2. Seeing the Sabbath rest as merely symbolic rather than including the literal sense.
3. Limiting grace to forgiveness and denying the victorious Christian life.

Can we not have the whole Bible without all these limits and restrictions being placed upon it because of the lie of the serpent? Man can only live by **every word of God**, not small sections of it based on dubious assumptions.

We will address more on this issue of methodology in chapter 25 *Building on the Solid Platform*. Adventism was built upon the literal rule of interpretation to take the literal meaning first.

Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that

Father Miller adopted. In the little book entitled "Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology," Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation:--

"1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible; 2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study; 3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering; 4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error; 5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible."

The above is a portion of these rules; and in our study of the Bible we shall all do well to heed the principles set forth. RH, November 25, 1884

When we allow the Bible to read plainly in a relationship-based context, it is quite natural to grasp the Son as the literal only begotten Son of God. It is such an understanding that can only make sense of the following statement from Ellen White:

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality." UL 367

This statement cannot be understood in a performance-based context. To do so is to believe that Jesus Christ is not truly God. A performance-based context demands that Christ is equal to the Father in every facet and in every sense. A relational-based system does not require this, freeing us from the twisting of scripture required to maintain co-equality.

Having accepted that the Son is the only-begotten of the Father leads us to the question of how we then understand the Holy Spirit. How would He fit into a view where Christ is literally the only-begotten Son of the Father? We will examine this in detail in chapter 21, but before that I want to examine some of the reasons why a literally begotten Son is not easy for human beings to accept.

20. We will not Have this Man to Reign Over Us

A. The Son of God, the Centre of Great Controversy

Luke 19:12-14 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, **We will not have this *man* to reign over us.**

In this parable Jesus tells the story of a nobleman who went to receive a kingdom. The nobleman of course is Christ. The citizens of the kingdom sent him a message saying – we will not have this man to reign over us.

This story accurately reflects the attitude of the Christian world. We will not have the begotten Son of God reign over us if He is any less powerful in His own right than the Father. This message is simply the echo of the core of the Great Controversy. Notice the following:

“The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor. If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all. But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage. Such were the subtle deceptions that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts.” PP 37

This whole controversy could have been avoided if (from a Trinitarian view) God had explained to Lucifer that Jesus was simply playing the role of the Son and that Christ and God were inherently equal in and of themselves. But if that were the case, the whole controversy could be blamed on God due to poor communication skills.

The above statement clearly states that Lucifer saw the exaltation of the Son of God as an injustice to himself. But that which was considered an injustice by Satan was not considered robbery by Christ (Philippians 2:6). For Christ accepted His Father’s Word and believed Himself to be equal to the Father simply because God said it. He accepted His Father’s inheritance. He had no need to turn stones into bread. Lucifer reasoned

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that if Christ could be exalted as equal in authority with God, then so could he. When God revealed that this was impossible, he refused to worship Christ as the Son of God. He said in effect, I will not have this person rule over me as He is not fully Divine *of himself*.

“Rejecting with disdain the arguments and entreaties of the loyal angels, he denounced them as deluded slaves. The preference shown to Christ he declared an act of injustice both to himself and to all the heavenly host, and announced that he would no longer submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs. He would never again acknowledge the supremacy of Christ.” PP 40

Satan never disputed the supremacy of the Father, he said “I will be like the Most High”, not above the Most High. He could see that the Father possessed power in and of Himself, but because God gave this to His Son without measure and in all its fullness, he felt that this was unfair. He refused to submit to it.

Satan unblushingly makes known to all the heavenly family, his discontent, that Christ should be preferred before him, to be in such close conference with God, and he be uninformed as to the result of their frequent consultations. God informs Satan that this he can never know. That to his Son will he reveal his secret purposes, and that all the family of Heaven, Satan not excepted, were required to yield implicit obedience. **Satan boldly speaks out his rebellion, and points to a large company who think God is unjust in not exalting him to be equal with God, and in not giving him command above Christ.** He declares he cannot submit to be under Christ's command, that God's commands alone will he obey. 3SG 37,38

B. The Lie of Eden Disconnects Us from True Son of God

When Satan tempted Adam and Eve, he attacked on the very point he considered to be an injustice. He told them that they would not surely die, that they possessed life in themselves. In essence he was saying they had *performance-based* equality with Christ.

This concept of *inherent life source*, as we noticed before, shifts our notions of Divinity from those of inheritance to those of self-origination. Since man now almost universally believes that he is immortal as Christ is immortal, then to consider Christ to be God He must have a greater position than man. The only place that man can place Christ is inherently

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equal with the Father. Due to the distortions of the teaching of the immortality of the human soul, Christianity is left with no option but to cry, “We will not have this man reign over us. He is not truly Divine.” By insisting that Christ came into possession of power by Himself, we are in effect destroying the personality of Christ. His true position is obscured. This is the design of Satan.

Angels were expelled from heaven because they would not work in harmony with God. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus. **This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God,** and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ. TDG 128.2

As we noted earlier, Trinitarianism and Arianism both arose out of the assumption that Divinity is only ascribed to self-originating Beings. ***Arianism destroys the Divinity of Christ while Trinitarianism destroys the personality of Christ.*** Satan does not care which side you choose, in either case the Person of Christ is lost and He ceases to be the Son of God as revealed in Scripture. And if the true Christ is lost then we can lament with Philip when he said to Christ, “How can we know the way?” – the true way is lost.

We know that our forefathers did not believe in the Trinity; that they saw it as part of the wine of Babylon. Why do we imagine that our forefathers were so ignorant? If we are willing to research we will find that many of our pioneers had well reasoned positions and did not just happen to pick it up via the Christian Connection. We do our forefathers a great dishonour to insinuate that they were not diligent to search out this issue and pass on to their spiritual children the most blessed heritage. The foundation was not laid wrong. God laid it right.

Notice this statement:

“Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. **Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men.** They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor.” MR760 p.9

C. Personalities of Father and Son are Landmark Doctrines

This statement leaves us in no doubt that the Personalities of God and Christ were part of the old landmarks. By accepting the Trinity, we have destroyed the Personality of God and the Son of God exactly as our forefather James White said:

““Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for THE faith which was once delivered unto the saints...” (Jude 3, 4) ...The exhortation to contend for the faith delivered to the saints, is to us alone. And it is very important for us to know what for and how to contend. In the 4th verse he gives us the reason why we should contend for THE faith, a particular faith; “for there are certain men,” or a certain class who deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. ... **The way spiritualizers have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural Trinitarian creed, viz., that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain Scripture testimony in abundance that he is the Son of the eternal God.**” {J. S. White, The Day Star, January 24, 1846}

James White knew exactly what the issues were; that an exaltation of Jesus to the position of the Eternal God – meaning possessing life in Himself separate from the Father – is a denial of the only Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the Trinity is a denial of the Father and the Son, then we have lost Their true *identity*; and as we expressed in chapter 3, keeping the commandments requires us to know the *identity* of the God we worship otherwise we can’t keep His commandments. Therefore, the Trinity doctrine, if truly believed, makes it impossible to keep the commandments. Is not this the Spirit of Antichrist? Little children keep yourself from idols.

D. Relationship Between Father and Son Defines all Kingdom Relationships

The reason we struggle to allow a begotten Christ to rule over us is because we are asking the wrong question of Him. We ask the *performance* question: “Are you equal with the Father in power and

existence?” This question will always give us the wrong answer, but it is our thoughts and not God’s thoughts. The Scriptures ask the right question: “What think ye of Christ? *Whose Son is He?*” Matthew 22:41. This is a *relational* question with reference to the Father. Let’s compare the two views:

Who is Christ?	Way to the Father
1. The Co-equal, Co-eternal with the Father	Performance Identity
2. The Son of the living God (The Father)	Relational Identity

Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). No one comes to the Father but through Him. He is the very key to the kingdom of God. If we see that Christ finds His way to equality with the Father by a *performance-identity*, then this is the way in which we will seek equality with each other. If Christ finds His way to the Father through a *relational-identity* then – praise God – so can we in our relationships. I pray earnestly you can see the precious light that flows from this reality. It has brought me comfort and joy to the point where my cup runs over.

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

The *relationship* between the Father and Son defines the concept of how *relationships* operate for the entire universe – and that is equality by relationship. If their *relationship* is defined by co-equality of power, then our *relationships* will be defined by exactly the same principle. Dear Lord, open our eyes to this vital truth.

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

When we see that Christ is equal with the Father in Relationship and His pedigree and value is the same as the Father, then we can allow Christ to truly be begotten. This vital truth allows for Christ to take a truly submissive position to the Father and establish the Divine Pattern of

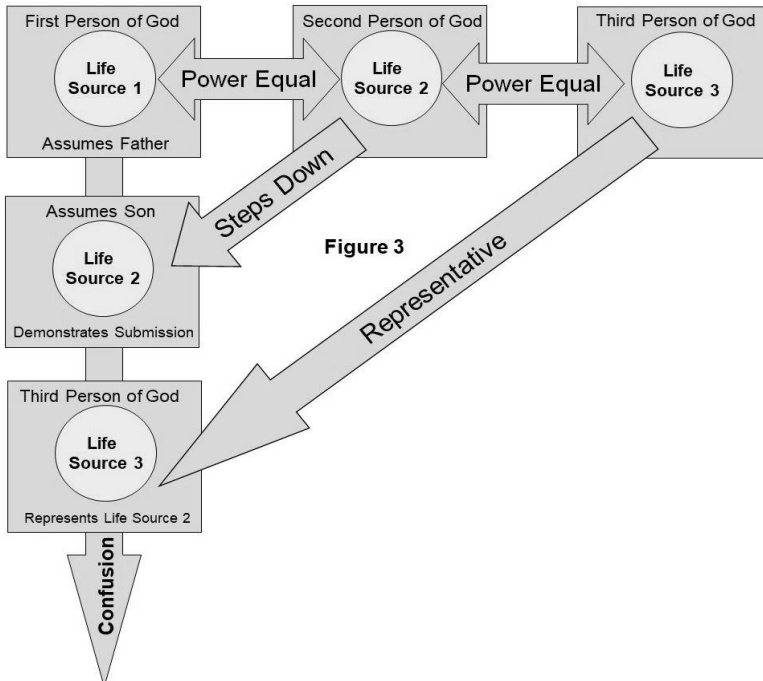
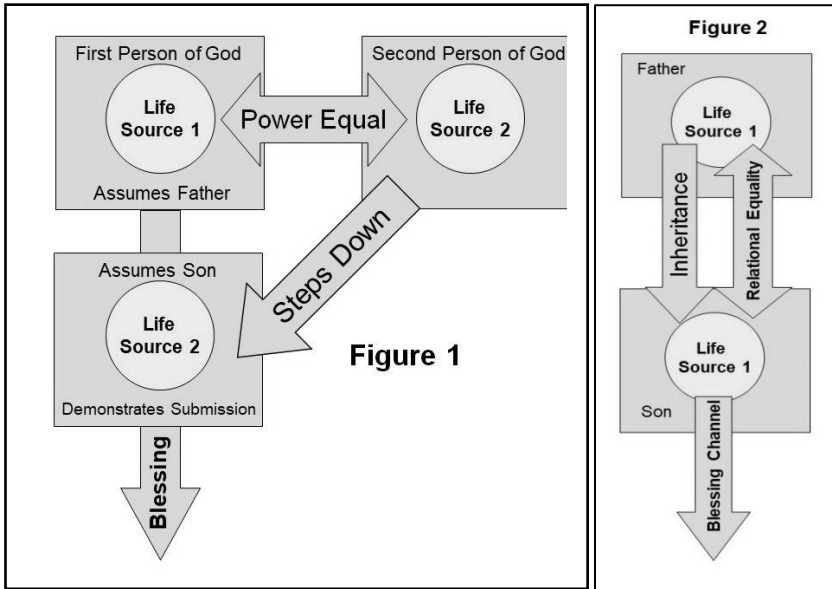
Life.¹⁰⁸ His Sonship and begotten state do not denigrate His Divinity in any way. This principle becomes vital in the husband and wife relationship. This will be discussed in detail in section six, but it is important to state that if we see a value-by-power-equality relationship between Father and Son, we will be unwittingly influenced towards this kind of relationship in a marriage. The concept of submission becomes devalued and seen as a denigrated state. This is indeed the situation in the church today. The submission of the wife is seen as degrading and therefore must be avoided.

Some have tried to suggest that Christ stepped into the role of a son to demonstrate the principle of submission. But this creates confusion as to the true identity of Christ. The stepping down concept involves a belief that Christ possessed a power equality with the Father and truly is exactly the same as Him in a power context, but has taken a role as a Son for the purpose of submission. (See Figure 1 below). This concept presents a designated Son, but not an actual begotten Son. It does not address the fact that this retains the equality of Father and Son as measured through a power-based-value system. It also leaves the impression that the Father and Son have separate original life sources that have always been independent yet somehow are mystically together in love, making their father-son relationship highly speculative and ambiguous. This underlying belief obscures the channel of blessing that flows from the Father through His Son. (See Figure 2). The multiple life source channels confuse the mind in regard to the river that flows from the throne of God.

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

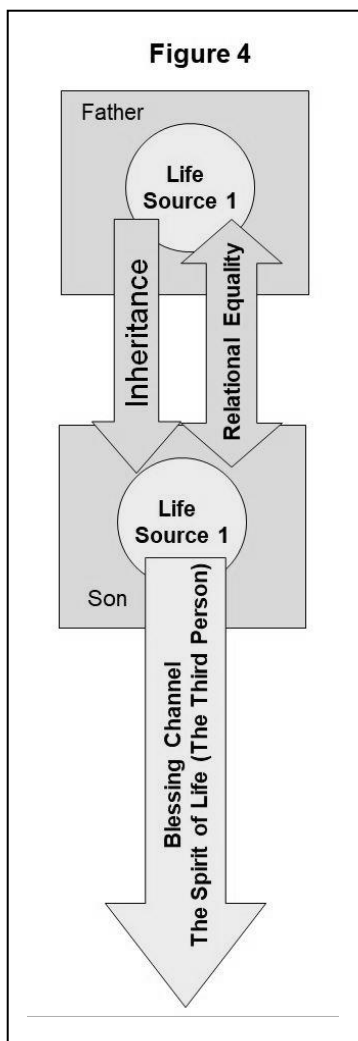
¹⁰⁸ See booklet Divine Pattern of Life on fatheroflove.info

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The channel is now a concoction of three different life sources role playing identities that are not their true identity. The channel is not clearly perceived nor understood, because there is not a clear conception of the flow of life as expressed in *Desire of Ages* page 21.

...through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.



Let us observe what the Bible actually portrays.

In figure 4, we see the one life source of the Father, which is given to the Son, and through the Son flowing out to the universe in the third person. All the relational attributes of the Father and Son are present in the Spirit because it is their omnipresence, which means it is not simply a force but the personality of God in omnipresent form. The need to see the Holy Spirit as a person in exactly the same way as Father and Son comes from the misconception of the belief of the need for a separate life source. This is neither needful nor biblical. Figure 4 shows a very clear channel of blessing life flow and does not confuse the identities of Father, Son or Spirit.

The confusion that arises from three life sources is most clearly demonstrated in the example of the creation of this world. The Bible states that God created everything through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of

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the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

In figure 4, it is easy to see how God created the world through His Son, but in figure 3 this becomes confused. Through the notion of three life sources, the one who actually used His power to create the world is the Holy Spirit because He was the one that hovered over the waters in Genesis 1:2. This makes the Bible hard to read.

The response comes from some, but Father, Son and Spirit are in a mysterious union! This makes the Ephesians 3:9 even more confusing by trying to state who was the actual agent of creation. The Bible should just state that they all did it, rather than the Father creating through the Son. It turns the Bible into nonsense.

F. Key to Understanding Son of Man Based on Understanding of Son of God

Back to our discussion on the true identity of Christ. If Christ only became dependent on the Father in the incarnation, then He is modeling for us a *relationship* with God that He Himself does not hold nor can speak with authority on, because this is not who He really is. Saying that Christ took the role of Son and played the part of *relational* access to the Father means this is not the true *identity* of Christ. It means a *relationship* with Christ in this context is a *relationship* with someone who in fact does not exist. It would turn the truth of God into a lie. If Christ were in actuality the self-originating 2nd Person of the Godhead, then He cannot in reality be the *way* to the Father. He could only represent or pretend to be that. And as such He is a Christ that is pretending or role playing dependence on the Father, and therefore He also can only role play taking human nature. The essence of the 1888 message is that Christ is truly God and truly man through a *relational-based* lens not a *performance-based* one. Just as He inherited everything from His Father to be God, so He inherited everything from man to become man.

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, ***he also himself likewise took part of the same;*** that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

“Therefore it is certain that an understanding of the position and nature of Christ as He was in heaven is essential to a proper

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understanding of His position and nature as He was on earth.”; Page 14 “Therefore it is further written of Him that He was "made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." **This more excellent name is the name "God,"** which, in the eighth verse, is given by the Father to the Son: "Unto the Son He [God] saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. Thus, He is "so much" better than the angels as God is better than the angels. And it is because of this that He has that more excellent name --the name expressing only what He is in His very nature. And this name "He hath by inheritance." It is not a name that was bestowed but a name that is inherited. Now it lies in the nature of things, as an everlasting truth, that the only name any person can possibly inherit is his father's name. This name, then, of Christ's, which is more excellent than that of the angels, is the name of His Father, and His Father's name is God. The Son's name, therefore, which He has by inheritance, is God.”; A.T Jones. *Consecrated Way* Page 12

“His likeness to God, as in the first chapter of Hebrews, is the only basis of true understanding of His likeness to men, as in the second chapter of Hebrews.” A.T Jones. *Consecrated Way* Page 17

SON OF GOD = RECEIVED THE FULL
INHERITANCE OF GOD

SON OF MAN = RECEIVED THE FULL
INHERITANCE OF MAN

The doctrine of the Trinity gives us a second Person in the Godhead who is made in the likeness of the Son of God but who in fact is not the Son of God. So it stands to reason that such a Person can be in the likeness of sinful flesh but not actually take sinful flesh. The Doctrine of the Trinity is logically inconsistent with Christ taking our fallen nature. It logically follows that Christ then cannot in reality be the Son of God or in reality be the Son of Man.

Notice this logic in *Questions on Doctrine* where the view on the nature of Christ was first changed:

Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity and glory, and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity and humanity, were mysteriously combined,- and man and God became one. It is in this union that we find the hope of our fallen

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race. Looking upon Christ in humanity, we look upon God, and see in Him the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person- Signs of the Times, July 30, 1896.

In both His natures, the Divine, and the human, He was perfect; He was sinless. That this was true of His Divine nature there can be no question. That it was so of His humanity is also true. *Questions on Doctrine*, (1957) Page 54.

“He also Himself took part of the same,” does not mean that He also himself pretended to be man through an immaculate conception. For Christ to be subject to death, He must take a body that is subject to death. The body of Adam before the fall was not subject to death. The Son of man inherited all the fullness of the manhood bodily in the same way that he inherited all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).

G. Father-Son Relationship Key to Righteousness by Faith

Christ is the WAY which is the TRUTH which is LIFE – praise God.

How we view Christ’s relationship to the Father is how we will understand His relationship to us and is how we understand righteousness by faith.

The reality of this truth makes me want to shout “O how I love Him, I love Him and I see in Him such matchless charms. In Him I have found the pearl of great price for which I will gladly suffer the loss of all things, for they are but dung compared to the truth of His Person.”

If Christ’s *relationship* to the Father is *performance-based* on equality of power, then by beholding this we will be changed into that image; we will conduct our *relationships* in the same manner. If His *relationship* is *relationally-based* on inheritance, then we will be changed into that image even by the glory of the LORD.

After having discussed these concepts with a number of people, the question comes back, “what do you mean the Trinity is performance-based? They are three beings that love each other in intimate relationship. Their relationship is so close they are called one. How can you call this performance-based?” When I refer to performance-based relationship, I am referring to the qualifications required to enter that relationship; the basis upon which a person gains admittance to the realm of Divinity. Once the members of the Godhead are admitted we can certainly place them in

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to the most intimate and loving relationship imaginable, but we must determine the basis of acceptance.

Godhead Model	Access Qualifications	Access Mode	Quality of relationship
Trinitarian	Self-originated life, Inherent power, Eternal existence	Performance	Intimate and personal
Fountarian ¹⁰⁹	Inheritance through Sonship	Relationship	Intimate and personal

We see that both models of the Godhead experience intimate and loving relationships, but they are accessed by diametrically opposed methods. From a human perspective this concept is easy to understand. If a man marries a woman just because she looks beautiful, the relationship was accessed through the performance mode of beauty. If a woman marries a man because he is wealthy, the relationship is accessed through the performance base of wealth. When Adam loved Eve he 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. The intimate connection was based on the inheritance of the woman from the man.

Please don’t let Satan destroy the true personality of Christ in your mind. This understanding is our only hope of truly understanding how to find our way to God. If we reject the teaching that Christ has a *relationship* to the Father by inheritance, then we will find it very hard to understand the Law, the Sabbath and the investigative judgment, the nature of Christ and character perfection, because we will ask the wrong questions of these teachings also. Our view of God, and especially Christ, affects all of these teachings; and a shift to the Trinity by our church would eventually lead to a change in attitude or actual teaching on these other doctrines, as history has certainly borne out.

Here is the source of the split in our Church in the 1980’s. The view of Christ introduced in the 1930’s demanded a *performance-value-system*

¹⁰⁹ I coined the term fountarian to express the concept of life source flow from one fountain point as opposed to the term Non-Trinitarian which speaks of that which is outside orthodoxy. For more see Fountarian.org

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understanding of access to the Father. By the 1960's many members were ready to despair because the *way* to the Father was now placed in a *performance-value-system* context. Some of the church leaders brought them relief by changing views on justification that released the *performance-value-system* pressure. It was a logical consequence of the new view of Christ introduced in the 1930's in the context of a Trinity.

We may accuse some of the church leaders in the early 1980's for bringing in New Theology, but this was the only way they could see to relieve the pressure of *performance* access to God. I cannot blame them for that. If only we could have reclaimed a correct view of Jesus as the Son of the Living God, how much pain would have been saved.

Is it possible that we have fallen victim to a very subtle form of idolatry that has caused us to actually be worshipping a god that is not in the Bible? The immediate response is "that is completely absurd!" The thought that it is so absurd is what makes it so easy to lay hidden within our church.

Jeremiah 2:11-13 Has a nation changed its gods, Which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory For what does not profit. (12) Be astonished, O heavens, at this, And be horribly afraid; Be very desolate," says the Lord. (13) "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Have we forsaken the fountain of living waters? Since this issue of equality of the Son to the Father is so critical to understand, I want to address it from another standpoint in the next chapter.

21. What Type of Measuring Rod is that in your Hand?

A. Credentials for Worship

When Jesus was here on earth, He made some very bold claims regarding Himself. One of these amazing statements occurs in John 5:18-27.

John 5:18-27 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. (19) Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, **I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.** (20) For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. (21) For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. (22) For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, (23) that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. (24) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (25) Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. (26) **For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,** (27) **and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.**

Jesus claimed that God is His Father and therefore that He is equal with God. He also claims that all judgment has been given to Him, meaning that the whole world will be judged according to His life. He also makes the important claim that all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Jesus claims that He is entitled to our worship.

If someone came to you and said I am worthy of your worship, the polite thing we would ask is, "What is your claim to worship?" "Upon what basis are you asking me to worship you?" "What are your credentials?" It would be natural for us to pull out our measuring rod and begin to size up this person who is making such a bold claim and see if they qualify. The question is *what type of measuring rod are you going to use?*

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When the Father introduces Jesus to the world, does He tell us why we should listen to Him? In the explanation of the Father is the key to which measuring rod we should use. Notice:

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

Notice carefully what the Father says. What is the reason why we should listen to Jesus ("Hear Him!"), His teachings and claims? God gives one simple reason: This is my Son whom I love (or am well pleased with). The measuring tool therefore must be a *relational* one. It must be based upon the type of relationship that Jesus has with the Father.

The Father did not say, "This is the all-powerful creator of the universe" as the basis of why we should listen to Jesus, even though Jesus was indeed all of this.¹¹⁰ The Father points us to the relationship that the Son has with Himself as the reason why we should listen to Him and follow Him.

B. Regarding Christ From a Worldly Point of View

But are we willing to listen to Jesus and follow Him based on His relation to the Father? Or do we naturally pick up another measuring rod to measure Jesus: a measuring rod that we were born with; a measuring rod by which all men measure true greatness; a measuring rod that is based on *power, position and performance*? Does the lie of the serpent naturally guide our hands to the wrong measuring rod to determine whether Jesus is worthy of worship? When we say measure, we are meaning our searching of the Scriptures. Is it possible to try and measure Christ in a worldly or carnal way, meaning employing a measuring rod that God has not asked us to use? Notice what Paul says in 2 Cor 5:16

2 Corinthians 5:16 So from now on we regard no-one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. (NIV)

¹¹⁰ Notice the relational basis of worship found in the following passage by Ellen White. "It is not the manifestation of His great and awful majesty and unparalleled power that will leave us without excuse if we refuse Him our love and obedience. It is the love, the compassion, the patience, the long-suffering that He has shown which will witness against those who do not offer Him the willing service of their lives." SD 19.

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Paul states that he once “regarded” (or “known” in the NKJV) Christ from a worldly point of view. The key point is that if we use the wrong measuring rod on Christ through the Scripture then our whole foundation for what we believe will be laid incorrectly.

1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Repeatedly we read scholars in their efforts to present the person of Christ with the words “full deity” and “Christ is God in the fullest sense” and that anything less than “total equality” is a depreciation of the deity of Christ. What kind of measuring rod is being used in these cases? Why is Christ continually subjected to this process of proving His inherent Divinity? This is a process that is really responding to the question – do you measure up to *our* standard?

Is this the measuring rod the Father asks us to use? Are we sure that when we come to examine Christ that we do it in a way that the Father asks us to? As we noticed in the previous chapter, that if we make Christ equal to the Father in the way the world always does – by inherent power, then we could actually deny the real Christ by using a faulty measuring rod.

C. Relational Versus Performance Based Measurement

Let us compare the measuring rods of *relationship-value* and *performance-value*:

Relational Based Measurement	Performance Based Measurement ¹¹¹
Word of the Father concerning Christ	Length of Existence
Knowledge of the Father’s Character	Source of power

¹¹¹ See Nov 1964 Ministry article, Page 7 on the Trinity for example: “The second fact is that all the Persons are coeternal. That is, all of them have always existed, and the Father cannot be said to have been in existence before the Son or the Spirit. All are timeless (see Col. 1:17; John 1:1, Rev. 22:13; compare Isa. 41:4). All three Persons are coequal. That is, they all have equal rank and dignity.”

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Knowledge of living with the Father	Amount of power
Inheritance from the Father	Position to the Father

If we use a *performance-based* measurement system, then we will refer to all the texts in the Bible that talk of Christ's power and abilities **as the basis** of why Jesus is worthy of worship. But the Father does not introduce any of these things as a reason or basis to listen to Him. Certainly, Christ's power and inherent attributes tell us what Jesus is like, but all these things are immediately understood when we say that Christ has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than the angels.

If we say that believing Christ is begotten actually denigrates the Divinity of Christ, then we are inadvertently suggesting that the inheritance which the Father gave was not sufficient. The inheritance and commands of the Father are actually not enough to settle the question of Christ's Divinity. Could we be saying in effect, "You might tell us that He is equal, but we are going to prove it for ourselves to make sure." Obviously once we are convinced that Christ is God, we will seek to ensure that his inherent powers and abilities are of the highest order. At this point we are faced with the danger of trying to prove too much and focusing on things that are not essential.

If we take a *relational* measuring rod, then issues of existence and power source are secondary to issues of the relationship of the Son with the Father. In essence we worship the Son because the Father commands it. We honour the Son because the Father tells us to. We believe He is Divine because He is the express image of His Father. Is this not enough? Is the Father's Word and bestowed inheritance not enough for us to worship Jesus? Obviously it wasn't for Lucifer. He demanded more than simply the Father's word; he wanted hard core *performance-based* evidence.

If we understand that the flow of the Father's blessing opens to us when we are in submission or obedience to His Word, can it be that in not accepting the only-begotten Son of God as equal with the Father based on His Word alone, that we are preventing His complete blessing from being released? That we are actually not in obedience to His Word? Could the Father's ability to pour out greater measures of His Spirit be directly linked to the manner in which we consider His Son?

D. Enslaved to Performance-based Measurement

Our church has unwittingly become obsessed with a *performance-based* measurement of Christ as a basis of considering Him fully Divine. Is this not evidence of our Laodicean condition? That is why there are two key passages in the Spirit of Prophecy that are always quoted **as a basis** to accept the full Deity of Christ. They are:

1. In Christ was life original, unborrowed and underived. DA 530 (Power source)
2. There never was a time when Christ was not in fellowship with the Father. Ev 615 (Length of existence)

Because the *performance-based* measuring rod is never questioned, if anyone suggests that Christ was begotten of the Father in eternity, this automatically means that the person is saying “there was a time when Christ did not exist.” The conclusion is drawn directly from the measuring rod used. The Father has never told us to use this measuring rod on His Son, therefore the conclusion gained by this faulty measuring rod is irrelevant. Those who are enslaved to *performance-based* measurement can’t allow Christ to be begotten, because this would cause Christ not to measure up **to their standard**.

Notice the Performance based logic in the following statement found in the Review and Herald.

“If

Christ is fully God and the Holy Spirit is fully God,

then

the Godhead must be a trinity.”

(J. R. Spangler, Review and Herald, October 21st 1971, I believe in the triune God)

The logic process is clear. The only way the above statement can form a concept of equality is through means of a Trinity. The nature of equality is assumed automatically to be power and performance based.

Just as the disciples believed that the question of “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” was critical, so we as Adventists have mistakenly believed that answering the question of the “age” of the Son is vital. Notice what Ellen White says:

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“Here Christ shows them that, although they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet ***His Divine life could not be reckoned by human computation***. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures.” {E. G. White, Signs of the Times, May 3, 1899 par. 4}

Human computation is taking the measurement of time and placing it against Christ to see whether He is eternal by our understanding. This is a human computation and not one that God has asked us to do. Again notice what Ellen White says:

“...although we may try to reason in regard to our Creator, how long He has had existence, where evil first entered into our world, and all these things, we may reason about them until we fall down faint and exhausted with the research when there is yet an infinity beyond.” {E. G. White, S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7, p. 919}

Those who use a *performance-based* measuring system will use this statement to prove Christ’s eternity, but the point is that it is useless to make any attempt to work out the length of His existence either way, whether begotten or unbegotten. But this is exactly what we must do in trying to use time measurement ***as a basis*** of Christ’s Divinity. Such attempts are a clear indication that, like Israel of old, we are held fast in the slavery of Babylon.

At times Ellen White felt frustrated that things she had said were taken and expressed in totally the opposite meaning from what she intended. Could this be true concerning some of the statements she penned concerning Christ?

“It seems impossible for me to be understood by those who have had the light but have not walked in it. **What I might say in private conversations would be so repeated as to make it mean exactly opposite to what it would have meant had the hearers been sanctified in mind and spirit.** I am afraid to speak even to my friends; for afterwards I hear, Sister White said this, or Sister White said that. My words are so wrested and misinterpreted that I am coming to the conclusion that the Lord desires me to keep out of large assemblies and refuse private interviews. What I say is reported in such a perverted light that it is new and strange to me. It is mixed with words spoken by men to sustain their own theories.”--Letter 139, 1900. 3SM 82

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Is it possible that the same has occurred today? This is a warning for all of us, but I raise it so that all of us might consider carefully: “Am I reading this as it was intended?”

E. Excluding Alternate Measurement from Orthodoxy

The Catholic deacon Arius stated that “there was a *time* when Christ was not”. This is never stated in Scripture but is a logical conclusion for a finite mind. For those who operate in a relational framework such statements are unnecessary, for Christ was brought forth in the realm of eternity before time began.

Then will be opened before him the course of **the great conflict that had its birth before time began**, and that ends only when time shall cease. Education 304.3

The conflict in heaven was before time began. For more on this issue see Appendix C part 2.

For Adventists to call people Arian (and thereby meaning they don’t believe in the deity of Christ) because they believe the simple words of Scripture that Jesus is the only-begotten of the Father, is to force their own measuring system onto those they label by a standard that is not necessarily believed by the accused.

The other amazing thing about calling people Arian and Semi-Arian is that these terms drive the Godhead issue back to the issues the Catholic church were wrestling with in the fourth century. Let me state categorically that I do not acknowledge the issues and reasoning of the debate of the Catholic Church in the fourth century; it was not based on Scripture alone; it was using a *performance-based* measuring system and therefore the term Arian belongs to that system but not to those who use a different measuring rod. It is also premature to assign the label of Arian or Semi-Arian to our forefathers. The pioneers did not support Arius and considered him part of the Greek philosophical falsehood of that time.

Paganism and Christianity met on the battlefield when Constantine contended for the throne of Rome; paganism and Christianity met in more deadly conflict in Alexandria, where Christian and pagan schools stood side by side. Here it was that such men as Origen and Clement, recognized Fathers of the church, adopted the philosophy of the Greeks, and applied to the study of the Bible the same methods which were common in the study of Homer and

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other Greek writers. **Higher criticism had its birth in Alexandria. It was the result of a mingling of the truths taught by Christ and the false philosophy of the Greeks. It was an attempt to interpret divine writings by the human intellect, a revival of the philosophy of Plato. These teachers, by introducing Greek philosophy into the schools which were nominally Christian, opened the avenue for the theological controversies which shook the Roman world, and finally established the mystery of iniquity. So from this false teaching of the Word in Alexandria came two leaders-Athanasius and Arius.** Each had his following, and yet no man could clearly define the disputed point over which they wrangled. So great was the controversy that the Council of Nice was called to settle the dispute, and deliver to the church an orthodox creed. Stephen Haskell, *The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, p. 229.2

The use of the labels Arian or Semi-Arian by the Adventist Church reveals a sad attitude to align itself with Protestant Orthodoxy. It has no bearing on the facts of history as to what our pioneers believed.

From my reading of Scripture, these labels stem from a theological system that I do not acknowledge. The debate of Alexander and Arius was complete foolishness.

Whether the Son of God, therefore, is of the same substance, or only of like substance, with the Father, was the question in dispute. The controversy was carried on in Greek, and as expressed in Greek the whole question turned upon a single letter. The word which expressed Alexander's belief, is Homoousion. The word which expressed the belief of Arius, is Homoiousion. One of the words has two "i's" in it, and the other has but one; but why the word should not have that additional "i," neither party could ever exactly determine. Even Athanasius himself, who succeeded Alexander in the bishopric of Alexandria, and transcended him in every other quality, "has candidly confessed that whenever he forced his understanding to meditate upon the divinity of the Logos, his toilsome and unavailing efforts recoiled on themselves; that the more he thought, the less he comprehended; and the more he wrote, the less capable was he of expressing his thoughts." (Gibbon.) A.T. Jones, *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times* September 13, 1897

I choose to obey the Father and use His measuring rod. Christ is equal with the Father because the Father says so. He is equal in that He knows

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the mind of the Father as no one else does. He knows the Father as the Father knows the Son. This is what is important in the Kingdom of God. Equality is in the *relational*, not in the inherent power.

I appeal to you in the words of Christ “How do you read?” (Luke 10:26) Do you read or measure with a *performance-based* or *relational* measuring rod? The measuring rod you use determines the kingdom that rules you.

22. The Spirit of God

The subject of the Holy Spirit is a mystery to us in many ways. Jesus indicated the mysterious nature of the Spirit when speaking to Nicodemus.

John 3:8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Perhaps it would be good to remind ourselves of the care needed when discussing such a subject as this. We are on Holy Ground when discussing the personality of God. This subject must be approached reverently, taking great care to keep our understanding within the limits of inspiration, while also being wary of entering into a controversial attitude when discussing such subjects. Notice what Ellen White says in this regard:

"I say, and have ever said, that I will not engage in controversy with any one in regard to the nature and personality of God. Let those who try to describe God know that on such a subject silence is eloquence. Let the Scriptures be read in simple faith, and let each one form his conceptions of God from his inspired word."
Spalding and Magan collection p. 329

This is an important key to this whole discussion. When trying to describe God, silence is eloquence. In reference to the Holy Spirit this is especially true, as we can be in danger of using modes of thought outside of Scripture to describe Him. Ellen White gives a strong Protestant principle in regard to the subject of God: that each person should take their Bibles and develop their own conception of God from the Bible alone. To force a position onto another person is a violation of this principle. This being the case, it would be wrong for either Trinitarian or Father-and-Son believers to force their views onto others in a controversial manner. Let each go to God on their knees and learn the truth for themselves.

To reasonably minded people, it is clear that both Trinitarian and Pioneer-based Godhead believers believe in the heavenly trio of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but it is the nature and personality of these three that are in question. It is unfortunate that our statement of fundamental beliefs has codified the personality of the Godhead based on the key Athanasian term of "co-eternal". This codification into our fundamentals no longer allows

each person to decide for themselves, from the Bible, the nature and personality of the Godhead.¹¹² Those who, through the Word, see the Father and Son as intrinsically Father and Son are placed in a position where to remain a Seventh-day Adventist they must surrender this belief to the will of another. Is this true biblical mode of thought and process? Is it biblical for a group of men, in their efforts to preserve the Divinity of the Godhead, to frame it in terms that they themselves understand, and not allow other minds to preserve that Divinity based on a different framework? It is my firm belief, regardless of what a man believes on this subject, that no person has the right to force onto others their mode of thought on this subject. The codification of Athanasian terms into our fundamentals has exposed our church to the same controversy that rocked the Catholic Church for over two centuries. The question is will we as a church be dragged down the same path? Will our position be decided by “counsels” or symposiums driven by our most learned scholars, or will we open the parameters of our fundamentals to allow each man to decide for himself what is truth?

Due to the level of mystery surrounding the Spirit, our efforts to understand it will reveal more readily our underlying assumptions when seeking to interpret His role. In other words, the Spirit will quickly reveal either our *performance-base* or *relational-base* thinking on the subject in respect to how we define His identity in the Godhead.

Let us observe again the underlying assumption girding the Trinity view:

Premise: There are three Persons of the Godhead.

Hidden/Underlying Assumption: Position of Divinity is only ascribed to Beings of highest *inherent power*.

The Bible clearly reveals that the Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of Deity. If we come to the Bible with the underlying assumption that positions of Divinity are only ascribed to beings of highest inherent power, then there is no option but to consider the Holy Spirit as a being

¹¹² It is possible for Pioneer based Godhead believers to say that they believe Christ is co-equal because he was given this equality by the Father and that makes Him co-equal, and it is possible to say that Christ is Co-eternal because Christ came forth In eternity – but of course they have very different meanings from what co-equal and co-eternal actually mean. It is equivalent to a liberal Seventh-day Adventist who does not accept 1844 saying they do believe in the investigative judgment, like Dr. Ford did at Glacier View.

that has its own inherent life source. It is the logical outcome. As we have previously indicated, such an underlying assumption causes great difficulty when trying to harmonise all inspired statements in regard to the nature and personality of God.

A. The River of Life

In our first chapter, we looked at the subject of life source and that God is the fountain of life. A careful observation of this life¹¹³ flow, from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, reveals how Father, Son and Spirit work together. Let us notice some passages:

Revelation 22:1-2 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

The above passage lays a basic framework for the flow of life. Life flows from the throne of God (the Father) and the lamb (Christ). This life is expressed as a river which flows from the Father (Source) and the Son (Channel). Notice how Christ expresses this concept in the book of John:

John 7:37-39 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus spoke of rivers of living waters flowing forth. This water can be received from Christ and then in turn be passed onto others. This river John refers to as the Holy Spirit. This concept of water flowing forth from Christ is also expressed in the story of Moses when He struck the rock. The rock was a symbol of Christ and the water was a symbol of the life giving spirit. (Ex 17:5-7, Ps 78:20, 1 Cor 10:4). David expresses this fountain and river concept as follows:

Psalms 36:7-9 How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of

¹¹³ This is life spiritual, mental and physical, not just physical.

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thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee *is* the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

David takes the concept of a fountain with flowing water and then parallels it to light. David also gives an indication that the presence of God is actually flowing in the river that flows from the throne:

Psalm 46:4,5 *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High. God *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.

David indicates that God is in the midst, or centre, of the city by means of the river. With these thoughts in mind, let us observe some statements from the Spirit of Prophecy regarding this framework.

The aged leader urged the people to consider, in all its bearings, what he had set before them, and to decide if they really desired to live as did the degraded idolatrous nations around them. If it seemed evil to them to serve ***Jehovah, the source of power, the fountain of blessing***, let them that day choose whom they would serve--"the gods which your fathers served," from whom Abraham was called out, "or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell." PP 523

The following statement in Desire of Ages gives a clear picture of how this life flows.

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. ***In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.*** And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life. DA 21

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The above statement is not only the law of life for humanity, it is the law of life for the universe. The life of the Father, the great source of all, flows through the Son and out to the entire universe. Since the created beings of the unfallen worlds did not need a Saviour, this flow of life is a universal law that operates beyond the realms of the plan of salvation. This is a critical point. This means that the personalities of Father and Son have not been assumed purely for the purpose of demonstrating to a lost world the character of God. These personalities are operating for all created beings, fallen and unfallen, both within and without the plan of salvation.

M.C. Wilcox reflects these thoughts perfectly when asked about whom or what is the Holy Spirit:

“What is the difference between the Holy Spirit and the ministering spirits (angels), or are they the same?”

“The Holy Spirit is the mighty energy of the Godhead, the life and power of God flowing out from Him to all parts of the universe, and thus making a living connection between His throne and all creation.” (M.C. Wilcox, Questions And Answers, Pacific Press, 1911 p.181)

Further down he illustrates:

“To use a crude illustration, just as a telephone carries the voice of a man, and so makes that voice present miles away, so the Holy Spirit carries with it all the potency in Christ making Him everywhere present with all His power, and revealing Him to those in harmony with His law.” (Ibid)

And on page 182 he states further:

“Thus the Spirit is personified in Christ and God, but never revealed as a separate person.”

This book was reprinted in 1919 and again in 1938, but the 1938 version appears to have had some editing done to it after Wilcox died in 1935.

Wilcox spoke of the Spirit as the mighty energy of the Godhead. Notice what Ellen White says in this regard:

Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to

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thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness. 5T 267

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. **Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end.** AA 49

It is God's plan that every part of his government shall depend on every other part, the whole as a wheel within a wheel, working with entire harmony. **He moves upon human forces, causing his Spirit to touch invisible chords, and the vibration rings to the extremity of the universe. The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.** SpTA10 36, 37

B. The Breath that Proceeds from Christ

Let us have a look at another example of life flow from the throne of God; this time in the context of the plan of salvation and how God answers our prayers and strengthens us:

Those who were bowed before the throne would offer up their prayers and look to Jesus; then He would look to His Father, and appear to be pleading with Him. *A light would come from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the praying company. Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from the Father to the Son, and from the Son it waved over the people before the throne.* EW 54,55

The book Early Writings was published in 1858, but this vision was given to Ellen White in 1846 and published in the Day Star. Notice carefully the framework and how it fits into the fountain and life flow model. The above statement is expressed through the symbol of light rather than water, but Psalms 36:7-9 parallels the symbols of water and light. We see that Light comes

1. from the Father
2. to the Son
3. and from the Son
4. to the praying company

Notice the points through which the light flows: from Father to Son to praying company. Clearly Ellen White is expressing that the light is the power of the Holy Spirit. This vision does not express the Holy Spirit as

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a point through which the light flows. This illustration is only possible if we remove the assumption that persons of Divinity must have their own inherent power. At the bottom of page 55 of Early Writings we get a little more clarification on this process.

Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, "My Father, give us Thy Spirit." Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace. EW 55

We notice here that believers would pray to the Father, and then Jesus would breathe upon God's people the Holy Spirit. In that breath or Spirit was light, love, joy and peace. If the breath contained love, joy and peace, then that breath had to contain personality. Ellen White puts it this way in Desire of Ages.

The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. **The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ.** It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. DA 805

When trials overshadow the soul, remember the words of Christ, remember that **He is an unseen presence in the person of the Holy Spirit.** E.G. White, DG 185.2, 1897

The Lord is soon to come. 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. Lt66-1894

Here Ellen White states that the impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It is Christ's omnipresence, or the presence of Christ not limited to His physical body, but being able to be everywhere at the same time. This is not another party simulating the life of Christ or in their own way trying to represent the person of Christ, it is the life of Christ directly. The simplicity of this cannot be overlooked. The Spirit in fact is the Spirit of Christ Himself through the agency of an omnipresent Spirit. This principle is also demonstrated in the symbol of the manna.

The giver of the manna was standing among them. It was Christ Himself who had led the Hebrews through the wilderness, and had daily fed them with the bread from heaven. That food was a type of the real bread from heaven. **The life-giving Spirit, flowing from the infinite fullness of God, is the true manna.** Jesus said,

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"The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world." John 6:33, R.V. DA 385

Notice how Paul refers to the Spirit in Romans 8.

Romans 8:9-10 But you are not in the flesh but in the **Spirit**, if indeed the **Spirit of God** dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the **Spirit of Christ**, he is not His. And if **Christ** is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the **Spirit** is life because of righteousness.

Paul uses the terms Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Christ and Spirit all interchangeably as representing the same thing.¹¹⁴ In the framework of a river flowing forth from God and the Lamb, this makes complete sense. If the above verse is three separate self-originated beings each with their own separate Spirit, it becomes very confusing. In Ephesians Paul uses a parallel between the Spirit of the Father being in the inner man and Christ dwelling in your hearts.

Ephesians 3:14-17 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, **to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

In another place Paul uses an interesting expression that clearly supports the life flow concept we have been addressing above.

Philippians 1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ...

Paul clearly states that the Spirit of Christ is supplied. It is the Spirit OF Christ and it is supplied. The natural reading of this is obvious in light of the other evidence presented. How does Christ provide His Holy Spirit? He breathes it upon his disciples.

John 20:22 And when he had said this, **he breathed on them**, and saith unto them, **Receive ye the Holy Ghost**:

¹¹⁴ E.J Waggoner. Christ and His Righteousness, Page 23. "Here we find that the Holy Spirit is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ". Stated in equation form. HOLY SPIRIT = SPIRIT OF FATHER + SPIRIT OF SON.

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Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the **love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost** which is given unto us.

1 Corinthians 15:45 (NKJV) And so it is written, "the first man Adam became a living being." **The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.**

Acts 3:19-20 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of **refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ**, who was preached to you before,

C. The Mystic Ladder

Let us consider another example of this process. Jesus made a very profound statement to Nathaniel that helps to explain this flow of spiritual water from God the Father to His Son and then to us. In this example, the role of the angels is given sharper focus.

John 1:51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

This is a very interesting statement. It presents Christ as a ladder that reaches from heaven to earth. Upon this ladder the angels are ascending and descending. Let us notice what Ellen White says about this statement.

The angels of God are ever passing from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth. The miracles of Christ for the afflicted and suffering were wrought by the power of God through the ministration of the angels. **And it is through Christ, by the ministration of His heavenly messengers, that every blessing comes from God to us.** In taking upon Himself humanity, our Saviour unites His interests with those of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam, while through His divinity He grasps the throne of God. **And thus Christ is the medium of communication of men with God, and of God with men.** {DA 143.1}

This is a fascinating statement. Christ is presented here as the medium of communication between God and man. Through this medium the angels bring to us every blessing of God. Christ is the one that is revealed as connecting earth to heaven in a real and tangible sense. The blessings of

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God pass through the medium of Christ by the ministration of Angels. This is in perfect harmony with John 7:37-39

John 7:37-39 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

As human agents can act as willing channels for God's love and blessing to flow to others, the angels also can act as willing channels of blessing to the human race. The angels, filled with the presence of Christ in their hearts, influence human hearts towards God. As Christ is in us the hope of Glory, so Christ is in the angels enabling them to be ministering spirits, strengthening them with His power. The Spirit of Christ is the connection and the ladder, and the angels are the willing agents of God that minister the Spirit of Christ.

"Hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Christ virtually says, On the bank of Jordan the heavens were opened before me, and the Spirit descended like a dove upon me. That scene at Jordan was but a token to evidence that I was the Son of God. If you believe in me as such, your faith shall be quickened, and you shall see that the heavens will be opened, and shall never be closed. I have opened them for you, and the angels of God, that are united with me in the reconciliation between earth and Heaven, uniting the believers on the earth with the Father above, will be ascending, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed from the earth to the Father above, and descending, bringing blessings of hope, courage, health, and life, for the children of men.

The angels of God are ever moving up and down from earth to Heaven, and from Heaven to earth. All the miracles of Christ performed for the afflicted and suffering were, by the power of God, through the ministration of angels. Christ condescended to take humanity, and thus he unites his interests with the fallen sons and daughters of Adam here below, while his divinity grasps the throne of God. **And thus Christ opens the communication of man with God, and God with man. All the blessings from God to man are through the ministration of holy angels.** {2SP 67.2}

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Again we see how the channel of blessing flows. Christ is the ladder and connection between heaven and earth. The angels are the agents that bring blessings of hope, courage, health and life to us, and send our prayers and requests back to heaven.

If we assume that the Holy Spirit is a separate person, the above statements don't really make sense. It would be assumed that the Holy Spirit is the medium of communication between God and Man; the Holy Spirit (as a separate person) is the agent through which God works His miracles. But this is not what inspiration tells us. It tells us that Christ is the medium, symbolized by the ladder, and the angels are willing agents that work through that medium.

When speaking of Jacob's experience, Ellen White says the following:

Jacob's experience as a wanderer from his home, when he was shown the mystic ladder, . . . was designed to teach a great truth in regard to the plan of salvation. . . . **The ladder represented Christ. He is the channel of communication between heaven and earth, and angels go to and fro in continual intercourse with the fallen race.** TMK 21.5

Ellen White calls it the "mystic ladder". There is a mystery that surrounds this process of communication between heaven and earth. Again we are told that Christ is the channel of communication. Please note, ***The Channel*** of communication. Christ is not only the source and fountain of life (received from the Father), but is also the channel or river or ladder of communication. These are vital truths that are simply explained. The mystic ladder tells us how the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of Truth, operates. If the Holy Spirit is a separate person than Christ, then the Holy Spirit would be designated as the channel in place of Christ, and the work of the angels would be secondary to the work of the Spirit. Yet the Spirit of Prophecy indicates that the work of the angels is central and primary to helping the human race.

D. The Comforting Omnipresence of Christ

With these thoughts in mind, notice this text:

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

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And notice this comment in regard to Christ sending the Holy Spirit:

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

The Holy Spirit is *Himself* (meaning Christ)¹¹⁵ divested of humanity. The word divested in Webster’s dictionary means “stripped or undressed”, it does not mean simply “without”. Ellen White clearly states here that **the Holy Spirit is Christ *stripped or undressed of the personality of humanity***. The river flows out of Christ the Rock. Since we are no longer bound to this principle of proving that the Spirit is a Divine Being by its own *inherent power*, then we can read these passages naturally. The Holy Spirit is the omnipresence of Christ.

There are some that suggest that Christ gave up His personal omnipresence when He took on humanity – that even after His resurrection and ascension to heaven He did not regain His omnipresence. I have never read this from inspiration. The omnipresence that Christ possessed in Heaven was the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁶ Notice the following statement that reaffirms this.

It is not essential for you to know and be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and the Comforter is the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of truth, which the Father shall send in My name." "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" [John 14:16, 17]. ***This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.*** Again Jesus says, "I have yet many

¹¹⁵ Consistency of the use of “He”, “His” and “Himself” through the paragraph indicate that Christ is the person indicated. The addition of the word “himself” in the phrase “The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of...” introduces redundancy when it would make more sense to simply say “The Holy Spirit is divested of...”.

¹¹⁶ It is important to point out that when Christ was incarnated and cumbered with human flesh, He surrendered the ability to be omnipresent through the Spirit of God.

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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].

In giving His commission to His followers, Christ did not tell them they would be left alone. He assured them that He would be near them. **He spoke of His Omnipresence in a special way.** Go to all nations, He said. **Go, to the farthest portion of the habitable globe, but know that My presence will be there.** Labor in faith and confidence, for the time will never come when I shall forsake you. {Ms138-1897}

There are many mysteries which I do not seek to understand or to explain; they are too high for me, and too high for you. On some of these points, silence is golden. Piety, devotion, sanctification of soul, body, and spirit--this is essential for us all. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" 14MR 179

This statement is very clear; she calls the Holy Spirit "The omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ" which is the comforter. If this is the case, then we should find statements that refer to Christ as the comforter. Notice the following:

John 14:16-18 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Christ says He will send another Comforter. Then he says "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you". It is another Comforter (of the same type) because it is Christ divested of the personality of humanity. It is Christ that comforts us Himself through the agency of the Spirit. How wonderful to know that Jesus is my Comforter!

"The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be."
8MR p. 49

Let them study the seventeenth of John, and learn how to pray and how to live the prayer of Christ. He is the Comforter. He will abide in their hearts, making their joy full. His words will be to them as the bread of life... RH Jan 27, 1903

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“As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving Jesus the Comforter.” 19MR 297

“The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them...” RH August 26 1890.

“The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul.” RH, October 26, 1897

“The teacher must be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Then the mind and spirit of Christ will be in him, and he will confess Christ in a spiritual and holy life.” RH, February 9, 1892

Why is it so important to see that it is actually Jesus that comes directly to us as our comforter? Imagine the scenario of a person going to visit a friend who has just lost a close family member. During the visit the friend declares, “It must be hard for you at the moment; I know of another friend who went through the same thing recently so I can imagine that it is very hard.” While we can appreciate the friend’s efforts to comfort us, how different would it be if the other friend who actually lost the family member came to sit with us and *shared* their experience with us? How much more comforting that would be.

Jesus has experienced rejection; He has suffered; He has been tempted in all points like us. (Hebrews 4:15; 2:17,18) He knows by *experience* the trials of human life.¹¹⁷ Can we say this of the Holy Spirit as a separate person? Does the Holy Spirit (as a separate person) know *by experience* what it is like to be tempted? Does it make sense for Jesus to tell the Holy Spirit about how difficult life is and then send one who has not actually experienced it to comfort us? Is this logical? From a Trinitarian view the Holy Spirit could comfort us with strength and peace and power, but could he comfort us with understanding and experience? Only Jesus can

¹¹⁷ The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is turning his face toward Him as the Saviour. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. DA 329

do this. As Ellen White states, “The Saviour is our Comforter, this I have proved Him to be.” Just knowing that the person we are directly communicating with understands what a certain difficulty is like is immensely comforting, because we have the realization that we are not facing it alone. Here is the relational power of Christ being our comforter divested of the personality of humanity. Comfort is much more than just power, it is a shared understanding and experience.

Once again, when we remove human determination that only *inherent power* makes a Being Divine, these statements release Jesus to us as our Comforter; He is no longer shut from our view. It is not a separate Person, it is Jesus! Jesus is our Comforter.

Gaining a clear picture of the Holy Spirit can be quite difficult. As we stated in the beginning, each person should be free to understand the details of this for themselves. When we talk of the Holy Spirit as “the third person” or that he is just as much a person as God is a person, it is easy to see why we usually see the Spirit as a separate person. Making the Spirit a separate person removes the fear of just making the Spirit a force, and I totally agree with the need to do that. But how else does one explain omnipresence? If the Father is a being but is also omnipresent, how do we express that? God is in heaven, at the centre of the universe, but He is also here with us through the power of omnipresence and we can feel Him near. His presence is not a divine emanation or simply a force; it is our Father, through the agency of His Spirit. This is exactly what the Holy Spirit is, the omnipresence of God. The concept of a first person in heaven and a third person as the omnipresence of the first person protects us from seeing God through the lens of pantheism. I believe it gives us a simple explanation of the mystery of omnipresence. How exactly does God do this? I have no idea and I believe silence is golden.¹¹⁸ But I believe, when you weigh up the weight of evidence from all the inspired statements and the unfolding of Adventist history, that the Holy Spirit is not a separate person, but the omnipresence of the Father and Son in the third person. The Spirit is the river of Life. Some will say, “so you don’t believe in the Holy Spirit”. I would answer, “I certainly believe in the Holy Spirit and that He is a person and is my comforter, for He is the omnipresence of God.

¹¹⁸ See AA 51

E. False Assumptions and Accusations

Many people make the mistake that if they simply can prove that there are three personalities in the Godhead, that this is enough to support a co-equal, co-eternal Trinity. But this could be premature. Could it be the faulty assumption that divine beings need to be understood as having their own self-originating life source and that equality is based on inherent power rather than inheritance, that creates this kind of thinking?

I often see people turn to Evangelism page 615 and read all the “three” statements and say “there, you see, there are three persons”. My response is “yes, but this says nothing of a co-equal and co-eternal role playing deity.” This might be a case of premise forcing without taking into account all that inspiration says on the subject, and placing this on the faulty platform of performance-based thinking born of the lie given to Eve in the Garden, “You shall not surely die”.

I have also heard the completely absurd statement that denying that the Holy Spirit is a person in the context of a co-equal co-eternal Trinity is in fact denying the Holy Spirit, and this places a person in danger of committing the unpardonable sin. Notice the Following:

“Christ told them plainly that in attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, they were cutting themselves off from the fountain of blessing... It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul. Thus it had been with these Jewish leaders. They were convinced that a divine power attended Christ, but in order to resist the truth, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. In doing this they deliberately chose deception; they yielded themselves to Satan, and henceforth they were controlled by his power.” DA 322-323

If you read this passage carefully you will discern that the unpardonable sin is attributing truth to be error; it is a rejection of light. It cuts people off from the fountain of blessing. Could there be a warning here for

Chapter 22 – The Spirit of God

people who attack their brethren for trying to harmonise inspired statements and seeking for light, that the very sin they accuse others of, they themselves might be in danger of? Consider well these things.

Dear friend, it is a hard thing to admit that the structure of the Godhead laid in modern Adventism may not be as solid as we all thought. I know how hard it is to have to admit this, but loyalty to the truth demands such an admission, and loyalty to the church requires us to appeal to the truth. Let us prove all things and hold fast to what is good.

Are you beginning to see that the Godhead is far less mysterious than what the Trinity makes it out to be? The Sovereign of the universe has a co-worker, an associate, His Son made in His Own image and from the Father to the Son and then to the universe flows the river of life, which is the Holy Spirit. It is so wonderfully simple. Jesus is fully Divine and possesses all the fullness of the Godhead through His *relationship* to His Father. If you still do not believe this then please explain this statement:

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality." UL 367

This statement utterly destroys any possibility of a performance-based view of Christ's equality with the Father. Read the statements, compare the texts, do the research, get the solid evidence.

The Spirit is just as much a Person as God is a Person because God's Spirit is not bound to His form and is indeed the omnipresence of God.

***The Holy Spirit is a free, working, independent agency. The God of heaven uses His Spirit as it pleases Him; and human minds, human judgment, and human methods can no more set boundaries to its working,* or prescribe the channel through which it shall operate, than they can say to the wind, "I bid you to blow in a certain direction, and to conduct yourself in such and such a manner." {FLB 52.4}**

Flesh and blood cannot reveal this precious truth to you, but I pray that indeed your eyes may be opened because there is much light and truth in the true *relationship* between God and His Son.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ "There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains

When we allow the Father, Son and Spirit to occupy a relational framework that reflects a fountain that flows forth from ONE (singular) source point, immense blessings are open to us.

23. Knowing God

A. Character Identification

As a young person growing up, I had the misfortune of being exposed to endless hours of television. One of the programs I watched on a regular basis was a program called “Happy Days”. For some of you, there will be an immediate knowledge of the program I am talking about. The program traced the lives of one particular family and their friends living in the late 1950’s. One of the main characters was Richard Cunningham. After watching many episodes of this program, I developed quite a connection with this character. I was familiar with his habits and character, and in some respects I began to emulate him. This was also true for the main character “the Fonz”. He was the cool guy with the leather jacket that always got the girls and could fix most situations. I developed quite a relationship with both of these characters.

If I had never bothered to look beyond the edges of my TV screen, I may to this day have maintained some kind of connection to these characters. But all this changed when I learned that Richard Cunningham was actually Ron Howard. I had known Ron as Richard, but I did not know Ron as Ron. Each time I look at Ron Howard, I think of Richard Cunningham, and while there are personality traits that shine through Ron into Richard, the fact remains that Richard is not really a person. He is an expression or form of a person (a persona). He demonstrates the joys and struggles of a typical teenage youth growing up in the fifties. But in reality he is not real.

This is the kind of dilemma we encounter when we entertain the idea of a co-equal and co-eternal Trinity. We have been told that the three persons of the Godhead chose to manifest themselves to us in the form of Father, Son and Spirit, so that we could understand the character of God. As many

other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible.” 1SM 248

people read the Bible and encounter the characters of Father and Son, we develop a close relationship to these characters. All this could be fine if we did not venture outside the edges of the Bible screen and just stayed in a relationship to the characters we see on the screen. But for others who are curious, they might begin to look at and wonder, “who are these three co-eternal beings that manifest themselves in this way?” The simple answer is that this is a mystery and that we can’t understand it. But the Trinity creates a door in the mind of man that can open at any time and raise this question.

B. Greek Thought Makes God Ultimately Unknowable

This whole discussion raises the question of core knowable identity versus a core unknowable identity that can be glimpsed through forms or expressions.

Put simply, in a literal understanding of Father and Son, the description of Richard Cunningham representing the Son gives to us the core identity of Ron Howard who represents the Father, because one is the express image of the other. In this example, Richard Cunningham is a complete revelation of Ron Howard. Conversely, in the Trinity model Richard Cunningham acts as just one mode of expression of Ron Howard which allows us to get a limited glimpse of him, but it does not allow us to really know him, because Richard is not the express image of Ron but a limited expression.

In the Trinitarian model the person entitled God the Son is choosing to play the role of the Son of God in a similar way that Ron Howard is playing the role of Richard Cunningham. In this situation, the person known as God the Son is not fully revealed in the person called the Son of God – this is simply a mode of expression. The reality of who God the Son is, is ultimately a mystery that we don’t know, even as I didn’t know the life of Ron Howard through the character called Richard Cunningham. In reality the role of the Son of God is the same as the role of Richard Cunningham – each role reflects aspects of reality but the character itself is not real; it does not actually exist.

The concept that God is an unknowable essence that manifests Himself in various forms to express who He is derives directly from Greek thought. Greek philosophy was embraced by elements of Christianity

Chapter 23 – Knowing God

starting most prominently with Justin Martyr, and then more robustly through Augustine.

Early Christians regarded Greek religion as holding views unworthy of God, but they were divided as to Greek philosophy. Christian philosopher Justin Martyr (c. 100-c. 165) saw Christianity as compatible with the highest and best Greek thought, whereas Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225) dismissed philosophy, saying that Jerusalem (faith) could have nothing to do with Athens (philosophy).

Consistent with theism, Augustine (354-430) regarded God as omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, morally good, the creator (*ex nihilo*) and sustainer of the universe. Despite these multiple descriptors, God is uniquely simple. Being entirely free, he did not have to create, but did so as an act of love. As his creation, it reflects his mind. Time and space began at creation, and everything in creation is good.

Augustine developed a theme found as early as Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno of Citium, that God is a perfect being. After enumerating a hierarchy of excellencies (things to be "preferred") Augustine affirms that God "lives in the highest sense" and is "the most powerful, most righteous, most beautiful, most good, most blessed" (On the Trinity, XV, 4).

But where Aristotle concluded that the greatest being must be aware only of himself, Augustine emphasized an opposite and distinctly Christian theme: God loves creatures supremely to the point of becoming incarnate in Christ in order to be revealed to them and to reconcile them to himself. Moreover, God is providentially active in history, from an individual level (Confessions) on up to dealings with entire nations (City of God). So as to the important subject of God's relationship to the world, Christian thought could not be more opposite Aristotle's view of a Being who contemplates only himself.

John Scotus Erigena (c. 810-c.877) who based his work largely on Augustine¹²⁰ had stronger affinities for Neo-Platonic thought. God created the universe according to eternal patterns in his mind and it is an expression of his thought, however incomplete an expression the cosmos may be....God is ultimately unknowable, being beyond all language and categories. Aristotle's predicates

¹²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Scotus_Erigena

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and categories cannot apply to God because they assume some type of substance. Nevertheless God can be described, albeit inadequately, using both positive and negative statements. Positive statements are only approximate but can be made more exact by adding negative statements. For example, it can be said that God is good (positive), but also that he is not good (negative) in that he is above goodness. These can be combined in the statement that he is "supergood." In spite of these approximations, God must be reached by mystical experience.¹²¹

We might list several other scholars and theologians, but the above quotes give enough evidence that Christianity has to some degree been influenced by Greek views of Theism. This influence has to some degree made God ultimately unknowable. We can glimpse Him but not really know Him. This lack of our ability to know God is certainly minimized in the Protestant tradition of basing what is known about God on the revelation of Scripture; but regardless of this, the doctrine of the Trinity is inherently subject to the charge of being influenced by Greek thought, which in turn makes God ultimately unknowable at the core level.

C. Bible Presents Father and Son as Knowable Identities

As we have noted, the Bible presents God to us as a Father and Son fellowshipping with us through their Omnipresent Spirit, if we accept what the Bible says on face value. The Core identity of God is revealed in the personality of Father and Son. This is who they are at the core of their being. Notice:

1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Notice how Ellen White states this:

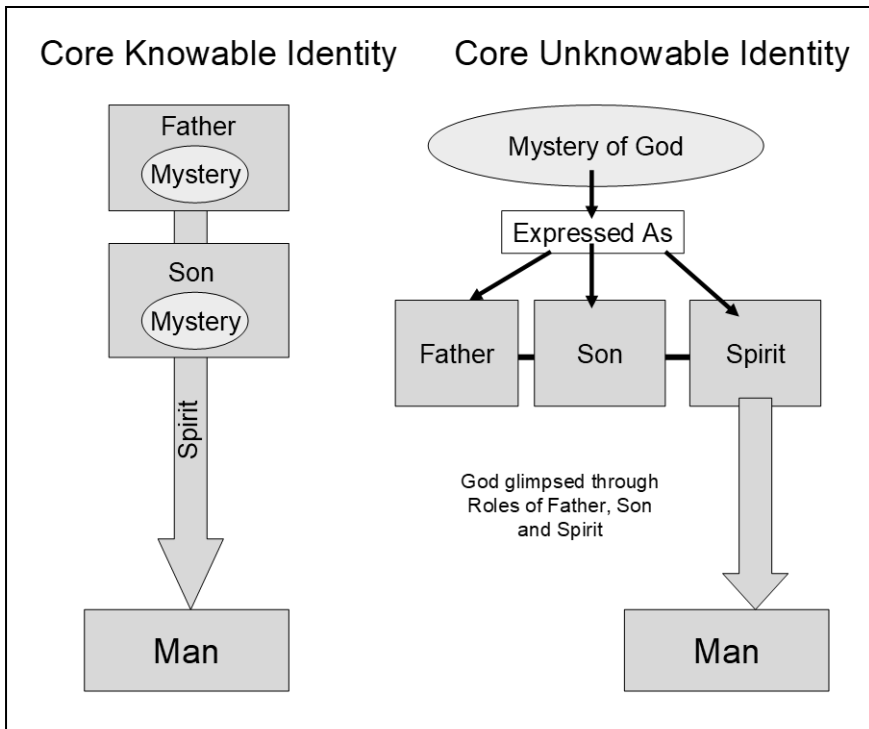
God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son. 8T 268

¹²¹ Internet Encyclopedia. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/g/god-west.htm>

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Hear the emphatic nature of these statements. God IS the Father of Christ; this is who He is at His core identity. Christ IS the Son of God. This is who He is at His core identity.

This issue is extremely vital to grasp. The Bible and Spirit of prophecy reveal to us a Father and Son as real persons who are not role playing or expressing forms, but simply being themselves – they are not acting a part. Being yourself is critical to having any sense of intimacy with someone. If the Father is not truly the Father, then using our example, we have a relationship with Richard Cunningham but this relationship is only a glimpse of the reality of Ron Howard. Such a relationship will suffer a



lack of intimacy in real terms, because it is not real.

In respect of the mystery of God, when we allow the core identity of God to be literally Father and Son, then the mystery of God is contained within these personalities. The mystery lies within the actual person and the process of knowing them. If God is not literally Father and Son and these

are simply modes of expression, then the mystery is not contained within these personalities and God is ultimately unknowable.

D. Trinity Presents all Members of Godhead as Representative – But of Who?

The Trinity gives us a frame of reference that does not house the mystery of the person of God and indeed leaves open the door for other possible frames of reference. Since the mystery is not contained, it makes God not truly knowable. The terms *Father*, *Son* and *Spirit* are roles assumed by the members of the Godhead to represent who? God? But which member of the Godhead? Well, all of them represent God. If we believe that God as three persons assumed roles to demonstrate for humanity what the One God is really like, then it is not true to say that two individuals represent another, but that all represent the one God, but who is that God? Well it is three in one and one in three. It is a mystery, that can't fully be known. So in essence God at His core identity cannot really be known. Father, Son and Spirit assume roles to express what is in the mind and heart of the one true God. They are only modes of expression and not intrinsic points of knowability. Here is contained the seeds of Greek heresy, an unknowable essence that is expressed in various forms, but those forms are not intrinsic in themselves. This is the inevitable result of seeing God as a three-person committee with assigned roles formed in eternity.

We can see this confusion manifested in the change of Adventist fundamental number three concerning the Father.

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also **revelations** of the Father. *1980 Fundamental statement.*

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In 1980 the wording of the statement still revealed the Son and Spirit as revelations of the Father in a representative sense. In 2015 this is

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removed. The Son and Spirit are no longer presented as representing the Father as the Source, but simply the same qualities are manifested in the three of them. Yet the Father is still referred to as the source in the 2015 statement. In what capacity is He the source if the Son and Spirit are no longer revelations of the Father? This is the natural consequence of core unknowable identity. This is the confusion of the Trinity.

It would appear that the doctrine of the Trinity, in which ever form you express it, presents a picture of God that is not really knowable but still gives us a sense that He is. Note the following:

“A prayerful study of the Bible would show Protestants the real character of the papacy and would cause them to abhor and to shun it; but many are so wise in their own conceit that they feel no need of humbly seeking God that they may be led into the truth. Although priding themselves on their enlightenment, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. They must have some means of quieting their consciences, and they seek that which is least spiritual and humiliating. **What they desire is a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him. The papacy is well adapted to meet the wants of all these.** It is prepared for two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world--those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins. **Here is the secret of its power.**” GC 572

What is the base doctrine that generates this power for the Papacy?

“The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church. . . . The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarifications, decided to state the doctrine in this way: In the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, truly distinct one from another. Thus, in the words of the Athanasian Creed: 'The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three gods but one God.'” (Handbook for Today’s Catholic, 1977. pg. 12.)

Catholics clearly recognise that their entire faith system is based upon the doctrine of the Trinity.

While Seventh-day Adventists will deny that our understanding of the Trinity is the same as Catholicism, no one can deny that the key

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ingredients are present.¹²² Certainly we must agree that our view of God forms the basis upon which all other doctrines are based. J.O Corliss understood this fact when in 1911 he stated:

It is of general understanding that the unity of God is the one doctrine upon which revelation lays the greatest stress. To guard this point was the principal object of the Jewish religion. This doctrine prefaces every important utterance of the Old Testament, from the speaking of the ten commandments to the outlines of minute ceremonials. Every prophetic warning kept this particular aspect in mind. The Lord Jesus always presented his Father in the forefront of all his teachings. The apostle Paul was careful to say that while there were in his day lords many and gods many, to him and his associates there was but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in him. 1 Cor. 8:5,6.¹²³

The concept of Trinity confuses the personalities of Father, Son and Spirit. It makes it impossible to combine oneness and three-ness with Scriptural integrity. The concept of mystical oneness, the metaphorical use of the terms Father and Son and the conception of the Spirit as a completely separate being yet unified to the others raises a multitude of questions, all of which are very confusing to answer. The spiritualizing or metaphorical use of the terms Father and Son essentially destroy their personality as Father and Son. Notice what Ellen White says in the following:

We are now to be on guard, and not drawn away from the all-important message given of God for this time. Satan is not ignorant of the result of trying to define God and Jesus Christ in a spiritualistic [USED HERE IN REFERENCE TO A SYSTEM OF INTERPRETATION, NOT SPIRITISM POPULARLY CALLED SPIRITUALISM.] way that sets God and Christ as a nonentity. The moments occupied in this kind of science are, in the place of preparing the way of the Lord, making a way for Satan to come in and confuse the minds with mysticisms of his own devising. Although they are dressed up in angel robes they have made our God and our Christ a nonentity. Why?--because Satan sees the minds are all fitted for his working. Men have lost tract of Christ and the Lord God, and have been obtaining an experience that is Omega to one of the most subtle delusions that will ever captivate

¹²² See next chapter for more detail

¹²³ J.O Corliss. RH Sep 7, 1911, *Tracings of the Prophetic Gift*.

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the minds of men. We are forbidden to . . . set the imagination in a train of conjecture.--Diary, #48, pp. 153, 163, Aug. 25 and Aug. 28, 1904.

The above is a reference to the Kellogg crisis and the specifics of the issues then are different to what they are now, but the principles are the same: a metaphorical application to the terms Father and Son that alter the reality of their personalities. The current Adventist understanding of the Trinity is tantamount to denying the Father and the Son, because their personalities are altered under this metaphorical or spiritualized system.

E. The Trinity is a Drama that Denies the Plain Reading of Scripture

In reference to methodology, the Trinity doctrine attacks the heart of a plain reading of Scripture. God is in essence performing a drama; He is assuming a form that represents Him but is not actually Him. This subtle shift completely changes possibilities of how we read Scripture. It opens the door for subtle higher critical forms of thinking. For example, the Bible calls Christ “the Son of God”, yet I have heard preachers say in defence of the Trinity that Jesus is not “really” the Son of God. The Scripture loses its plain reading ability and at every point Satan can infect us with the question, “Yea hath God said”, or did God mean this literally.

Note the following example.

“A plan of salvation was encompassed in the covenant made by the Three Persons of the Godhead, who possessed the attributes of Deity equally. In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, **one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered into, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son. The remaining divine Being, the Holy Spirit, was also to participate in effecting the plan of salvation. All of this took place before sin and rebellion transpired in heaven.**

“**By accepting the roles that the plan entailed, the divine Beings lost none of the powers of Deity.** With regard to their eternal existence and other attributes, they were one and equal. But with regard to the plan of salvation, there was, in a sense, a submission on the part of the Son to the Father.” Gordon Jensen, RH Oct 31 1996

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This is pure speculation without one shred of biblical support. It also makes the members of the Godhead actors in a play and takes the metaphorical road of interpretation.

The direct result of Adventism embracing a Trinity view is an attack on the literal sanctuary in heaven. The enemy knows this is the secret power of Adventism. When Kellogg embraced a Trinitarian view¹²⁴, it was not long before Ballenger was attacking the Sanctuary teaching. The literal view of Father and Son is our only defence in protecting the Sanctuary. Note carefully what Ellen White says:

“Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. **Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men.** They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor.” MR760 9.5

Notice this statement in Questions on Doctrine that indeed sets the people of God adrift without an anchor of plain Bible reading:

“In the interdenominational Millerite movement to which the early Seventh-day Adventists had belonged, a few of the leaders were members of a denomination known as "Christians." This group had sounded their no-creed, Bible-and-Bible-only rallying cry in the early nineteenth century Arminian revolt against the dominant ecclesiastico-political New England Calvinism, in which assent to the Westminster Confession of Faith was a *sine qua non*. **In their zeal to reject everything not found in the Bible, the "Christians" were betrayed by over literalism into interpreting the Godhead in terms of the human relationships suggested by the words "Son," "Father," and "begotten," that is, into a tendency to disparage the non-biblical word "Trinity"”** *Questions on Doctrine* p. 46,47

It is logically inconsistent to have a non-literal Father and Son in a literal Sanctuary. My theological training provided many examples of how this inconsistency cannot stand. Such inconsistency would guarantee the rise of men like Desmond Ford who directly attacked the literal sanctuary doctrine. If God is not literally revealed in the persons of Father and Son,

¹²⁴ See Appendix F

then nothing in the Bible needs to be considered literal. While many would not go to such extremes, the Trinity doctrine makes it convenient to symbolise plain statements that may cut across carnal desire.

F. Make Us a King, So we can be Like the Other Churches

One of those carnal desires was for Seventh-day Adventists to be accepted by other churches and lift the label of being called a cult. It is certainly apparent that names can hurt as much as sticks and stones, if not more! After the book *Questions on Doctrine* was produced, Eternity Magazine made the following comment about Adventists:

“I should like to say that we are delighted to do justice to a much-maligned group of sincere believers, and in our minds and hearts take them out of the group of utter heretics like the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, and Christian Scientists, to acknowledge them as redeemed brethren and members of the Body of Christ.....” ¹²⁵

We delude ourselves if we think that we as Adventists started using the word ‘Trinity’ only as a convenient way of expressing the Godhead. The use of this term opened to us the fellowship of other Protestant communions and removed from us the cult label. Such fellowship has seen in the past few decades a wholesale embracing of Pentecostal modes of thought and worship that are dragging us to the heart of spiritual Baal worship.

The bottom line is that an acceptance that God is a co-equal, co-eternal Trinity denies the ability of Father and Son to literally be Father and Son, and such a denial destroys our ability to remain faithful to the belief of sola scriptura.

Now I am certain that there will be many people who have expressed a belief in the co-equal, co-eternal Trinity that will enjoy the blessings of God’s company in heaven. Martin Luther is a perfect example. There are millions who have enjoyed an intimate walk with their Saviour and Lord while still holding a Trinitarian view, for there are many who look at the forms of expression of Father, Son and Spirit and seek to look no further than this into the flawed base of this doctrine. But to face the challenges

¹²⁵ ‘Eternity’ magazine ‘Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?’ by Donald Grey Barnhouse. September 1956.

and pressures of the last days, we need a more perfect revelation of God's Son to be enabled to hold fast. The heart of this doctrine will ultimately strip away everything that is Seventh-day Adventist, because Adventism is based upon the foundation of a Father and Son that, at their core, are knowable identities. The slow demise of Adventist faith and practice that we have seen over the last 80 years or so can trace its roots to this very doctrine. The attacks on the sanctuary, the investigative judgment, the nature of Christ, on Christian perfection, on worship styles, on roles of men and women in the church, on views of inspiration, on use of drama and everything else we might care to mention is traced to this unknowable God in a performance-based context called the Trinity.

G. No Condemnation, But Rather Personal Conviction

In reading these words, you might feel quite upset. I can understand that. I will still love you by God's grace. I pray that you can still do the same for me. But I will testify that in being released from this teaching I have found a freedom in Christ that I have longed for all my life. That is why I have a burden to share it with you. My God is now knowable; the mysteries housed within the personalities of Father and Son are revealed to me by the quiet working of the Spirit.

As we noted at the beginning of the previous chapter:

“I say, and have ever said, that I will not engage in controversy with any one in regard to the nature and personality of God. Let those who try to describe God know that on such a subject silence is eloquence. Let the Scriptures be read in simple faith, and let each one form his conceptions of God from his inspired word. Spalding and Magan collection.” p. 329

I will not condemn anyone else for what they believe or are seeking to express in terms of their understanding. But I have the right to study and believe freely with my own Bible, just as you do. Let's study together and get the Scripture truth, rather than seeking to defend systems of belief that cannot stand the scrutiny of inspiration.

Let each of us study God's inspired word, seeking the truth about Him who promises that we will find Him when we seek for Him with all our heart. Jeremiah 29:13

24. The Same Yesterday, Today and Forever

A. Relational Frame of Reference Crucial for Relationships

Reading through the first chapter of Matthew and the third chapter of Luke, we find a very significant method of identification for Christ. The use of a genealogy to identify someone is clearly a relational frame of reference.

The use of genealogy was critical in Israel to prove rights to inheritance and land ownership.¹²⁶ Genealogy was the key reference point for any person living in Israel. In most cases when a new person is introduced in scripture, they are introduced by a relational reference. Notice:

Isaiah 1:1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz

Jeremiah 1:1 The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah

Ezekiel 1:3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi,

It is interesting to note that in the earliest genealogies listed in Genesis, the first person that makes a transition in their point of reference is Nimrod.

Gen 10:8-10 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. (9) He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. (10) And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

It is significant that Genesis 10:9 says “wherefore it is said, Even Nimrod the mighty hunter.” It does not say “Even Nimrod, the Son of Cush,” even though he was formerly known this way.

The frame of reference for Nimrod was the deeds that he performed, not the dependent relationship that he originated from. Here is the heart and confusion of Babylon.

Nimrod determined to be known by what he did rather than who he belonged to. In light of what we have observed in the first 7 chapters on this book, this is entirely consistent with a relational-value versus

¹²⁶ See Numbers 36

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performance-value based kingdom. In a relational kingdom, you are identified by who you belong to. In a performance based kingdom you are identified by what you do. I find it significant that it has become the practice of Christians (those who represent a relational kingdom) to usually introduce themselves by what they have done and achieved rather than simply who they belong to. Here is an example. “And now I would like to introduce to you Dr Christian. Dr Christian has a PHD in New Testament Languages, he has served as pastor for 25 years in 15 countries and authored 35 books on many critical Christian topics.” How many times have we heard this kind of introduction as a reason why we should listen to a speaker? What drives this kind of an introduction? Is this a small hint of the wine of Babylon influencing Christian minds? Why can’t a person be introduced as simply “This is Pr Christian, a son of God that has been captured by the love of Christ.” Is this not sufficient identification for why we should listen to a speaker?

It is important to point out that people in the Bible have certainly been remembered for their deeds. But this remembrance is secondary to their relational identification.

2 Samuel 23:1 Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel...

The great King David is noted in the final chapters of 2nd Samuel firstly as the Son of Jesse, then by some of his achievements, such as being a psalmist.

As we noted in chapter 3, effective communication between two or more persons requires a clear identification of who that person is. If there is no system for a consistent point of reference to a person, then ultimately that person is unknowable, because the points of reference keep changing. The Jewish system of genealogies provided a consistent reference point for individuals and guaranteed the identity of each individual.

If a person is known primarily by their roles or deeds, the point of reference will become confused, for a person is always involved in multiple roles and deeds at different times and in different places. For instance, during my career I have served as an office clerk, a farm hand, a storeman, a management accountant and a minister, not to mention a number of other jobs. I have also worked as a computer programmer, a graphic artist and web designer, a composer and song writer, a choir

leader and a book author. I can elect to present myself through any one of these roles at any given time, but without a consistent point of reference my desire to be known primarily through these roles will ultimately destroy the core of my identity, because the consistent point of reference is lost. My consistent point of reference is that I am the son of Abel Ebens, the son of Hank Ebens, all the way back to Adam who was the son of God. This is the only thing about me that does not change. Family relationships do not change, but roles and career positions are constantly changing.

When Nimrod elected to be known by his deeds as his primary frame of reference, he lost the one thing that would safeguard his identity.

The second reason why a relational frame of reference is so critical is that it not only provides identity, it also provides a channel through which blessing can be received. The deeds we perform mean nothing without the blessing and approval of those that we look towards. Here is the heart of the words of the Father to Jesus: “This my Son” – Identity, “in whom I love” – Blessing. These are the two ingredients required for consistent identity with a sense of purpose and meaning. There is nothing else that can provide this.

B. Trinity Confuses/Destroys Relational Frame of Reference

Turning to the subject of the Godhead, these issues become critical. Vance Ferrell in his book defending the Godhead makes a very significant point about the members of the Godhead:

Here is the primary cause of this seeming confusion in human minds: People confuse the nature of the Godhead with Their work. Learning about the individual mission of each member to save mankind, we are tempted to imagine that Their individual activities and work for mankind explain the nature and inner attributes of each of them.¹²⁷

Here is one of the most critical points of the whole debate concerning the Godhead. From a Trinitarian point of view, the terms Father, Son and Holy Spirit denote the *work* of the members of the Godhead; this is not their *true identity*. These are roles assumed by Father, Son and Spirit for

¹²⁷ Vance Ferrell, (Defending the Godhead, Harvest time books, 2005) page 7

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the **work** of Salvation. In making these claims, the Trinitarian position destroys the consistent point of reference for knowing the Father and the Son. By turning these relational terms into job descriptions we are placed in the same position as the Greeks at Mars Hill, the God we claim to worship becomes the unknown God; and He does become in this framework truly unknowable because there is no consistent frame of reference. This is why Ellen White is emphatic when she says:

“God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” 8T 268 (1909)

The relational referencing in this quote is vital to us being able to respond to John 17:3.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

To know God, we must have a consistent frame of reference. The doctrine of the Trinity removes this frame of reference and makes God truly unknowable. Ellen White appeals for the consistent frame of reference when she says:

“He who denies the personality of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, is denying God and Christ. "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." **If you continue to believe and obey the truths you first embraced regarding the personality of the Father and the Son, you will be joined together with him in love.**” Review and Herald 8th March 1906

Note carefully that Ellen White appeals to Adventists in 1906 to cling to a view of the personality of the Father and Son which they “first embraced”. This statement raises serious doubts to the claim that Ellen helped shift the denominational position. She appeals for a consistent position that they had held from the beginning. If there had been a shift that she was pushing for, she would have said after her release of Desire of Ages – “let us hold fast the increased light we have received in recent years regarding the Father and the Son.” But she says to hold fast that which they had believed from the mid 1850’s.

We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together

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a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God's word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake. He who makes such an application knows not the wonderful demonstration of the Holy Spirit that gave power and force to the past messages that have come to the people of God. CW 32 (1905)

C. Everlasting Gospel requires Unchangeable Frame of Reference for God, Law, and the Gospel

The issue of consistent reference points running through Scripture is essential to our understanding of the gospel. This is why Paul says there is one Lord, One Faith, and One Baptism. Ephesians 4:5. This is why Paul says that there is no other gospel than the one he has preached. Galatians 1:8,9. This is why Paul said the same gospel that was preached to Israel was preached to the Christians of his day, Hebrews 4:2. Consistent points of reference in relationship to:

1. The Person of God
2. The Law of God
3. The Gospel

are vital for us to be subject to the Bible and its revealed plan of salvation, rather than the Bible and the plan of salvation be subject to us. A Seventh-day Adventist defence of the Sabbath depends entirely upon a consistent point of reference with respect to the Law. If the law is changeable, then so is the Sabbath. A Seventh-day Adventist defence of the sanctuary and the investigative judgement depends on a consistency with respect to the gospel. This is why we call it the everlasting gospel. The gospel has not changed. Its mode of expression has changed, but the plan itself has never changed.

The consistency of the Law and the consistency of the Gospel depend on a consistency of the person of God. If our reference points for God are changeable, then so is the law, the Sabbath and the Sanctuary. The Trinity doctrine makes the reference points for God changeable, especially the reference points for Christ. The second person of the Godhead becomes, or puts on the role of, the Son of God, which means His relational reference

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point changes. In his incarnation many claim that Christ changed his relationship again, and when He went back to heaven, it changed again.

By changing the reference points of Christ's relationship to the Father, we lose a consistent point of reference. This changeability makes the definition of Christ subject to us rather than us being subject to Him. Let me explain. Take the example of the law of God. The Protestant churches divide the law into three segments: The law before Moses, the law from Moses to the Cross and then the New Testament law of love after the Cross. By segmenting the law, the consistent point of reference is lost and the law becomes subject to human interpretation as to which Bible verses apply to which segments.

Knowing that the Law of God is a transcript of God's character, then the same process by which the law is segmented will also allow the segmentation of the person of God Himself. As I have stated earlier this segmentation flows directly from a determination from man to be known by his deeds and roles rather than by His relational frame of reference.

The Constant universal Law

Identity of law (Reference Point)	Law is consistent expression of God and His Kingdom		
Time Segment	Genesis to Moses	Jews Pre-cross	Christians Post-Cross

The law binds humanity because it is constant and universal.

The segmented changeable Law

Identity of law (Reference Point)	Nothing Specific Stated	Ten Commandments	New Commandment Love one another
Time Segment	Genesis to Moses	Jews Pre-cross	Christians Post-Cross

Humanity binds the law and dictates its limits because the law is segmented and changeable

By referring to the terms Father and Son as roles and the work of God, rather than these titles actually being God himself, God in fact becomes subject to man. Any references concerning Himself are boxed into various segments and can be used to deny the statements made are actually about the person rather than simply His work.

The classic case for this is the segmentation of the incarnation from Christ's pre-existence and post-resurrection life. Look at the following verse.

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

This verse uses the reference points of Father and Son. If these reference points are not consistent as displayed in a Trinitarian framework, then it becomes easy to deny that this statement is a universal reference. The reference above becomes known as “an incarnational reference.” This means it is no longer a statement concerning the **person** of Christ, it is only a statement concerning the **work** of Christ. Through this method of segmentation we can in fact unwittingly take control of the person of Christ and make Him to be what we want him to be. As we have created a segmented framework, we decide which Bible texts fit into which segment. The segmented view of Trinitarianism does not align itself with the fact that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Jesus Christ, the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever. Heb 13:8

The Only Begotten Son

Roles (Work)	Creator	Messiah	Priest	Judge	King
Core Identity (Relation)	Son of God (Revealed and Reachable in Scripture)				

The Only Begotten Son is not a role but the core identity. It does not change and all references to the Son in Scripture directly reveal who He is.

The Self Originating Second Person

Roles (Work)	Creator	Messiah	Priest	Judge	King
	Son (Pre existent)	Son (Incarnational)	Son (Post Incarnational/?)		
Core Identity (Relation)	Self Originating Second Person (Not Revealed)				

If the Second person of the Godhead takes the “role” of Son then “The Son” is part of the “work” of The Second Person and not the actual person himself. Bible passages of the Son are only reflective of work and are not a direct revelation of the Second Person of the Godhead. Passages concerning the Son are split into pre-existent, Incarnational and Priest/King.

D. No Relational Changes in the Incarnation

The book of John presents several references to the person of Christ that form a consistent reference point to tell us exactly who Jesus is. Notice the following example.

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John 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

This verse is used consistently in Trinitarian contexts to refer to the pre-existent divinity of Christ and a reference proving that He is the second person of the Godhead.¹²⁸

But what about the next verse?

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

This verse is consistently referred to as an *incarnational* reference. But what makes John 5:18 a reference to Christ's true existence and the next verse a reference to his incarnational work? Who decides? Without a consistent point of reference, everyone decides for themselves what verse refers to what segment.

Let's look at another example in John 5.

John 5:28,29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [Christ's] voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Christ is telling us that He possesses power to raise people from the dead, and that He will do it at the end of human history. Clearly, this is a reference to the power that Christ possesses, the power to give life. But the immediate verse following says this:

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

Is John 5:30 simply an *incarnational* reference? If we would allow the terms Father and Son to be our consistent point of reference, we would not even have to ask this question because no segmentation is required;

¹²⁸ Whidden, Moon and Reeve., *The Trinity*, Review and Herald, 2002) Page 55

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because any references to Father and Son reveal exactly who they are, not just what they do.

It is true that when Jesus came to this earth He clothed His divinity with humanity; but if we assume that Christ changed His actual relation to the Father in the incarnation, then our consistent point of reference is lost. If we say that Christ demonstrated dependence on God only in the incarnation, then the nature of the relationship has changed.¹²⁹ This is a vital point. Throughout the New Testament we are asked as to whether we believe that Jesus IS the Son of God. But if we accept a Trinitarian model, we can only say that we accept that Jesus is the Son of God for the purpose of the plan of salvation or for the purpose of representation of the Godhead. In effect, this is a denial that Jesus truly IS the Son of God. This is the very heart of the controversy. Do we accept the words of the Father, that Jesus is His Son, or do we not?

If you study references of John 5 in the Spirit of Prophecy, you will see there is no segmentation that takes place. The person of Christ is consistent all the way through. Notice the following passage.

The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?" Hebrews 1:1-5. **God is the Father of Christ;**

¹²⁹ "The work of redemption is called a mystery, and it is indeed the mystery by which everlasting righteousness is brought to all who believe. The race in consequence of sin was at enmity with God. Christ, at an infinite cost, by a painful process, mysterious to angels as well as to men, assumed humanity. Hiding His divinity, laying aside His glory, He was born a babe in Bethlehem. (Ellen G. White, MS 29, 1899.) There is no indication in this passage of a change in identity or a change in relationship to the Father.

Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.

Jesus said to the Jews: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. . . **The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth.**" John 5:17-20.

Here again is brought to view the personality of the Father and the Son, showing the unity that exists between them. This unity is expressed also in the seventeenth chapter of John, in the prayer of Christ for His disciples:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." John 17:20-23.

Wonderful statement! The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one. {8T 268, 269}

Notice carefully that Ellen White opens this passage with a clear statement that the relation of Father and Son is clearly revealed in their relation to each other and their personality. She then refers to Hebrews 1:1-4 before moving directly to John 5:17-20, where Christ says He can do nothing of Himself, and again restates that this is the relation of the Father and the Son. There is no segmenting of the verses, it is consistent all the way through. Study for yourself and you will see that all references to Christ used by Ellen White are consistent; there are no exceptions or segmenting that takes place.

All references to Christ in the Bible when speaking about the Father and Son relationship reveal that this is exactly who Christ the Son of God is. The notion of incarnational referencing as opposed to pre-existent referencing segments the person of Christ and makes

Him subject to our will and discretion as to which verses reveal the second person and which verses are simply part of His work.

Notice what Ellen White says of the entire discourse of John chapter 5, not just parts of it.

Jesus knew that the Jews were determined to take his life, yet in this discourse [John 5] he fully explained to them his Sonship, the relation he bore to the Father and his equality with him. 2SP 172

Jesus Christ is certainly the same yesterday, today and forever, but only through the relational reference to His Father. If Jesus is not indeed the Son of the Father, then there is not a clearly identifiable consistent point of reference for us to know Christ. Christ simply becomes a chameleon that evolves and changes into different forms and roles for whatever purpose, just like the actors in Hollywood. If ever you wanted a definition of confused identity, simply look to the lives of those who live on the silver screen.

The only way we can know Christ, and consequently His Father, is by believing that Jesus is indeed the only begotten Son. It is the only consistent frame of reference we have to know Him and identify Him. Once we can be assured of the consistent point of reference for God and His Son, then we can be assured of a consistent frame of reference for His Law and His Gospel. They all stand and fall together. Let us not change times and laws or persons, but let us submit to the One Lord, the One Law and the One Gospel and be saved.

25. Building a Solid Platform

A. Questioning the Plain Statements of Scripture

From the beginning of time Satan has tried to confuse the human race about the meaning of God's statements. Satan's first words to Eve were not a direct attack on what God had said, but rather an insertion of doubt as to what God really meant. "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" The implication and manner of question assumes a completely different framework of understanding. Satan's question suggests that there must be some kind of mistake here. Satan does not seek to establish any reason why he thinks there is a mistake in what Eve thinks God has said, he just assumes it is a mistake based on his own frame of reference. That frame of reference of course is that everyone has an independent life source, as we outlined in the first few chapters. This assumption is never stated but is simply assumed.

God's word was plain enough:

Genesis 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The plain and literal meaning, accepted and embraced by Adam and Eve, would have prevented the untold misery that the human race now suffers.

A key element of Satan's attack on truth is to infer doubt concerning the literalness of God's plain statements. Once the doubt is sustained, then the direct attack takes place. This is what Satan did when he boldly stated, "You shall not surely die."

The fact that Eve had to restate what God had said suggests that she needed to reassure herself. She could have simply said "Yes!" and offered no explanation. The justification offered suggests that the seed of doubt was already growing in her mind. Empirical evidence further embellished this doubt. The fact that the serpent was eating the fruit, was still alive, and could talk, added weight to the serpent's underlying suggestion that there must be some mistake either about her understanding of what God said or that God was simply wrong.

Paul warns us regarding this:

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Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

The rudiments or first principles of the world stem from the first lie – you shall not surely die. It suggests inherent life and power are possessed by mankind, and consequently that the display of such power reveals the value of the man. These principles are constantly at war with the plain statements of Scripture which continually remind us that God created us and we are responsible to him every moment of every day.

B. Development of Every Key Adventist Doctrine was Literal and Real

If you survey the various denominations with reference to the key pillars of the Christian faith, you will find that none of them hold a consistently plain and literal rule of interpretation. This is where Seventh-day Adventism has differed. From beginning to end Adventism has held a plain reading of Scripture. Notice the following chart:

Doctrine	SDA Belief
Father and Son	Literal and Personal Beings
Heaven	Heaven is a literal place
Creation	The earth was created in six literal days
The Devil	A literal Devil called Satan that tempts us
Nature of Man	Mortal, Death is literal – return to the dust. Wages of sin is death, not eternal life in hell.
Age of the Earth	A literal 6000 years according to the literal genealogy of the Old Testament
The Flood	The flood literally covered the entire earth after 40 days of rain
Old Testament Stories	All considered true
The Commandments	To be literally followed
The Sabbath	A literal weekly rest and is a memorial of a literal six-day creation

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The Daily, Host and Stars Persecuted. Sanctuary Cast Down	Literal events of Rome persecuting God's people (host) and their leaders (the stars) ¹³⁰ . Magnification against the Prince – the Crucifixion. Casting down of the Sanctuary – the literal place of Rome taken over by the Papacy
Virgin Birth	Literal
Nature of Christ	Christ literally took our nature, not the nature of Adam before the fall. ¹³¹
Miracles of Jesus	All literally took place
Death of Christ	Literally took place – The whole person of Jesus died.
Resurrection	Literal and real. The central hope of Christianity
Heavenly Sanctuary	Literal and real. Administered by the real priest Jesus
Elder	Literal male husband of literal female wife
Christian Perfection	Literal and real through the faith of Christ
Investigative Judgment	Literal and real. Daniel Seven's books being opened are literal and real. The Ancient of days and Son of man are real and literal persons, and all are literal antitypical fulfilments of the Most Holy Place ministry of the literal heavenly Sanctuary
Second Coming	A literal, audible and real event

No other denomination holds a consistent and literal view of these Bible doctrines. Many churches are simply not able to hold these doctrines because of a spiritualizing of other doctrines. For instance, most churches believe in the immortality of the soul and that the righteous go straight to heaven. Such a belief makes null and void the concept of an investigative judgement. For some, it also negates the need for a literal second coming. For others, a belief in evolution renders useless a belief in the Sabbath; it

¹³⁰ Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation* (Review and Herald, 1944) Page 159; William Miller, *Views of Prophecy* Page 28. J.N Andrews, *The Sanctuary and the 2300 Days*, Page 34. James White, *Bible Adventism*, Page 127

¹³¹ The view of the nature of Christ has altered widely in Adventism. The view that Christ took a pre-fall nature demands a spiritualized view of texts in Hebrews and Romans. Hebrews 2:16 states that Christ took on Him the seed of Abraham, not the seed of Adam before the fall. Romans 1:3 states that He was made of the seed of David **according to the flesh**. The statements are simple and unambiguous. Taking a pre-fall view of the nature of Christ forces these passages to be figurative in some sense.

simply has no meaning because the creation is a metaphorical 7 days. Also, a spiritualizing of the nature of Christ renders meaningless the concept of real Christian perfection. If Christ did not literally take our nature, then we cannot literally have victory over sin. The cause and effect is simple if not obvious to the discerning Bible student.

C. Pioneers Hammered out a Literal View of Salvation Surrounded by and Attacked by Spiritualized Views

The Adventist Pioneers had to pick their way through many spiritualized views to build their platform. The Advent doctrine was built upon a clear system of interpretation that allowed the Bible to explain itself clearly and simply. William Miller wrote out a 14 point list called rules of interpretation.¹³² Let us notice some of these rules.

1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible. Matt 5:18
4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence, and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in an error. Isa.28:7-29, 35:8. Prov.29:27. Luke 24:27,44,45. Rom.16:26. James 5:19. 2Pet.1:19,20.
5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound it to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed or wisdom is my rule, not the Bible. Ps.19:7-11, 119:97-105. Matt.23:8-10. 1 Cor.2.12-16. Eze.34:18,19. Luke 11:52. Mal.2:7,8.
6. God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables, and in this way the same things are oftentimes revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures, and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one. Ps.89:19. Hos.12:10. Hab.2:2. Acts 2:17. 1Cor.10:6. Heb.9:9,24.

¹³² Go to Appendix D to see the entire list

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Ps.78:2. Matt.13:13,34. Gen.41:1-32. Dan. 2:7, 8. Acts 10:9-16.

11. How to know when a word is used figuratively. If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally, if not, figuratively. Rev 12:1,2. 17:3-7
12. To learn the true meaning of figures, trace your figurative word through your Bible, and where you find it explained, put it on your figure, and if it makes good sense you need look no further, if not, look again.

Giving a summary of his thoughts William Miller stated:

I believe the Bible is the revealed will of God to man, and all therein is necessary to be understood by Christians in the several ages and circumstances to which they may refer; - for instance, what may be understood to-day might not have been necessary to have been understood 1000 years ago. For its object is to reveal things new and old, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished for, and perfected in, every good word and work, for the age in which he lives. I believe it is revealed in the best possible manner for all people in every age and under every circumstance to understand, and that it is to be understood as literal as it can be and make good sense; - and that in every case where the language is figurative, we must let the Bible explain its own figures. We are in no case allowed to speculate on the Scriptures, and suppose things which are not clearly expressed, nor reject things which are plainly taught.¹³³

These rules were and are the benchmark of the Advent movement. In summary:

1. Every Scripture passage must have its weight on a subject and then those passages must be harmonised.
2. Passages are to be understood literally unless there is good reason to see them figuratively.
3. The meaning of figures are found elsewhere in the Bible.

¹³³ Miller's Works Volume 1 Page 33.

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Here is Ellen White's Testimony concerning these rules of interpretation. Note it well.

Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures **upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted.** In the little book entitled "Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology," Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation:--

"1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible; 2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study; 3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering; 4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error; 5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible."

The above is a portion of these rules; and in our study of the Bible we shall all do well to heed the principles set forth. RH, November 25, 1884

Uriah Smith expressed it this way:

All Scripture language is to be taken literally, unless there exists some good reason for supposing it to be figurative; and all that is figurative is to be interpreted by that which is literal. Uriah Smith. *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation* (Review and Herald, 1897) Page 123

J.N Loughborough makes this perceptive comment:

The beauty of Divine Revelation has been shut away from the minds of the common people, by their being taught, and supposing that the Bible does not mean what it says, or that the sense of the scripture writers is not contained in the scriptures themselves, but that they are mystical and have a hidden meaning. If this be a fact, we inquire, How shall we arrive at just conceptions of that word and its true interpretation? Oh, says one of the proud professors of

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our day, you go to Rev. Mr. A., Doctor of Divinity, he will enlighten your mind in regard to the matter. The second says, A. will not inform you aright; you must go to one of our Divines, and so all direct our attention to a different direction for an understanding of the word. They disagree among themselves, and thus are produced upward of 600 different sentiments of the present time. This grows out of the principle that the Bible does not mean what it says, but means something which is not conveyed to our minds by the literal reading of the text. If the position be true that the student of the Bible must first have a thorough knowledge of the popular theology of the age, before he can understand that book, then it would seem to the inquiring mind that the Bible, after all, was not the revelation of God's will, as it does not convey the idea of the author, but his meaning is to be found by the learning of the schools.

If the Bible is the revelation of God's will to man, then his will is found in the book, and the book means what it says. We admit that figures are there used, and explained, but claim that a plain statement should be understood the same as when made in any other book. We can form no just conceptions of God's character as revealed in the word, if this be not the truth of the matter. If God had revealed his will in such a manner that man cannot understand it, and then pronounced in that word condemnation and death to those who did not obey his will, we should at once conclude that he manifested none of the character the word represents him as possessing.

If the Bible is not a literal book, then we need another book, proceeding from the author of the Bible, explaining the revelation we now have, that we may have the will of God. J.N Loughborough. *Man's Present Condition and His Future Reward or Punishment* (Advent Review Office, 1855) Page 7.

George Storrs pin points the efforts of Satan to destroy the church by bringing in mystical meanings to the Bible text:

It sustains the mischievous practice of mystifying, or making the Scriptures to have a secret or hidden meaning, in the plainest texts.

This mischievous practice was brought into the church, almost as soon as the Apostles had left the world. The converts from heathenism seemed intent on uniting heathen philosophy with christianity. Hence they must find an abundance of mysteries in the Scriptures: and the practice of allegorizing, i.e. making the

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language to contain something that does not appear in the words, commenced and generally prevailed, before the third century. This was done, doubtless, with a view to lead heathen philosophers to embrace christianity, as affording them a fruitful field for their researches. But it led the church astray into the wild fields of conjecture; and every lively imagination could find hidden wonders in the Bible; while the plain literal meaning of the text was disregarded. That fatal practice increased from age to age, till the simplicity of the gospel was totally eclipsed, and the obscurity has not wholly disappeared to this day. George Storrs, *On the Enquiry Is there Immortality in Sin and Suffering*. Page 131

It is exactly this plan Satan has brought to bear upon the Adventist church. The fight that our pioneers had against spiritualism coming to our ranks was relentless. But our pioneers resisted it.

Notice Ellen Whites comments:

As we were about to journey to New Bedford, a special message came from Sister M. for me to come and relate what the Lord had shown me. Brother Nichols took my sister and myself to the house where quite a number were collected. There were individuals present whom I had been shown were strong fanatics. They dealt in a human or Satanic influence, and called it the spirit of God. I had not seen them before with my natural eyes, yet their countenances were familiar; for their errors and corrupting influence had been shown me, and I felt forbidden to relate my vision in such a company. There were some present that we loved; but they had been led away in this deception. The leading ones considered this a favorable opportunity to exert their influence over me, and cause me to yield to their views.

“I knew their only object was to mangle the visions, spiritualize away their literal meaning, throw a Satanic influence upon me, and call it the power of God. {LS88 229.2}

Spurious scientific theories are coming in as a thief in the night, stealing away the landmarks and undermining the pillars of our faith. God has shown me that the medical students are not to be educated in such theories, because God will not endorse these theories. The most specious temptations of the enemy are coming in, and they are coming in on the highest, most elevated plane. *These spiritualize the doctrines of present truth until there is no distinction between the substance and the shadow.* MM 87.4

Ellen White warns us in her book *Acts of the Apostles*:

The follower of Christ will meet with the "enticing words" against which the apostle warned the Colossian believers. He will meet with spiritualistic interpretations of the Scriptures, but he is not to accept them. His voice is to be heard in clear affirmation of the eternal truths of the Scriptures. Keeping his eyes fixed on Christ, he is to move steadily forward in the path marked out, discarding all ideas that are not in harmony with His teaching. The truth of God is to be the subject for his contemplation and meditation. He is to regard the Bible as the voice of God speaking directly to him. Thus he will find the wisdom which is divine. AA 474, 475

The Adventist platform of truth stands upon the literal rule of interpreting Scripture. To loosen one plank of this method on these doctrines is to open a flood gate of spiritualised views. Again we have been warned:

I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform. I saw individuals approach the platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. *Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect,* and the people much happier. *Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it to be laid wrong.* EW 259

The key thrust of Satan's attack against God's people after 1844 was trying to introduce spiritualized views. The rejection of the 1888 message by the church which left the church more vulnerable to satanic attack, combined with a dying off of some of the older pioneers, opened a door to these theories coming in. Kellogg was the first obvious case. In dealing with the Kellogg crisis, Ellen White makes the critical point that the errors of Kellogg were the same as the errors that she met after 1844.

After the passing of the time, [1844] we were opposed and cruelly falsified. Erroneous theories were pressed in upon us by men and women who had gone into fanaticism. I was directed to go to the places where these people were advocating these erroneous theories, and as I went, the power of the Spirit was wonderfully displayed in rebuking the errors that were creeping in. Satan

himself, in the person of a man, was working to make of no effect my testimony regarding the position that we now know to be substantiated by Scripture. ***Just such theories as you have presented in Living Temple were presented then.*** These subtle, deceiving sophistries have again and again sought to find place among us. But I have ever had the same testimony to bear which I now bear regarding the personality of God. . . . 4MR 57

The defence of Adventists against these spiritualized views was a view that the Father and Son were literal persons. The literal views of the pioneers were NOT simply unfortunate imported ideas from the Christian Connexion as is claimed,¹³⁴ they were the cornerstone of guarding against spiritualized views. But Kellogg was only the first to fall; other leaders would succumb.

D. Spiritualized Assault During the Early 20th Century

There was a flood of apostasies from the church during the early part of the 20th century. Jones, Waggoner, Conradi and Ballenger, just to name a few. But other figures that remained in the church also fell under the spell of spiritualized views.

At this stage of our experience we are not to have our minds drawn away from the special light given [us] to consider at the important gathering of our conference. **And there was Brother Daniells, whose mind the enemy was working; and your mind and Elder Prescott's mind were being worked by the angels that were expelled from heaven.** Satan's work was to divert your minds that jots and tittles should be brought in which the Lord did not inspire you to bring in...

And I was shown from the first that the Lord had given neither Elders Daniells nor Prescott the burden of this work. Should Satan's wiles be brought in, should this "Daily"¹³⁵ be such a great matter as to be brought in to confuse minds and hinder the advancement of the work at this important period of time? It should not, whatever may be. This subject should not be

¹³⁴ George Knight. A Search For Identity (Review and Herald, 2000) page 32.

¹³⁵ Prescott and Daniells had embraced the "new view" of the Daily that had come from Conradi and Waggoner. The new view demands that the phrase "casting down the place of his sanctuary" be not a literal event, but rather a spiritual casting down in the minds of men. This shift dismantled several planks in the pioneer presentation of Daniel and Revelation.

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introduced, for the spirit that would be brought in would be forbidding, and Lucifer is watching every movement...

...you had no moral right to blaze out as you did upon the subject of the "Daily" and suppose your influence would decide the question. There was Elder Haskell, who has carried the heavy responsibilities, and there is Elder Irwin and several men I might mention who have the heavy responsibilities.

Where was your respect for the men of age? What authority could you exercise without taking all the responsible men to weigh the matter?

...If any change is essential, God will have the harmony in that change consistent, but when a message has been entrusted to men with the large responsibilities involved, [God] demands faithfulness that will work by love and purify the soul. Elders Daniells and Prescott both need reconversion. A strange work has come in, and it is not in harmony with the work Christ came to our world to do; and all who are truly converted will work the works of Christ...

...A world-wide work is before us. I was given representations of John Kellogg. A very attractive personage was representing the ideas of the specious arguments that he was presenting, sentiments different from the genuine Bible truth. And those who are hungering and thirsting after something new were advancing ideas [so specious] that Elder Prescott was in great danger. Elder Daniells was in great danger [of] becoming wrapped in a delusion that if these sentiments could be spoken everywhere it would be as a new world.

Yes, it would, but while their minds were thus **absorbed I was shown that Brother Daniells and Brother Prescott were weaving into their experience sentiments of a spiritualistic appearance and drawing our people to beautiful sentiments that would deceive, if possible, the very elect.** 20 MR 17-22

Ellen White reveals that Daniells and Prescott were being attacked by Satan, and in their warfare against Kellogg's theories, they unwittingly succumbed to spiritualistic "sentiments that would deceive, if possible, the very elect". The issue at hand was the subject of the Daily in chapter 8 of the book of Daniel. Prescott and Daniels embraced the view that the Daily is the ministry of Christ in Heaven, but such a view demands a spiritualized view that actually presents an attack on the Sanctuary in

Heaven. The pioneers held the view that Daniel reveals two desolating powers: paganism and papalism. The daily is seen as paganism and the transgression of desolation seen as papalism. We do not want to engage the whole topic of the “Daily” controversy¹³⁶, but simply make the point that a shift to a spiritualized methodology is required to sustain the heavenly view of the Daily.

1. The Pagan View of the Daily

And [**Pagan Rome**] waxed great, *even* to the host of heaven; and [he] cast down some of the host [**God’s People – Literal**] and of the stars [**Leaders of Israel – Literal**] to the ground, and stamped upon them. [**Literal**] Yea he [**Pagan Rome**] magnified himself even to the Prince of the host,¹³⁷ [**Christ - Literal**] and by him [**Papal Rome**] the daily [Paganism] was taken away [**Literal**] and the place [Rome] of his [**Pagan Rome’s**] sanctuary [miqdash]¹³⁸ was cast down¹³⁹ [**Literal**] And an host [army] [Literal] was given him [**Papal Rome**] against the daily [Paganism]¹⁴⁰ by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered. Daniel 8:10-12

2. The Heavenly View of the Daily

And [**Papal Rome**] waxed great, *even* to the host of heaven; and [he] cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.¹⁴¹ [**Literal**]Yea [he; **Papacy**] magnified himself even to the Prince of the host,¹⁴²[**Spiritual**] and [from Him, Christ] the daily [His continual ministry] was taken away,¹⁴³

¹³⁶ For more on this see *Have we followed cunningly devised fables* by Robert Wieland on maranathamedia.com. See also the video series called *Gospel Anchor Series*. <http://maranathamedia.com/series/view/gospel-anchor-series>

¹³⁷ Rome tried to kill Christ at his birth and crucified Him in 31AD on the cross

¹³⁸ Miqdash can be used for God’s or pagan sacred place.

¹³⁹ The Captial of Rome was moved to Constantinople in 330AD fulfilling Daniel 11:24’s prophecy of a 360 year rule from Rome. Start date is 31BC with the Battle of Actium.

¹⁴⁰ The conversion of the Barbarian tribes to Catholicism between 496 A.D and 508 A.D – See Daniel and Revelation by Uriah Smith page 177, 1897 edition.

¹⁴¹ Papacy persecuted and killed more than 50 million of God’s people during 1260 years between 538-1798 AD.

¹⁴² Claimed to be God on earth

¹⁴³ The priesthood of the Papacy obscured the priesthood of Christ by pointing people to earthly priests.

[Spiritual and metaphorical but not in reality] and the place [Heaven] of His [heavenly] sanctuary [miqdash] was cast down **[Spiritual and supposed but not in reality, also does not address inference that heaven is cast down]**. And an host [army] was given him **[Papal Rome]** against the daily¹⁴⁴ by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered. Daniel 8:10-12

If we allow the “Daily” to mean Christ’s ministry, then we must spiritualize the terms “taken away” and “Place of his sanctuary cast down.” The actual place of the heavenly sanctuary is heaven itself, which the Papacy certainly did not cast down. It is evident that the obscuring of the work of Christ took place by the work of the Papacy¹⁴⁵, but this is not reflected in the text of Daniel 8:11. Apart from the gaps in this theory, there does not appear any compelling evidence to accept this view except that, as Ellen White states, it presents beautiful sentiments that can deceive the very elect. It is this very point where our test of clinging to Scripture is tested most. It sounds pleasing to present Christ the Son of God as being God the Son and God in the same right as the Father in terms of power and position, but Satan takes advantage of our eagerness¹⁴⁶ to exalt Christ and leads us to a spiritualized view of the terms Father and Son. The same is done with the “Daily.” In our eagerness to exalt Christ in the book of Daniel and show Christ as the central figure of the controversy (as we should), Satan takes advantage of this eagerness and introduces a small wedge that allows for a spiritualized view of reading the Bible and once the seed was accepted, it soon bore fruit. This fruit was most clearly manifested in the release of Questions on Doctrine.

¹⁴⁴ Same as Pagan view

¹⁴⁵ Daniel 8:13 speaks of the treading down of the [qodesh] sanctuary, and this finds legitimacy in Hebrews 10:28 where Paul states the Son of God is trodden under foot. See Bible Adventism Sermon 8 “Trodden Under Foot” by James White for more detail.

¹⁴⁶ Eve was eager to point out the command of God in not eating from the tree, and she added “you shall not touch it”, which God did not say. She added to God’s Word. “In Eve’s controversy with the serpent, she added “Neither shall ye touch it.” Here the subtlety of the serpent appeared. ***This statement of Eve gave him advantage***; he plucked the fruit and placed it in her hand, using her own words, He hath said, If ye touch it, ye shall die. You see no harm comes to you from touching the fruit, neither will you receive any harm by eating it. Con 14.2

E. Seeds of Daniells and Prescott Spiritualized Daily Manifest in Q.O.D. regarding Father, Son and Nature of Christ.

A study of history reveals that it is obvious that Adventism has been attacked with spiritualised views of Scripture. It is the chief weapon in Satan's arsenal to undermine truth. We have been attacked again and again. In 1971 *Newsweek* wrote an article on movements within the Adventist church to "rid itself of an exaggerated biblical literalism." The article stated that, according to the liberals, "you will find few seminary professors who admit to the 6000 year theory, and many Adventists no longer believe that the days of creation were each 24 hours long." The liberals also charge that "Adventists traditionally have placed too literal an interpretation on the second coming-thinking it was just around the corner-and failed to recognize the power of that doctrine to motivate Christians to change the world around them."¹⁴⁷

In my theological studies, a literal six-day creation was ridiculed, as was Christian perfection; the literal human nature of Christ; an emphasis on the nearness of Christ's coming; the references to the Remnant and Babylon, the significance of the Investigative Judgment; all were ridiculed and undermined in some way. I know this to be fact because I was there and I witnessed it.

Conservative Adventists look with horror at how liberalism is trying to pull out every pin of our faith. Yet it was conservative Adventism that set the precedent for spiritualized methodology and opened the flood gates. It is short-sighted for conservative Adventists to point the finger at liberals when conservative Adventism started this process. Notice Froom's spiritualised methodology in the following statement:

"In their zeal to reject everything not found in the Bible, the "Christians" were betrayed by over literalism into interpreting the Godhead in terms of the human relationships suggested by the words "Son," "Father," and "begotten," that is, into a tendency to disparage the non-biblical word "Trinity" and to contend that the Son must have had a beginning in the remote past." *Questions on Doctrine* Page 47

¹⁴⁷ Pipim, 75

The book *Questions on Doctrine* opened the flood gate of spiritualized views, both with the Godhead and the Nature of Christ. Once this door opened, there could be no stopping it. And it has not been stopped. I witnessed the overwhelming levels of the spiritualisation of Adventism in my theological training within Adventism.

In seeking to address the spiritualisation of the Sanctuary doctrine, Pr George Burnside makes this observation:

One speaks of a “spiritual sanctuary of heaven rather than the literal visible one.” He ridicules the idea of a temple in heaven having walls, or furniture. This raises a question. What is a temple? What is an immaterial temple? What are the “many mansions,” Christ spoke about in John 14:1-3. Are the mansions only symbols too? What is the “holy city,” New Jerusalem? Is that too but a symbol? The “great city, the Holy Jerusalem, has walls. If the temple does not have walls, does the holy city have walls? “The wall of the city had twelve foundations.” Revelation 21:14. Is this too, only a symbol, a mere airy fiction? If the “city, which hath foundations,” Hebrews 11:10, is real, why not the temple? How can you have a temple without walls? What is it? Away with such airy floating feathery fictions! Christ is real. Heaven is real. Our Lord’s return will be real. The resurrection of the saints will be real. The New Jerusalem is to be real. The temple of God is real. The redeemed will be real. They will eat and drink in the Father’s Kingdom. “They shall build houses, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.” Isaiah 65:21. Are these things too, mere “symbols” or shadows? Will these houses in the Glory land have walls? If so, why not a heavenly temple?¹⁴⁸

How can we as conservative Adventists use a literal method of interpretation for every facet of Bible Doctrine and then turn around and say that the terms Father and Son are not literal or real; where is the consistency in this? The rejection of the literal terms of Father and Son has been a key driving factor in the spiritualising of the Adventist faith. I have heard of conservative Adventists standing in the pulpit and proclaiming that Jesus was not literally the Son of God. Such denials of Christ are denials of the Father, and such statements place a soul’s salvation in danger.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ George Burnside - The Two Apartment Sanctuary in Heaven. Pamphlet

¹⁴⁹ I John 2:22,23

James White understood this significant point when he said:

It is said that the view that Adventists have fulfilled the parable of Matt.xxv,1-12, leads to spiritualism.¹⁵⁰ This may be true; but take notice, this is not our position. The coming of the bridegroom is in the history of the marriage. ***Our position is, that a change has taken place in the position and work of our literal High Priest in the literal Sanctuary in heaven, which is to be compared to the coming of the bridegroom in the marriage. This view is a perfect safeguard against spiritualism.*** We not only believe in a literal Jesus, who is a "Minister of the Sanctuary," but we also believe that the Sanctuary is literal. - And more, when John says that he saw "one like the Son of man" "in the midst of the seven candlesticks," that is, in the Holy Place, ***we know not how to make the candlestick spiritual, and the Son of man literal. We therefore believe that both are literal,*** and that John saw Jesus while a "Minister" in the Holy Place. John also had a view of another part of the Sanctuary, which view applies to the time of the sounding of the seventh angel.

...The Most Holy, containing the Ark of the ten commandments, was then opened for our Great High Priest to enter to make atonement for the cleansing of the Sanctuary. ***If we take the liberty to say there is not a literal Ark, containing the ten commandments in heaven, we may go only a step further and deny the literal City, and the literal Son of God. Certainly, Adventists should not choose the spiritual view, rather than the one we have presented. We see no middle ground to be taken.***¹⁵¹

**THE REJECTION OF THE LITERAL FATHER AND SON
RELATIONSHIP OPENS THE DOOR TO A SPIRITUALISED
METHODOLOGY FOR READING SCRIPTURE THAT OPENS
THE DOOR TO A TRAIN OF HERESIES.**

After the introduction of the book Questions on Doctrine, our Doctrinal platform shifted slightly as shown in the following table.

Doctrine	SDA Belief Around Release of Questions on Doctrine
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¹⁵⁰ Notice the use of the word spiritualism in the context of spiritualizing

¹⁵¹ James White, The Parable, p. 16

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Father and Son	First and Second Person of Godhead take on the role of Father and Son but are not literally Father and Son. Terms such as the Spirit of God do not refer literally to the Father's Spirit, but to a separate person called the Holy Spirit
Heaven	Heaven is a literal place
Creation	The earth was created in six literal days
The Devil	A literal Devil called Satan that tempts us
Nature of Man	Mortal, Death is literal – return to the dust. Wages of sin is death not eternal life in hell.
Age of the Earth	A literal 6000 years according to the literal genealogy of the Old Testament
The Flood	The Flood literally covered the entire earth after 40 days of rain
Old Testament Stories	All considered true
The Commandments	To be literally followed
The Sabbath	A literal weekly rest and is a memorial of a literal six day creation.
The Daily, Host and Stars Persecuted. Sanctuary Cast Down	Daily offered as both Paganism and Papacy. ¹⁵² Under a Papal view (new view), the taking away of the Daily is a spiritualized view that did not actually occur literally, but only in the minds of people. The Sanctuary was not literally cast down, but rather spiritually in the minds of the people. ¹⁵³
Virgin Birth	Literal
Nature of Christ	Christ took the nature of Adam before the fall. The meaning of the verse “took on him the seed of Abraham” is no longer literal
Miracles of Jesus	All literally took place
Death of Christ	Confusion introduced over what part of Christ died or didn't die
Resurrection	Literal and real. The central hope of Christianity
Elder	Literal male husband of literal female wife

¹⁵² Questions on Doctrine Page 256; RH July 14, 1927 Page 6.

¹⁵³ Ellen White Warned Daniells and Prescott about pushing their view of the Daily. She indicated that Satan was working their minds and that they were entertaining spiritualized views. MR 20 Page 21

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Heavenly Sanctuary	Literal and real. Administered by the real priest Jesus. ¹⁵⁴
Christian Perfection	Literal and real through the faith of Christ
Investigative Judgment	Literal and real. Daniel Seven's books being opened are literal and real. The Ancient of days and Son of man are real and literal persons and all are literal antitypical fulfilments of the Most Holy place ministry of the literal heavenly Sanctuary
Second Coming	A literal, audible and real event

For a good overview of the war on our church from spiritualized views, I invite you to study the book *Receiving the Word* by Samuel Pipim. If we look at the inroads made by spiritual views, especially in our colleges and schools today, we see the following:

Doctrine	SDA Belief Today in Many Places
Father and Son	First and Second Person of Godhead take on the role of Father and Son but are not literally Father and Son. Terms such as the Spirit of God do not refer literally to the Father's Spirit but to a separate person called the Holy Spirit.
Heaven	Heaven is a literal place
Creation	Creation not in six literal days
The Devil	A literal Devil called Satan but many human issues are just psychological problems
Nature of Man	Mortal, Death is literal – return to the dust. Wages of sin is death not eternal life in hell.
Age of the Earth	Earth older than 6000 years

¹⁵⁴ Anderson, R.A. Review and Herald Aug 3 1962, "The Ministry of Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary": "It was "when he had by himself purged our sins" that He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3).

More than twenty times we read of Christ being "at the right hand of God." For Christ is "not entered into the holy places made with hands . . . but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). While some may seek to substitute a ministry *for* a place, we would emphasize a ministry *in* a place, and that place is the sanctuary in heaven. Since our Lord as the ministering High Priest is real, then the place where He ministers must also be real."

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The Flood	Flood is debatable as to whether it was world wide
Old Testament Stories	Most Considered True
The Commandments	Commandments can't be followed
The Sabbath	A literal weekly rest but not a memorial of a literal six-day creation
The Daily, Host and Stars Persecuted. Sanctuary Cast Down	Papal view of Daily; the taking away of the Daily is a spiritualized view that did not actually occur literally, but only in the minds of people. The Sanctuary was not literally cast down but spiritually in the minds of the people.¹⁵⁵
Virgin Birth	Literal
Nature of Christ	Christ took the nature of Adam before the fall. The meaning of the verse "took on him the seed of Abraham" is no longer literal
Miracles of Jesus	All literally took place
Death of Christ	Confusion introduced over what part of Christ died or didn't die
Resurrection	Literal and real. The central hope of Christianity
Heavenly Sanctuary	Heavenly Sanctuary not literal, but symbolic of Christ's ministry. "God not contained in a box for 160 years"
Elder	Terms Husband and Wife are not literal, but rather interchangeable
Christian Perfection	No Such Thing
Investigative Judgment	No Such Thing or token acknowledgement
Second Coming	A literal, Audible and real event but not focused on as much. Growing emphasis on liberation and feminist theology

From the above list, you can see that our Adventist faith has been stripped bare. There is a weekly Sabbath and a virgin birth and a resurrection and a real second coming into a real heaven, but everything else is confused

¹⁵⁵ C Maxwell, God Cares Vol 1 Page 172 – "Christ's Priesthood obscured"; Daniel and Revelation Committee, Symposium on Daniel Page 399. "The author observes that no words are used that would denote a defilement of the heavenly sanctuary by the horn. What does appear instead is an attack *in different forms*-(meaning a spiritualized view)-upon God's people, the foundation of Christ's Sanctuary and ministry..."

and spiritualized. The inroads of spiritualism are virtually complete. This type of Adventism will not survive the coming crisis. And those Conservative Adventists still clinging to the *Questions on Doctrine* version of Adventism, or even conservative Adventism with just the acceptance of the Trinity, will find the door of spiritualised views is still open. Such believers are vulnerable to Satan's spiritualistic philosophies and are in great danger of receiving strong delusions.

F. The Fall of Babylon

In his book *Modern Spiritualism*, Uriah Smith makes an extremely important point about why so much confusion abounds and false doctrine exists, it all comes back to one simple principle – the rejection of a literal interpretation of Scripture. This is what produces the doctrine of devils: Spiritualizing of the Bible text under the influence of, or communication with, evil spirits. Thus the communication with evil spirits – spiritualism, and their doctrine, which is a spiritualizing of the text, is also referred to as spiritualism. Both the communication and that which is communicated is spiritualism. If you read carefully, Ellen White and other pioneers used the term spiritualism in both contexts – the communication and the method of Bible interpretation.¹⁵⁶ Before we look at Uriah Smith's statement, we will look at some examples of how the term spiritualism can be used in the context of spiritualizing the text.

I have been thus particular in quoting the Scriptures, in answer to the questions proposed, to endeavor if possible to dispel some of the thick darkness and mist of Shakerism, Quakerism, Swedenborgianism, ***and all the Spiritualisms that now seem to be settling down all over the moral world, and shutting out even the very light from the horizon. To my mind this spiritualizing system, when God's word admits of a literal interpretation, and - according to rule - the literal first;*** is, to use a sailor phrase, like a ship groping her way into Boston Bay in the night, in a thick snow with the moon at full. Nothing could be more deceptive to the mariner; the flying clouds at one moment light up the firmament by the thinness of its vapor, (encouraging the mariner to believe that he shall now see the light house) the next moment it grows

¹⁵⁶ Arthur White. Biography of Ellen White Vol 1. Page 80. "As one reads this he will note the use of the term spiritualism, which must be taken in the light of the work of the spiritualizers and not in the light of what today is understood to be spiritualism or spiritism, although both emanate from the same source.

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darker, and so it continues to deceive them, until of a sudden the breakers are roaring all around them - the ship is dashed upon the rocks - one general cry goes aloft for mercy! and all hope is forever gone - ship and mariners strewed all over the beach! **Good God! help us to steer clear of these spiritual interpretations of Thy word, where it is made so clear that the second coming and kingdom of Christ will be as literal and real, as the events that transpired at the first Advent, now recorded in history.** Joseph Bates. *The Opening of the Heavens* (Press of Benjamin Lindsey, 1846) Page 22

There are some with us who formerly run into the deceptive fog of spiritualism, and gave up the literal Jesus, and made his glorious appearing only spiritual. It is evident that they never would have been delivered from that snare of the devil, had they not heard our views of present truth. Nothing can be so well calculated to dispel the mischievous mists of spiritualism, as the clear, literal view of the Heavenly Sanctuary. RH Feb 17, 1852

James White clearly states that the literal sanctuary in heaven is our protection against spiritualism or spiritualized views. But now let us examine what Uriah Smith says about how Babylon Falls

The term "Babylon" is not intended nor used as a term of reproach, but rather as a descriptive word setting forth the very undesirable condition of "mixture" and "confusion" in the religious world. It is certainly not the Lord's will, who prayed that all his people should be one, that scores or hundreds of divisions and sects should exist within his church. That is owing, exclaims the Catholic, to the Protestant rule of private judgment. It is not. It is owing to that Pandora's box of mystical interpretation placed in the church by old Origen, that prince of mischief-makers. By this method, which has no method and no standard, the interpretations of God's word will ever be as various and numerous as the whims and fancies that may find a place in the minds of men.

But all this confusion must be remedied in that church which will be ready for the second advent; for no people will be prepared for translation but such as worship the Lord in both spirit and truth. To bring the Church to this point, a call has been sent to Christendom in the special truths for this time. Most turn away, but some are taking the stand to which these circumstances summon them. The process is simple. ***It is but to read and obey God's word in the light of what is called the literal rule of***

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interpretation. No other rule would ever have been thought of, if the Devil had let the minds of men alone. By this rule the true Sabbath would always have been maintained, a perfect safeguard against idolatry in the earth; the law would have held its place as a perfect, immutable, and eternal rule of conduct, ***a safeguard against the antinomianism of all ages and the Spiritualism of to-day***, the view that the dead remain unconscious in the grave till the resurrection, would always have been held, and then there could have been no purgatory, no masses for the dead, no Mariolatry, no saint worship - in short, no Roman Catholicism, and no Universalism, nor Spiritualism; the true nature of the coming and kingdom of Christ would not have been lost sight of, and the peace and safety fable of a temporal millennium never could have existed.

To say nothing of others errors that would be corrected, suppose all Christendom stood together on those four simple truths, how much division could there have been in the Christian world? A second denomination could not have existed. And what would have been the condition of things? - As different from the present condition as one can well imagine - no paganism, no Roman Catholicism, no Protestantism, no multiplied sects, no Spiritualism, - but Christianity, broad, united, free, and glorious. ***Some are taking their stand on these truths, and so will be shielded from the delusions of these last days, for which the way, by ages of superstition and error has been so artfully prepared. Every one must stand upon them who is governed by the literal rule of interpretation; for they are read in so many words of the sacred volume itself. But the churches generally reject them, often with bitterness, scorn, and contempt, and some even with persecution. And this is why Babylon has fallen.*** Uriah Smith. *Modern Spiritualism*, Page 141,142

Notice carefully in the following passage how Ellen White associates the term spiritualism with a teaching and with a removal of literalness. The passage has to do with the realness of Jesus and His Father. Her remedy is to take the Bible simply as it reads, and I agree.

I have frequently been falsely charged with teaching views peculiar to Spiritualism. But before the editor of the Day-Star ran into that delusion, the Lord gave me a view of the sad and desolating effects¹⁵⁷ that would be produced upon the flock by him

¹⁵⁷ Notice the use of the term “desolating” in connection to spiritualizing and spiritualism

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and others in teaching the spiritual views. I have often seen the lovely Jesus, that He is a person. I asked Him if His Father was a person and had a form like Himself. Said Jesus, "I am in the express image of My Father's person."

I have often seen that the spiritual view took away all the glory of heaven, and that in many minds the throne of David and the lovely person of Jesus have been burned up in the fire of Spiritualism. I have seen that some who have been deceived and led into this error will be brought out into the light of truth, but it will be almost impossible for them to get entirely rid of the deceptive power of Spiritualism. Such should make thorough work in confessing their errors and leaving them forever.

I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. *Early Writings* Page 77,78

Arthur White makes the point that Ellen White's fight against spiritualising God, Christ and heaven saved the emerging church.

The spiritualization of heaven, God, Christ, and the coming of Christ lay at the foundation of much of the fanatical teachings that 17-year-old Ellen Harmon was called upon by God to meet in those formative days. **The visions firmly established the personality of God and Christ**, the reality of heaven and the reward to the faithful, and the resurrection. This sound guidance saved the emerging church. 1BIO 81

Note very carefully that the early visions of Ellen White presented the persons of God and Christ as literal beings. Note also that their personalities are directly tied to the titles they carry; Father and Son. This process saved the emerging church and helped build a solid immovable platform. It cannot be denied that a literal understanding of Father and Son was at the heart of the pillars of our faith, and as Arthur White clearly states, that literal understanding "saved the emerging church."

26. Growing on the Solid Platform

A. Pioneers Given Great Light Concerning Person of Christ

Ellen White describes the Adventists' experience as one that was led step by step onto a solid immovable platform.

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I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform. EW 259 (1882)

In another place Ellen White recalls the intense study and prayer that took place to understand the truth.

“After the passing of the time in 1844 we searched for the truth as for hidden *treasure*. I met with the brethren, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, “We can do nothing more,” the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me. I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. *Thus light was given that helped us to understand the Scriptures in regard to Christ, his mission, and his priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God*, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.” RH, May 25, 1905 par. 24

If we notice carefully, Ellen White clearly recalls that light was given regarding Christ, His mission and His priesthood. The line of truth that they received regarding Christ would extend right through to the city of God. There were several teachings¹⁵⁸ that were searched out into an interlocking system of truth. Part of that interlocking system was truth about the person of Christ, and that truth was integrally locked into an understanding of the plan of salvation.

B. If Pioneer View of Christ was Essentially Flawed, the Whole System is Flawed

The Bible clearly teaches that no other foundation can be laid than Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). If Adventism built an interlocking system of beliefs upon a view of Christ that was essentially incorrect, then the

¹⁵⁸ See CW 30 for a description of old landmarks and pillar doctrines.

foundation is wrong and therefore the entire system is wrong. This point cannot be sidelined or overlooked.

**If the foundation was wrong concerning Christ,
then the entire system was and is wrong**

Christ is the centre and circumference of all truth.¹⁵⁹ If that view hammered out by our pioneers gave a view of Christ that was essentially not who He was, then the whole system is infected by the wrong framework. The entire system must be re-laid, renovated and changed. A new order of books would need to be written; a new system of education would need to be engaged to recover from such a tragic mistake.

C. Literal Sanctuary Mandates Literal Son of God

One of the key elements of the Adventist Sanctuary Message was the connection between the literalness of the personalities of Father and Son and the literalness of the Sanctuary. James White expressed it thus:

The Most Holy, containing the Ark of the ten commandments, was then opened for our Great High Priest to enter to make atonement for the cleansing of the Sanctuary. If we take the liberty to say there is not a literal Ark, containing the ten commandments in heaven, we may go only a step further and deny the literal City, and the literal Son of God. Certainly, Adventists should not choose the spiritual view, rather than the one we have presented. We see no middle ground to be taken.¹⁶⁰

“Here is positive testimony that there is a tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, and that this tabernacle is in the heavens, (not heaven itself,) and that of this sanctuary, Christ is the minister. That there are literal things in heaven the Scriptures abundantly testify. As the great offering for the world, made on Calvary was literal, and as our great High Priest, Jesus, the son of God, is a real and literal personage, so must he have a literal sanctuary in heaven, in which to perform his priestly office.” RH, 18-8-1863

Says the prophet Daniel, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hairs of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the

¹⁵⁹ RH August 15, 1893

¹⁶⁰ James White, The Parable, p. 16

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fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." Chap.vii,9. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom." Verses 13, 14.

Here is a sublime description of the action of two personages; viz, God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. Deny their personality, and there is not a distinct idea in these quotations from Daniel. In connection with this quotation read the apostle's declaration that the Son was in the express image of his Father's person. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." Heb.i,1-3. The Personality of God Page 3 and 4

James White states emphatically that there is no middle ground on this issue. The system of Adventism, its sanctuary and priestly system, hang upon a literal understanding rather than a spiritual view. Ellen White States it this way:

"Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. **Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men.** They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor." MR760 9.5

Taking our Bibles as they read, the sanctuary teaching reveals two literal personages operating in the Sanctuary; the Father and the Son. This is clearly revealed in Daniel 7.

Daniel 7:9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire.

Daniel 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

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In verse 9, the Father is described on the throne. In verse 13, the Son is brought to the Father in the Most Holy Place. Note the sequence Ellen White portrays in Early Writings describing the events of Daniel 7.

I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, "If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist." EW Page 54

Under the title *End of the 2300 days*, Ellen White pictures Father and Son seated on a throne, and then she raises a question regarding the person of the Father. Jesus tells Ellen White that the Father has a form like Himself. The reality of the Father and Son personages is reinforced before moving on. Further down we read:

I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. EW 55

And thirdly we read:

Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after He arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who arose when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him as He left the throne and led them out a little way. Then He raised His right arm, and we heard His lovely voice saying, "Wait here; I am going to My Father to receive the kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to Myself." Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. EW 55

In describing the events of the end of the 2300 days;

1. Father and Son are seated together on a Throne in the Holy Place
2. The Father rides a chariot into the Most Holy Place and sits down

3. The Son is brought on a chariot into the presence of the Father in the Most Holy Place.

These are real and literal events. We also note in this transaction the interaction of two personal beings. The Sanctuary presents two personal beings acting in the plan of salvation. It is certain that the Holy Spirit is revealed everywhere in the Sanctuary (in the fire, the water, the oil etc.), but it is not revealed as a separate and distinct personal being. The question that must be asked is: where do we see a three person (co-equal co-eternal) Trinity in the Sanctuary? You will find it nowhere.

This being the case, a shift from a literal Father and Son to a metaphorical representation of Father and Son will open the door to negate the literalness of the events of Daniel 7 and the Judgment. This door has been opened by Adventist theologians. Several times in my theological training, I was advised that the events of the investigative judgment were symbolic. It was suggested to me that God cannot be cooped up in a “box” for 150 years because God inhabits the whole universe. It was suggested that the Sanctuary is not a literal building but rather a symbol of the two phases of Christ’s ministry. It was suggested to me that God does not need to examine literal books because God already knows everything and already knows who are His and who are not. In essence, the end of the 2300 days is a stage show for the universe – it is not real.

D. Growing in our Understanding of the Godhead

It has been suggested in several places that Seventh-day Adventists grew in their understanding of the Godhead, and that in the refinement process we were led to an understanding of a co-equal and co-eternal Trinity. Examples used to back this idea were the development of the Sabbath start and end times, the health message and the tithing system. All of these are indeed examples of refinement of a principle, but it can never be stated that a change in the view that Christ was indeed the Son of God literally can be refined into a view that Christ is not the Son of God in identity but only in function. This is a complete shift that cannot be simply categorised as a refining process.

In the book *The Trinity* by Whidden, Moon and Reeve, it is suggested on page 181 that Adventism went through a process of anti-Trinitarianism in order to jettison the Greek philosophical basis of the Trinity that other Church communions included. This suggestion overlooks the implication

that the entire movement would have been placed on a false platform in the process; a process that would infect every other doctrine. If the Lord wanted to remove the Greek philosophical platform and retain the Trinity purely on “biblical grounds”, I am sure it could have been done without dragging the name of Christ through what is now considered a completely false view and would therefore lay a completely false foundation.

	Catholicism	Protestantism	Pioneer Adventism
Doctrine	Trinity	Trinity	Father, Son Spirit
Authority	Tradition	Bible	Bible
Worldview	Greek Philosophical Base: Dualism, Immortality	Greek Philosophical Base: Dualism, Immortality	Literal Bible Reading Base: Historicism, Non Immortality

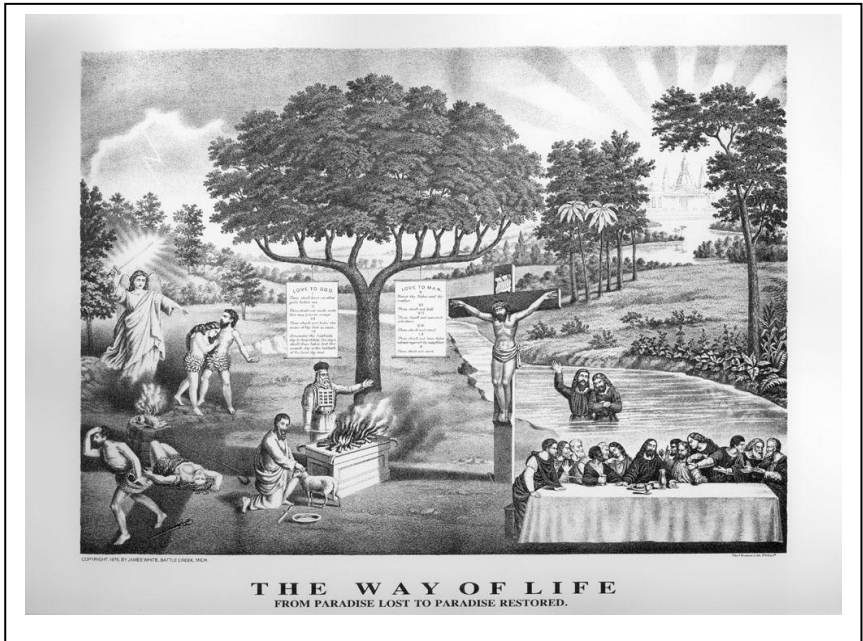
E. Pioneer View of Christ Did Need Refinement as Evidenced by 1888 Message

One thing evident is that the pioneer position of the Godhead certainly needed refining. If it did not, then the 1888 message would not need to have been given. Non-Trinitarians make a mistake if they say that we should believe exactly as the pioneers did. Such a statement could indicate a negation of the need for the 1888 message and a fuller view of the role and Deity of Christ and a correct view of the gospel through the proper understanding of the Two Covenants.

My assessment is that while the pioneers were correct to assert that Christ was the literal Son of God, their understanding of how central and how far-reaching Christ is to every teaching of the Bible needed time to expand and be realised. The message of 1888 lifted Christ into a much more central position from which all truth radiates. It also clarified the process of keeping the commandments of God through the grace of Christ. This lack of refinement in understanding sometimes subtly and unwittingly downgraded the role of Christ. The shift in the 1888 message was that Christ was presented in all the fullness of the Godhead more clearly and in a more refined way. It was old light placed in the correct context of the

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Two Covenants.¹⁶¹ Probably the simplest way to show this unwitting downgrade is in the contrast of two pictures endorsed by James and Ellen White. Notice the picture that James endorsed called the “Way of Life.”



In the above picture, we see all the key elements of the plan of salvation, the fall and the curse, the sacrifice and priesthood, the law and the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ and the founding of the Christian church that culminates in the celestial city. This picture certainly contains all the essential elements but the emphasis is quite different from the picture Ellen White endorsed. The way that the law is presented and emphasised reflected a view of some pioneers of our efforts to keep the law of God. Notice the following:

“In the early years of this message the laborers had one specific objective - to herald to the world the great fact that the last proclamation of the advent of Christ, to be given previous to his appearing in the clouds of heaven, is now going to the world, and

¹⁶¹ See the booklet *Discarding Augustine's Covenant Glasses to Receive the Latter Rain* on maranathamedia.com. See also *Calvary at Sinai* by Paul Penno also on maranathamedia.com

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to lead souls to Christ through obedience to this closing testing truth. This was the one objective point of all their efforts; and the end sought was not considered gained unless souls were converted to God, and led to seek through an enlightened obedience to all his commandments, a preparation for the Lord from Heaven”¹⁶²

The above statement by Uriah Smith lacks refinement in expressing the principles of how obedience occurs. The emphasis is heavy on obedience and limited on grace. The very phrase “coming to Christ through obedience...” appears to completely negate the centrality of the gospel. Notice another example written in the *Review and Herald* curiously titled “Justified by Works”:

“We have seen that to repent is ... to feel such sorrow for sin as to lead one to turn from it, and seek forgiveness. Then when Jesus and the apostles told the people that they must repent before they could believe or be converted, they must feel such sorrow for sin as would lead them to turn from it, and seek forgiveness, or, in other words, they must stop sinning before they could receive pardon or be justified...

Let me say again, reader, do not get the idea that I am trying to lessen your obligation to believe in Christ. Let me define my position once more. To make satisfaction for past sins, faith is everything. Precious indeed is that blood that blots out all our sins, and makes a clean record of the past. Faith only can make the promises of God our own. But present duty is ours to perform. When God says, "To-day if ye hear his voice, harden not your heart," all depends upon how we hear. Justification or condemnation is ours to choose. Obey the voice of God and live, or disobey and die. The choice is ours to make. We have it in our own power to live or die.”¹⁶³

The above statement is alarming in its strident tones of obedience. There is little of the saving power of Christ enabling us to obey and a complete reliance on Christ for grace to overcome. Such statements clearly indicate a lack of understanding of the work of Christ in the plan of salvation. I contend that while the personality of Father and Son were basically understood, the significance of the work of Christ in Adventist doctrine was still being confused by the lie of the serpent. The emphasis on works

¹⁶² Uriah Smith, *Review and Herald* Jan 3, 1888 Page 8.

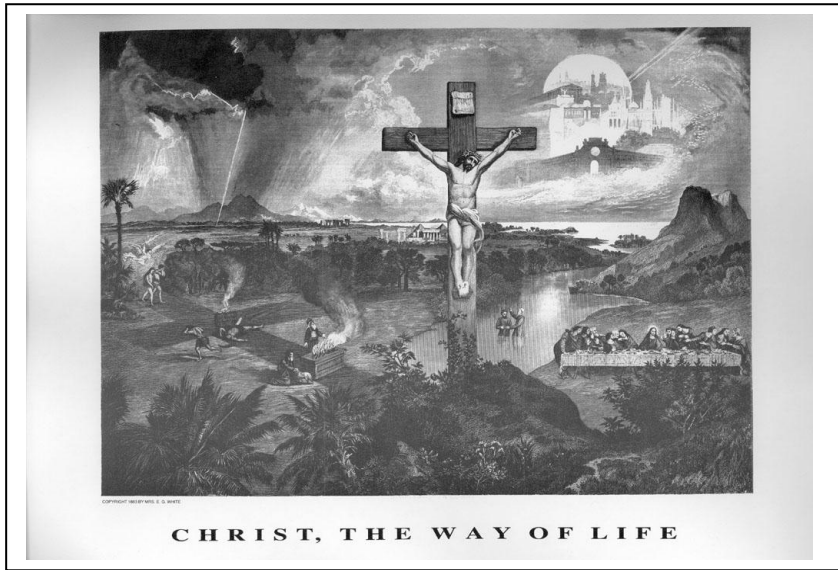
¹⁶³ J. F Ballenger, *Review and Herald*, Oct 20 1891 Page 642

and obedience revealed a confused belief that man had some kind of personal power to keep the commandments of God that was aided by the work of Christ. This sentiment had to be changed or Adventism would be seriously impeded in its progress. This is why Ellen White wrote:

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” TM 91, 92

In Ellen White's picture endorsed in 1883, we see even in the title a deeper recognition of the central role that Christ plays in the way of salvation. The cross of Christ towers above all other scenes along the way. The law is symbolised in the experience of Mt Sinai with the flashing lightning rather than the written code hanging upon the tree. Such a shift emphasises the living reality of Christ in you the hope of glory, as the manifestation of the written code. The law is the root and the gospel is the fruit.¹⁶⁴ The shift in the picture emphasises a growing and refining awareness of the centrality of the person of Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life. All of these principles exploded into Adventist consciousness in the 1888 message. The 1888 message shifted our view of Christ and also ourselves, that all power to obey comes through Christ and we are totally helpless without it.

¹⁶⁴ Christ Object Lessons p 128.



F. Trinity a Complete Reversal, Not Refinement of Pioneer Platform

It would seem natural that those who view the equality of Christ in intrinsic terms rather than inherited terms could view the shift of emphasis on the role of Christ in an expanded Deity as the beginning of a shift to Trinitarianism. Such a view though must ignore the platform that Adventism was laid upon, and it must be called a complete reversal on the person of Christ, not simply a refinement.¹⁶⁵ Such leaps in logic are easy to understand in light of the urgency with which Adventism has struggled to embrace the relational view of the centrality of Christ, and also the growing desire¹⁶⁶ to avoid the cult label from other Protestants.

¹⁶⁵ Clear evidence for the complete inability for the Trinity to be a refinement of the Pioneer doctrine is the insightful article by George Knight that appeared in *Ministry Magazine* in Oct 1993. He states that very few Pioneers would be able to join the church today because of current views on the Godhead. This is clear evidence that this is not refinement but a complete change. A refinement would still allow our pioneers to join the church.

¹⁶⁶ This growing desire for unity with other Protestants was strengthened by the threatening rise of higher criticism in protestant circles and the consequent fundamentalist reaction in the 1920's. Adventism in some ways was forced to choose sides. As George

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Ellen White was quite clear that Jones and Waggoner presented Christ in all the fullness of the Godhead.

“Messages bearing divine credentials have been sent to God’s people; the glory, the majesty, the righteousness of Christ, full of goodness and truth, have been presented; **the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ has been set forth among us with beauty and loveliness**, to charm all whose hearts were not closed to prejudice. We know that God has wrought among us.” EGW 1888 materials page 673

If Ellen White said that Jones and Waggoner presented *the fullness of the Godhead in Christ*, then I think we can accept that *it was the fullness* and not a step towards a supposed *fullness* in a Trinitarian sense. It is clearly evident to any candid student that Jones and Waggoner did not present Christ as the Co-Equal and Co-eternal God but rather the Son of God.

"Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Heb. i. 4. **The Son must inherit the name and titles and estate of the Father. Whatever titles belong to God the Father belong equally to Christ. They are His by right. By birth He is "heir of all things."** The Apostle Paul writes of the glorious appearing "of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus ii. 13. The Father Himself addresses the Son as God, saying to Him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Heb. i. 8. E.J Waggoner, *Present Truth UK*, October 24, 1895

Therefore it is further written of Him that He was "made so much better than the angels, **as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.**" **This more excellent name is the name "God," which, in the eighth verse, is given by the Father to the Son: "Unto the Son He [God] saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever."** A.T. Jones *Consecrated Way* p. 14, 1905

The facts are there if we allow ourselves to see them. Knowing that these messengers presented this view of the Godhead, we must consider carefully this next quote.

W. Bush expressed it, "either you are with us or you are with the terrorists." (Higher Critics)

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The time of test is just upon us, **for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ**, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth. For it is the work of every one to whom the message of warning has come, to lift up Jesus, to present him to the world as revealed in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelations of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to his disciples and in the wonderful miracles wrought for the sons of men. Search the Scriptures; for they are they that testify of him. {RH, November 22, 1892 par. 7}

Those who reject the idea of Jesus being begotten of the Father and receiving His inheritance need to explain how such an erroneous view can be connected the Loud Cry of Revelation 18? If Jesus is the Truth (John 14:6) and Revelation 18 is a mighty revelation of truth, how can there be a mighty revelation of truth when the chief messengers have a wrong view of who Jesus is?

Holding a position that Christ came forth from the Father has sadly led some Adventists to accuse such believers as being Catholic because the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity holds that Christ is both Co-eternal and being Begotten at the same time, which is totally unbiblical. The point I would make is that to say someone holds a Catholic view because they believe Christ is brought forth from the Father is to suggest that our pioneers placed the platform of Adventism squarely upon a Catholic base. The absurdity of this need not be documented or expressed further.

I mentioned earlier that if the position hammered out by our pioneers gave a view of Christ that was essentially not who He was, then the whole system is infected by the wrong framework. The entire system must be re-laid, renovated and changed. A new order of books would need to be written; a new system of education would need to be engaged to recover from such a tragic mistake.

The question is what has been taking place in Adventism? Exactly the above! A new order of books that downplay the literal sanctuary, shifts on justification and sanctification, shift on the nature of Christ, shifts on the investigative judgement, shifts on Christian perfection, shifts on the role of the Spirit of Prophecy, shifts on the roles of men and women. This onward march of shifting and switching at such a scale does clearly indicate that either the pioneers did lay the foundations incorrectly, or the

current church has stepped off the original platform. As James White expressed it, “There is no middle ground”.

Ellen White speaks directly to this issue when she states:

History is repeating. With the open Bible before them, and professing to reverence its teachings, many of the religious leaders of our time are destroying faith in it as the word of God. They busy themselves with dissecting the word, and set their own opinions above its plainest statements. In their hands God's word loses its regenerating power. This is why infidelity runs riot, and iniquity is rife.

When Satan has undermined faith in the Bible, he directs men to other sources for light and power. Thus he insinuates himself. Those who turn from the plain teaching of Scripture and the convicting power of God's Holy Spirit are inviting the control of demons. Criticism and speculation concerning the Scriptures have opened the way for spiritism and theosophy--those modernized forms of ancient heathenism--to gain a foothold even in the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Side by side with the preaching of the gospel, agencies are at work which are but the medium of lying spirits. Many a man tampers with these merely from curiosity, but seeing evidence of the working of a more than human power, he is lured on and on, until he is controlled by a will stronger than his own. He cannot escape from its mysterious power. DA 258

27. Assumed as a Fact

A. Trinity Foundation of All Other Doctrines

The Roman Catholic Church states that the Trinity is the foundation of her faith from which all the rest of their teachings flow. She states:

“The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church. . . . The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarifications, decided to state the doctrine in this way: In the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, truly distinct one from another. Thus, in the words of the Athanasian Creed: 'The Father is God, the Son is

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God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three gods but one God.” (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, 1977. pg. 12.)

Roman Catholicism has at its heart a system of righteousness by works. This system worships the performance based connection between the members of its Trinity. Catholicism understands clearly that the Trinity forms the basis of all its other doctrines. All their doctrines are an expression of works because the Trinity they worship defines its relationships through a process of works. The effort to prove that the Son is equal to the Father in inherent power lays the framework for all systems of righteousness by works, while also being the basis for a counter movement of forensic justification in Protestant systems.

The Adventist Church states in Fundamental 13 that the unity of the church is held together by the oneness of the triune understanding of God.

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. **This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God**, who has adopted us as His children. Seventh-day Adventists Believe, p 170.

If the unity of the church is bound together in the oneness of the triune God, then this is saying the same thing as Rome. The Trinity is the foundation of all its doctrines, for it is the doctrine around which the church gathers itself.

The reality of this is reflected in the fact that many people can retain membership in the church who reject one or more of its fundamentals, but those who reject the Trinity are much more likely to be disfellowshipped.

B. Link Between Trinity and Sunday

As Sabbath keepers we remind our Protestant friends that there is no Scriptural basis for Sunday keeping, and we even show quotes from the Roman Catholic Church indicating that they agree with us. Just read

Rome's Challenge.¹⁶⁷ The Catholic Church makes a similar argument about the Trinity which exposes our hypocrisy in our position that we are more sola scriptura than the other Protestant churches.

“Our opponents [Protestants] sometimes claim that no belief should be held dogmatically which is not explicitly stated in Scripture (ignoring that it is only on the authority of the Church we recognize certain Gospels and not others as true). **But the Protestant churches have themselves accepted such dogmas as the Trinity for which there is no such precise authority in the Gospels... it is our claim that Tradition alone - founded on the Apostles' teaching, analyzed and reflected on through the ages by the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit promised by Christ - illumines the full and true meaning of the Scriptures.**” (The Catholic Church's New Dogma: The Assumption of Mary by Graham Green, *LIFE*, Oct.30, 1950, (emphasis in [brackets] supplied)).

Please observe the connection between Sunday observance and the Trinity in this Catholic statement quoted in the *Review and Herald*:

“Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

“A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; - she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.”

“Q. Do you observe other necessary truths as taught by the Church, not clearly laid down in Scripture?

“A. The doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine the knowledge of which is certainly necessary to salvation, is not explicitly and evidently laid down in Scripture, in the Protestant sense of private interpretation (RH, Aug 22, 1854; quoted from Doctrinal Catechism).”

¹⁶⁷ To read *Rome's Challenge*, go to www.tencommandments.com.au

C. Trinity is an Assumed Teaching

In 1854, the Adventist Review exposed the non-biblical position of the Trinity. In 1981 it agreed with Rome that this teaching is not explicitly revealed in Scripture but is assumed to be true.

“While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, *it is assumed as a fact* by Bible writers and mentioned several times. Only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity.” (Adventist Review Vol. 158 No. 31, 1981, P. 4) (Emphasis Supplied)

This is an amazing admission. It states that the Trinity “is assumed as a fact.” Is it safe to assume facts to be true? In all my time as an Adventist I had shown people that Sunday observance is not based on Scripture using the Catholic catechism, but I had never read further to find that the Trinity doctrine is exactly the same. Are you challenged like me to make sure our teachings are only from the Word of God?

As an Adventist I had always understood that our understanding of the Trinity was different to the Catholic one, and indeed our second fundamental belief would tend to suggest that:

“There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **a unity of three co-eternal Persons**. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. **He** is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through **His self-revelation**. **He** is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)”

Where in the Bible can we find a statement that indicates that three co-eternal persons are referred to by the singular pro-noun “He”? It not only contradicts the Bible but the rules of English.

D. Three Persons in One Mysterious Unity or in One Mysterious Substance?

This view suggests three separate Persons that are one in unity and purpose. But to my surprise, I found recently that there are also statements in Adventist publications that do indeed appear to present a Catholic position. When we say Catholic position, we mean that which is based on the Athanasian creed. Here it is:

Chapter 27 – Assumed as a Fact

“....And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, ... neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, ... the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be both God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the Catholic Religion, to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.....” Max Hatton, *Understanding the Trinity*, p. 13

This view presents three distinct Persons in one substance. The oneness is in substance, not just in unity. Interestingly, a book produced by an Adventist Pastor which is available in the Adventist Book Centre states:

“What Trinitarians really do say is that what we can only describe as three Persons all exist within one substance.” *Ibid*, p. 133

So some Adventists do express the Trinity in similar terms to the Catholics. And as we see below, some Catholic publications express the view close to the Adventist understanding:

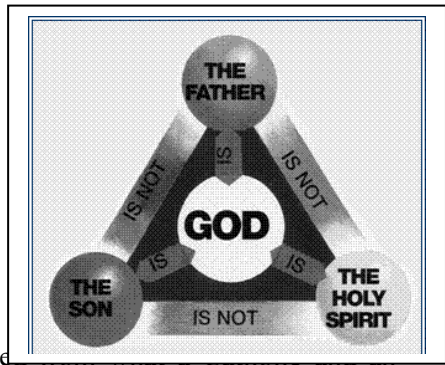
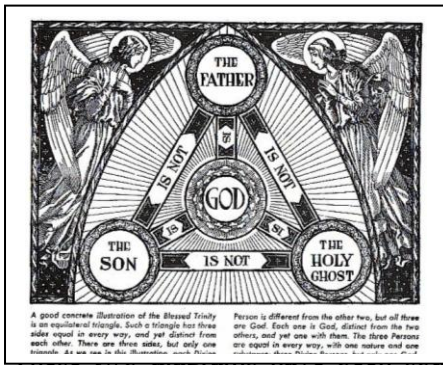
“The Trinity is the term employed to signify the central doctrine of the Christian religion - **the truth that in the unity of the Godhead there are Three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, these Three Persons being truly distinct one from another.** Thus, in the words of the Athanasian Creed: 'the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God.'... **Yet, notwithstanding this**

difference as to origin, the Persons are co-eternal and co-equal: all alike are uncreated and omnipotent. This, the Church teaches, is the revelation regarding God's nature which she proposes to man as the foundation of her whole dogmatic system.” (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1912 ed. vol. 15 p.47)

This statement does not emphasize the one substance (although it would be implied by the reference to the Athanasian Creed), but three beings that are distinct but co-equal and co-eternal.

E. Different But Same

One thing that I found interesting was two illustrations used to explain the Trinity. The one on the left is Catholic¹⁶⁸ and the one on the right is Adventist.¹⁶⁹



Adventist understands from their creed or fundamental statement. The outcome appears to be the same.

In the end, it is not the actual version of the Trinity that is the essential issue. It is the underlying assumption that a **“Position of Divinity is only ascribed to Beings of highest inherent power”**. The terms co-equal and co-eternal found in both statements clearly reflect this, and that is all that is needed to destroy the personality of God and His Son and thereby cause us to lose the *way* to God.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ *My Catholic Faith* by Bishop Louis, LaRavoire Morrow, S.T.D

¹⁶⁹ *The New Pictorial Aid for Bible Study*, p. 75

¹⁷⁰ The work of the papal church was to be of an exactly opposite character to that of Christ...The Papacy, claiming to be the vicegerent of the Son of God, is in truth the vicegerent of another power. ST Nov 19, 1894. A number of Adventists indicate that the doctrine of the Trinity formed by the Catholic Church was essentially correct with the

I don't know about you, but after having learned these things I believe that we are not standing on solid ground on this issue.

- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, is not explicitly stated in Scripture.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, was introduced in the centuries after the first apostles.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance¹⁷¹, distorts our understanding of the personality of God and His Son. It altered their *relationship* from inheritance to co-equality.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, confuses righteousness by faith. The Trinity takes away the *relational* access to God and Sunday focuses on the event of the resurrection rather than the *relationship* we enter into on the Sabbath.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, is the heart and soul of Catholic faith.
- The Trinity doctrine, like Sunday observance, was rejected by our pioneers.

Do these things at all concern you? Are we sure that every part of our faith is based on Scripture and not tradition? What will we do when we are called to stand before the world and defend the Sabbath claiming that everything we believe as Seventh-day Adventists is from a 'Thus says the Lord' in the Bible? How will we reply when the spiritual descendants of the bishop of Reggio¹⁷² come to us and say, "You claim to follow the Bible with every teaching and yet you admit yourself in your own publications that the Trinity is nowhere explicitly taught in the Scriptures and is **assumed as a fact!**" What answer will we give?

need for some alterations, but how can a church that works in a character exactly opposite to Christ and ruled by a power opposite to that of God formulate a view of Christ that is anything close to correct. It can be nothing but entirely opposite.

¹⁷¹ Sunday is a symbol of inherent power that stems back to Nimrod and his flight through the heavens protecting the inhabitants of the earth. Sunday in the Trinity also points to the power by which Christ raises Himself.

¹⁷² The Bishop of Reggio was the man who withstood the reformers at the council of Trent and stalled the reformation by saying, "If you claim to follow the Bible and the Bible alone then you should keep the Sabbath, because Sunday is nowhere found in Scripture." The reformers Bible-stand was proved to be hollow and they capitulated, and the integrity of the reformation was lost.

R.M Johnston sums up the Adventist dilemma well when he says:

“For while it is true that no formal statement of the doctrine can be found in the most reliable Biblical manuscripts, nevertheless a comparison of Scripture with Scripture makes any contrary teaching untenable.” (R. M. Johnston, Ministry, November 1964, *What Can We Know About the Holy Trinity?*)

The reasoning process here is that while the Trinity can't be found in Scripture, anything else would be untenable. Here is the heart of the issue. Adventism accepts the Trinity because it can't see any other way to preserve the Divinity of Christ and the Personality of the Spirit. I contend that in this book is presented a clear alternative that preserves the Divinity of the Son and the Personality of the Spirit and yet avoids the dangers of speculation brought about by a false concept of equality.

28. Seven Common Methods Used to Defend the Trinity

1. A Spiritual view of Father and Son as opposed to the Literal Position (Addressed in Chapters 23, 25, 26)

One of the key arguments used against a true Father and Son relationship is that it is too literal and is a superimposing of human concepts onto God. A true Father and Son relationship is seen as diminishing the equality of the Son with the Father. The central flaw of this argument is the failure to define the basis of equality. Power based equality is naturally assumed in exactly the same manner as William Miller assumed the Sanctuary to be the earth. As I have endeavoured to show in this book, the concept of equality reflected in power and position terms is a superimposing of human ideas onto the Godhead. I contend that as Miller's failure to correctly define the term Sanctuary led to severe disappointment, so our failure to correctly determine the nature of equality will do the same. Based on a power-performance view of equality, I concur that it is impossible to hold a literal view of the Father-Son relationship. This is a natural consequence. The second consequence is an altering of hermeneutical principles from a plain reading to a spiritualized reading, as we see evidenced below:

“Another important point involves how we interpret the Bible. Here the issue pertains to whether we should interpret some

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passages literally or whether we may treat them more figuratively. Maybe we could illustrate this way. While we often refer to Jesus as the Son and frequently call the first person of the Godhead the Father, do we really want to take such expressions in a totally literal way? Or would it be more appropriate to interpret them in a more metaphorical way that draws on selective aspects of sonship and fatherhood?" - "The Trinity" by Whidden, Moon and Reeve, Page 94

The authors' question was, do we need to take things in a literal way? The question I pose is, what drives the inclination to a metaphorical understanding, is it not a predetermination that the Trinity is correct?

"Is it not quite apparent that the problem texts become problems only when one assumes an exclusively literalistic interpretation of such expressions as "Father," "Son," "Firstborn," "Only Begotten," "Begotten" and so forth? Does such literalism go against the mainly figurative or metaphorical meaning that the Bible writers use when referring to the persons of the Godhead?" Ibid Page 106

The texts are only a problem if you pre-determine a Trinitarian view. The authors take incredible liberties to assume they know what the Bible writers were meaning and pronounce a figurative meaning in violation of Miller's rules to take the literal first before seeking a metaphorical meaning. If you elect to first use a metaphorical reasoning process to deal with Bible passages that don't suit your pre-determination, then any Bible doctrine that stands in your way can be brought to the position you want. The needless assumption of the metaphorical makes certain man's triumph over that which he is required to believe. This is the method used by Evangelicals to escape the Sabbath, by making it a spiritual rest only rather than a literal one.

"In their zeal to reject everything not found in the Bible, the "Christians" were betrayed by over literalism into interpreting the Godhead in terms of the human relationships suggested by the words "Son," "Father," and "begotten," that is, into a tendency to disparage the non-Biblical word "Trinity" and to contend that the Son must have had a beginning in the remote past." Questions on Doctrine, Page 47

Froom accuses some of the pioneers of interpreting the Godhead in human relational terms while he fails to realise that the Trinity can be

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easily seen as a human construct to support power equality, and thus the argument is flawed. Based on his metaphorical view of Scripture, Froom goes a step further when he writes:

“There is danger of limiting our idea of personality to bodily manifestations. It seems difficult to grasp the idea of personality apart from the tangible bodily form of humanity—existence with a limited, human, bodily shape. But personality and such corporeality are to be clearly distinguished, though they are often confused. Personality does not require the limitations of humanity.”¹⁷³

No Scriptural evidence is given to support this view, it is a philosophical leap from a metaphorical mindset. Apart from this it expresses the very sentiments that Kellogg expressed.¹⁷⁴

“The Doctrine of the Trinity. The word “begotten” *was* taken literally, [by the pioneers] which meant that Christ at some point in eternity proceeded from the Father, and was therefore subordinate to Him.” G Pfandl – The Doctrine of the Trinity among Seventh-day Adventists. Journal of the Adventist Theological Society Spring 2006. Page 165.

The assumption is made that a begotten Son automatically demands a subordinate inferior Christ. When the assumption is corrected, subordination is no longer an issue.

Early Adventists strove to be true to Scripture. When they read “first-born of every creature,” they took it at face value. Other Bible phrases, such as “only begotten Son of God,” also were

¹⁷³ L. E. Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter*, rev. ed., 1956

¹⁷⁴ “It is largely from Froom that the church has inherited its hermeneutic in interpreting the statements of Ellen White on the Father, Son and Spirit. He boasted at one time to R. A. Anderson, with whom he worked on the compilation *Evangelism*, “I am sure that we are agreed in evaluating the book ‘*Evangelism*’ as one of the great contributions in which the Ministerial Association had a part back in those days. You know what it did with men in the Columbia Union who came face to face with the clear, unequivocal statements of the Spirit of Prophecy on the Deity of Christ, personality of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and the like. They either had to lay down their arms and accept those statements, or else they had to reject the Spirit of Prophecy.” (Letter dated 18-1-1966).” Here we see some of the political motivation of Froom to shift the Denomination to a Trinity position based on a metaphorical view of Father and Son and a view of personality apart from a form or body.

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understood on a literal English level. – Merlin Burt, Journal of Adventist Theological Society page 128. Spring 2006.

Does the above author infer that early Adventists were naïve and that an informed face value reading of Scripture is a sign of weakness?

There is no direct Biblical reason to take a spiritual rather than a literal view of the Father and Son relationship, except that it makes it impossible to believe in a power-equality Trinity. Notice the pioneer principles for interpretation:

“How to know when a word is used figuratively. If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally, if not, figuratively.”
Rev. xii. 1,2. xvii. 3-7. Millers rules of interpretation XI

I contend that it does make good sense to understand the terms Father and Son just as they read. The only reason I can see not to, is to defend a predetermined non-biblical agenda. Opponents will create straw man arguments trying to push this into extreme literalism, such as Jesus is the true vine.¹⁷⁵ We can all laugh at this and say of course we don't take that to a literal extreme, because it does violence to the simple laws of nature. But comparing the term Son to Christ being the Vine or the door as a reason to avoid calling Jesus a literal Son is quite unnecessary.

“The Most Holy, containing the Ark of the Ten Commandments, was then opened for our Great High Priest to enter to make atonement for the cleansing of the Sanctuary. If we take the liberty to say there is not a literal Ark, containing the Ten Commandments in heaven, we may go only a step further and deny the literal City, and the literal Son of God. Certainly, Adventists should not choose the spiritual view, rather than the one we have presented. We see no middle ground to be taken.” James White, The Parable, p. 16}

James White understood the implications of a spiritual view on other doctrines. It is interesting that he contends that a spiritual view of the sanctuary could lead to a spiritual view of the literal Son of God, which he saw as a rejection of Adventism. Ellen White echoes her husband's view with a number of statements supporting a plain reading of scripture.

¹⁷⁵ Whidden, Moon, Reeve. The Trinity Page 94

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- A great work can be done by presenting to the people the Bible just as it reads. 5T 388
- If all would take the Scripture just as it reads, and open their hearts to understand the word... CS 92
- He is seeking to teach them that the Lord's way is always to be closely followed, that His word is to be taken as it reads, and that men are not to devise and plan according to their own judgment, irrespective of His counsel. {CT 353.1}
- Unaccustomed to accept God's Word exactly as it reads, or to allow it to be its own interpreter, they read it in the light of their maxims and traditions. So long had they neglected to study and contemplate the Bible that its pages were to them a mystery. They turned with aversion from the truth of God to the traditions of men. {CTr 226.3}

Dealing directly with the issue of a literal Father and Son, Ellen White is explicit on this issue.

- "God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son." 8T 268 (1909)
- "The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality." UL 367

In summary, a failure to define the basis of equality and give a strictly biblical framework for that definition of equality, forces a spiritualized method of interpreting scripture. Once this principle is established, the central principle of Protestantism (The Bible and the Bible Only) fails and tradition must triumph. It is important to remember that the breeding ground of the Trinity took place in Alexandria, a place well known for using a spiritualized method of interpretation. My appeal to my brethren is to examine the basis of equality in a scriptural context rather than assume the meaning of the term.

2. A Change in the Identity of Christ in the Incarnation (Addressed in Chapter 24)

The centre of this debate usually revolves around a discussion on the meaning and timing of “begotten”. Once a person is committed to a power-equality Trinity using a spiritualized method of interpretation, then obviously it is impossible to believe that Christ was begotten in eternity. The spiritualized principle once started must continue, and therefore not only must cause the terms Father and Son to be spiritualized but also the term begotten. The flow on effect begins. The spiritual view allows for two alternatives, a spiritual begetting in eternity or a spiritual begetting at the incarnation. In either case, it is a spiritual view that is presented. Notice the following sample statements.

“Some passages that seem to point to the position of subordination that Christ takes in relation to the Father could very well be speaking from the perspective of His incarnate state rather than His glorified status. “The Trinity” by Whidden, Moon and Reeve. Page 94

“However, as we will shortly find, there is no compelling evidence that the Son of God was “begotten” at any time before His incarnation.” Glyn Parfitt – The Trinity Book Page 45 in Manuscript.

“I believe John 5:26 refers to the life given to the Son during the incarnation, not to Christ receiving life from the Father back in eternity.” Erwin Gane – Personal Email 3/10/07

A belief in a begetting at the incarnation ultimately means a change in the nature of the relationship between Father and Son – Christ was not a Son before the incarnation and He became a son after the incarnation. This method isolates passages of scripture that identify Christ as the Son of God. When people point to those passages as evidence of Sonship, the cry goes up – “yes, but that is in the incarnation.” I addressed this issue in Chapter 24, but here will raise a few points from John 5.

John 5:18. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

This verse is used consistently in Trinitarian contexts to refer to the pre-existent divinity of Christ and as a reference proving that He is the second person of the Godhead. But what about the next verse?

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John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

This verse is consistently referred to as an incarnational reference. But what makes John 5:18 a reference to Christ's true existence and the next verse a reference to his incarnational work? Who decides? Without a consistent point of reference, everyone decides for themselves what verse refers to what segment.

Let's look at another example in John 5.

John 5:28,29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [Christ's] voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Christ is telling us that He possesses power to raise people from the dead, and that He will do it at the end of human history. Clearly, this is a reference to the power that Christ possesses, the power to give life. But the immediate verse following says this:

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

Is John 5:30 simply an incarnational reference? If we would allow the terms Father and Son to be our consistent point of reference, we would not even have to ask this question, because no segmentation is required, because any references to Father and Son reveal exactly who they are, not just what they do. Again, the Spirit of Prophecy is reasonably clear on this issue:

The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged

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our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?" Hebrews 1:1-5. God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.

Jesus said to the Jews: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. . . The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth." John 5:17-20.

Here again is brought to view the personality of the Father and the Son, showing the unity that exists between them. {8T 269.4}

Notice carefully that Ellen White opens this passage with a clear statement that the relation of Father and Son is clearly revealed in their relation to each other and their personality. She then refers to Hebrews 1:1-4 and then moves directly to John 5:17-20 where Christ says he can do nothing of himself and again restates that this is the relation of the Father and the Son. There is no segmenting of the verses, it is consistent all the way through. This shows that Ellen White uses a universal point of reference of Father and Son, not a segmented incarnational era verses pre-begotten era. Once this predetermination is removed and Scripture is read plainly, there is no issue here.

3. Confusion over the Term Mystery (Addressed in Chapter 23)

The use of the word mystery to describe God can lead to an immediate conflict of ideas. The Bible clearly tells us that salvation is directly linked to knowing God. (John 17:3) Ellen White says that in order to be like God, we must know Him aright.¹⁷⁶ There is no question that the Scriptures teach that we must know God's character in order to know Him. No one would argue against this fact. When we come to discuss some aspects of God's nature, like where does His power come from, or how does He

¹⁷⁶ Ministry of Healing 409.

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speak things into existence, or what is the substance of His body, none of this is revealed to us, it is a mystery. But there are clearly some aspects of His nature that we do understand, as Paul states:

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. NIV

How then do we divide the need to know His Character from the inability to understand certain aspects of His nature? Where is the dividing line? There is obviously a tension here. There are two dangers present. If we try and seek to understand the mysterious aspects of God's nature, we can very quickly fall into idolatry and develop a false concept of God. On the other hand, if we attribute as a mystery parts of God's nature that have been revealed or all of His character and person that we actually need to know, we are in danger of not knowing the essential part of God that is critical to our salvation.

When we use the terms Father and Son, are these terms knowable and understandable? Do these terms reflect the respective characters of Father and Son that we must know, or are they transient labels reflecting a Deity that we cannot really know? Secondly, is it important to know how the Father relates to the Son? Does their relationship have any bearing on how we should treat each other? Is not their relationship foundational to all relationships and how they should be conducted?

It is common knowledge for Bible students that names of individuals in the Bible were connected to their character. Ellen White reflects this view when she states:

Great significance was attached to the names given by Hebrew parents to their children. Often these stood for traits of character that the parent desired to see developed in the child. PK 481

Is it possible that this principle established by God and the representative of His kingdom could apply to the terms Father and Son? Are these terms reflective of character, personality and person, or are they simply functional, workable labels and metaphors to help us scratch the surface of a great mystery?

There certainly are mysteries concerning God that we do not understand, but a Trinity model creates extra-biblical mysteries that force a retreat to

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“mystery” as an only defense. The things that are revealed are for us and our children, and it is our duty to study them out and get the Bible answer. I think Raoul Dederen sums it up quite well:

“The difficulty is evident enough. A doctrine that affirms that God is one, and yet that there are three persons in God, must often bewilder the mind in its attempt to find a relevant and intelligible framework in which that seeming contradiction can be expressed and at the same time meet the average person's religious needs. No wonder that the reference to the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible has encouraged sardonic remarks to the effect that the whole doctrine is incomprehensible.” Raoul Dederen. *‘Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity,’* 1970. Andrews University.

And sometimes these remarks are not always sardonic but simply a cry of confusion and sadness that the doctrine of God has been made so hard to understand.

In dialogue with Erwin Gane, he expressed to me the following:

The problem arises, I believe, because of a misunderstanding of Jesus' teaching. John 14:9 says "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." Then He proceeded to say, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." Here is a very mysterious relationship. There is a unity of existence between the Father and the Son which is infinitely mysterious. ***They are One in a sense that human minds cannot grasp.*** So much so that Isa. 9:6 can refer to the Son as "Mighty God, Everlasting Father." And Col. 2:9 tells us that "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."

Gerhard Pfandl expresses it this way:

“God himself is a mystery, how much more the incarnation or the Trinity. However, that should not trouble us as long as the different aspects of these mysteries are clearly taught in Scripture. Even though we may not be able to comprehend logically the various aspects of the trinity, we need to try and understand as best as we can the scriptural teaching regarding it. All attempts to explain the Trinity will fall short, “especially when we reflect on the relation of the three persons to the divine essence ... all analogies fail us and we become deeply conscious of the fact that the Trinity is a mystery far beyond our comprehension. It is the incomprehensible glory of the Godhead.” Therefore, we do well to admit that “man cannot comprehend it and make it intelligible. It is intelligible in

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some of its relations and modes of manifestations, but unintelligible in its essential nature. ” G. Pfandl. *The Trinity in Scripture*, 1999.

If all attempts to explain the Trinity will fall short and it is far beyond our comprehension, why do we even have fundamentals about it? If we can't explain it, then we are bound to mislead people when we try to explain it. If we can't explain it, should there not be a measure of restraint against attacking those who might see this mystery from a different perspective? It's hard to be dogmatic about a mystery, isn't it? I believe this is why Ellen White says that each person should study this subject for themselves and come to their own conclusions.¹⁷⁷

I can certainly see how this could be a mystery from a Trinitarian point of view, but if the Father-Son relationship is beyond the comprehension of the human mind, where do we turn for a model of a perfect relationship to pattern after? Is the oneness of the Father-Son relationship so hard to understand? Again it must be conceded that there are aspects of this relationship we certainly don't understand, but is it mysterious to the point where we can't even identify with them? **Ellen White states clearly that the oneness between Father and Son can be understood, because it is the same as the oneness between Christ and the disciples.**

“Christ is one with the Father, but Christ and God are two distinct personages. Read the prayer of Christ in the seventeenth chapter of John, and you will find this point clearly brought out. How earnestly the Saviour prayed that His disciples might be one with Him as He is one with the Father. But the unity that is to exist between Christ and His followers does not destroy the personality of either. They are to be one with Him as He is one with the Father.” RH June 1, 1905.

So when Dr Gane says that God is one in a sense that we can't understand, he may have overlooked the above statement and the sentiments of John 17. Only the Trinity makes it mysteriously complex, and yet it does not need to be this complex. Nothing in the Bible demands such complexity; it is humans that demand the complexity because of our need to

¹⁷⁷ “I say, and have ever said, that I will not engage in controversy with any one in regard to the nature and personality of God. Let those who try to describe God know that on such a subject silence is eloquence. Let the Scriptures be read in simple faith, and let each one form his conceptions of God from his inspired word.” Spalding and Magan collection p. 329

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superimpose our presuppositions upon the Bible. Romans 1:20 states quite clearly that:

Romans 1:20 Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse;

Paul says that His invisible attributes are clearly perceived in the things that are made. I think that makes it fairly plain. If not, the John 17:3 formula for salvation becomes very problematic.

In the Sabbath School Lesson of April 10, 2008, Roy Adams states the following:

In John 10:30, for example, He declared: 'I and the Father are one' (NIV). The neuter form of the Greek used here for 'one' implies a union as close as our minds can conceive. Jesus and the Father are of one substance, one nature, yet not one and the same Person (in which case He would have used the masculine gender). If you have trouble plumbing the depths of all this, you have lots of company. The deeper you probe the subject, the more keenly you understand the depths of your ignorance.

Again, from a power equality point of view in the Trinity, this concept of oneness is indeed a mind boggling mystery. But from a perspective of the Son being in the image of the Father and receiving everything from Him and a sharing of a very close relationship, certainly we can say that the eternal Godhead can be understood by the things that are made. (Romans 1:20) It is the doctrine of the Trinity that creates the impossibilities to the point where I am asked to believe in something that I can't even comprehend nor understand. God says, "Let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). Again I state there is much we do not know about God that has not been revealed, but what has been revealed clearly states that there is a Father: the source of all; and His only begotten Son, who received an inheritance from the Father, so in Him dwells all the fullness of God; and that God is present with us as a person through the omnipresent Spirit. This is not complicated; actually it is rather straightforward and unpretentious. All of this is revealed in Scripture and is for us and our children (Deuteronomy 29:29).

My main concerns about the use of mystery language is its impact on the identity of God and our ability to relate to Him. Again in the Sabbath

School Lesson of April 10 2008, Roy Adams highlights the potential confusion of identity that can arise when we believe in the Trinity.

But imagine a situation in which the being we have come to know as God the Father came to die for us, and the one we have come to know as Jesus stayed back in heaven (we are speaking in human terms to make a point). Nothing would have changed, except that we would have been calling each by the name we now use for the other. That is what equality in the Deity means.

The point here is that the identity of the person is irrelevant, only the job matters. This must be the inevitable result of power equality.¹⁷⁸ It is also the inevitable result of a spiritualized view of God. Speaking in human terms, it would not matter if you called your father, mother, or your mother, father; the only thing that matters is what role they fulfill at the time. But this cuts across the heart of relational identity and the point of knowing someone. If a person changes in their identity as Son and as Father, then they cease to exist as they were; the connection is lost, and so is the blessing. I cannot accept such speculation, and reject it as an attack on my personal relationship with the Father and Son I have come to love and know through the Scriptures.

4. Performance Based Measuring of Deity (Addressed in Chapter 21)

This is the key issue in my mind and yet I have not found in any of the literature I have read that the word equal or equality means anything else than performance-based equality. No alternatives seem to have been perceived, let alone entertained.

In reading through Whidden, Moon and Reeve's book, the terms "Full Deity" of Christ are presented again and again in terms of the power that Christ possesses of himself.¹⁷⁹ It is his own powers that qualify Him as divine. Nowhere is the idea entertained that such power could be inherited and equality is in the relationship. I contend that equality can be seen

¹⁷⁸ We see this principle reflected in the human sphere with the drive for women's eldership and ordination. Identity as a woman is irrelevant, only the job matters, and men and women are completely interchangeable. The result will be utter identity and relational confusion. This is exactly what Satan wants.

¹⁷⁹ Whidden, Moon and Reeve, Pages 23-30

differently and the Deity of Christ preserved and actually enhanced in this model.

This power based equality is clearly stated in *Questions on Doctrine*.

(1) Christ is one with the Eternal Father—one in nature, equal in power and authority, God in the highest sense, eternal and self-existent, with life original, unborrowed, underived; and (2) that Christ existed from all eternity, distinct from, but united with, the Father, possessing the same glory, and all the divine attributes. *Questions on Doctrine* page 36.

Questions on Doctrine makes it clear that Christ's Divinity is unequivocally from His own resources and not in any way inherited from the Father. In personal discussions with some scholars I have been told exactly the same – Deity can only be recognized through self-originated inherent power and position. I contend that such a belief does not arise from Scripture but is rather forced onto Scripture. It is Lucifer not Christ who seeks equality through power and position. Christ's equality is assured in His relationship to the Father; He didn't need to prove it to Satan in the Temptation in the Wilderness and He doesn't need to prove it to us. We all can just accept the Word of the Father that Christ is His Beloved Son and it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell.¹⁸⁰

I quoted this before, but this statement provides the best example of identity destruction.

But imagine a situation in which the being we have come to know as God the Father came to die for us, and the one we have come to know as Jesus stayed back in heaven (we are speaking in human terms to make a point). Nothing would have changed, except that we would have been calling each by the name we now use for the other. ***That is what equality in the Deity means.*** [Emphasis mine] Sabbath School Lesson, April 10, 2008.

If we accept power-based equality, this statement must indeed be correct. But what are the implications? Identifications of individuals become meaningless, they can no longer represent who that person is. This

¹⁸⁰ Colossians 1:19

principle can open the door to role identity neutering and confusion of how we relate to each member of the Godhead.

Vance Ferrell continues this principle in the following statement:

People confuse the nature of the Godhead with Their work. Learning about the individual mission of each member to save mankind, we are tempted to imagine that Their individual activities and work for mankind explain the nature and inner attributes of each of Them. Yet we are limited by our language. So in identifying each member of the Godhead, in this book we will speak of Them as the Father, the Son or Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The problem here is that these names identify Their work, not Their nature. Vance Ferrell, *Defending the Godhead*, Page 7

Vance Ferrell indicates, like Roy Adams, that the terms Father and Son do not reflect their identity but their work. Can it not be seen that this is identity destruction, that this actually makes it impossible to know the members of the Godhead? The answer comes: but God is a mystery beyond our comprehension. This must make God ultimately unknowable, and this is the genius of the Trinity doctrine – to make a doctrine that passes as a means of remembering God that actually leads to forgetting Him. It is my observation that while those of us who grew up in the modern era simply ask the question “Is it right?” for those of us brought up in a post-modern environment where relational elements have become increasingly important, the Trinity is going to continue to come under fire as not meeting the relational needs of people. This is apart from the fact it is not explicitly stated in the Bible and doctrinally suspect.

I could cite several more examples of this power-performance definition of Godness, but I think it unnecessary, as it appears to be commonly accepted as a universal principle of determining Deity. I reject this principle on the basis that this methodology is not supported in Scripture.

5. Conducting the Discussion According to the Terms of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

It is quite amazing to me that many in our church would accept the Nicene and Athanasian Creedal statements as a point to work forward from and a legitimate context for a discussion of the Godhead. These creeds were introduced in a period of wholesale apostasy, and as these creeds were formulated in the prophetic period of Pergamos, I consider

them highly suspect. In his book “Understanding the Trinity”, Max Hatton begins chapter one with quoting the Athanasian Creed.¹⁸¹ While he modifies some aspects of it, it is his starting point. For anyone who studies the history of the development of these creeds, it must be understood that God had no hand in formulating them and our Pioneers certainly put no stock in these Church Fathers.

Yet another step in the apostasy was the adoption of the heathen day of the sun—Sunday—as a festival day. So general did this become that, even before A.D. 200, one of the apostasy—even now one of the "church Fathers"—has reported that "others suppose that the sun is the God of the Christians, because it is a well-known fact that we pray towards the east, or because we make Sunday a day of festival."—Tertullian. RH, A.T. Jones, April 17, 1900

There is a more subtle form of dragging the Godhead debate back to the apostasy of the 3rd and 4th centuries, and that is the continuing use of labels such as “Arian” and “Semi-Arian”. Whether one believes the creeds or not, to invoke these terms is to immediately set the stage of orthodoxy and non-orthodoxy in the context of the Nicean and Athanasian creeds. It seems quite odd to me that on the one hand some Adventists will claim they reject the Catholic Trinity, and yet on the other hand they will still employ the labels that arose out of the Catholic formulation of the Trinity. Why not use the term “semi-Trinitarian”? It makes as much sense as “semi-Arian”.

A third issue that I find interesting is that many Adventist scholars will favourably quote works from contemporary protestant authors concerning the Godhead. I find it difficult to conceive that someone who believes that the human soul is immortal and who also believes that God burns sinners in hell forever could have any right conception of God.¹⁸² To my mind, these authors worship and speak of a god that I do not acknowledge, nor will worship; therefore to favourably quote their works and echo their sentiments might appear to be good scholarship, but in actuality it is bad practice that leads to drunkenness from the wine of Babylon.

¹⁸¹ Max Hatton, Understanding the Trinity, Page 13

¹⁸² This is not a reason to blame or attack individual authors, it is simply the legacy they have been handed from earlier church fathers and their own creedal traditions.

6. Making Assumptions. (Addressed in Chapter 27)

When it comes to truth, is it wise to assume things not stated in Scripture? The Church does admit that the doctrine of the Trinity is exactly that – an assumption.

“While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, *it is assumed as a fact* by Bible writers and mentioned several times. Only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity.” (Adventist Review Vol. 158 No. 31, 1981, P. 4) (Emphasis Supplied)

“Although the Old Testament does not explicitly teach that God is triune, it alludes to a plurality within the Godhead.” Seventh-day Adventists Believe ... A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines, 1988. R & H Publishing Assoc. p.22.

Fernando Canale is correct when he states:

“Because human philosophy is called to be subject to the Bible, and since divine philosophy is already available in the Scriptures, our understanding of God must stand free from human speculations.” (Fernando L. Canale, the Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia Volume 12, page 105, ‘Doctrine of God.)

But later he appears to make a statement that completely denies his previous statement:

“The concept of the Trinity, namely the idea that the three are one, is not explicitly stated but only assumed.” (Ibid, page 138)

Many would agree that it is a calculated human assumption based on what appears to be correct, but in the end it must be conceded that it is human speculation. H. Maldwyn Hughes, the very first principal of Wesley House, a Methodist theological College, acknowledges this speculation when he states:

“The doctrine of the Trinity is not primarily a speculative doctrine. It is a speculative construction of materials provided by revelation and Christian experience. The definition has stood the test of time, mainly because it is believed that the Church was divinely guided in framing it.” (H. Maldwyn Hughes, M. A., D. D. Christian foundations, An introduction to Christian doctrine, page 141, fourth edition, July 1933)

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Some may quibble about this being a Methodist perspective, but Adventist Scholars freely quote evangelical scholars to make their points concerning the Trinity. Many of these scholars freely admit that the Trinity is not a Bible based doctrine:

“Exegetes and theologians today are in agreement that the Hebrew Bible does not contain a doctrine of the Trinity, even though it was customary in past dogmatic tracts on the Trinity to cite texts like Genesis 1:26, “Let us make humanity in our image, after our likeness” (see also Gn. 3:22, 11:7, Is. 62-3) as proof of plurality in God.” (Encyclopedia of Religion, Trinity, Volume 15, page 54, 1987)

It also says later;

“Further, exegetes and theologians agree that the New Testament also does not contain an explicit doctrine of the trinity.” (Ibid)

While some scholars might disagree with this assessment, the majority appear to admit it. The question must be asked – Is this the way we should form Bible doctrine?

Again, Whidden, Moon and Reeve rely on strong clues rather than explicit statements when they say:

“Probably **the strongest clues to such a divine triunity** occur in the famous gospel commission that Jesus gave the church in its baptismal formula: ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Matt. 28:19).” The Trinity, by Jerry Moon, Woodrow Whidden, & John W. Reeve, published by R & H 2002, p.32. (Chapter entitled “The Strongest Biblical Evidence for the Trinity”)

The strongest clues are of course not explicit statements. Using a methodology of strongest clues for that which you want to find can lead to statements like the following:

“But what about direct prayer to the Holy Spirit? While we have no clear example of or direct command to pray to the Holy Spirit in Scripture, doing so does have, in principle, some implicit biblical support.... It only seems logical that God’s people can pray directly to and worship the Holy Spirit. (The Trinity, Page 273)

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Wow, this is a big call. Even though the Bible does not command it, these men feel it is ok to pray directly to the Holy Spirit. Is this a safe biblical principle? I think Richard Rice sums it up best when he says:

“The role of the trinity in a doctrine of God always raises questions. One reason is that the word itself does not appear in the Bible, nor is there any clear statement of the idea. But the Bible does set the stage for its formulation, and the concept represents a development of biblical claims and concepts. So even though the doctrine of the trinity is not part of what the Bible itself says about God, it is part of what the church must say to safeguard the biblical view of God.” *The Reign of God, An Introduction to Christian Theology from a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective.* by Richard Rice. 1985. Andrews Uni Press.

The admission is plain. The Trinity is a device that the church felt it must construct to safeguard what they believed the Bible tries to say about God. This is a fairly clear case of tradition over Scripture and the wisdom of men being wiser than God.

Another assumption:

No informed Trinitarian has ever said that 3 persons = 1 Person. What Trinitarians really do say is that what we can only describe as three Persons all exist within the one substance. The Three Persons are therefore, the One God. (Understanding the Trinity, Page 133)

Again, this is a big call and no scriptural support for it. I think many thinking Trinitarians would cringe at the above statement and I do know of at least one who calls it heresy.¹⁸³

Here is another statement:

Although the word Trinity is not found in the Bible (neither is the word incarnation), the teaching it describes is clearly found there. Briefly defined, the doctrine of the Trinity stands for the concept that “God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.” (The Trinity in Scripture by Gerhard Pfandl June 1999)

¹⁸³ Vance Ferrell, *Defending the Godhead.* Chapters 4 and 5

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Again there is the admission that it is not explicitly stated and yet is found in Scripture. Is this a safe procedure for a key doctrine of the Adventist Church?

One of the most fascinating reads is Vance Ferrell's description of the Heavenly Council and how each member of the Godhead decided on the roles and how the three of them worked everything out:

Returning now to that distant past. The three members of the Godhead had to figure out a way to solve three inherent problems:

The first problem was that the Godhead had such immense power, authority, and intellect. —The angels, the inhabitants of the other worlds, and humans on earth would have a difficult time relating to Them and loving Them. Although I like the little wild animals which live around my country home, they live in constant fear of me. Recognizing that I seem to have immense abilities and power which they cannot begin to understand, they are apprehensive.

The Godhead recognized that They would later face this same problem when They created such greatly subordinate beings. How could They express the great depth of Their love for those creatures and convince them of it?

The second problem was the fact that there were three in the Godhead. It is difficult to identify with three leaders. Think about that for a moment. (For example, how would fallen man go about praying to three Gods?) There was need for a special pattern, so humans would look to one sovereign God as Lord of all in their lives.

The third problem was that each of the members of the Godhead needed a definite name by which Their creatures could identify and partly understand them. Keep in mind that each was fully divine with all the powers of the other two; yet They needed separate names.

While each member of the Godhead, being infinite, had all power, each maintained a position and did a work which was different than the others. This was not difficult to do, since one was already the supreme One. Another was the beloved Son. The third was the

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Holy Spirit. Their positions and actions would solve each of the three problems mentioned above.¹⁸⁴

This is highly speculative and of course not found in the Bible.¹⁸⁵ Once you are no longer bound to Scripture, it becomes very simple to defend your position and you also can become very creative. Are we really *Sola Scriptura* in our beliefs?

7. Premise Forcing EGW Statements to Support the Trinity. (Addressed in Chapter 15)

This method is common and was employed by Froom when putting the compilation ‘Evangelism’ together. I find it interesting that while the church does not generally believe in using Ellen White for doctrinal purposes, in the history of the Trinity she is pointed out as the key figure that shifted the church’s doctrine into a Trinitarian view of the Godhead. If the doctrine was not a popular one, like the investigative judgment for example, outsiders looking at our history could accuse us of getting our belief of the Trinity from Ellen White rather than the Bible, an interesting thought.

Ellen White makes many statements. Some certainly seem to indicate a view that reflects the Trinity and these are regularly quoted, but what about the many that are completely contrary? The only person I have read that has made a serious attempt to defend the Trinity using every statement of Ellen White is Vance Ferrell. I commend him for his effort, but the twists and turns required to make it all fit makes for a very interesting read.

For others Ellen White is convenient, they can quote her when she agrees with them and call her human when she does not. I address this issue in detail throughout the manuscript because it was the conflicting statements of EGW that first raised my interest in this subject. Of course, those who oppose the Trinity often do a similar process of using Ellen White to defend their position and ignore statements that seem to support the Trinity. I don’t accept this method for discovering and debating doctrine, instead aiming to use Miller’s rules to get a more systematic picture.

Whether we like it or not, whether we call her human or a lesser light or not doctrinal, as long as we encourage people to read EGW, this issue is going to keep surfacing. It will not simply disappear. She makes too many statements

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, Page 10,11

¹⁸⁵ I found this high level of speculation from Vance Ferrell disappointing for I have found his work in other areas to be quite good.

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that don't support the current view of the Godhead. So it appears the prophet that launched us into the fellowship and respect of Evangelical Christianity through the revelations of her statements on the Trinity, is now like an old anchor that is a bit irritating. Will we let the anchor hold, or cut it loose and let our spiritualized views smash us on the rocks of ecumenism?

29. Christ as Originator or Representative

There are a number of places in Scripture where the differences between a life source model (that reveals Christ as Begotten) and a Trinitarian model (that depicts Christ as unbegotten,¹⁸⁶ possessing His own resources and sharing them with the Father) become most apparent. Notice the following passages:

Isaiah 43:10 Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.

Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God.

Isaiah 44:24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

Isaiah 45:5,6 I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else.

These passages present a challenge to both views. Each passage presents as a single individual being mentioned. The terms:

“beside me there is no saviour:”

“besides me there is no God”

“spreadeth abroad the earth by myself”

“there is none beside me”

are unequivocal and isolationist, everything is excluded beyond the single individual speaking. The Bible references *Father*, *Son* and *Spirit* as possessing the attributes of Deity, and worship of both Father and Son are

¹⁸⁶ Many Trinitarians would deny that they believe Christ is unbegotten. Many see Christ as spiritually begotten to be a Son for the purposes of the gospel, while others see Christ as begotten in the incarnation. In either case, this is not a true state of being begotten. To be spiritually begotten is like saying you believe in the rest of the Sabbath without the need for keeping the weekly Sabbath. It is only something spiritual.

directly mandated in Scripture. Whidden, Moon and Reeve reflect some of the challenges in grappling with these passages when they state concerning Isaiah 43:10,11

...if we are to take seriously the clear testimony of the New Testament writers that Jesus is God, is to conclude that whoever the Lord, YHWH, or Jehovah who speaks in Isaiah 43:10,11 is, His Identity must include that of Jesus of the New Testament who claimed to be in some sense the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Whidden, Moon and Reeve, *The Trinity*, Page 48

This is an important point. If Jesus is not included in the passages of Isaiah 43:10,11; 44:6 and 45:5,6, then how can Christ's claim to being equal with God and worshipped as God be sustained?^{187 188} On the other hand if Christ is included, how do we account for the unequivocal isolationist language? Would it not have been a lot simpler for the passages to say "There is no God besides Father, Son and Spirit in one indivisible union"?

A. Making "I" mean "We" and "Me" mean "Us"

In respect of a Trinity model, one way to solve this problem is to make "I" mean "We". One member of the Godhead speaks for all of them and there is in fact no differentiation between members. This is where we have three persons in one substance¹⁸⁹ or we have a blending of the three persons in a mysterious unity that can't be fully comprehended.¹⁹⁰ The two concepts are very similar and the end result is the same: A blended indivisible mysterious unity that allows one to speak for all without focus on who is actually speaking.

Firstly: To accept this, there must be a linguistic sacrifice: "I" no longer means "I" in the sense of English (and Hebrew) but rather "We", and "Me" can't mean "Me" it must mean "Us".

Secondly: There must also be a loss of importance as to which member of the Godhead is actually speaking. Could knowing who is actually

¹⁸⁷ Phil 2:6; Matt 28:17; John 5:18

¹⁸⁸ It is interesting to note that the Adventist Bible Commentary completely by-passes the difficulties of identification in the Isaiah passages

¹⁸⁹ Max Hatton Understanding the Trinity Page 133

¹⁹⁰ Erwin Gane, Personal Email "Here is a very mysterious relationship. There is a unity of existence between the Father and the Son which is infinitely mysterious."

speaking be important? Is there a potential, through the blending process, that the individuality of each member could be lost in certain texts? I guess for some this is not an important point as they are all the same in character anyway, but for those of us that actually are interested in a personal relationship with the individual person Jesus and the individual person of the Father, it certainly is important. The difference could be akin to the receiving of the usual Christmas family letter. Usually one member of the family writes about the whole family and for some it is irrelevant who is writing as long as you get the information, but for others who know them well and are interested in more detail, they are actually interested to know who wrote the letter.

If the Isaiah texts speak only of the Father as many Non-Trinitarians claim, then it does appear to make it impossible to harmonise such texts with the New Testament claims of Jesus that He is God. And it is clear that Jesus has full rights to be called God and to be worshipped as God.¹⁹¹

Is there a way to read these passages simply without sacrificing linguistics or denying the full deity of Christ?

B. Power-Based Equality Causes Confusion

I believe the key lies in our understanding of the equality of Godhead members and the life source flow from the Godhead. In chapter 21 we looked at the two different measuring rods used to determine Deity. A performance based measuring system determines Deity by inherent power and unlimited existence, measured by time and eternity. In a reply to me concerning my earlier draft of this manuscript it was stated, “Equality of the members of the Godhead is by virtue of their possession of inherent characteristics.”¹⁹²

This natural line of reasoning creates the underlying assumption for how we should understand Ellen White when she states that Christ has life original (from himself) and unborrowed (from any source outside himself) and underived (from any source outside himself). This interpretation of the passage is mandated by the demand that equality be based on inherent characteristics regarding life, power and existence.

¹⁹¹ Hebrews 1:8; Revelation 5:13.

¹⁹² Barry Harker. A Response to “The Return of Elijah” Page 7

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This type of equality demands that there is a Divine life source that the Father possesses and a Divine life source that the Son possesses, and in the equality of these possessions we see the basis of a unity from which springs love, unity and oneness. The two life sources (or three when we include the Spirit) create the natural potential for autonomous and individual action. We see the fruit of this potential in the way some Adventist Scholars view the Creation.

On His own [Speaking of Christ] He stretched out the heavens and by Himself He spread out the earth. How can anyone claim that Yahweh had a foreman (or someone similar) as a helper? There is no contradiction for those who know the truth about the Trinity. Jesus is a member of the Godhead and as such is the Creator.¹⁹³

The author of this statement believes that Christ performed the *work* of creation alone. This is an explanation for Isaiah 44:24 and is the natural fruit of power based equality. Did Christ *act* alone?

Hebrews 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

The context of Hebrews 1:2 would indicate that the Father made the worlds by His Son. But what about the following text further on:

Hebrews 1:9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

This text reveals that the Father speaks of the Son laying the foundation of the Earth and the heavens were the work of Christ's hands. Do Hebrews 1:2 and 1:9 Contradict? Do we change the meaning of the word "made" to mean "plan with"? Do we strip the word "made" of action?

¹⁹³ Max Hatton, Understanding the Trinity Page 63. Note the author does not deny the Father's part in the creation, but the action of Creation was alone performed by the Son.

C. Father is Source and Christ is Manifesting Channel

I suggest that this apparent contradiction is created by the power equality required to deem a person of the Godhead Divine. Notice the Life source ideas in these passages:

“But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

“God has sent his Son to communicate his own life [The Father’s Life] to humanity. Christ declares, "I live by the Father," *my life and his being one*. (Ellen G. White, Home Missionary, 1st June 1897, ‘A call to the work’)

As legislator, Jesus exercised the authority of God; his commands and decisions were supported by the Sovereignty of the eternal throne. The glory of the Father was revealed in the Son; Christ made manifest the character of the Father. He was so perfectly connected with God, so completely embraced in his encircling light, that he who had seen the Son, had seen the Father. His voice was as the voice of God. {RH, January 7, 1890 par. 2}

These passages from Ellen White make it clear that it is the Father’s life that flows through the Son. The Son shares the Father’s life. This fact of course makes a power-based equality impossible, but I suggest that such equality concepts originated in the mind of Satan, not God.

If we allow the Father to be the source and Christ to have received all the fullness of the life, then Christ can act as representative channel of the Father rather than be required to be the originator of action independently. So what about the texts in Isaiah?

Isaiah 43:10,11 Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me,

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and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.

Christ states in John 5:19,20 that He does nothing of himself, but what He sees the Father do. And the Father shows Him everything that He does and the Son follows through. In this light, we see Christ as the representative of the Father speaking concerning the Father, who is the source of all things. Is Christ left out of this equation? No, because this text addresses source, not channel. The texts of Isaiah make sense in the context of this very important passage from Ellen White:

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality.” UL 367 (1905)

Is Ellen White here saying that Jesus is not truly God? Of course not, but she is saying He is not the source, the originator, this is the Father. Ellen White’s quote above is a reflection of what Paul says regarding Source and Channel:

1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, **of whom** [source] are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, **by whom** [channel] are all things, and through whom we live.

The Father is presented as source – “of whom are all things” and Christ is presented as channel – “through whom are all things”¹⁹⁴

This life source confusion is highlighted again regarding Isaiah 43:11 when it is claimed:

Furthermore, the case becomes even more compelling when the Lord goes on to say that “besides me there is no saviour”...it must mean that the Messiah Jesus of the New Testament is the Lord Jehovah of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah¹⁹⁵

But the Scripture says:

2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

¹⁹⁴ For more on this see the books *The Divine Pattern* and *The Divine Pattern of Life* on maranathamedia.com

¹⁹⁵ Whidden, Moon, Reeve, 48.

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This passage indicates that the Father is the Saviour, reconciling the world to himself through Christ. The Father is the Source, Christ is the Channel that manifests this saving power of the Father.

1 Corinthians 1:24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

In the above verse Christ is called the power of God. This does not mean God the Father has no power, rather it says that Christ is the channel for the Father's power. It also calls Him the wisdom of God. This does not mean the Father is not wise, but rather the Son of God is the channel and manifestation of the Father's wisdom.

Even the Revelation of Jesus Christ given to John was sourced from the Father. Everything finds its source in the Father. Everything that Christ does finds its source in the Father. Christ has received everything from the Father. One reason the church rejects this is because it either knowingly or unknowingly holds to a false basis of equality. I state again: this type of equality finds its source in the mind of Satan, not God. Satan was the one who stated that he would ascend, he would exalt his throne, he would sit upon the mount of the congregation, he would be like the most High. Clearly it is Satan who originated power based equality.

When we understand source and channel concepts, the Bible reads more plainly and simply. Take for instance the sending of the Angel to the Israelites.

Exodus 23:20-23 Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name *is* in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.

Christ is the one speaking here. He speaks of sending an angel and that His name is in Him. We also know that Christ is the angel mentioned.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ 1 Corinthians 10:4 "...for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." The confusion of life source by evangelicals is also a possible reason why they reject Christ being Michael the Archangel.

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Does Christ speak of Himself in another form? This makes things complicated. But if Christ is speaking as a representative of the Father and what the Father will do through His Son as the Angel that follows them, the passage is plain. We must remember that Christ speaks what He hears the Father speak and as the WORD of God, He communicates it to us.

So in the context of Life source coming from the Father, all of these texts in Isaiah fall into place. These texts point to the Father as the source. Christ is not excluded as God because He shared/inherited the Father's Life and is worshipped as God and all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him. All this is possible once we let go of power-based equality concepts that find their origination in Isa 14:12-14.

30. Sealed with the Father's Name

A. The Parable of the Virgins

The parable of the ten virgins found in Matthew 25 reveals some interesting light on what distinguishes the wise from the foolish virgins. The obvious difference between the wise and the foolish is the supply of oil that the wise virgins had. The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit which sustained the wise virgins in following the Bridegroom to the marriage supper.

The second factor that distinguished the wise from the foolish virgins was the fact that the admittance to the marriage feast is determined by whether the guests knew the Bridegroom. Getting to know someone obviously takes time, and the foolish virgins did not use the time they had to get to know the Bridegroom.

Is there a connection between having a supply of oil and knowing the Bridegroom? Jesus made it clear to the disciples the connection between Himself and the operation of the Spirit. We touched on this issue in chapter 22, but will revisit it again here.

John 14:16-18 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth

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with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Jesus said that He is the one that would come to us. Through the Spirit Christ abides with us. Notice again these statements:

“The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be.”
8MR p. 49

“Let them study the seventeenth of John, and learn how to pray and how to live the prayer of Christ. He is the Comforter. He will abide in their hearts, making their joy full. His words will be to them as the bread of life...” RH Jan 27, 1903

“As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving Jesus the Comforter.” 19MR 297

B. Knowledge of the Bridegroom Comes through Jesus Our Comforter

Jesus is portrayed as the Comforter and it is simply explained to us how this takes place.

“It is not essential for you to know and be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and the Comforter is the Holy Ghost, “the Spirit of truth, which the Father shall send in My name.” “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” [John 14:16, 17].” *This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.* 14MR 179

The Spirit referred to in John 14:16-18 is the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ. It is through the supply of oil that the virgins come to know Christ. It is claimed that the Holy Spirit as a separate third person facilitates this process of getting to know Christ, but such a belief contradicts the Bible, the Spirit of prophecy and common sense. The basic principle of intimacy and drawing close to someone does not occur in the context of a third party that is a separate and distinct personal being. In other words, a man cannot develop a strong sense of intimacy with his wife through his best man; that is adultery!

Satan has introduced theories to obscure Jesus from our view as our Comforter, and it has left our church ready to die.

“The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them...” RH August 26 1890.

The reception of the Spirit comes from a true knowledge of the Father and the Son. In chapter 3, we made the point that receiving the life of God could only occur by a correct identification of both God and man¹⁹⁷, and that identification process was established through the Commandments of God.¹⁹⁸

It must be self-evident that a belief in a True Father, His Son and their omnipresent Spirit is a completely different God to a concept of a co-eternal Trinity. The ramifications of the different beliefs are tremendous and are mutually exclusive. Many people suggest this is a small issue. Such a statement reveals a lack of understanding of the issues involved and is completely reckless.

C. Israel’s Striking Example of Worshipping False Gods

On the borders of Canaan, Israel was seduced into worshipping a false god.

Numbers 25:1-3 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

¹⁹⁷ “This lie (Satan’s lie in the garden) also destroyed man’s concept of God as his fountain, his *treasure* and centre of his life. In this terrible state, man could no longer communicate effectively with God because man had lost the identity of both parties: himself and God.” Page 30

¹⁹⁸ “Romans 7:10 tell us that the commandments were ordained to life. 1 John 3:4 says that sin is the transgression of the Law and Rom 6:23 says the wages of sin is death. Therefore the commandments were given to protect our life. This means that if the commandments protect our life and our life comes through communion with God, then the Commandments should reveal the true *identity* of both God and man and also indicate the boundaries of that communication. *Return of Elijah* Page 45

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How could Israel, right on the borders of Canaan, suddenly turn around and become engaged in the worship of false gods? These things have been written for our admonition.

“At first there was little intercourse between the Israelites and their heathen neighbors, but after a time Midianitish women began to steal into the camp. Their appearance excited no alarm, and so quietly were their plans conducted that the attention of Moses was not called to the matter. It was the object of these women, in their association with the Hebrews, to seduce them into transgression of the law of God, to draw their attention to heathen rites and customs, and lead them into idolatry. These motives were studiously concealed under the garb of friendship, so that they were not suspected, even by the guardians of the people.” PP 454

The Adventist church, for over 50 years from its inception, had little intercourse with the daughters of Babylon. But after a time, some of our men began to train in non-Adventist institutions. These institutions worshipped a Trinity God and believed in the immortality of the soul. How could such association enhance our standing? Added to this was the dialog between our church leaders and the evangelicals Walter Martin and Donald Barnhouse. In this association the church emerged with a strengthened view of the Trinity and a different view of the nature of Christ. Is it so difficult to see that Adventism has been influenced by Babylon right when she is on the borders of Canaan?

Many of our scholars would scoff at such “silly notions”, but such men are usually trained in the same such institutions. Many of our own institutions have adopted, in greater or lesser degrees, the poisonous influences of the evangelical world. Adventism has repeated the history of Israel and is now worshipping a false god after the manner of the daughters of Babylon that surround us.

D. Can’t be Sealed in the Worship of a False God

Note carefully the difference between what is written in the foreheads of the 144,000 and what is written on the forehead of the woman that rides the beast.

Revelation 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, **having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.**

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Revelation 17:4-5 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: **And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

For any worshipper, that which is placed at the centre of their thinking is the God that they worship and serve. Why do the 144,000 have the name of the Lamb’s Father written into their foreheads? Why is not the Trinity, the triune God, written into the foreheads of the believers?

In contrast, the woman who rides the beast has her mind filled with a mystery and with Babylon or confusion. The god she serves is a total mystery and causes great confusion, and this confusion leads to great abomination as revealed in Romans chapter one. In contrast to a God who is known through the creation, the harlot’s god is a confusing mystery.

Whenever we stray from the worship of the true God, the mind is filled with a mystery, a false system of worship that is an abomination to God. Notice the following:

Jeremiah 2:11-13 Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which *are* yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for *that which* doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Israel was often seduced to the worship of false gods. What makes us think we are immune from such possibilities?

We notice in Jeremiah 2:13, that when Israel forsook God, they were cut off from the fountain of living water. The Spirit of God no longer flowed to them because they had rejected the true knowledge of God. In the next chapter, God states the following:

Jeremiah 3:3 Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.

A failure to recognize the true God breaks our connection to the source of life and it prevents the latter rain from occurring. Notice the procedure that occurs during the time of the shaking when God’s people pray for the Spirit:

“Those who were bowed before the throne would offer up their prayers and look to Jesus; then He would look to His Father, and appear to be pleading with Him. *A light would come from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the praying company. Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from the Father to the Son, and from the Son it waved over the people before the throne.*” EW 54,55

The light came to God’s people from the Father to the Son to the believers. If we don’t truly believe that God is the Father and He has a Son, but rather believe in a Trinity, then if He poured out His power to such individuals, God would confirm their belief in a false god. This will never happen. The latter rain can only come when we know the only true God and Jesus Christ. The mystery of the Trinity is a false God that causes God’s people to be charged with having a whore’s forehead. Israel was never considered Babylon, but she was considered a whore when she forsook the worship of the true God.

E. False Worship Exposes Believers to Destruction.

The blessing of God to Israel was always dependent on them keeping His commandments. A failure to observe the commandments brought a curse. The commandments are a hedge of protection, and when that hedge is broken then God’s people are vulnerable to destruction.

Deuteronomy 28:1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

Deuteronomy 28:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

The Co-eternal Trinity sourced from the daughters of Babylon is not the God of the Bible and as such is a violation of the first commandment. A violation of the commandments breaks the covenant that God’s people

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have with Him. When God’s people break the covenant, then the following takes place:

Isaiah 24:5-6 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, **broken the everlasting covenant**. (6) Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

We noted earlier that God’s people are sealed with the Father’s name in their foreheads. God’s followers recognize the Father as the great source of all and recognize that His Son has inherited everything from Him. In recognizing the true God, they have a correct connection with the source of life and can receive the much needed oil to go into the wedding feast. Those who do not worship this God are exposed to the slaughter of the avenging angels of Ezekiel 9.

Ezekiel 9:1-6 He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man *with* his destroying weapon in his hand. (2) And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them *was* clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. (3) And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which *had* the writer's inkhorn by his side; (4) And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. (5) And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: (6) Slay utterly old *and* young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom *is* the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which *were* before the house.

Who is represented by the avenging angels?¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ For more on this see the booklet *The Slaughter Weapons of Ezekiel 9* on maranathamedia.com

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Unless they repent, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work and in holding up the hands of sinners in Zion, they will never receive the mark of God's sealing approval. **They will fall in the general destruction of the wicked, represented by the work of the five men bearing slaughter weapons.** 3T 267

How does this take place?

When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. **The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent.** God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. **The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.** {GC 614.1}

Those who refuse to worship the true God will be sent a strong delusion that they should believe a lie.

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Dear friend, these are extremely serious issues. We must have the Father's name written in our foreheads, not the mark of the mysterious Trinity. To avert the danger our church has exposed itself to, we must confess our sin of breaking His commandments and denying His Son. We must plead for time before Satan is given permission to send his avenging angels to come and slaughter the faithless inhabitants of Jerusalem. We must sigh and cry for our city and our brothers and sisters that are engaged in false worship.

There are plenty who point out the sins of the church, but it is often with sneering contempt; God's true people love the church and are in anguish over its condition. They still love their leaders and plead with God to help them to see the great danger we are in. Notice that those who are sealed are still in

the city when the sealing takes place. They have not moved out of the city to a “holier” place. They stay in the city and sigh and cry and plead with God and anguish over their own sins as well as those of their brethren.

Let us acknowledge that we have all slumbered and slept. The whole church has been seduced by the Trinity delusion, both the wise and foolish virgins. Let us return to the God of our fathers and plead to be sealed with the seal of the Father.

Section 6 – Restoration of Relational-Based-Thinking by Elijah

31. *Made in His Image and Likeness*

A. Definitions of Image and Likeness

Genesis 1:26-27 **And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:** and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

God made man in His image. Let us unpack these two verses to see what more we can learn. The word *image* in the Hebrew is ‘tselem’, it means:

1. to *shade*; as in the shadow of a figure;
2. *resemblance*;
3. hence a representative *figure or idol*.

Man was made in the resemblance or figure of God. The other word that is used is *likeness*. This word in Hebrew is ‘d’muth’, it means:

1. *resemblance*;
2. *model*;
3. *shape*;
4. adverbially *like*: *fashion*, like (-ness, as), manner, similitude.

So man was made in the model, shape or same fashion as God. Let us look through Scripture to see how these two words are used. The word *image* is used 15 times in the Old Testament.

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- The first two (Gen 1:26,27) refer to man made in God's image.
- The 3rd one (Gen 5:3) refers to Seth made in Adam's image.
- The 4th text (Gen 9:6) relates to the sacredness of life because we are made in God's image.
- The rest refer to idols.

With reference to the word *likeness*, it occurs 26 times in 23 verses.

- The first two (Genesis 1:26; 5:1) refer to man made in God's likeness.
- The 3rd (Genesis 5:3) one refers to Seth made in Adam's likeness.
- The 4th (2 Kings 16:10) refers to an altar that Ahaz copied from Tiglathpileser. He made it in the same likeness.
- The next (2 Chronicles 4:3) refers to the brass oxen that held the laver in Solomon's temple. They were in the likeness or similitude of oxen.
- David uses it (Psalm 58:4) to compare the lies of the wicked to the poison of serpents.

I think by now we get a fairly good idea about what image and likeness mean, although I think the English is fairly straightforward.

B. "Our Likeness" – Father Speaking to Son

So when God said "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness," who was talking and who was listening? Notice the following statements:

"After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. **And now God says to his Son, 'Let us make man in our image.'**" 1SP 24

"God, in counsel with his Son, formed the plan of creating man in their own image." RH 24 Feb 1874.

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These statements clearly tell us that The Father was talking to His Son.²⁰⁰
So what do we know about the Father and the Son?

“I saw a throne and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus’ countenance and admired his lovely person. The Father’s person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered him. I asked Jesus if his Father had a form like himself. He said he had, but I could not behold it, for said he if you should once behold the glory of his person you would cease to exist.” *Broadside* 1 – April 6th, 1846

So the Father and Son have a form. How does this relate to man?

“In the beginning man was created in the likeness of God not only in character but in form and feature”. GC 644

Notice Genesis 1:26 states that when the Father said to His Son, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” He then says “Let *them*”, indicating that the image involved plurality and that plurality was two. God did not say “Let him” but “let *them*”. This is significant, and is expanded in verse 27.

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

This formula is telling us two things:

1. “In the image of God created he him”:

Adam was made in the same form or body type as God, as well as in character and mind: he had the power to think, create, love and feel.

Notice what Ellen White includes in the description of the image:

“And now God says to his Son, “Let us make man in our image.” “As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of noble height, and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. His complexion was neither white, nor sallow, but ruddy, glowing with the rich tint of health.” ISP 24

²⁰⁰ F.M Wilcox, RH May 27, 1915. *Misrepresenting the Father*, “God said to his Son at that time ‘let us make man in our image.’ They were then in the same image”

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She describes his height, symmetry (form), complexion was ruddy glowing and healthy (features).

2. “Male and female created he them”:

Since in Genesis 1:26 God was speaking to His Son, He was saying in effect, “Let Us (You and I) make man (Adam & Eve) in Our (Yours and Mine) image.” So we have two Divine Beings talking together and they agree to make two beings in their image.

Looking again at the statement in *Spirit of Prophecy Volume One*, it goes on after saying that God speaks to His Son about making man in *Their* image, and describes both Adam *and* Eve.

“And now God says to His Son, "Let us make man in our image."...[Description of Adam]. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She, too, was noble--perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful.” 1SP 24

C. Husband/Wife Relation made in the Image of Father/Son Relationship

So Genesis 1:27 tells us that man was made in God’s image in the singular (character, body type and thinking ability) as well as the image of both Father and Son. So Adam and Eve as a unit were made in the image of the Father and the Son. Notice carefully that the **relationship** between Adam and Eve was also part of what is the image of God.

So not only were Adam and Eve made in the image of God individually, their **relationship** was also a reflection, a resemblance, of the **relationship** between the Father and the Son. This being the case, then indeed the **relationship** between Adam and Eve gives us a key to understanding the **relationship** between the Father and the Son.²⁰¹

Father and Son	Adam and Eve
Son comes forth from the Father (John 8:42; Proverbs 8:22-30).	Eve comes forth from Adam (Genesis 2:21-23).

²⁰¹ “God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us.” SC 10

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Christ was the express image of the Father and inherited everything He possessed from Him. A co-worker who could appreciate the Father's purposes (Hebrews 1:2-4).	Eve was a help-meet and companion to Adam comparable to him. All that she had she inherited from Adam. She was made from his bone, not from the ground (Genesis 2:20-24).
Father is the head of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3).	Man is the head of the woman (1 Corinthians 11:3).
Christ received the Father's Name. (Hebrews 1:4)	Eve received Adam's name. (Genesis 5:2)
Christ is equal with the Father through the <i>relationship</i> (John 5:18; Philippians 2:6).	Eve was equal with Adam through the <i>relationship</i> . They were one flesh (Genesis 2:24).
Father made all things through Christ. The Father's <i>life source</i> was channelled (nurtured) by Christ and from Christ came the whole universe (1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:17, Ephesians 3:9).	Adam's seed (life) was nurtured by Eve and from Eve came the whole human race (Genesis 4:1; 5:3).

The creation sequence opens for us a flow of life:

1. Christ comes forth from the Father and possesses His Life – the Father is His Head.
2. Adam comes forth from Christ and receives His Life – Christ is the Head.
3. Eve comes forth from Adam and receives his life – Adam is her Head.

This is exactly what Paul describes:

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

Without the serpent's lie of *inherent power*, the above text gives a beautiful flow of the life of God. It is not, I repeat NOT a list of who is superior to whom.

D. The Godhead Can Be Understood.

The *relationship* between Father and Son is described by Paul in Romans:

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Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

This passage indicates that the Godhead CAN be understood by the *things that are made from the creation*. As opposed to finding God by trying to search Him out,²⁰² we can know the things of God by what is revealed to us (Deuteronomy 29:29). Paul indicates that the Godhead can be understood through the creation. Please note part of the purpose of God's creation of Eden.

Adam had themes for contemplation in the works of God in Eden, which was Heaven in miniature. RH Feb 24, 1874

The creation of Eden was heaven in **miniature**. It was to be a lesson book for the universe on how Heaven is ordered and organized. The most notable part of the creation that was "Heaven in miniature" was that which was made in God's own image. Please note that this image is far more than character, it was a unique creation made in God's image.

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made "in the image of God," RH Feb 11, 1902

God created man a superior being; he alone is formed in the image of God. RH April 21, 1885.

The only means for accounting that human beings were a "new and distinct order" that "alone is formed in the image of God" is the pairing of Adam and Eve in a husband/wife oneness that reflects the Father/Son oneness relationship. The angels reflect God's character and they are closer to God individually in that they are spirit beings like God. The only characteristic that makes us "alone" like God, distinct from the angels, is the Husband/wife relationship, the dual authority – Man being a source authority and woman being a nurturing channel authority. No other creation has been made like this.

Further evidence of this thought is revealed in the following statement:

²⁰² Job 11:7-9

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What his [the Husband's] influence will be in the home will be determined by his knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. AH 213

This statement indicates that the ability of a husband to function correctly depends directly on His knowledge of the Father and the Son.

E. Husband/Wife Relationship a Response to Satan's Challenge to Christ

A close examination of inspiration reveals that Satan's rebellion arose before the creation of this world.

Angels in Heaven mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in Heaven. The Father consulted Jesus in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. 1SP 23

The Great Controversy centered on the relationship that the Son of God had to the Father. The creation of the human race would be a lesson book to the universe not only of God's creativity, but also to better reveal important elements of the Godhead. Romans 1:20 states clearly that the Godhead was revealed in the creation.

We must ask the question of why God engaged in such a curious method of creating man and woman. Why was Eve taken as a rib from Adam's side? Why did Eve receive all of her substance from Adam; and why was Eve the only one in the garden that could understand Adam? Does this not teach us something of the relationship of the Father to the Son?

Apart from this, the role of the help meet that Eve played and the nurturing role in relation to Adam's leadership, was this not a lesson book to the universe? Does not the role of Eve teach everyone about the critical role and relationship between authority and submission structures?

1 Corinthians 11:7-10 For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels.

Paul does not use a post-fall argument for the headship of the man, but rather a pre-fall position. The importance of a woman having power or

authority on her head allows her to be the key agent for demonstrating how to respond to a source of authority – in her case, her husband. This illustration reveals to the angels and the universe the key role of Christ in establishing the authority of the Father by submitting to it.²⁰³ Thus the woman has a symbol submission to authority on her head – *because of the angels*. This adds significantly to our understanding of the family based government of God and Satan’s hatred of the family.

F. Perversion of Godhead Reflected in Perversion of Male-Female Relationship, which Perverts Gospel.

As we have just noted, the Godhead is understood through the things that are made, namely the creation of Adam and Eve. Further evidence of this comes from the fact that the rest of the chapter describes a refusal to glorify God, which in turn perverted relations between men and women which leads to abominable behaviour.

Romans 1:21-27 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward

²⁰³ This is opposed to the concept of temporary subordination advanced by some Adventist scholars. See Ministry Magazine, November 1964, *What Can We Know About the Holy Trinity*, “We must allow, however, that Christ voluntarily and temporarily subordinated Himself at His incarnation”. Apart from the fact that this suggests Christ gave himself, rather than the Father giving Him to the human race, it also provides the basis for the temporary subordination of wives to their husbands until the sin problem was dealt with. If Christ’s subordination to the Father was due only to sin, then the same can be said for wives in respect of their husbands. This idea is extremely popular with Adventists today (See *A Woman’s Place* published by the Review and Herald, 1992, page 20, as one example) and is quite logical if you follow that line of reasoning, but of course it is not biblical.

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another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

Trace the above passage:

1. They knew God – the *relationship* of Father and Son. (verse 21)
2. Their imaginations became vain – they believed the serpent’s lie that individuals have an inherent power source and shifted their *value system* from *relational value* to *inherent power*. Thus the *relationship* between husband and wife became to be understood as two separate beings with separate *inherent power*. This broke the understanding of the flow of life; and in the changed *relationship* of man and woman was lost the knowledge of the true *relationship* between the Father and Son. (verse 21)
3. Thus, they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into the image of what man perceived – equal power Beings in their own right. Inherent power being the ruling principle, it was not long before many men worshipped powerful beasts and powerful birds and other animals that display powerful characteristics. (verses 22,23)
4. This broke the right relations of men and women, which led men and women into gross sexual misconduct. The more the *relationships* were perverted, the greater the lie grew about God. (verses 24,25)
5. With the image of God broken in the lives of men and women, they became open to homosexuality which completely destroys the image of God. (verses 26-28)

The sequence of Romans chapter one is extremely significant.

1. A discussion on the gospel being the power of God unto salvation by faith. (Romans 1:16-18)
2. A reference to the suppression of truth by ungodly men. (Romans 1:19)
3. Contrasted by the knowledge of truth about the true God revealed in the creation. The highest revelation being the creation of man in the image of God. (Romans 1:20)

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4. A discussion of the perversion of God reflected in the perversion of the male female relationship, which is a perversion of the image of God. (Romans 1:21-27)
5. The resulting fruit being all manner of sinfulness and wickedness. (Romans 1:28-31)

The above sequence supports the emphasis of the restoring of family relationships under the Elijah message of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers.

1. A restoration of true family relationships will lead to the correct roles of men and women in marriage
2. The restoration of the image of God in the male-female relationship will lead to a correct understanding of the Father and Son relationship.
3. The true understanding of the Father and Son relationship will restore the blessing channel as revealed in 1 Corinthians 11:1-3 and *Desire of Ages* p. 21.
4. The restoration will see the Father as the source, “of whom are all things”, and Christ as the channel and nurturing authority, “through whom are all things”. 1 Corinthians 8:6
5. The restoration of the Father as the source of all blessings will prepare the way for God’s people to have the Father’s name sealed in their foreheads through the channel of His Son. Revelation 14:1

All of these truths place crucial importance upon the male and female relationship, which when rightly maintained supports a true understanding of righteousness by faith. Therefore:

- Whenever the *relationship* between a man and his wife is described in terms of power equality, skill equality, intelligence equality rather than *relational* equality, we destroy the image of God and the channel of blessing is broken.
- Whenever a husband refuses to provide for and protect his wife and children, the image of God in man is broken and the channel of blessing is broken.
- Whenever a women gives orders to or seeks to dominate her husband, the image of God in man is broken and the channel of blessing is broken.

These are extremely serious issues. How many families truly reflect the image of God in their homes?

Do you see why Paul gave the following instructions?

Titus 2:2-5 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. (3) The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, **that the word of God be not blasphemed.**

Have you ever wondered how teaching young women to love and obey their husbands and love their children and make their homes a pleasant place can prevent blasphemy?²⁰⁴ If women do not learn to submit to their husband's leadership but rather are taught to mother him and/or rule him, the flow of life is broken and the image of God in man is broken. The Father is never in a place of submission to the Son – He is the fountain, the seed which is nurtured in the womb of Christ – In Him[Christ] we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28) Can you see the seriousness of this issue?

G. Understanding Godhead Essential for True understanding of Equality, Authority and Basis of Relationships

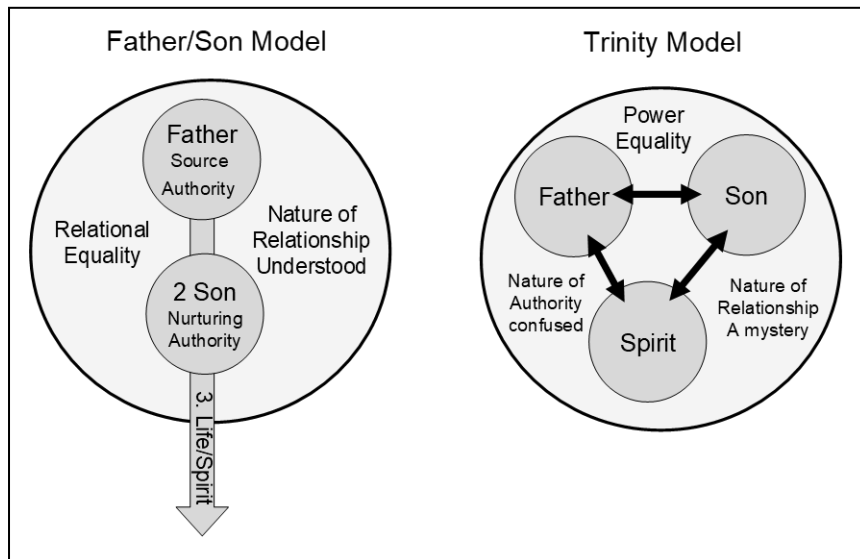
When we contrast the Father-Son Godhead (divinity) structure with the Trinity, we see significant changes in how we understand authority, equality and the nature of relationships.

In the Trinity, the primary authority of the Father is an *assumed* authority. By Trinitarian standards, the Son could just as easily have assumed the position the Father holds.²⁰⁵ The Son assumes the role of secondary authority, but he is not actually secondary because of his co-equal and co-eternal inherent power. This is contrasted to the absolute authority of the Father in the Father-Son model and the delegated authority of the Son. The authority structure is clear; it is not assumed; and it establishes a

²⁰⁴ For more detail on this, see my sermon "Recipe for Blasphemy" found at maranathamedia.com

²⁰⁵ Dr Roy Adams expresses this view in the Sabbath School Lesson of April 10, 2008.

direct channel of blessing structure. The Trinity model confuses authority, and this confusion in the image of God is evidenced by the confusion experienced in the roles of men and women we see today. The rise of transgender fluidity is a direct expression of this confusion.



In the Father-Son model the nature of the relationship is very clear, whereas in the Trinity the nature of the oneness between the Father, Son and Spirit is a complete mystery. The Adventist church is in a difficult situation when it claims that one God exists in a unity of three co-eternal persons. A unity of persons creates a haze over the concept of oneness. Some scholars have already begun to embrace the one substance view to prevent the charge of tri-theism that we are subjected to, but the belief in one substance is an even greater mystery, even though it would satisfy the demand for oneness more clearly than a unity of three co-eternal persons.

The conclusion of this matter though is that the nature of the relationship is a mystery and is not “understood by the things that are made”. Is it any wonder that human relations become so distorted and confused, resulting in a convoluted mystery?

The only thing that is clear in the Trinity model is the issue of equality, equality based on power and inherent characteristics. Issues of Authority and the nature of the relationship are confused and mysterious.

Characteristic	Father/Son Model	Trinity Model
Authority	Clear and Absolute	Assumed and Confused
Equality	Relationally based	Power Based
Nature of Relationship	Understood	Mystery

Once again we raise the question, why is it the Father of the Lamb's name that is in the foreheads of the 144000? The clarity that God's people receive concerning God leads to a view of the Father as the source of all things and the source of blessing, which is then channelled and magnified through the Son. The woman riding the beast clings to power-based equality and maintains a confused authority structure and a mysterious relationship base, both of which will not fully release the power of God (the life source) unto salvation.

H. Protection of Life Source Depends on Correct Family Structure

Notice again the law of life for the Universe.

“In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

The Father's life flows through the Son and out to the universe. In that life is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. It is the Spirit of God that flows out to us and gives us life both spiritual and physical; a continual flow of blessings for which we will return joy and thanks for all God does for us. The absence of thanks and praise to God breaks the law of life in the universe. The protection of this life flow depends on a right understanding of the

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structure of the Godhead and the structure of the family unit which was made in God's image.

If we hold a view that Christ possesses self-originated life apart from the Father, then the family unit is susceptible to gravitating towards the same understanding that men and women are co-equal based on their abilities. This view was recently expressed in the *Record* where the letter writer stated that the equality of a man and women is based on the equality we see in the Godhead. He stated:

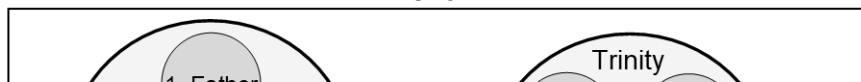
“Prior to the Fall, Adam and Eve were co-equals and complementary to each other. (See Genesis 1:26-30) Neither “ruled” over the other; their God-ordained role was to co-rule in their care of the natural world and to reflect within their marriage a taste of the unity and equality that exists within the Godhead.”²⁰⁶

This statement, with its use of the term co-equals, is most certainly reflecting a Trinitarian mindset. Can you see how the Trinitarian view of co-equality based on *performance measures* destroys the life flow of God's blessing? Can you see how the Trinity is affecting marriages everywhere in Christian homes? Is it a coincidence that Adventist marriage (under confused authority and a mysterious understanding of relationships) breakdown statistics are almost the same as those in the world? There are certainly a number of influences that affect this statistic, but when the flow of blessing as described in 1 Corinthians 11:3 is halted due to notions of *performance co-equality*, marriage can be a very desolate place.

*The diagram on the left protects the life flow by maintaining that man was made in the image of God. On the right, we see that the life flow is broken and the relationship between man and woman is changed. If man was indeed made in the image of God in **form and feature**, then a Trinitarian view is rendered impossible. A third being of some description would need to have been created with man and woman to keep man in the image of God. Another point worth noting is that the diagram on the right shifts the emphasis of life creation as coming from the mother. This system allows the possibility of all kinds of feminine style worship.*

My prayer is that we will reclaim the image of God in our marriage *relationships* and restore the channel of blessing which is the life flow of

²⁰⁶ *The Record*, April 14, 2006, page 29. “A Post Grace Rectification.”



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God. One of the central keys to doing this is restoring Father and Son to their true positions, which in turn will restore true authority, true equality and true relationship systems.

In this chapter we have begun to see the importance of family structure and Godhead (Divinity) structure in securing the blessings of God. In the next chapter we will see how family, church and community structures can preserve the flow of God's blessing and safeguard the sense of self-worth in our children.

32. Restoring the Glory of Children by the Coming of Elijah

In the previous chapter we noticed how the importance of the flow of life being preserved in a channel of blessing from Father to Son to man to woman. The structure of the male-female relationship in the image of God – The Father and Son – is vital to preserve the life flow. In this chapter we want to focus on the spiritual nature of this life flow.

A. Physical and Spiritual Channel of Blessing

Man has been created with two fountains, reflective of the body plus breath formula of Genesis 2:7. Man passes his physical seed through the sexual union, but he passes his spiritual seed through the words that he speaks. As in the physical, so in the spiritual²⁰⁷:

1. A man gives physical seed to his wife in loving intimacy and she nurtures it to form a body.
2. A man then fills that body with spiritual seed by blessing his wife and children and his wife nurtures both body and spirit of the child. Here is the wonder of both physical and spiritual birth.

This is how Adam begat a son in his image and likeness. He made the form through his wife and then filled it with his word; then Adam nurtured that child through his wife, and therefore Seth resembled himself.

This is what Jesus meant when He said:

John 3:6,7 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.(from above)

The word in the Greek for *again* renders more accurately as *from above*. We must be born in the physical (the flesh) but also *from above* through the Word.

²⁰⁷ It is interesting that man must maintain the paradox between his spiritual and physical fountains. If a man just focuses on passing physical seed, he will create physical bodies through the woman; but if he does not give attention to giving spiritual seed then those bodies will be dead or lifeless in the spiritual sphere (not born from above). If a man focuses only on the spiritual, he will not create any bodies to fill with the spiritual seed.

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This principle of forming and filling is the process God used to create the world.

Forms		Fills	
Day 1	Light and Dark	Day 4	Sun, moon and stars
Day 2	Waters on earth and in the sky (atmosphere)	Day 5	Swimming and flying creatures
Day 3	Ground and vegetation	Day 6	Ground dwelling creatures - Adam and Eve

B. The Father's Role as Blessor

The process of filling the form, or mind, of a child and creating a robust sense of identity comes primarily in the form of a blessing.

Proverbs 17:6 Children's children *are* the crown of old men; and the glory of children *are* their fathers.

The word *glory* carries the meaning of *to boast* as in “let not the wise man glory in his wisdom” (Jeremiah 9:23,24); do not boast or find *value* or *worth* in your wisdom. In this sense, a child obtains a sense of *worth* or *value* and *identity* from their father. Some translations like the NIV change the word father to *parents*, but the root word in Hebrew is *ab* – Father. A child's father is its source and seed, and its mother nurtures that seed. To form and fill a child with body and (right) spirit requires both father and mother, but the father is the source of blessing as expressed in Proverbs 17:6.

Notice what Ellen White says about the Father's role:

“The husband and father is the head of the household. The wife looks to him for love and sympathy and for aid in the training of the children; and this is right.” AH 211

“All members of the family center in the father. He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues: energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness.” AH 213

“The father represents the Divine Lawgiver in his family. He is a laborer together with God, carrying out the gracious designs of

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God and establishing in his children upright principles, enabling them to form pure and virtuous characters.” AH 213

Please notice carefully this next statement, remembering all we have mentioned about the life flow structure.

“God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love. "His glory is His children's good; His joy, His tender Fatherhood." He tells us to be perfect as He is, in the same manner. We are to be centers of light and blessing to our little circle, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness. "In His borrowed goodness good," we may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His. Jesus said, Be perfect as your Father is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. **Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God's children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God.** In Christ dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest "in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:11). That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for "the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." Psalm 19:7, margin. Through love "the righteousness of the law" will be "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."” MB 78

Summarising the above passage we notice:

1. God’s life flows out in unselfish love to all His creatures.
2. We are to be centres of light and blessing in the same way. We are to be perfect in our sphere as He is in His.
3. Every child lives by the life of (or life that flows through) their father.
4. This life is the life of Jesus manifest in our mortal flesh.
5. It will produce the same character in us as it has in Him.

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Can you see the power of understanding the structure and flow of the life of God? Here is the very heart of righteousness by faith.²⁰⁸ A key part of understanding righteousness by faith involves understanding the structure and life flow of God.

So how does a Father pass this blessing to his children?

Proverbs 18:21 Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

Genesis 12:2,3 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 28:1-4 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

The Father's words give the *identity* and *value system* to the child. *Value* and *worth* flow from the *life source* and as the father represents the heavenly Father in the family structure, he carries the *life source*.

Notice the emphasis of the patriarchs on blessing their children. When a father says to his child, 'you are precious, you are important, you are special and you are a child of God', his words carry the blessing and life of God. The father carries the power to bless and the power to curse as expressed in Proverbs 18:21 – "death and life are in the power of the tongue".

²⁰⁸ We do not wish to infer that a person's personal salvation is dependent on another person. Each person receives the blessings of salvation directly from God. But just as a person can learn of salvation through a preacher or a person can receive food prepared from another person, so humans act as channels in receiving the blessings of salvation. As Romans 10:14 states: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

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Do we as fathers realize how great is this power? Are we allowing our mouths to be the fountain which fills the minds of our children with the life of God? What a privilege to be made in God's image, what a gift to have the power to bless. We see Jesus express this principle of words giving life in the following verse:

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

C. Attack on the Father's Role

The enemy of our souls understands this principle well. He knows that if he can either shut down the spring flowing from the father directly or choke it through altering the submissive role of the mother, he will greatly inhibit a child from being filled with the Spirit of God.

Satan knows that fathers are the earthly source and that they hold the key to filling children with the Spirit of God by their blessing. For this reason, Satan has sought every device possible to destroy the role of the father to stop the source of the *life spring*. He can do it basically in three ways:

1. Take the father out of the home.
2. Cause the father to ignore his responsibility to bless his children.
3. Cause the mother to take the leadership role of the home.

I don't think anyone will disagree that these three things are happening everywhere in our church and society. When a couple divorce and the father has limited access to his children, it takes the blessing away from the child. The mother will of course continue to try and nurture her children but, without the spiritual seed of blessing from her husband, she will nurture in vain unless she can find some other means to restore the seed and blessing process. We will look at how God has made provision to restore the blessing shortly, but let us continue with Satan's attempt to extinguish the *life spring* through the father.

How does Satan cause men to ignore their responsibility to their children? When Adam and Eve fell and embraced the lie that 'you shall not surely die', it led to the altering of their *value system* from a *relationship value system* to *performance-based* one. Man was driven to worship the work of his own hands (Isaiah 2:8). The need to be successful in terms of education or career or business becomes so great that he neglects his

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children's needs. He is focused on becoming someone great and leaving his mark on history. Since his focus is on himself, children become a hindrance and Satan will encourage the father to curse his children, to tell them they are stupid, dumb, or ignoring them altogether. By getting the father to curse his children, he poisons the life stream and greatly wounds the child, destroying the child's sense of *worth* and *value*. Satan knows such poisoned children will grow up to manifest the same restless striving, passing on the curse to the next generation. For some the pain is too great – the result is suicide of either mind or body or both.

The last tactic is to use role reversal or role interchangeability. If the father lacks the skills to be a leader, if he is less intelligent than his wife or not as competent, then it will be natural for the wife to take the leadership role. But as she is not the source of blessing, by taking his position, she (without realizing it) devalues his role and takes the glory of children away. Dear mothers, there are some things I would like to say to you at this point. If you find yourself in this position, if you love your children, pray for wisdom as to how to give your husband back his position of leadership. By assuming or taking his role, you disrespect his position of authority, and by your example your children will do the same to both him and you. You may already be struggling because of the way your children refuse to acknowledge your authority over them. It may seem disastrous to you to follow your husband's decisions and allow him to be the leader in the family, but the consequences of not doing so will be far, far worse.

Many mothers say, "But my husband won't lead. What do I do?" Well, for one thing don't tell him, "You are supposed to be the head, you must lead us!" You can never help him take up his responsibility by exposing his weakness. Instead, you will need to take a step of faith, to walk away from doing those things that your husband should be doing, and prayerfully support and edify your husband. You will need to forgive him for failing you and your children by avoiding his responsibilities. Helping a home regain its correct roles will be difficult – you will be tempted many times to think it impossible. However, the Lord has promised to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children." Claim that promise and allow the Lord to lead you through this difficult journey. The greatest aid in this process is to know our Father in heaven does not condemn us and is ever merciful. He knows how hard it is and is committed to helping all the way.

D. Appeal to Wives and Mothers

Mothers, you also need to know about some of the ways you can stop the Lord from fulfilling that promise in your own family. If you order your husband around, speak negatively about him to your friends, and try to force him to be the priest of the home (or worse, take the priesthood yourself), you will block the channel of blessing for your children. If you are in the habit of doing these things, I ask that you take a moment right now to ask God to forgive you for these things, and ask Him to guide you as you seek to be a woman after Christ's own heart.

I have seen this principle of submission open the door of blessing to a family. I once had a mother come to me all frustrated and tell me her unbelieving husband was upset with her and refused to allow her to go to an upcoming church event. She frowned and said, "I am not going to be told what to do, I have the right to go." I made the suggestion to her: 'Go home to your husband and with a kind and smiling face, filled with love for your husband, tell him you have considered what he said and that if he felt she should not go, then she would submit to his request and not go.' She wrestled with the idea, as I believe I would have because these things are not easy, but she agreed.

The following week she returned to me all smiles. She said, "You will never believe what happened. I did as you said and my husband turned around and said 'I never said you couldn't go. If you want to go then go.'" Her son sitting nearby, who was not going to church, suddenly spoke up and said, "I will go with you Mum". She was blessed beyond imagination. Her son went with her to the church event and gave his heart to Christ while he was there. In demonstrating the principle of submission to her husband, her son submitted to the Spirit of God and came to Christ.

Ladies, recognise your husband for who he is – made in the image of the Father. He holds a vital key to whether you will enjoy your children and grandchildren, or whether you will weep for them due to their misfortune.

E. The Promise to Abraham Fulfilled in Family Structure

The fact that the correct structure of the family unit is vital to allowing the flow of God's life into our children is expressed in the following verse:

Chapter 32 – The Glory of Children and the Coming of Elijah

Genesis 18:18,19 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

This verse is a formula:

1. ‘I know him’, or more correctly, ‘I have known him’. This word *know* is the same as when Adam *knew* his wife. It symbolizes the transfer of the seed. God placed the seed in Abraham.
2. ‘(in order) that he will command his children and household after him’. Abraham would pass the seed to his family. He would command it, because he was the source of blessing to the family.
3. ‘That they keep the way of the Lord’. The seed in point 1 above combined with the structure in point 2 combines to allow the family to keep the way of the Lord.
4. ‘To do justice (righteousness) and judgment’ – when the life channel flows, righteousness will be demonstrated in the life.
5. ‘That God may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken to him’ – namely that Abraham would be a great and mighty nation and that all families of the earth would be blessed in Him.

Notice the promise to Abraham involved the commanding of his children and household. Take away the command of the father and the promise to Abraham is lost. Notice what Ellen White says:

“Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are "the issues of life"; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.” AH 15

We are told that the success of the church depends on home influences. Get the home influences wrong, get the roles wrong, cut the blessing and the church will fail.

F. Seed and Nurture Roles

I mentioned earlier that we would look at God’s plan for the restoration of the blessing if a home circle was broken and the father was removed

Chapter 32 – The Glory of Children and the Coming of Elijah

or had left. The principle of *Seed* and *Nurture* actually occurs in three levels:

1. The Father (Seed) and the Son (Nurture) (John 5:19,20).
2. Christ (Seed) and the Church (Nurture) (Eph 5:24,25).
3. Husband (Seed) and Wife (Nurture) (Eph 5:22).

As the husband is the head of the wife, so Christ is the head of the church. The church is referred to as a woman; the church takes the seed of Christ and nurtures it into a commandment keeping people made in the image of its Father, Jesus, even as Seth was in the likeness and image of his father Adam, through Eve.

How does Christ give His seed to the Church? Firstly, it comes to us directly through daily personal Bible study. It also comes through family worship, but in a community setting, it comes through the eldership of the church at the times of God's appointed blessings.²⁰⁹ The apostles²¹⁰ gave themselves continually to the ministry of prayer and the Word (Acts 6:4). They were charged to feed the flock (John 21:17; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2). The elders of the church are the earthly representative of the *male seeding principle*. The Church membership represents the woman which nurtures the seed and bears the image of Christ in its offspring – those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus (Rev 14:12).

Seeing the connection between the home circle and the church, Paul, in giving his qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy 3:4,5, alludes to Genesis 18:19:

1 Timothy 3:4-5 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

Elders must be selected from homes that rule their house well, having their children in subjection with all gravity. Do you grasp the implications of this?

²⁰⁹ See booklet Sabbath Fountain on maranathamedia.com

²¹⁰ One of the meanings of the word apostle is seed carrier.

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1. Elders must be selected from homes that rule their houses well.²¹¹
2. In the image of God, man is the source of blessing to the family. He must be the leader of his home or the glory of his children will be lost.
3. Therefore women cannot be elders because it would be a disaster for them to rule their homes. If women are made elders or become the leading pastor of a church, then the flow of *life source* to the church will be cut off.

Ladies, you have the privilege of representing Christ as your part of the image of the Godhead, with the joy and pleasure to nurture and cause Christ to be formed in the church, but not as the image of the Father/father, but in the image of the Son.

The principle of seed and nurture in the roles of men and women was clearly demonstrated in the gospel ministry of James and Ellen White. Notice the manner in which they worked together

Our meetings were usually conducted in a manner so that both of us took part. I would give a doctrinal discourse, then Mrs. W. would give an exhortation of considerable length melting her way into the tenderest feelings of the congregation. Was my part of the work important, hers was no less important. ***While I presented the evidences, and sowed the seed, hers was to water it. And God did give the increase.***²¹²

James, in his male capacity, seeded the people with doctrinal discourses, and then Ellen would exhort the people and appeal to their hearts to respond to the Spirit of the Lord. It was an effective combination that reflected the seed and nurture principle. I suggest that this means of work for males and females will prove the most effective.

Sadly, performance-based thinking has affected the church on many levels and in many different ways. By misunderstanding the relationship between the Father and the Son through a belief in the Trinity, it has made it inevitable that we confuse the roles of men and women (women as Pastors and Elders). One follows the other. I completely understand why

²¹¹ Mercedes H. Dyer, *Prove all Things*, Page 379 “We affirm that there exists a distinct correlation between the headship role of the father in the home and that of the Elder Pastor in the Church.”

²¹² Life Sketches Page 127,128 (1880)

many in the church wish to push for women's ordination; it is entirely consistent with a Trinitarian view of the Godhead. So to argue against women's ordination and argue for the Trinity is a logical inconsistency. The reason Rome is able to keep their priesthood male is they simply made Mary the mother of God and placed her right at the top to satisfy the need for feminine equality. But for Protestants who hold a stronger biblical view, this option is not open to us. Female ordination appears to be the only solution.

G. Destructive Impact of Trinity Concept on Family Structure.

I appeal to those who read this book, who hold leadership positions, to consider well the implications herein discussed:

1. A co-equal Trinity changes the structure of the Godhead from relational value to performance value equality.
2. We are made in the image of God as a family unit.
3. The Trinity shifts the family unit from a relational value to a performance-based value equality.
4. This shift chokes the channel of blessing by distorting spiritual seed and nurture principles.
5. The choking of the blessings greatly impedes the flow of the Holy Spirit into the lives of our families and churches.
6. The choking of the blessing destroys the glory of children and breeds worthlessness and insecurity.
7. Worthlessness and insecurity intensifies *performance-based-value-thinking* and creates the mountains and valleys in our lives which further block the Holy Spirit from reaching us.

Is the assumption worth it? Is it worth blocking the channel of God's *life source* – His Spirit, by dismantling the structures He has set up? Is this not grieving the Holy Spirit?

When we understand God's *relational-equality system*, then the apparent injustice and inequality completely disappears and the fountain of life is opened again for us. This certainly gives us context for the following verses and their importance.

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James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Isaiah 1:17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

The heart of pure religion is to visit the fatherless and the widows; restore the spring to Israel; bring forth water from the rock that the church of God may drink.

If a family loses their father or the father is unwilling to nurture his children, it is the responsibility of the leadership of the church to step into the gap. If a child loses its mother, the church must feed it and care for it and nurture it. Let us take up our responsibilities and save the lost and dying souls that have no fountain at home. If the church loses its fountain because of the feminisation of its leadership, then God promises us:

Psalm 27:10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

God will care for us and seek to bring us to a church that still has a spring, a place where men are the pastors and elders of the church.

H. An Appeal to Restore the Family Blessing Structure

At this point I would say to elders of churches, seek to include a practice in your church where you can bless the children; where they can come forward and have hands placed upon them and be blessed and told that God loves them. Our children need this *seed*. Fathers, bring your children to yourself and place your hands on them in an appropriate setting where their hearts are receptive and tell them they are precious and special, to restore their glory.

God has given us the Sabbath and His other appointed times for blessing. The Spirit of God is poured out in greater measure at these times and so they are the best times for speaking words of blessing.²¹³

Our Father in heaven knew exactly what Jesus needed to hear before He faced Satan in the wilderness. He needed a simple blessing:

²¹³ See the booklets *Living Bread from Heaven* and *Sabbath Fountain* on maranathamedia.com

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Matthew 3:16,17 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

This statement by the Father reveals the one thing that His Son can't live without and cannot produce from within Himself, and that is value derived from the blessing of the Father. This would be no issue for an unbegotten Son. The blessing at the baptism, while nice, would not be vital, but a begotten Son must have that blessing. Jesus could not fulfill His mission without it. He, in this moment, reveals the very heart of God's kingdom. Just as the Son of God can't truly operate without His Father's blessing, neither can we.

How powerful are those words, *this is my beloved child in whom I am well pleased*. Accepted and received into the heart they can heal any wound, any pain, if you can believe it. Notice the following in *Desire of Ages*:

“And the word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative.... The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.” DA 113

When the Father spoke to Jesus His Son, the Word passed through Christ to every one of us. What wonderful news. Here is power to clear the mountains of pride and fill the valleys of depression. Here is the key placed in the hand of faith that will unlock heaven's power house. Will we not use it? Will we not believe His Word?

If you follow Isaiah Chapters 1 to 3 carefully, you will notice a steady decline in the leadership of Israel:²¹⁴

1. A formalisation of worship (Isaiah 1:13-15).
2. The lowering of the standards of leaders (Isaiah 1:23).
3. The embracing of eastern/Babylonian ways (value by *performance* thinking, Isaiah 2:6).

²¹⁴ See the sermon “The Downward Path” available at maranathamedia.com for an expansion of this process.

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4. Taking away the good men – the water and bread are taken – the fountain is closed – the channel is cut off (Isaiah 3:1,2).
5. The rise of immature leaders because the children's bodies were not filled with the fountain of life and so are *performance* rather than *relationally* based, and therefore are insecure and controlling (Isaiah 3:3,4).
6. The disrespect of authority (Isaiah 3:5).
7. The feminisation of leadership (Isaiah 3:12) – Women shall rule over them.

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

The story of Israel is a story that we need to pay close attention to because we have followed in their footsteps. All of the above steps have taken place in our church at some level. We have reached the bottom, and now it is time for Elijah to come and restore the true understanding of the God of Israel so the Latter Rain might fall. Notice the work of Elijah:

Isaiah 40:3-7 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the goodness thereof *is* as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass.

Elijah will comfort God's people. He will prepare the way of the Lord. The mountains of pride will be leveled by a sobering from the fatal drunkenness from the word of the Eden serpent, that *worth* and *value* are measured by *performance*. Elijah will raise every depressed soul by restoring the fountains to homes and churches and causing us to know that we are God's beloved children whom He loves.

Luke 1:15-17 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with

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the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

When Elijah comes he will not be intoxicated by the wine of Babylon, where greatness is measured by the *performance of inherent power*. He will restore the family springs by turning children back to their fathers and see in them the channel of their glory.

Fathers: Do you have children that need to know you love them? Have your children grown and left home and there is a sad distance between you? Are you hurt or angered by your child's lack of gratitude for all you have done? Rise in the power of Elijah and bless your children, let them know you love them.

Husbands: Does your wife know you love her? Do you appreciate all her efforts? Do you show her the affection she deserves? Do you seek to control all the money in the house and leave none for her? Repent! Remember her birthday, don't be stingy, surprise her with kindness, do not be put off by any sarcasm she throws at you. Do not blame her for family difficulties – you are the man, arise in the name of Elijah and restore the spring to the heart of your wife. Love her as bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh.

Mothers: Is your husband the true head of your home? Do you submit to his leadership, do you pray for his wisdom, do you believe the Lord can guide him? Rise in the power of Elijah and give the scepter of power back to your husband, take your foot from his throat and ask forgiveness if you have laid your hands on the priesthood. Take blasphemy out from your home by seeking spiritual strength to obey your husband, and love your children and nurture them into the image of Christ according to the gift God has given you. Resist the charms of the evil one that entice you to leave your place of duty. Trample the serpent under your feet and let your marriage relationship reflect the image of God and His Son.

Children: Obey your parents, respect their authority, for the fountain of life is with your father and the joy of growth and nurture is with your mother. Honour them, love them, seek to please them and do your best to resist Satan's efforts to trust your inclinations over the words of your parents. In submission you will find the fountain of blessing.

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Malachi 4:5,6 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Will you remove the curse from your home and allow Elijah to prepare your hearts for the Spirit of God to come in and form the image of Christ in you?

33. Life Structures – Individual, Family, Church, Community²¹⁵

A. Life/Blessing flow through the Individual Channel

Ezekiel 14:14 Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness," says the Lord God.

People are saved as individuals, and ultimately a person is responsible for his own salvation. The channel of blessing for the individual comes through personally believing the Word of God in prayer and Bible study. Through this process a person receives spiritual life directly from God, and is thereby blessed and guided. In terms of receiving instruction, the only authority that the conscience can completely submit to is the Bible and the Bible alone. We may receive biblical instruction from family and the church, but all of this must be tested against the word of God by the individual.

The capacity to be connected to the individual channel is heavily dependent on the nuclear family and church family structures. Children are seeded and nurtured into the fundamentals of the faith, prayer and reading the Bible from their parents. Those not brought up in a Christian home as spiritual children are seeded and nurtured with these principles in the church family. So the foundations of the individual channel are developed in the family and/or church channels of blessings, but it is ultimately the individual channel that is the basis of salvation.

B. Life/Blessing flow through the Family Channel Structure

In the previous chapter we observed that spiritual life flows most powerfully through family structures. The death and life contained in the mouth of a father as a seeding agent and in the mouth of the mother as a nurturing agent, will lay the spiritual foundation of their children.

We also noticed that the headship of the father in the home is vital to preserving this spiritual life flow in the family. In this sense the father is the tangible spring for each family. This is why Ellen White states:

²¹⁵ “As in the natural, so in the spiritual world. Human life is preserved, moment by moment, by divine power; yet it is not sustained by a direct miracle, but through the use of blessings placed within our reach.” 3SP 418

“All members of the family center in the father.” AH 213

We also noticed in the story of Abraham that God blessed Abraham in order that all families of the earth would be blessed through him. Here we see a complete irrigation system for spiritual life to flow through communities. This life flow is protected by the law of God, which causes a person to be planted by the rivers of water (Psalms 1:1-4).

God created this spiritual irrigation system so that we would not only be relationally focused through our relationship to God, but also relationally focused through our relationships with each other. As the Scripture says:

Romans 14:7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

If we only needed to maintain a relationship with God and obtain life in all its aspects (physical, mental and spiritual) from Him, we would not need each other, and we would gravitate towards isolation rather than community.

The life flow through human structures protects the relational system of society and are a reflection of God’s Kingdom.²¹⁶

As a child grows there can develop a spiritual paradox between the conscience of the individual and the authority of the family structure. As children, we are commanded to honour and obey our parents. This is an authority that must be respected. But in matters of faith we must regard the Word of God as a higher authority. Notice the paradox

Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

Matthew 10:37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

When there is disagreement on what we understand truth to mean, we must both honour our parents and follow our conscience. This can be extremely difficult to do if your family ask you to do things directly

²¹⁶ God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven. He desires that the families below shall be a symbol of the great family above. COL 290

contrary to the Bible. In such cases, the higher authority of the Word of God must decide the decision, but this does not mean that we cease to respect or disown our parents. To cease to respect our parents would cut a God ordained channel of blessing.

C. Church and Community Depend on Family Structure

A failure in family structure would lead to a community like Sodom and Gomorrah, which destroyed itself because they had so perverted the family structure that the spiritual life flow system could no longer operate in that society. This is why God warned Abraham in Genesis 18:

Genesis 18:17-18 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

We see here a direct connection between God destroying Sodom and the ability of Abraham to become a great nation. If Abraham did not command his family and children after him, then he also would have his heritage destroyed like Sodom. So when God says, “Will I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?” He is indicating that Abraham must learn the lesson of Sodom and makes sure his family structure is preserved.

The other point we would make about the blessing on Abraham flowing to all the families of the earth, is that it is the Spirit of Christ in Abraham that is passed to his descendants through the blessing. The Spirit of Christ is preserved in the remnant of Israel through the family structure. Here is the reason for Satan’s venom against the family.

The family then is the key building block for the church, community and nation. Notice:

“Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are "the issues of life"; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.” Adventist Home p. 15.

“God designs that the families of earth shall be a symbol of the family in heaven. Christian homes, established and conducted in accordance with God's plan, are among His most effective

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agencies for the formation of Christian character and for the advancement of His work.” Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 430.

“If we will open our hearts and homes to the divine principles of life, we shall become channels for currents of life-giving power. From our homes will flow streams of healing, bringing life, and beauty, and fruitfulness where now are barrenness and dearth.” The Ministry of Healing, p. 355.

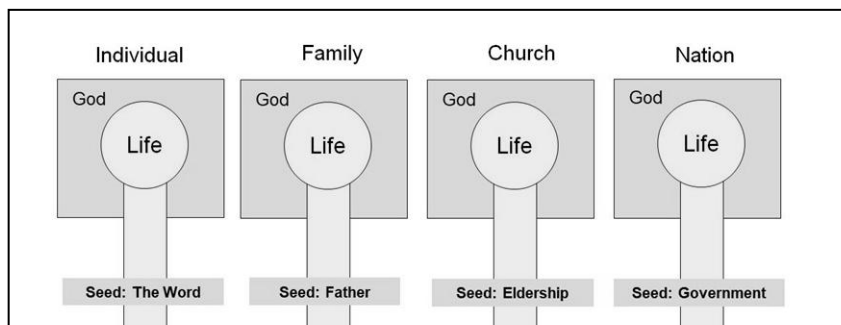
“Christ designs that heaven's order, heaven's plan of government, heaven's divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth.” DA 680

The family is also the primary key to the making of the individual. The individual life channel is built from a platform of the nuclear family or, if needed, the church family.

But in terms of groups of people, the church, community and nation need a structure that reflects the seed and nurture principles of the family. This is the guarantee of God's relationship based kingdom principles.

The connection between family and church authority is clearly expressed in the words of Ellen White when she states:

"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God. The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. ***It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority.*** PP 308



For ministers and rulers to be included in the fifth commandment, church and community structures must clearly be extensions of a family government structure. The connection to receiving life through submission is established in the next paragraph:

This, says the apostle, "is the first commandment with promise." Ephesians 6:2. To Israel, expecting soon to enter Canaan, it was a pledge to the obedient, of long life in that good land; **but it has a wider meaning, including all the Israel of God, and promising eternal life upon the earth when it shall be freed from the curse of sin.** PP 308

The principles of *life flow* through the headship of the church to its members is vividly portrayed in the story of Moses in Exodus 17:8-13.²¹⁷

Exodus 17:8-13 Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands *were* heavy; and they took a stone, and put *it* under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other

²¹⁷ For a more in-depth presentation on this, download the sermon *A Leader's Prayer* from maranathamedia.com

on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Using *performance-based-thinking* we might say that Moses was a coward to send Joshua to fight while he, his brother and Hur went and had a prayer meeting. But here the channel is clearly portrayed. The success of Joshua and the soldiers depended on Moses' prayers. When Moses prayed, Joshua and the soldiers would gain the upper hand, but when he didn't the Amalekites would. We see Aaron and Hur assisting Moses to keep praying. As elders they played their part in keeping the channel of blessing operating.

One might ask, if Moses was tired, why couldn't Aaron or Hur take his place and start praying? If that had occurred, it would have broken the important lesson of blessing flow through the authority structure.

When Joshua and the army placed themselves under the leadership of Moses and the elders, they were assisted in their protection of Israel. What a lesson for leaders this is! If Moses had not faithfully prayed, many mothers and children would have had no father that night.

Jesus demonstrated this same principle in the New Testament with the feeding of the 5000. Jesus was the source who distributed the bread and flesh to the disciples, who were then the channel of that food to the multitude. The life-sustaining food was distributed through a structure of blessing. After the feeding of the 5000 Jesus declares Himself the 'Bread of Life'.²¹⁸ He is the one that flows through the channel in the form of the Comforter. The point is there needs to be a structure for this system to work correctly.

D. Blessing Received Through Submission to Headship

It is exactly on this point where many people fail to receive a blessing. When, as church members, we see leaders doing the wrong thing, we usually forget the position of authority they hold and present our complaints in the spirit of accusation and defiance. Such lack of submission to authority places members outside of the channel of blessing, and evil will always result. At this present time we see our

²¹⁸ Psalm 78:20 Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

church is terribly fractured with in-fighting and disunity. I believe much of this disunity could have been avoided if both leadership and membership had more fully understood their respective roles of seed and nurture. If we are to have a remnant of believers that are in unity and love together, we must recognise that church structures of authority must be recognised and followed.

This is especially true in regard to the contention over the issue of the Godhead. Amongst non-Trinitarians there is a prevalent spirit of disrespect for authority and lack of a submissive attitude. Such lack of submissiveness often completely negates the effect of whatever they are trying to say, and sadly it completely negates the principle of submission we see demonstrated in the life of Jesus. I would appeal to all that while we surrender our conscience to no man, it is vital to work with God's established structures to receive a full blessing.

As church members, we must pray for our leaders. They are instruments of God to bless us; they are the spring of the church to give it life in an orderly fashion.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.

Do we esteem our leaders highly in love? Do we pray for them? Or do we murmur and complain and spread reports about their faults and weaknesses? As a church we must come to terms with this issue.

Performance-based-thinking with its emphasis on the self-powered individual, feels no need nor can ever grasp the importance of such a structure. Structures are for exploiting for our own advancement, and become a means of control rather than blessing.

I am often asked, "but what happens if after you follow the process of submission, a leader continues to follow a course contrary to Scripture?" We must remain in the channel of blessing and plead for patience, until the Lord addresses the issue either by correction or removal. It's easy to pray for the latter, but if we truly love the brethren we must pray for the former and let God decide what will occur.

What if we have been removed from the church by leadership that have erred? Firstly, examine our hearts to see if our faults and weaknesses

contributed to the discipline. Ask God to show us where we can go to find a structure of authority to continue to be blessed. This is a difficult issue and requires much prayer and wisdom, but God will not remove from us the channel of blessing if we are humble in heart and seek to preserve the principles of God's kingdom.

E. When Leaders Fail

But what if a leader is clearly doing the wrong thing? The key is to remind such a leader, through the submission process, that he is a source of blessing to the church and we urgently need the blessing that he has been granted power to bestow. Through the process of submission, we remind our leader of his obligation to care for the flock. A spirit of defiance and rebellion will potentially stir up frustration or anger in our leader and guarantee we will not obtain what we are seeking. The principle of submission to God's delegated leaders will create a desire to pray for our leaders rather than immediately reject their authority and act on our own authority.²¹⁹

This principle is very difficult to carry out because all of us are stamped with the lie, "You not surely die". It is natural that when someone in authority over us seems to contradict the Scriptures, that we should immediately act independently of them so that we are free to do as we believe is right. But we must remember that a leader has been granted the power to bless and that we who are under such authority must do everything we can to ask God to open that channel again through that leader.

We spoke earlier about the tension of the family and the individual. This tension is widened between the individual and the church. No man can be the conscience for another, nor can any church leader be responsible for the salvation of another. No person can allow another person to decide what they read and believe, who they associate with and where a person worships. These are all matters of conscience. At the same time, we must submit our findings in Scripture to God's appointed leaders and pray that God will bless their counsel to us. Holding this tension requires a lot of wisdom and patience and most of all trust in our Heavenly Father.

²¹⁹ For more on this see the book *The Divine Pattern* on maranathamedia.com

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Sadly, some believers will take the principles of submission of authority to an extreme, and choose to remain quiet and say nothing for fear of loss of reputation or standing in the church. Submission principles do not mean silence; they mean appeal for a biblical explanation and a continual and earnest prayer to be blessed through God's appointed channel. On the other hand, others take the individual element of the paradox to an extreme and leave the church, thinking only of their individual channel and ignoring the family connection they have with the church. Leaving the church without regard for church family considerations is the same as a wife divorcing a husband she no longer agrees with nor can convince of her position.

Coming back to the tension of individuality and submission, look at the following apparent contradiction:

Matthew 23:9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

Compare that with this verse

1 Timothy 5:1 Rebuke not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men as brethren;

1 Corinthians 4:15-17 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. (16) Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. (17) For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

In Matthew, Jesus is addressing the abuse of power by leadership, and in that context we should not implicitly trust any leader and their judgment without reference to the Word of God. In contrast, Paul is asking younger men to love and cherish the agencies of truth that God sends to them in the same way a son would love and respect a father. There is no discord here.

F. When We are Released from the Authority of Established Leadership

What about the examples in the Bible where people have defied the commands of leaders and continued in what they believe to be right? Notice an example:

Acts 4:18-20 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. (19) But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. (20) For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

The Jewish leadership tried to silence the apostles from speaking in the name of Christ and proclaiming Him as God's Son. This is quite a relevant example for many who have come to see Christ as God's only Son. Is it not right for such people to quote this verse and go right ahead and present their views without regard to the current leaders of the church? This is a fair question and one that must be addressed.

For over three years Jesus prayed for and reached out to the Jewish leadership. At any point he could have allowed circumstances to play out so that their position was removed, but He did not. He continued to tell the people to report to the priest when healed, He commended the woman for putting her two mites into the plate and he still attended their religious gatherings and feasts while on earth. After His death he gave the leaders a little more time to acknowledge his death and resurrection. They had fifty days.

Before Jesus went back to heaven, He gave this important instruction.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The cue for the disciples to go forward and act upon their commission was a signal manifestation of the power of God as a stamp of approval and authority for their mission, independent from the previous human authority which God had ordained but had turned because of their misuse of their position and their rejection of truth.

When the day of Pentecost came, the disciples had been praying and fasting for the power to proclaim Jesus as the true, holy, and harmless Son

of God. There had been divisions among the disciples and disharmony; all this was confessed and forsaken. Then after ten days God demonstrated His power through Pentecost and the outpouring of the Spirit. The signal manifestation of the power of God was the green light to establish a new movement regardless of pre-established authority. So we see the sequence of transition:

1. Elijah Comes First – John the Baptist
2. The character of God revealed in Christ
3. The Cross is magnified
4. A large disappointment
5. Hope revived and renewed
6. Preparation through repentance and confession
7. Pentecostal power established the new movement

After this Peter and the apostles began to proclaim boldly the name of Christ. Miracles also attended their preaching, as well as the gift of prophecy. All of these evidences indicated that God was leading them directly.

What about the case of Jones and Waggoner? The old guard did not want their message presented. The leaders even had a letter from Ellen White telling Jones and Waggoner that they were out of line by presenting their views without consulting their elder brethren.

But we know that Ellen White clearly supported the message of 1888 in glowing terms. After 1888 Jones, Waggoner and Prescott went everywhere presenting this most precious message. The fact was that they had the authority of a prophet attending them. Ellen White endorsed the message and eagerly tried to help move it forward. It was the authority of the prophet that allowed them to move as they did.

Without the direct authority of a prophet or a clear manifestation of God upon His people through revival or divine manifestation, God's people have no authority to reject established leadership.²²⁰ The authority of the Adventist church was clearly validated by God and set up through the midnight cry revival of 1844, the prophetic gift of Ellen White, and the experience of miracles – in many cases in conjunction with the large

²²⁰ See Chapter 8 – *Mantle for Confrontation* in book *The Divine Pattern* on maranathamedia.com

revelation of biblical truth. There is no indication that this organization has yet been rejected by God and therefore it is unwise to ignore its authority. It is God who decides when such an event will take place, not man. I must concede that from the information presented in this book, it is evident that the church has moved away from the platform given to us and that the fruit of this is manifested in many sad and terrible happenings in the church, but the Lord is longsuffering towards His church even as He was with Israel in the time of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Though the leaders had turned to false gods, there was a period of time given to Israel to repent and turn back to the true God. I believe that we are still in this time, and this is a test for those who wish to see change now. Time is running out though, and the church over the past decade has only hardened its resolve to cling to the falsehood of the Trinity in its 2015 release of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs.

The tarrying time ensures that God's people wait for His direction. If every man felt at liberty to present to the church what he felt was the truth without regard for due process, there would be a perfect Babylon (confusion). Such a spirit of independence, self-sufficiency and resistance is in complete contradiction to the person of Christ, who is the complete example of submission and dependence upon His Father. Christ does nothing but what the Father directs. We would do well to do likewise. Many people ask: but why are things being revealed to many people outside the leadership of the church? I would answer: so that we can submit them to our leaders and pray for them. The gift of truth is a test for the one who receives it. The temptation is to act independently and not follow through on the duty to appeal to our leaders and prayerfully ask for them to open the channel of blessing. Those who fail to wait and pray are in great danger of falling into error and rejecting the very heart of what Christ teaches us – how to be a person under authority.

If we step out from under an established authority structure in a spirit of defiance and possibly anger towards leadership, we will carry this spirit into any organization we become a part of. This spirit is then passed onto everyone that comes under its influence. Secondly, if we step out without the direct blessing of the Lord, we become susceptible to a spirit of self-justification for our existence, which manifests in proving the organization we have left is in apostasy. This process leads to self-righteousness – “we are better than you”. While it may never be intended,

it will always be the inevitable result. We do well to remember the Psalm which says:

Psalm 127:1 Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain.

The Lord must build the house and lay the foundation for organization that understands the vital principle of submission, love for leadership and the appeal process. Without these things, “they labour in vain that build it”.

G. A Suggested Process for Church Members

If after our appeals have not met with scriptural answers, and we have given sufficient time to listen and make sure we are not in error, and we are engaged in a process of fervent prayer and love for our leaders, then it must be considered fair to declare our position, not by trying to win people to our view, but by stating to the leadership that our conscience is bound by the Word of God and we cannot forsake it. It is my suggestion that those who hold membership advise the leadership of their position and that appeal be made to the leaders to act in the best interest of the congregation.

This appeal is an invitation for leadership to make sure they are right by praying and carefully rereading your proposals. It is also a submission to them that if they wish to use their God given authority to dismiss you, then you will accept it as God’s will.

All the while you will be praying for a blessing through the leaders, pleading that God will bless you through those that you have come to love so dearly through your prayers for them. I believe that this places us in the best position for God to act on our behalf. If God’s appointed leaders refuse to bless us while we are asking for a blessing from God, then our dear Father in heaven will certainly intervene. Either the leadership will respond to the Spirit and their eyes will be opened to the truth, or God will allow the consequences of their resistance to truth to remove them. If the leaders do remove you from membership, remember that as they judge, they will be judged. If their actions are wrong, then their own judgement will come back to them eventually. Thus we should pray for them. I would fear for any leader in that position and would pray that God have mercy on them. I personally believe that a process of submission

will actually hasten a change in the current church situation. If we remain submissive to leadership and pray for a blessing, the need for leadership reform or change comes more powerfully before the Lord. But if we remove ourselves from the established channel and begin our own work, then no pressure is brought to bear on the leadership and God's arm cannot be raised to act.

I believe that if we follow this procedure, then if the time comes where we are forced into being in a different group, it will avoid bringing to the believers a spirit of self-sufficiency and rebellion and as the proverb states:

Proverbs 24:13-14 My son, eat thou honey, because *it is* good; and the honeycomb, *which is* sweet to thy taste: (14) So *shall* the knowledge of wisdom *be* unto thy soul: when thou hast found *it*, **then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.**

If we cling to the principles of God's government, the sweet taste of honey, which is found in the law of God, will be ours. His blessing will remain upon us and our expectation will not be cut off.

For those who have left the church in disappointment and bitterness, I would appeal to you to consider that these feelings are seed that will be passed onto everyone that you teach and influence. As far as I can see, the only cure is to ask for forgiveness of church leadership for any wrong attitudes manifested. This process itself opens a chance for potential dialog. It is very hard for a leader to dismiss a person who is gracious and submissive. It allows the spirit of Christ to speak to them in the night season. I would also ask those who have left the church to renew your prayers for church leadership. Pray for them in love, and pray for their families that God will be merciful to them. This spirit of love and grace protects the soul from pride and self-sufficiency. I would also strongly appeal to any in this case not to hand out material to members on church property or seek people out on church property to present your view. If people ask what you believe you have a right to answer, but seek to be transparent with church leadership in all matters.

This is a difficult issue and requires much prayer and wisdom, but God will not remove from us the channel of blessing if we are humble in heart and seek to preserve the principles of God's kingdom.

H. The Former Rain Rebuilds Family/Community Structures to Prepare for Latter Rain

With all these things in mind, the preparation for the Latter Rain involves the restoring of the *irrigation system* within families which then flows to churches and the community – such a restoration needs the coming of a teacher of righteousness (the former rain) to turn the hearts of family members into the correct family structure – a structure that reflects the image of God.

When our family structures are restored to the image of the structure of the Godhead by the removal of mountains and valleys through Elijah – then a highway will be made for our God, the *irrigation system* repaired, and love will flow in its fullness and God will be revealed in the Latter Rain (Isaiah 40:1-12).

Preparation for the latter rain therefore is a response to the teacher of righteousness that does the following:

1. Teaches us that Christ has reclaimed our sonship through His baptism and victory in the wilderness.
2. Once in sonship we can fully appreciate the gift of God's beloved Son to us, even allowing Him to die on the cross for us.
3. This gift shows our centre or heart *treasure* has moved from ourselves to the fountain of life – our heavenly Father.
4. We are then correctly instructed in the law, the law which restores the true *identity* and character of both God and ourselves and re-establishes the life flow system.
5. A correct view of God and His structure for the flow of life impacts our structures as we are made into His image, and this begins the restoration of the family unity.
6. All this work is part of the Elijah message. Elijah pointed people back to the law of God and exposed their false worship of God.
7. When our family structures are restored, the blessings will flow into our families and churches and remove the mountains of pride and the valleys of depression.
8. Then we will be prepared for the outpouring of the Latter Rain that will prepare us for translation.

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Will we heed the voice of Elijah and turn our hearts to the fathers and fathers turn your hearts to your children? Will we seek to clarify the God we worship and see whether that God is built on a value by *performance-base* or on a value by *relation-base*?

My prayer is that you will prayerfully consider these things, take them to the Lord and prove all things, rightly dividing the word of God on a correct *value system* and *life source* view that is free from the serpent's lie – "You shall not surely die."

Like the prodigal son, will we come to the Father determined to be accepted back as a hired servant? Or will we, under the blessing of the investigative judgment, allow the Word to penetrate our *performance-thinking* and truly believe the Word of God that says to us:

"You are my beloved son whom I love" (Matt 3:17).

34. Seed-Nurture Authority Structures

A. Authority Structures Come in Twos

We noted in Chapter 31 that mankind has been made in the image of God not only individually but also relationally. We noted the following parallels of that image.

Father and Son	Adam and Eve
Son comes forth from the Father (John 8:42; Proverbs 8:22-30).	Eve comes forth from Adam (Genesis 2:21-23).
Christ was the express image of the Father and inherited everything He possessed from Him (Hebrews 1:2-4).	Eve was a help-meet and companion to Adam comparable to him. All that she had she inherited from Adam. She was made from his bone, not from the ground (Genesis 2:20-24).
Father is the head of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3).	Man is the head of the woman (1 Corinthians 11:3).
Christ is equal with the Father through the <i>relationship</i> (John 5:18; Philippians 2:6).	Eve was equal with Adam through the <i>relationship</i> . They were one flesh (Genesis 2:24).
Father made all things through Christ. The Father's <i>life source</i> was channelled (nurtured) by Christ and from Christ came the whole universe (1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:17).	Adam's seed (life) was nurtured by Eve and from Eve came the whole human race (Genesis 4:1; Genesis 5:3).

In Chapter 32 we looked at headship concepts associated with male leadership and the resulting authority structure that results in the family. In Chapter 33 we looked at how these authority structures ripple through the church and the community.

As we have stated earlier, our view of the Father and Son relationship has a direct impact on human relations, both in terms of equality concepts and authority concepts. When equality is based on a *performance-based* understanding, the nature of the Father and Son as well as the husband

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and wife relationship is altered to the point where roles can be potentially interchangeable and identity can no longer be attributed to the terms Father and Son or husband and wife. The terms are only functional and no longer an expression of core identity.

If we consider the direct authority areas of the Christians life, it is evident that God has authority as expressed in the first four commandments and our parents have authority as expressed in commandment five. God's authority is directly reflected in the Lordship of Both Father and Son. Parental authority is reflected in the leadership of both husband and wife. When we look at the authority of God's revelation of Himself, we find it also follows a two part, *Divine Pattern* formula: The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. In each authority structure, there is a source authority and a channel authority. We could summarise this as follows:

Seed/Source	Father	Husband	Bible
Nurture/Channel	Son	Wife	Spirit of Prophecy

Shallow thinking could lead to disputing with the above chart by reciting texts that Christ is referred to as the Seed in Scripture. It is indeed true that Christ is the Seed in relation to the creation, but this seed was given to Him by His Father, it comes through the channel of blessing.

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,--God's *thought* made *audible*. DA 19

The emphasis of seed here is the point of origination, and that always resides with the Father.

B. Seed-Nurture Relationship of Bible-Spirit of Prophecy

It must be conceded that a shift in the relationship between Father and Son from relationship equality to power based equality will have a direct impact on husband-wife equality and also Bible-Spirit of Prophecy equality and authority.

For the last 30 years there has been an intensified concern as to how to express a Seventh-day Adventist belief in and support for the Spirit of Prophecy. This concern was raised in the 1919 Bible conference with legitimate questions as to how we should relate the Bible to the Spirit of Prophecy. It was not until the 1970's, when the minutes for this

conference were found, that Adventism began to seriously engage this question again.

It is my observation that the shift in equality between Father and Son (with the introduction of a *power-based-equality* Godhead) directly impacted our view of the relationship between the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

C. Shift to Trinity Impacts Authority of Spirit of Prophecy

With the strong allegiance to the Spirit of Prophecy from the 1930's to 1960's, it was inevitable that the church would find it hard not to place the Spirit of Prophecy on the same authority base as the Bible, even though this would be denied in theory. In elevating Christ to the same power and source position as the Father, the natural result would be an elevating of the Spirit of Prophecy to the same power and source position as the Bible. The results are evident that during this era it was common practice to derive doctrine directly from the Spirit of Prophecy and to rely heavily on compilations of her writings.

This dilemma was most painfully revealed in the early 1980's when Bill Johnson was questioned by Walter Martin on the John Ankerberg show about how Adventists viewed the Spirit of Prophecy. Dr Johnson did his best to give answers, but Dr Martin pulled out several quotes from Adventist leaders clearly showing that the Spirit of Prophecy was effectively equivalent to the Bible. Walter Martin correctly exposed this flaw of thinking, but the consequential alternative that would rise in the coming decades would be equally wrong.

Of course, it must be acknowledged that if Adventism wished to remain true to Protestant principles of the Bible and the Bible only, and even support Ellen White's admonition that we should go to our Bibles for our doctrine, then ultimately the Spirit of Prophecy would have to be shifted from its incorrect position of power equality with the Bible.

Sadly, without a shift in the equality concepts between Father and Son, the only way to remove the Spirit of Prophecy from the position of equality is to in fact make it of none effect. The growing mantra of "lesser light" and the greater focus on Ellen White's humanness, her borrowing of sources and "growth in understanding" concepts, and the growing annoyance at the use of Ellen White in sermons and presentations all attest to the shift that Ellen White's writings have taken towards being of "none effect." Any student of Adventist history would know how much Satan hates the Spirit of Prophecy

and how many times he tried to kill Ellen White and prevent her work. It appears that the devil's success has come in firstly elevating the Spirit of Prophecy to an incorrect position, then to apply heat to this inconsistency, firstly externally through evangelicals, and later internally from the church, causing finally a swing back the other way to a muted or destroyed authority in the Spirit of Prophecy. A brilliant tactic, directly related to false equality concepts that find their inspiration in the Trinity.

I have struggled for years to know how to relate the Spirit of Prophecy to the Bible. I knew that the Spirit of Prophecy was not the source of doctrine and yet I knew that to ignore its writings would be to ignore precious light. There is also the issue of how to relate the Spirit of Prophecy to the Bible and still maintain the Protestant principle of Sola Scriptura. Lesser light is still light and light is to be followed and obeyed. It is not simply good advice, it is salvational, for it is the Testimony of Jesus. I see now that while my concepts of equality were clouded by the Trinity, it would be impossible to hold these two authorities in correct tension. Either I would become an "Ellen White Worshipper" as Walter Martin Called F.D. Nichol, or I would hypocritically espouse the virtues of her writings while disregarding anything she said that did not suit me personally. Once correct authority structures are established, the dilemma is solved. The Spirit of Prophecy is a nurturer of the Seed. It allows us to "prosper" and develop. It corrects false worldviews and assumptions and allows us to see the Bible in a correct light. Just as a son or daughter would obey his/her mother's commands and the mother would submit to the leadership and authority of the headship of her husband, so should we submit to the authority of the Spirit of Prophecy even as it submits to the headship and seed of the Bible. The concept is simple; the impact, profound; the effect, life transforming. As Jesus is the way to the Father, so the Spirit of Prophecy is the way to the Word of God in these last days.

It should be pointed out that just as the Spirit of Prophecy is being made of "none effect" through a false elevation, so too the person of Christ will be made of none effect by a false elevation. This false elevation in a power equality context destroys Christ as the Way. The altering of His relationship to the Father blurs the way of salvation. Is it possible that in Satan's efforts to "dispute the supremacy of Christ" that he found it easier to first falsely elevate Him and then make Him of none effect? Let us consider well these things as we ponder how we shall constitute our authority structures.

Section 7 – How Shall We Respond?

35. My Personal Experience

It has been said that the acceptance of truth passes through three stages:

1. Intense resistance
2. Careful investigation
3. Accepted as totally obvious

This is exactly what has happened to me regarding the truth about God and His Son. I was first exposed to the idea that the Trinity was incorrect in 1993. It involved a seven hour discussion with friends of mine²²¹ that left me quite disturbed. I could not comprehend how my friends, who were solid Bible students, could reject the obvious Bible teaching of the Trinity. There was a high level of emotion driving my responses. I was concerned for my friends; they were falling into heresy and I was desperate to save them. I also realized that accepting such beliefs would cost me highly. My high level of emotion caused me to twist things they were saying as evidence that they were wrong. This is a powerful self-defense mechanism when the heart of your faith is being challenged. I have shared the Sabbath truth with several people and I have often had people twist my words to try and destroy my credibility in their minds.

So when I first heard about the Begotten Son teaching in 1993, I managed to twist what they were saying or intentionally misunderstand what they were saying to preserve my position. I moved the discussion from the topic to the person. I saw that their mindset was unbalanced. I would reassure myself with my other Trinitarian friends as we laughed together about my Pioneer-based Godhead believer friend's crazy ideas and unbalanced mind.

Over the next seven years, the Lord worked on my attitude. Finally I was convicted that even if I disagreed with my friends Blair and Caroline who denied the Trinity, I was unchristian to mock them and scorn their ideas, especially when I had not thoroughly investigated the subject for myself.

²²¹ The friends of mine were Blair and Caroline Andrew. Sadly Blair passed away last year. I will be forever thankful for his appeal to me on this question of the true Sonship of Jesus Christ.

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I went to Blair and Caroline and apologized for my attitude and began to look at some materials on the subject. I had now moved from intense resistance to the second stage of careful investigation.

After reading many books, I could see that there were at least two sides to this discussion. I saw merit in the plainness of the Father and His begotten Son. At one point I remember kneeling down and saying Lord if this is the truth then I am willing to accept it. But some of the material I read seemed to indeed depreciate the Divinity of Christ, and there were the quotes in Evangelism and other places that clearly talked about three Persons. I could not resolve the issue. The issues against Pioneer-based view of God for me were:

1. The quote “Life original, unborrowed, underived.”
2. The quote “There never was a time when Christ was not in close fellowship with the Father.”
3. The issue of the equality of the Son and preserving His Divinity.
4. The issues of another Comforter.
5. The experience of M.L. Andreasen.
6. The suggestion by some of the Pioneer-based Godhead believers that Ellen White’s writings were tampered with.
7. That James White near the end of his life stated that the view of the divinity of Christ held by evangelicals was so close to his that he saw no point in debating the subject. This point caused me to believe that Pioneer-based Godhead believers were making a big issue out of a small issue.
8. The disrespect for Church leaders shown by some Pioneer-based Godhead believers. Handing out books behind the Pastor’s back and targeting new converts.
9. I perceived that some Pioneer-based Godhead believers were saying there is no Holy Spirit.
10. The linking of the Omega issue to the Trinity. This appeared to me to be alarmist and sensational beyond belief.
11. The emphasis of Pioneer-based Godhead believers on the personality of God I saw as an over focus on the mechanics of the Godhead relationship. I could not see how this affected the character of God. It made little sense to me.

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The issues that caused me to favour Pioneer-based view of the Father and His beloved Son were:

1. John 3:16 and John 5:26 and the real identities of Father and Son. It seemed to make the Scripture read more simply.
2. The position of our pioneers.
3. The quotes of Ellen White from *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *Spirit of Prophecy Volume 1*, that spoke of Christ as the ONLY Being who could enter into the counsels of God and that Lucifer was next in honour to Christ.
4. Proverbs 8, referring to wisdom and 1 Corinthians 1:24,30 referring to Christ as wisdom and E.G.W. support that Proverbs 8 is describing Christ (PP 34).
5. The fact that Ellen White never used the word Trinity nor wrote against the Pioneers' beliefs on this subject.
6. The message of righteousness by faith given by Jones and Waggoner was set clearly in a Pioneer-based Godhead framework.
7. That Christ could have come just after 1888 when most of the Church still held a Pioneer-based Godhead view.
8. The Doctrine of the Trinity was the central doctrine of Rome.
9. The suggestion that God was role-playing was a concern to me.

The issue was split in my mind and I could not settle it. There were aspects of the Pioneer-based Godhead view that were attractive, but there were still too many hurdles that I could not resolve. During the next seven years I remained open on the subject. I favoured the Trinitarian view because I could see no other way to preserve the equality of Christ with the Father and safeguard the divine atonement. But I had become sympathetic to Pioneer-based Godhead thinking. During this time I noted that some Adventists were being disfellowshipped over the issue. On the one hand I could see that if people were being intentionally disruptive, handing out material, expressing anti-Conference views, constantly saying the Church was in apostasy and always carrying a frown, that they should move on for their own sake as well as the church. However, in cases where people were just expressing convictions, seeking answers and not getting aggressive, I felt that people disfellowshipped in this manner made our statement of 27 fundamentals a creed and that made me extremely nervous.

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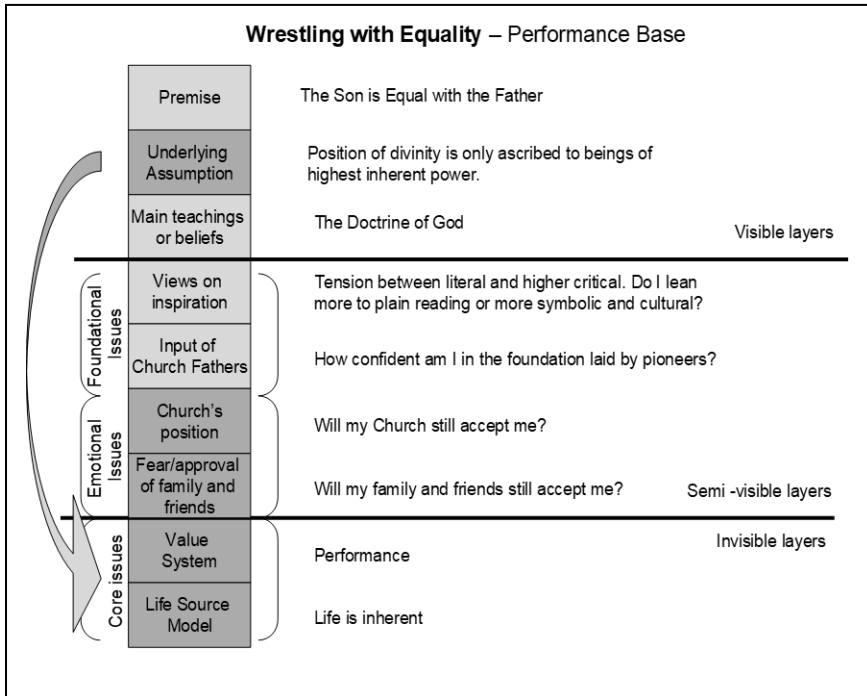
Over the next seven years I believe the Lord opened my mind to how to understand the issues of equality. This indeed was the key issue. The concepts described in the first 7 chapters of this book came to me and I began to grasp the importance of sonship in relation to escaping a *performance-based* mindset. Apart from the incredible new sense of freedom from pride and fear that I began to experience, I also began to see the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy through a completely new lens. My *treasure* and *value* was beginning to shift from myself to my Father. My mind then opened up to a deeper relational way of thinking. Chapter 3 in reference to the law is a perfect example. I could actually begin to see how I could love the law with my heart and not just my head. It was exciting.

I began to study the roles of men and women in the church due to the fact that some of the Church leadership has been encouraging the acceptance of women as ordained pastors. As I studied, I pondered the relationship of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were said to be made in the image of God. I had always understood this as each individual was made in the image of God. I then noticed that Adam and Eve were in the image of God as a unit, not just as individuals. All of this was covered in Chapter 31.

Armed with the principles of *relational-equality* and life flow through a channel, I began to see the direct relationship between righteousness by faith, the family structure (manhead) and the Godhead. I could see that to make Christ self-existent *and* separate from the Father confused the life source flow and altered the role of men and women as reflected in the image. Finally, I began to realize that this was no longer a small issue, and that a correct understanding of the personality of God and His Son holds precious light that would not be understood in the context of a co-equal, co-eternal Trinity.

It was not until I fully embraced sonship and the full knowledge of my *value* through the Father, that the Holy Spirit began to penetrate my *performance-thinking* at the deeper levels. The reason I had not been able to accept the literal Father and Son before was because my thinking was layered like this:

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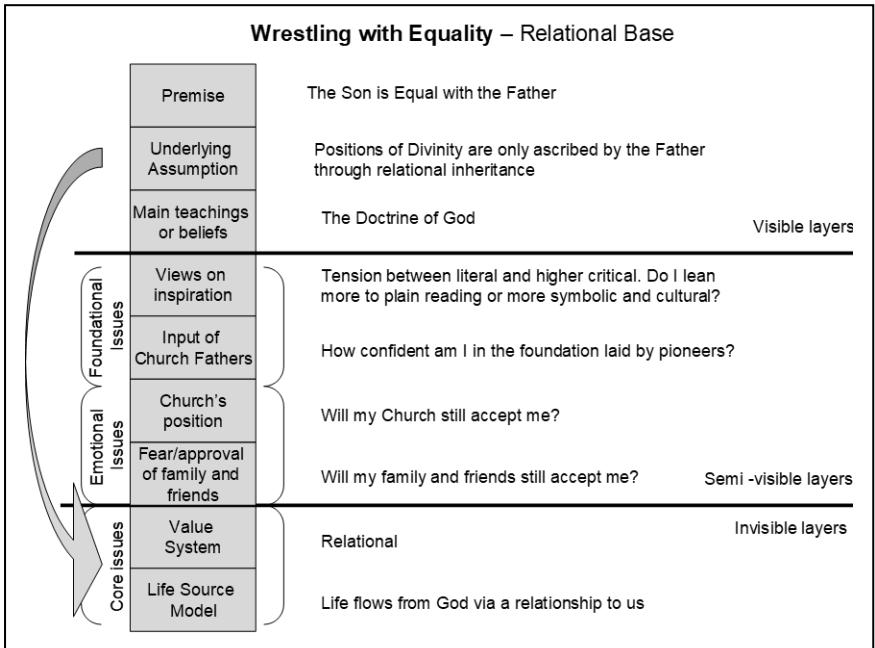
I had not realized that even though the Father accepted me fully as a son, my Christian experience was still controlled by my natural desire to serve my Father as a servant. I thought I had accepted it, but these deeper layers were still invisible to me and caused me to ask the *performance-based* question of Jesus. Without even realizing it I was asking Jesus to prove His Divinity by His *inherent power*, not by His *relationship* to the Father. In essence I was not fully converted. I was still captive to the lie: “You shall not surely die.” I have now begun to understand what Jesus meant when He said in response to Peter’s recognition of Him as “the Son of the living God”:

Matthew 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Flesh and blood (natural humanity) cannot grasp the equality of Jesus with the Father on a relational basis, because human nature is stamped with the lie “You shall not surely die.”

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But once I accepted my Father's words that I am His beloved son and began to live as if I really believed it, I was much more able to have the real Christ revealed to me.



Secure in my Father's love, I am able to firstly see that Jesus is truly the Son of God, begotten by the Father in eternity, and that He has received everything from the Father. I can then truly see that the very person of Christ, His very *identity*, is the way to the Father. This reality has brought me joy overflowing. I know that this is the truth and it has set me free. I have found the pearl of great price and I will sell all to possess it. Satan has tried to hide Jesus from me as my Comforter, but now my Father revealed to me His Son and I have found eternal life in truly knowing the Father and the Son.

Accepting this truth has also made me realize that I have sinned against God and broken His commandments. I had worshipped a Christ of my immediate forefathers that suited my flesh also. I had dictated the terms of exactly who Christ should be. I did not allow Him to reveal himself as He truly is. For this I am ashamed and repentant. Also as a pastor I have presented to people an incorrect view of God, a view that will not fully

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open an understanding of righteousness by faith, distorts family relationships and negatively impacts the Spirit of Prophecy. To such people, I ask your forgiveness and pray that God will blot out my sin through the precious blood of His Son.

To all of my church family and friends, I know I must sound completely absurd, but my fear of those thoughts is surpassed by the truth of finding the real Jesus on the Damascus road.

Some may feel that in my book I have attacked the church regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. I love the Seventh-day Adventist church and as one who has been so blessed by this church, I say plainly that my desire is to resolve the many painful and conflicting issues I have witnessed and experienced in this movement. I do not condemn any man or woman for the very things that I myself have been guilty.

I pray earnestly that you will search your heart and allow yourself full sonship or daughtership, so that the Father can really reveal His Son to you. To those who believe – He is Precious!

36. A Word to my Fellow Pastors and Administrators

I am sure you have experienced, like me, the familiar scenario of someone coming to you after you have preached a sermon and telling you in no uncertain terms that what you are teaching is incorrect. When someone approaches me with a high level of emotion like this, I find it difficult not to become defensive and feel that I am being personally attacked. Once I am in a defensive stance, I find it very hard to actually hear what the person is saying. The only thing I really hear is that this person is against me and is trying to undermine my position as a minister. This is still a struggle sometimes, but the more I believe that I am a son of God, the less powerful my old *performance-based* nature is and the less defensive I am becoming.

Some of the sentiments contained in this book may be seen as a personal attack on the church and undermining its credibility. I hope that you will not see it this way, but rather as an appeal from a brother who loves his church and wants to see it prosper and excel. As I clearly stated in my previous chapter, I am not condemning anyone for holding a belief in the Trinity, as I have done this for many years and taught it with passion and conviction. It would be totally hypocritical for me to accuse others and totally unbiblical to show disrespect to the leaders God has appointed in His Church.

My plea to you, especially those in administrative positions as you have been given by our Saviour a position that can greatly bless our church, is that you prayerfully consider the contents of this book and release to the church the full blessing of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. I wish to esteem you highly in love for your work's sake, and I trust that you will take this to the Lord and ask: "Are these things so?" Please see this book as a son who is coming to his father and saying, "Dad, I think I found something amazing!" rather than seeing it as a self-opinionated person trying to prove that he knows more than anyone else. I know that I am certainly guilty of being opinionated and overconfident, and therefore I pray that you will be patient with me and pray for me if I have displayed these traits in my book. I have been nurtured and raised by this church. Everything I have has come through this church. I appeal to you in the name of Jesus, please consider these things and release to us the blessing that God has granted you to give to the church. I have full confidence in the Lord concerning you that your desire is to bless the church of God.

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As I have mentioned earlier, our view of how to conduct relationships comes directly from how we view God's relationship with His Son. If their relationship is built on an *equality of power and position*, then we will build our structures in the same way. I am confident that if we returned to the view that Christ is indeed the Son of God and received everything from Him, then our own position as ministers would be more clearly understood in the channel of blessing. Our members would begin to see that they do not have to be equal with us in power and position, but they would instead pray for us to release God's blessing to them as His chosen agents whom He wants to work through. The majority of independent ministries that arose in the 1980's and onwards have failed to accomplish what they hoped because in many cases they would not acknowledge your God given authority and proved themselves deniers of God's desire to restore the human structure of the channels of blessing.

I submit to you also how a view of Christ as the real Son of God, receiving everything from the Father, will affect the families of our congregations. We can encourage *relational-equality* in homes and help families restore the blessing of children and strengthen our family base. I believe there are many advantages that can be gained if we view things in this way.

I realise that other churches would immediately label us as a cult, but how can we allow that to influence our thinking when such churches themselves are immersed in *performance-based-thinking* and the concept of the immortality of the soul? Should we fear their judgment? Do they stand on the platform of truth so lovingly given to our pioneers by God?

Considering all that I have requested of you, I wish to make the following request which I know is asking a great deal, but I come with the confidence of a son to his father expecting to be blessed. I appeal to you as leaders to consider presenting to our people the changing of the wording of some of our fundamental teachings. Our current wording on fundamentals 2 to 5 are as follows:

2. The Trinity

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole

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creation. (Deut. 6:4; 29:29; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:6, 7.)

3. The Father

God the Eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 14:9.)

4. The Son

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 5:18; 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 2:9-18; 4:15; 7:25; 8:1, 2; 9:28; John 14:1-3; 1 Peter 2:21; Rev. 22:20.)

5. The Holy Spirit

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 2 Peter 1:21; Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13; Rom. 1:1-4.)

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My appeal to you is to consider revising these four fundamentals to reflect a belief that God the Father is the one self-originating source of life, that all the fullness of the Father is inherited by the Son and that the Holy Spirit is Christ our Comforter divested of the personality of humanity. The following Ellen White quotes serve as a wonderful base:

“The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate--a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father--one in nature, in character, in purpose--the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Proverbs 8:22-30.” PP 34 (1890)

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way," He declares, "before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth" (Proverbs 8:22-27).” 1SM 247

“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

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represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.” 14 MR 23.

“The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be.”
8MR p. 49

If you feel this is untenable, I ask at least that the term co-eternal, a term lifted right out of the Athanasian Creed, be removed so that members can follow this counsel:

I say, and have ever said, that I will not engage in controversy with any one in regard to the nature and personality of God. Let those who try to describe God know that on such a subject silence is eloquence. Let the Scriptures be read in simple faith, and let each one form his conceptions of God from his inspired word. Spalding and Magan collection p. 329

Let each person come to their own conclusion with their Bibles and do not force a view of equality onto the doctrine that for some is not needed.

I appeal to you as leaders to give back to the church the real Jesus Christ who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, who took on the nature of Abraham and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. All of this is possible if we take a *relational* view of the Bible. I also ask that the wording of the fundamental concerning Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary be revised:

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have a part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who, among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith

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of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the second advent (Heb. 1:3; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Mal. 3:1; Leviticus 16; Rev. 14:12; 22:12.)

I ask you to make clear that the investigative judgment began in 1844 and was not just a revealing of the facts to heavenly intelligences of something that was already established. The wording is ambiguous and can leave the impression that Christ did not actually perform any work at this time, as is suggested in *Questions on Doctrine*. I also request that the wording of “disposition of all sin” be changed to reflect the “blotting out of sin” so a clear connection can be made to a concept of final atonement.

Another reason I wish to make this appeal is that because our people can now purchase and access Ellen White’s writings as well as the Pioneer writings on CD-ROM, enquiries are only going to increase. I have become aware that there is a significant group of Adventists who hold a literal Father and Son understanding of the Godhead but are keeping quiet for fear of persecution. This is a powder keg that is waiting to go off. This issue is not going to go away. It will shake the church to its very foundations.

My brothers, God is my witness to my heart-felt plea to you to take courage to place our church on a firm foundation rather than a teaching of God that has to be *assumed as a fact* and is not explicitly stated in Scripture. Give to us a Jesus who truly knows our struggles by taking our nature, and return to us the true joy of the investigative judgment that has power to unmask the servant syndrome. Give to our people a platform that we can take into the final conflict without one thread of human devising.

I submit this request to you this day, the 1st of August 2007.

Dear Father, hear my prayer in the name of your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

37. A Word to the Church and Advent Believers Worldwide.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

To my fellow believers in Christ, I pray that you will carefully consider the words of this book and take them to prayer and compare them with Scripture. I ask you to study this issue out and place yourself on the solid platform of Christ the Rock – the True Son of God, that the house you build will withstand the coming fires of persecution.

I know this material will come as quite a shock to many of you. It certainly has been for me. But I realised that I have never truly questioned the doctrine of the Godhead before, I have only tried to defend it. If you feel negative towards this material, I ask you to pray earnestly to look at the subject on its merits and not bring secondary emotional issues into the study.

If you find blessing and joy in these things, I plead with you not to act in defiant and aggressive tones toward our leaders. Rather humble yourself and repent and acknowledge that you have followed a wrong course also. Let your conduct be flavoured with humility and repentance. I ask you to pray for your leaders, whom God has appointed for us, and humbly plead with them to restore to our church the truth of God and His dear Son, who was torn from God's bosom to be allowed to die for us on the Cross.

If you truly embrace these precious truths, then it will be evidenced in a greater love and more intimate relationship between husband and wife. It will reveal itself in a stronger bond of family ties and will flow into our churches with joy and not with pride.

Do not use the truth of these things to gain *value* for yourself as though you know something that others do not; maintain the spirit of humility and grace that is fitting for such a wonderful truth as that which God has given us.

It will be evident to many of you that, because of our Laodicean condition and self-sufficiency, that we indeed have been captured by the god of Babylon. Let us not point fingers at others and recognize that we have all failed our Saviour. Let us pray with Daniel:

Daniel 9:3-22 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

(4) And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; (5) We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: (6) Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. (7) O Lord, righteousness *belongeth* unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, *that are* near, and *that are* far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. (8) O Lord, to us *belongeth* confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. (9) To the Lord our God *belong* mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; (10) Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. (11) Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that *is* written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. (12) And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. (13) As *it is* written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. (14) Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. (15) And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. (16) O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people *are become* a reproach to all *that are* about us. (17) Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. (18) O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our

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desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. (19) O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

How wonderful it will be when God sends the Spirit of Elijah and releases us so that we can cry in freedom, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen”, and our joy in this release will lighten the whole earth with the glory that we have come to know that:

Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of the Living God.

Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

38. The Fall of Babylon

On the front cover of this manuscript I placed the following statement:

“Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die." "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4,5. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time. ... Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion.” GC 561

Satan’s master deception is built directly upon the lie “you shall not surely die”. As we have discussed, this lie makes the automatic assumption that every individual has within themselves their own inherent source of life. This foundational assumption makes it impossible to understand the truth about God’s kingdom.

This lie not only affects the way we view the law, the Sabbath, the state of the dead and the sanctuary, but it affects the way we view the Son of God. Christ is the truth and every other doctrine is simply a reflection of Him. If we have had a performance-based understanding of all these doctrines, then have we not, by implication, had a performance-based understanding of Christ Himself? Notice carefully the following:

I was directed to this scripture as especially applying to modern Spiritualism. Col. ii, 8. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Thousands, I was shown, have been spoiled through the philosophy of phrenology and animal magnetism, and have been driven into infidelity. If the mind commences to run in this channel, it is almost sure to lose its balance, and be controlled by a demon. "Vain deceit" fills the minds of poor mortals. **They think there is such power in themselves to accomplish great works**, that they realize no necessity of a higher power. Their principles and faith are "after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Jesus has not taught them this philosophy. Nothing of the kind can be found in his teachings. **He did not direct the minds of poor mortals to themselves to a power which they possessed.**

He was ever directing their minds to God, the Creator of the universe, as the source of their strength and wisdom. Especial warning is given in verse 18. "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." The teachers of Spiritualism will come in a pleasing, bewitching manner to deceive you, and if you listen to their fables you are beguiled by the enemy of righteousness, and will surely lose your reward. **When once the fascinating influence of the arch deceiver overcomes you, you are poisoned, and its deadly influence adulterates and destroys your faith in Christ's being the Son of God,** and you cease to rely on the merits of his blood....4bSG Page 87.1 (1864)

Without the complete eradication of the philosophy of some power retained in man, the true understanding of righteousness by faith cannot be appreciated or applied in the life correctly. For the churches who believe in the immortality of the soul there is no ability to break free of the lie of inherent power in the soul. Yet there is a more subtle form of this through the doctrine of the Trinity. In worshipping Jesus as God the Son, one who has inherent power without an inheritance, the worshipper of such a person is transformed by what he beholds and thus the philosophy of the inherent power in man is subtly maintained through the idolatry of the Trinity.

With such poison it is of course almost impossible to see that in Christ is the very key to understanding the kingdom of God. But how we understand how Christ relates to the Father in His very person will define the very nature of God's kingdom. This is why Christ is the chief cornerstone. This is why Christ has a name above every name, because He shows us how the Father constitutes His kingdom and how relationships are conducted. The Son of God is not loved and accepted by the Father because He is inherently equal. He is not considered worthy of Godhood because of endless existence. He is not equal with God because he has the "right stuff". He is God because He is the Father's Son. This is who He is.

This is the wisdom of God as expressed in 1 Corinthians 1:30. The Father did not write His wisdom firstly on paper; He placed it in a person and that person is His Son. The principles of worship dictate that the worshippers will become like the one they worship. Since the Father is independent, self-sufficient and not under any authority, this principle

would be embraced by any created beings he would directly make. So in the wisdom of God, He brought forth His Son, who would then create all things, and this Son is held up by the Father for all the universe to behold and model themselves after. The Son of God demonstrates the key principle of submission to authority, and it is in this sense that Christ is the name above every name. He is our example in all things. He is the WAY and the TRUTH and the LIFE. He is the wisdom of God that brings the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24).

If we see Christ as equal with the Father because He is the co-equal, all powerful, self-existent, independent, self-originating second person of the Godhead, then we are doomed to conduct all our relationships on that basis, an equality of power (which forms the core ingredients of the poison that prevents us from seeing Christ as the true Son of God.) If God does this Himself then we will definitely follow His example. We can say that the second person of the Godhead *demonstrates* the principle of submission, but the reality is this is not who He actually is in His identity. It is not real.

If we see Christ as equal with His Father BECAUSE He has received everything from Him and is full of His Father's life and has a mind that alone can understand the Father's heart, then we have found the very seat of relational power. We understand that all relationships are conducted on the principle of life flow and inheritance. We understand the Father is the One great source of all and His Son is the definer and jewel of understanding God's heart and kingdom. This truth is the key to release us from the prison of Babylon. It undoes the lie, "You shall not surely die."

Satan does not want us to know who Christ really is because Christ in and of Himself, in His very identity and relationship to the Father, is the undoing of Satan's kingdom. In just being, Christ's person shouts from the highest mountains that Babylon is fallen. The Son of God does not need to speak a word, His very identity is freedom's ring from Satan's kingdom. Can we begin to understand why Satan had to destroy Christ? Christ's relationship to the Father proves that Satan is a liar.

Let us step back a little and consider something. Since the Father is the source of life, He is the fountain and all power has come forth from Him. God the Father could be perceived in a power performance model. He is self-originating power and life. He can be perceived in a performance-

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based context. In the Son of God, begotten in the express image of the Father, we see the Father's supreme demonstration of Himself. In Christ we see the very heart of the Father, we see a relational God. In exalting His Son as equal with himself, we see the wisdom of God in elevating relationship above inherent power. In the worship of the Begotten Son, we worship the God of relationships. Every fibre of my being shakes with joy just at the contemplation of this beautiful truth. I feel like a soaring eagle flying on the heights of the clouds. I feel that my spirit has been set free from a terrible weight. Will you fly with me? Will you see Christ as the name above every name, as the jewel in the Father's crown, as the chief cornerstone? Will you kneel with me and worship this Christ, the true Christ, the complete and total revelation of the Father's heart? This is the God that I will worship in Spirit and truth. In this revelation of Christ I hear the voice of the mighty angel: "Babylon is Fallen, is Fallen!" Brothers and sisters, in Christ we have the doorway out of the serpent's prison. Won't you take this opportunity to be free and wear the easy yoke of the Begotten Son? Be free from the terrible lies that have been a yoke too heavy for us to wear.

Is it important for us to understand the correct relation of the Son to the Father? Notice:

Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, ***we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself.***

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character. MH 409

How does God reveal himself?

As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son. The outshining of the Father's glory, "and the express image of His person," MH 418

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. MH 419

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Ellen White clearly states that God reveals himself through His Son. He is the outshining of the Father's glory. This is how God reveals Himself. Is this not plain for us to see?

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three co-eternal beings decided to assume the roles they now occupy. God has not given this picture as a revelation of Himself. There is not one word of inspiration that supports this claim. Those who claim that the members of the Godhead express themselves through the forms of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in danger of the influences of the platonic heresy of "forms". This concept teaches that God can reveal Himself through a form but that form is not who He really is, it is only a representation of Him. Most Adventists would never acknowledge this, but it is hard to escape the claim.

It is exactly this thinking that has led our scholars to question many aspects of the sanctuary teaching. In my theological training I heard several times that we can't see the sanctuary as literal; God is not sitting in a box for 150 years. So what does this spiritualising of the sanctuary in heaven facilitate? It removes the two apartments of the sanctuary as implausible. Once the two apartments are minimized, some scholars are emboldened to deny the doctrine of the investigative judgement. None of this would be possible if the sanctuary was accepted as literal because **this is how God reveals it to us!**

Back to Ellen White's statements in Ministry of Healing. If we must know God aright, does this involve a correct understanding of the relationship of the Son to the Father? Ellen White states further in the chapter in her efforts to give this true knowledge:

The disciples did not yet understand Christ's words concerning His relation to God. Much of His teaching was still dark to them. Christ desired them to have a clearer, more distinct knowledge of God.

"These things have I spoken unto you in parables," He said; "but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in parables, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." John 16:25, margin.

When, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, they understood more fully the truths that Christ had spoken in parables. Much of the teaching that had been a mystery to them was made clear. But not even then did the disciples receive

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the complete fulfillment of Christ's promise. They received all the knowledge of God that they could bear, but the complete fulfillment of the promise that Christ would show them plainly of the Father was yet to come. Thus it is today. Our knowledge of God is partial and imperfect. When the conflict is ended, and the Man Christ Jesus acknowledges before the Father His faithful workers, who in a world of sin have borne true witness for Him, they will understand clearly what now are mysteries to them. MH 420

Christ desires for you and I to have a correct understanding of His relation to the Father. Like for the disciples, many of His teachings are dark to us because we do not correctly understand the relation of the Son to the Father. Brothers and sisters, I have tried as much as I can with the frailty of language to express to you what I believe God has shown me. Please take it to our Heavenly Father and ask Him, “Is this how you want me to understand your Son?” I pray that you will find in this the power of the fourth Angel in the person of Christ and His relationship to the Father.

Section 8 – The Response

39. The Biblical Research Committee of the SPD Part 1

It is now twelve years exactly since I first began to write the Return of Elijah in July of 2007. I delivered the first draft of this manuscript to my immediate boss, the Conference President of the South Queensland Conference at the time, on August 28, 2007. He received me graciously as I outlined to him the contents of the manuscript. I asked for the manuscript to be submitted to the Biblical Research Committee in Australia for consideration.

I hoped that I might be able to personally present my paper to the committee, but I was told this was not the process they followed. It took almost 12 months before I received a response. In a letter dated August 25, 2008, I received a response to the manuscript. In the introduction it states the following:

AE aims to establish a paradigm which he believes functions as a basis for all theological thinking. This paradigm is a system of value and equality *which takes its starting point in human family relations as AE understands the Bible to describe them*, and which delineates an authority structure to be found in both human relationships and internally in the Godhead. On the basis of this paradigm AE gives an assessment of a number of theological areas of specific significance for Seventh-day Adventist theology. AE believes that understanding and applying this paradigm will solve a number of the questions still being discussed, spanning such topics as justification and salvation, the role of women in home and church, and the Godhead or the Trinity. BRC Evaluation of Return of Elijah, Aug 25, 2008

If you look at the beginning of the book it actually begins with a biblical study on the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. The very first quote in the book is from Great Controversy:

“Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. **The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die."** "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4,5. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last

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remnant of time. ... Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion.” GC 561

The beginning of this book contrasts Satan’s lie of inherent power with God being the source of all life. Sections 1B and 1C address elements and effects of Satan’s kingdom. Section 1D provides several Bible evidences to show God as the source of life and section 1E shows how everything is completely dependent on God for life. In this early section there is no effort to differentiate God and Christ for this source of life. The book presents it as coming from them. In chapter 2, I begin to address the value system. I start with the story of my relationship with my son. This may be the reason the evaluation of the document suggests that I started with human relations. This is true for my explanation of the value system, but this is in chapter two; thus chapter one is ignored in the evaluation and yet this is critical in that it exposes Satan’s core issue of the lie of inherency. The reason I relate my story of my son is because of quotes like this.

Of Enoch it is written that he lived sixty-five years, and begat a son. After that he walked with God three hundred years. During these earlier years Enoch had loved and feared God and had kept His commandments. He was one of the holy line, the preservers of the true faith, the progenitors of the promised seed. From the lips of Adam he had learned the dark story of the Fall, and the cheering one of God's grace as seen in the promise; and he relied upon the Redeemer to come. **But after the birth of his first son, Enoch reached a higher experience; he was drawn into a closer relationship with God. He realized more fully his own obligations and responsibility as a son of God.** And as he saw the child's love for its father, its simple trust in his protection; **as he felt the deep, yearning tenderness of his own heart for that first-born son, he learned a precious lesson of the wonderful love of God to men in the gift of His Son,** and the confidence which the children of God may repose in their heavenly Father. PP 84.3

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. SC 10.

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We have clear evidence that the human relationship provides a window into the divine, for we were made in the image of God. I quoted this verse several times.

Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

I take this text to mean that the invisible things of God are understood through the things that are made and that because God said to His Son let us make man in our image, that this would provide a starting point to explore the value system. In any case it is section 2B where I outline the value system of heaven. This is the starting text:

Luke 12:6,7 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are *worth* more than many sparrows.

Followed by this:

Jeremiah 9:23,24 Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.

These statements are not derived from human relationships; they are the words of Christ and of one of the prophets about how we obtain value. All of this study is provided to contrast Satan's kingdom and his lie of inherent power. I return to the Evaluation.

While the views of AE in several of these areas may be somewhat controversial, the positions in regard to the Trinity seem to conflict openly with the official statements of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. **The Son is understood as eternally subordinate to the Father**, and the distinct personhood of the Holy Spirit seems questioned.

Though subordinate, the equality of the Son to the Father is, according to AE, not in question. His paradigm ensures in his view equal value in spite of different authority. So, in AE's thesis it becomes a major issue on what basis someone is

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accepted as equal. AE here distinguishes between “performance” based and “relational” based equality, implying that the Son is accepted as or receives his divinity on the basis of his relation to the Father, and is thus equal in value—similarly, women in the gender relation receives blessings through men through relationship, not performance, and exactly for that reason still have the same value. BRC Evaluation of Return of Elijah, Aug 25, 2008

It would appear that my point about equality through relationship was articulated and thus I assume it was understood. For that I am appreciative. Now it gets interesting.

Much of “The Return of Elijah” is written in notes form *rather than as an essay or scholarly paper*. This is one reason that several readers have found it difficult at times to be sure of the exact meaning or position of AE on several questions. This uncertainty is heightened by a general lack of references and *minimal interaction with other SDA scholars who have presented careful arguments on a number of the issues* and most of texts referred to by AE. BRC Evaluation of Return of Elijah, Aug 25, 2008

While my examiners were able to discern my overall presentation, it appears they were not familiar with my style of presentation. You as the reader can decide whether my writing is ambiguous and unclear. I concede that some of the points I made needed clarity and expansion, but I do believe that there was ample source material to make my key points related to life source, value system and its impact on how we view divinity.

The second point above reveals one of the great vulnerabilities for the church in hearing messages that appear original and outside the accepted style of presentation. I accept that awareness of current scholarship is important. The fact is that I was aware of it, as I had read widely of what the church had to say, and I was presenting my view of the situation in response. After this critique I did put together chapter 28 where I responded to several current SDA scholars and my thoughts on what they had written. Yet, why is it not possible to present information from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy alone and in the broader context of the founders of our movement?

It is at this point that obviously my appeal to the leaders would fail. I did not submit myself to their scholarship, thus proving that for the church,

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Sola Scriptura appears out of reach – you can’t argue from Scripture and Spirit of prophecy alone. The following quote comes to mind, and I quote it as a principle, not to say I am in the position of Christ above anyone else, but rather to show that truth can come through channels that we do not expect and in a style with which we are not familiar:

The doctors turned upon Him with questions, and they were amazed at His answers. **With the humility of a child He repeated the words of Scripture**, giving them a depth of meaning that the wise men had not conceived of. If followed, the lines of truth He pointed out would have worked a reformation in the religion of the day. A deep interest in spiritual things would have been awakened; and when Jesus began His ministry, many would have been prepared to receive Him. The rabbis knew that Jesus had not been instructed in their schools; yet His understanding of the prophecies far exceeded theirs. In this thoughtful Galilean boy they discerned great promise. They desired to gain Him as a student, that He might become a teacher in Israel. They wanted to have charge of His education, **feeling that a mind so original must be brought under their molding.** {DA 79.6, 80.1}

I know that I lacked the humility of a child and that some of my expressions were excessive, and this hindered my appeal to them. In this edition of the book I have softened some of my expressions; and I feel a little sorrow that I was not able to fully manifest the Christlikeness that I wanted to at that time.

It remains an open question to many readers, for instance, whether AE believes the Son had a beginning. Though never saying that, the way several quotes from Ellen White are used, along with the general language, may leave that impression. If not, AE’s position would be closer to the concept of “eternal generation.” **The exact theological position of AE on the nature of the Holy Spirit also leaves a number of uncertainties.** BRC Evaluation of Return of Elijah, Aug 25, 2008

We see here that the Church really wants to zero in on these two questions. *Does the Son have a beginning and is the Holy Spirit a separate person?* I am sorry that it was not discerned that within the framework I had laid down these issues are no longer vital. These are questions related to inherent power and position. As I stated in chapter 18.

It is not God’s thoughts that drives man to attribute His Son with divinity and consequent *value* by *inherent power*, but the thoughts of His enemy. Since God’s kingdom is *relational*, should we not

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value Christ in respect of His *relationship* to His Father rather than seeking to prove His *value* and Divinity by His *inherent power*? Does not the Bible tell us clearly that Christ received all things through a *relationship*? *Return of Elijah* page 152.

The reference to eternal generation I could only describe as a slur intended to link my work with Roman Catholicism. I ask the reader to note that my work was never quoted to sustain this charge. In fact my work was not quoted at any time through the evaluation, thus making interaction difficult.

The Biblical Research Committee questions the very premise of AE's thesis. When faced with the biblical texts which explicitly call Jesus "God", and the permeating New Testament testimony identifying Jesus with Jahveh, *the first question to ask is not the question of equality, but the question of divinity. The issue is not what grounds we as humans accept the equality of Jesus with God. The question is, what the Bible means with "God."* BRC Evaluation of Return of Elijah, Aug 25, 2008

This is the pivot point of the rejection of my appeal. The church states unequivocally that the first question that must be asked is a question of divinity, not a question of equality, or in other words, relationship. Without any evidence to justify this assertion, it is simply presented. It unwittingly eliminates the possibility of inheritance as a means of having divinity. In the question itself is the assumption of inherent power. The question only seeks to examine in the person under question, being Christ, that He has divine qualities. No effort has been made to test their assumption as to whether the first question they advance is the right one. Thus it remains an untested assumption. The above statement also reveals that there was never an intention to entertain the framework I was suggesting. Their determination to assert what is the first question makes certain that my appeal would never be heard. That is extremely sad. Thus the following statement is a mirror to the author of their words:

This difference in starting point determines everything. **While the Church understands God to be revealed in Jesus Christ as described in the Bible, and therefore takes that divine self-revelation in Christ as its starting point,** AE begins with a reflection on human relations and equality. *By making that choice, AE has predetermined the outcome because he has taken for granted that divinity is something the Son somehow receives.* By

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choosing this starting point, AE has assumed what he is supposed to prove. BRC Evaluation of Return of Elijah, Aug 25, 2008

Stating the above statement in the mirror for the writer of it:

“By making that choice, the church has predetermined the outcome because it has taken for granted that divinity is something that is inherent through self-revelation.”

You as the reader can decide who has predetermined the outcome. For me to predetermine the outcome is to ensure the loss of my career, income and standing in the church. Why would I desire to predetermine that type of an outcome? What benefit is there in this when doing so would place my family in financial difficulty? It is not for me to guess motives as to why the church would predetermine the outcome, but what would the church have to lose if they accepted what I laid before them? You decide.

AE's paradigm thus views God from a human perspective and imposes anthropology on theology. The approach therefore tends to become reductionist and limiting God when describing him in human terms. While AE may claim that his understanding of anthropology is derived from the Scriptures, the committee finds little exegetical substantiation for that claim. BRC Evaluation of Return of Elijah, Aug 25, 2008

It may be equally stated that to make God to look like a committee of three could be to present God in the form of an Adventist committee. The charge of anthropology cuts both ways except for one thing.

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

And now God says **to his Son**, "Let us make man in our image."
ISP 24

Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Did God make man as a committee to reflect His image? The church found little exegetical substantiation for my claim because of the predetermined initial question. The rest is elementary, and so I was presented with these conclusions and recommendations:

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The Biblical Research Committee of the South Pacific Division does not find the thesis contained in “The Return of Elijah” to be new light. In its estimation it creates more problems than it solves.

1. Its starting point is a philosophically based anthropology rather than God’s self-revelation in Christ as described in Scripture.

As a consequence, the document does not ask what the Bible means when it identifies Jesus as God, but rather on what basis we as humans come to accept him as equal to God. The thesis thereby assumes what is to be proved.

2. The thesis is not substantiated by proper exegesis, enunciated by a clear “thus saith the Lord”, or confirmed by Ellen G White.

Throughout, the document lacks any serious interaction with scholarship and other biblical studies, whether Seventh-day Adventist or not.

3. The conclusions of the manuscript which questions the truthfulness of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, the co-eternal divinity of Jesus and the distinct personhood of the Holy Spirit in particular can for these reasons not be sustained. BRC Evaluation of Return of Elijah, Aug 25, 2008

The above points are important to read because they do most certainly apply to one party or the other. Either the church is correct in its assertions and what they say is true, or else it is confessing to its own guilt as to what it has done if what I have written is correct. This is for you to decide. I have given my testimony and submit it before you.

We recommend Adrian Ebens:

1. Not to present the positions expressed in “The Return of Elijah” regarding the Godhead to the Church in general

Not to pursue this line of thinking further

2. In interaction with Adventist and other scholars to re-study many of the questions and seek an assessment of the textual biblical basis for a number of the claims made

Including the establishing of the value paradigm, the proposed structure of families and “flow of blessing” theory, and a number of texts used throughout the document

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3. To develop in interaction with Adventist and other thinkers more clear definitions of the paradigms of performance or relationally based value, including a methodology for its usage and possible limitations

Find a venue to present some of the ideas to other scholars

4. Develop further trust in Adventist scholarship and the spiritual gifts and authority God has entrusted to and the corporate Church has recognized in our scholars

It is inevitable that if the church is not asking the relational questions, then the recommendations will also be non-relational. It might have been nice to come together and pray or, if the church felt I was unstable, to come and pray with me, or something along those lines. I was invited to stop thinking the way I was and to have more faith in Adventist scholarship.

I will hasten to mention that I never released Return of Elijah to the public until August of 2012, four years later, when I was disfellowshipped from my beloved church.

40. My Appeal

Two weeks later I sent the following reply. I will present it in full below.

Monday, September 08, 2008

Address to the Biblical Research Committee in response to official findings and statement regarding the manuscript “The Return of Elijah”

To my brothers in Christ who are over me in the Lord, Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have prayed earnestly about the observations, counsel and guidance you have given me in response to my manuscript *The Return of Elijah*. I wish to thank all of you for taking the time to consider this document, as you have mentioned that you have considered it at “several” meetings. Since it is a large document, it would have required significant time and resources to give it proper consideration and for this I am grateful.

I know that you would be fully aware of the challenges I face in light of the response given and I want to highlight a part of the challenge I now face so that you might pray for me that I will follow God’s will and do what is right in all things.

In my first submission, I stated the following which I believe is a core component of this whole process:

I never dreamed that I would be placed in a position where I would be producing a paper like this. I write with mixed emotions because on the one hand the views presented in this paper have opened to my heart a view of Christ and His righteousness that has caused my heart to overflow with joy and stand in awe of such great salvation. On the other hand, I am well aware of the fact that some of the concepts revealed in this paper will cause alarm and dismay for some and my pastoral heart shrinks from anything that would cause a major upheaval for the Lord’s flock. In many ways I am at a loss to know how to proceed with it or what to do with it.

...This paper came together in about 2 weeks. I was often awakened in the early hours and as I communed with my God, I saw things that I was compelled to put to paper. The words have flowed like a great current through my mind and heart onto these pages. It is your job to test what spirit is driving this experience. I need your feedback in this process.

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It is important for me to tell you that it was not my intention to write such a document as I have. At the time of writing I was extremely unwell and hardly eating at all and then in the midst of this situation I found myself typing up to 8 hours per day every day for 2 weeks. I could not account for the energy I received nor the clarity of mind to put together a systematic treatise of such scale. As I noted above, I often would awake in the early hours of the morning and many things would pass through my mind with such clarity and clearness and the joy I experienced at what I observed was almost overwhelming at times. At one point as I considered what I was learning concerning Christ, I was overwhelmed with joy and just wept with a sense that I had found the true identity of Christ and in this identity I had found the true WAY of salvation.

Obviously, these powerful emotions have found expression in my document for which some have accounted as arrogance and presumption, I have no defence against such accusations and offer none except the experience that I passed through.

As you would know, a key element of my thoughts centre on the concept of the channel of blessing and the importance to submit to God's ordained authority, and so I eagerly submitted my manuscript to Pr Neil Watts who received me graciously.

In submitting my materials to you I have tried to follow the counsel of Scripture:

1 Timothy 5:1 Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;

Each of you are men of experience beyond mine and have been placed in a position of responsibility to guide and bless God's flock. It was necessary therefore that I should submit myself to you to ascertain not only the content of my manuscript but also the experience that I have passed through. Anything of an experiential nature must be compared with Scripture and I would not dare to trust my experience without the counsel of my brethren.

In coming to you I have come as a son would to his father with great anticipation and joy, saying "Father, Father, look at what I have found. Isn't it wonderful?" I was not and am not naïve to the realities of what answer I might receive but I trusted God would oversee such issues.

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In telling me that you have seen nothing in the document of merit, I feel as a son would feel when his father tells him that what he is excited about is nothing to be excited about and not helpful. I confess that I experienced a great wave of depression as a result that tested my heart severely. I know of a certainty that it has never been the committee's intention to hurt me or cause me pain and I believe that each of you have a love and concern for me as any father would for his son. So I do not take these things personally but only share them that you might know the trials of my soul.

Beyond this experience, I am now placed in a perplexing situation. If you are certain there is nothing noteworthy in my document and that the sentiments should not be shared with the church, what spirit was it that motivated me to put these things together? The conclusions of the committee would seem to indicate that I have been deceived and am being led by a false spirit. I sense this has not been the focus of the committee, but I think you can understand my thoughts on this matter as a consequence. Please be frank with me and tell me if you think that I have been deceived. This manuscript is not simply an intellectual exercise, it was forged in a deeply spiritual experience and the spirit that gave it must be tested and revealed.

I appeal to each of you in this regard that you ask the Lord on my behalf concerning this matter. If you can ask our heavenly Father concerning this matter and whether I am indeed misled and have been deceived for whatever reason. This is of utmost importance as I am sure you can understand.

In regard to the content of my manuscript and the reply given, I confess I am quite disappointed. I was hoping for biblical guidance from you regarding the manuscript, but you have not offered me one text of Scripture in response. I realize that you have stated that the reply does not deal with all the details and there are issues left untouched, but the points given to me have no Scriptural support.

One of the key points mentioned is:

“AE's paradigm thus views God from a human perspective and imposes anthropology on theology”

This has been stated, but the process has not been shown to me by quoting from my manuscript and then showing in Scripture how I have faltered in my thinking. I am eager to listen to what you are saying, but is it

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unreasonable for me to ask for a biblical response? I asked the committee to show me where my logic process has faltered, but the statements offered such as the one above do not help. They appear simply as opinions rather than a biblical presentation of the facts. If I have imposed anthropology on theology, I need to be shown the references where I have done this and how it conflicts with biblical truth.

I would contend that I have offered several passages of Scripture for the thesis I have put forth and I am asking the committee to give me a “Thus saith the Lord” in response, but this has not been done.

There are several assertions that the committee has made but not one of them has been supported by a clear biblical reasoning process to help me see the error of my thinking. I don’t believe that any of you would want me to accept the naked assertions and opinions of man without a clear thus saith the Lord. To do such would be to violate my conscience and is completely non-Protestant.

I have been asked to “not pursue the line of thinking” contained within this manuscript. The only authority you have to ask me to stop this is to appeal to the authority that my mind is captive to and that is the Word of God. I cannot submit my thinking to any authority other than this. I am sure you understand this.

I am eager to submit to you my brothers that are over me in the Lord, but your authority over me has been established and given to you by Scripture and therefore this is the only authority I can accept. To accept your request on any other basis is to submit myself in matters of conscience to the will of man. This I cannot and will not do under any circumstances.

On a number of occasions I asked the committee to show me from the Bible where I am wrong, I am not submitting this document for comment on where I can further prove my understanding, I am asking to be shown the error of my thinking clearly and unequivocally from the Scripture.

The committee has also stated that there are several areas in the manuscript that are uncertain and lack clarity. I am more than open to talk to any of the committee about these areas. My paper has not been submitted as an academic paper to ascertain its academic qualities but as a springboard of discussion and to enter a process of dialog so that the things that are unclear can be made plain. This is why I requested that I might appear before the committee to answer questions that seem to be

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unclear. I would also contend that truth does not only come in the form of a scholarly paper. I have written as I sense things have been revealed to me. I am sure the paper can be expanded as the beginning of something that can be developed into a series of scholarly papers if that is useful, but these are not needed to ascertain the truthfulness or non-truthfulness of the paper.

I have been asked by the committee not to circulate my document to the “church in general.” I have not been given sufficient Biblical authority as to why I should not. At this point I certainly will not pass the document to the church in general hoping for the biblical evidence that I am seeking. But it must be understood that I have submitted myself to the committee for the purpose of being shown from the Authority of the Scriptures where my errors are. I am sure you agree that the requests of the brethren must be supported by a clear thus saith the Lord.

Finally my brothers I wish to ask each of you on a personal level. Are you absolutely sure beyond reasonable doubt that the church’s current position on the Trinity is correct? Are you absolutely certain that there is nothing of merit in the manuscript “The Return of Elijah”? I urgently need an answer on this. Have you taken the manuscript to the Lord and prayerfully asked Him whether there is any light in this or has the manuscript been only considered in an academic way? I mean no offense by these questions but the subjective experience I have passed through urges me to appeal to you in this way.

My brothers if there is reasonable doubt concerning the church’s current view of the Trinity and there is a possibility of light in what I am saying, then there is a possibility that we as a church are engaged in the worship of a false understanding of God. The history of Israel clearly teaches us the possibility of God’s people being led astray regarding the worship of the true God. I am not stating these things as facts to the committee but merely to talk of possibilities. Are we sure about this!

The committee has asked me to show my trust in Adventist scholarship. My brothers you are asking me a very hard thing. Certainly there are scholars that I have been blessed by and appreciate in the church, but I can’t trust any scholar that rejects a literal six day creation and there are scores of them amongst our ranks. I can’t accept any scholar that seeks to downplay the concepts of the Remnant and references to other churches in respect of the concept to Babylon and again there are scores of them. I can’t accept a

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scholar who rejects the investigative judgment in its proper understanding and again there are scores of scholars who do and I know this for a fact. Your request for trust cannot be extended to any of the above and never will be by myself. I am happy to accept any member of the Adventist church as a brother or sister in Christ and love them as Christ would, but to trust scholarship outside the plain statements of Scripture will never occur with me.

In conclusion:

If you could please provide me a Biblical response to my manuscript both showing my errors of judgment by quoting the areas of my document and then giving a clear Biblical rebuttal of such a position.

If you could please advise me concerning my personal experience, is it of God or of men or worse the Devil?

If you can affirm that you are certain that our current position of the Trinity is correct and is indeed the correct view of God and would you be willing to sign such a statement personally or have a representative sign the statement on behalf of the committee with the official seal of the church?

Can you arrange a forum where the contents of this document can be discussed and explored?

I thank you once again for giving these things serious and prayerful consideration. As you can imagine these things are urgent for me and your speedy response would be most appreciated.

Please be assured that I hold each of you in high regard and esteem you highly in love and keep you in my prayers that God will impress you the correct path to follow with respect to this matter.

Faithfully in His service

Adrian Ebens

41. Division Response

Wahroonga, April 03, 2009

Dear Adrian,

The Biblical Research Committee commissioned me to formulate an answer to your formal response without consulting with the committee regarding the details.²²² The following has, therefore, not been edited by the committee, and words and phrases are mine. Though the committee has expressed its trust in my ability to present to you what has been its clear consensus when it comes to the content of your manuscript, any failure to do so in the most gracious and kind manner falls back on me alone.

In your response to the Biblical Research Committee assessment of your manuscript entitled “The Return of Elijah” you implore us to (1) show from the Bible that you are wrong; (2) give an evaluation of your personal experience; (3) affirm whether we trust the present Adventist position on the Trinity to be correct; and (4) arrange a forum where your thesis might be explored.

Introduction

Let me respond in reverse order to the elements of this appeal.

In relation to (4) we have to acknowledge that open discussion and dialogue on some topics at times is different, and that it is a challenge to find venues for exploring new theories. We have created such protected environments of more academic nature over the last 8 years, but we have also experienced heavy attacks from not least extreme conservatives for doing so. We are still trying. Let me add that in the particular area of your concern, the very strong deliberate, and strategically planned attacks on the church from other groups who may be perceived to share some of your views, certainly have not been helpful.

Yet, let me add that a number of the issues you raise normally are considered and discussed in class rooms settings, in this case most likely

²²² I understand this to mean that the discussion is over as there is no requirement to report back to the committee.

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at Master’s level. That is the forum where students try out new theories²²³, receive critique by their peers, and work on improving categories and argumentation.

In relation to area (3) it is easy to state, but nevertheless it is a deep conviction of the members of the committee that the Seventh day Adventist understanding of the Godhead as expressed in the Trinitarian statements of our fundamental beliefs and supported with many biblical references, is in accordance with biblical truth. Your summary appeal regarding these fundamental beliefs in your latest edition has not convinced us, and the Ellen White quotes you use as a reference for change do in our view simply not say what you imply they are saying (see the appendix at the end of this letter).

Let me add that though some of our doctrines now and then are challenged and questioned by some of our biblical scholars or theologians, the doctrine of the Trinity has for considerable time had the full and undivided support of biblical scholars and theologians teaching in our colleges and leading our church in administrative positions throughout the world. It has been studied, the biblical foundation has been investigated, our SDA history has been researched, and we are in basic agreement about the framework within which we pursue more light and enhanced understanding.²²⁴

We believe that though our understanding and expressions always are open for improvement, we by following the doctrine of the Trinity on the basis of God’s self-revelation in Christ through the Bible, worship the true God.

We do not, by the way, “worship” “a false understanding.” It is not the understanding, but the person of God who is the object of our worship,

²²³ While my approach to the subject of the Son of God includes different perspectives, the doctrine is not new but was a fundamental principle of the church until the death of Ellen White.

²²⁴ That doesn’t leave any room at all. I understand from this statement that the church is determined to maintain its belief in the Trinity through the consensus of its scholars and leaders for the past number of decades.

and we do not find in the Bible any example of “an understanding” being worshipped.²²⁵

Further, you challenge us to sign personal statements on this belief, sealed with the official seal of the Church. This is a challenge we do not consider. We do not have to say again what our fundamentals clearly state, but believe in the simple appeal of Jesus to maintain clarity in language and intentions (Matthew 5:32). There is no purpose in making such a statement, claiming to believe what we already have stated we believe, other than to create doubt in the integrity of all the members who confess so when being baptized, and whose representatives have voted that statement.²²⁶

In relation to your personal journey, spiritual life, and Christian integrity, the committee has not taken time, or felt it is qualified to pass judgment on your personal experience. Suffice to say, we are convinced that it is possible to harbour wrong theological views, yet do so in all honesty. We have no inclination that you are led by any false spirit, and we have no intention of questioning your personal motives or integrity.²²⁷ If you were to make the claim that your insight is due to special revelation from God, we would have ventured into an assessment of such a claim to prophetic gift or special revelation. But as it is, we simply disagree and find that your thesis is not supported from the Bible. Your theory is human. So are you, as we all are. Being human, we may get excited and enthusiastic, but nevertheless be theoretically wrong. Truth is that no human except Jesus is always only right in all intellectual views. The fact that I feel encouraged when coming up with a new theory does not make it more or less true. We do not build our doctrines on such emotions.²²⁸

²²⁵ My use of the term “false understanding of God” was an attempt to avoid the direct and more blunt charge of idolatry. So in response I am left with no room but to indicate that the church is engaged in idolatry through its worship of the Trinity.

²²⁶ In reflection I regret asking the church to sign a statement concerning the Trinity. Even if my motive was honourable, it really was not profitable to make such a request.

²²⁷ That was comforting to read.

²²⁸ It would be easy for the church to charge me with an emotionally based response. If reason and emotion are seen as opposites then the display of one suggests the absence of the other. So for something to be reasonable many assume there should be a minimal display of emotion. Part of my response to the church was to present both reason and emotion together. It was intentional on my part. For those who did not wish to see my points from Scripture they could always point to my display of emotion as a reason to

Chapter 41 – Division Response

Regarding Biblical Foundation

Let me with these words of introduction move to the essential part of this final official response to you from the Biblical Research Committee.

You appeal to a “Thus saith the Lord” that your thesis is wrong. Such an appeal to clear biblical statements is commendable, and we have had no intention of not being biblical. In the following, we will, therefore, provide some biblically based comments on the main issues in the area of hermeneutics, exegesis, and theology. We fully agree that the ultimate authority with which we speak and act as a church is the Bible only, and we maintain that position over against anyone who would claim, for instance that the structure of the church, or the church offices, have an authority independent of the one based upon and given by the Word of God in Scripture. Let me add that this is one of the paradoxes in your theory as you seem to attach a unique authority to certain roles, independent of the authority of the word,²²⁹ with your theory about “flow of blessing” preferring what is historically a Roman Catholic authority structure²³⁰ instead of what we as a church have always understood to be the Protestant and biblical model.

But let me highlight two important points. First, it is commonly understood that any new thesis has to be proved rather than disproved.²³¹ In this case, our major objection to your basic theory is exactly that you in our estimation have not proved it.²³² You have not persuasively justified your thesis from the Bible itself though your claims rank it even higher than doctrine because it is set up as a criterion of or a system for establishing or assessing all doctrine. We will from the outset state that it is not up to us to disprove, but it is up to you to prove from the Bible that

reject what I say. Such comments only reinforce the oppositional framework they operate in.

²²⁹ No evidence of this claim was provided. Each person can decide for themselves if the evidence is there.

²³⁰ Here is a clear example of not digesting the principles of life source. The Roman system is directly connected to the immortality of the soul and inherent power. Comparing my thought process to this indicates an inability to work within the framework I provided.

²³¹ If only F.M. Wilcox had remembered this when he inserted the word Trinity into our Fundamental beliefs in 1931.

²³² This is because of a determination to remain within the church’s assumed framework.

your thesis holds. It needs to be properly and thoroughly established. We have not found it to be so.

Second, we once again raise the issue of scholarship and interaction with other Seventh-day Adventist Bible students. We fully understand that your paper is not written as an academic paper, and we have had no intention of wanting you to do so. But your persistent refusal²³³ to consider, converse with, and potentially counter the arguments brought forward by Seventh-day Adventist scholars in the area of biblical exegesis, history, and theology in regard to the Trinity is not acceptable to us. It cannot be justified by claiming that some scholars do not believe in a six day creation, an investigative judgment etc. That is not a valid excuse for ignoring sound arguments, but looks rather as an attempt to avoid reality. And we are in this case not speaking about a few individuals on the fringe of Adventist faith, and who question the above positions of the Church. That would certainly not apply to scholars like Gerhard Pfandl, Merlin Burt, Jerry Moon, Denis Fortin, Raoul Dederen, Fernando Canale, Richard Davidson, Norman R. Gulley, Gerhard Damsteegt, Ron Clouzet and more, to begin a list that would encompass virtually all present scholars of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who have written on these topics, and whose writings are laid out in the open for everyone to study.

It is not enough just to claim that all these people are wrong in their biblical exegesis or historical judgments because they have not seen your system. You need to tell in specific why they are wrong, for instance, in their exegesis of biblical texts, or in their assessment of statements by Ellen White. You never do.²³⁴

This lack of dialogue and genuine interaction may both be caused by and result in lack of clarity and precision in your manuscript and presentation of your thesis. We have repeatedly asked you to try to state your point of view briefly and in summary form.²³⁵ From experience we know that most theories which cannot be clarified this way probably are too complicated, and they are certainly not the obvious choice for or basis for doctrine. Very often, what we feel is clear in our own minds, seem less clear when put down on paper, but exactly therefore such exercise in precision is both worthwhile and necessary. You have in our estimation not yet reached that stage with your

²³³ I didn't comprehend the use of the word *persistent* as our interactions were not that many.

²³⁴ The reader can decide if this is case. See Chapter 28 for details on the scholars.

²³⁵ Please see the final Appendix. This information was indeed provided.

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theory, and we have found no readers who have been sure they always understood what you actually meant.

Let me hurry to add that we have no reason to criticize your loyalty and actual behaviour, and we appreciate that you have submitted yourself to the Church in a process we realize is personally hurtful to you. Nevertheless, should not these facts make you question your own experience and its basis, Is this not an example of a spirit being too independent?²³⁶

We did not at first find it necessary to repeat what these Adventist thinkers have already said, and we took their biblical expositions as part of our foundation for our response. Your manuscript is very lengthy, and the comments made have been many. We did not see the need to repeat it all.

Further, when we looked over our interchanges with you in the past few years, and the material which has been forwarded to you also by Australian Adventist theologians, such as Carol and Eric Livingston, all of which privy to the committee, we noted the enormous amount of biblical material open to you. You may have been dissatisfied with these biblical comments and the biblical based critique, and you certainly have the right to disagree, but you have received them. You have already had access to and been given biblical answers galore. Besides those which have been directly shared with you, you have expressed your familiarity with a number of the writings which prominent Adventist thinkers have written on the topic, providing the biblical basis for our fundamental belief.

Further, we have also taken note that your general thesis is one of philosophy and hermeneutical methodology. You have consistently made that claim yourself. In conversations with you, we observed that whenever anyone of those who had read and assessed your document, pointed out in your manuscript what they perceived to be misunderstandings of biblical texts, Ellen White quotations etc., you in general rather than responding to their specific exegetical, that is, biblical issues, quickly jumped to philosophical issues, and instead of looking more closely at the facts of the texts, you claimed these persons were wrong because they did not follow or understand the right value system.

So, for these main reasons we did not in our formal response include the explicit biblical references you are now calling for: your thesis was not in itself justified by clear biblical reasons, and we took for granted the many

²³⁶ I questioned myself over and over and prayed for the truth and wondered many times if I had missed something.

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biblical expositions already shared by Seventh-day Adventist scholars and Bible students. Let me try in the following to a certain degree to make up for that omission by pointing out some of the areas where we perceive that it contains fundamental weaknesses, acknowledging that some of it will be repetitions of what has already been shared with you, but nevertheless are points which we in spite of your protests find absolutely valid.

On behalf of the Biblical Research Committee,

Field Secretary, SPD²³⁷

²³⁷ To read the rest of this letter follow this link.

<http://maranathamedia.com/article/view/brc-final-response-apr-3-2009>

42. My Final Response to the Division

May 3 2009

Dear (Church Leaders)

Thanks for taking the time to put this reply together. I have given it prayerful consideration.

Out of respect for the BRC's final word, I will not offer a counter response.

I will concede that my handling of the statement concerning Christ's elevation by EGW was not adequately presented and I see that I allowed misunderstanding to occur. I have always believed that Christ's position to the Father has not changed, though I see that occurs in a different way.

I also see wisdom in the committee not offering a new statement concerning the Trinity as this would cast doubt on the existing agreed statement and your reaffirmation of this position is the correct thing to do considering the church's position.

I appreciate your personal note. I have tried my best to be open to whatever my brethren have presented to me and prayerfully consider it.

Try as I might, I am unable to be reconciled to it.

As you have kindly offered me a personal note regarding my experience, I will briefly clarify by stating that my experience came in response to my study and not the other way around.

I am having a personal wrestle with the issue of my integrity while in my current position. While a credentialed minister, I would think that Adventist members have a right to believe that ministers that address them should believe those 28 fundamentals. I see that I am vulnerable to the attack of lack of integrity and I am not sure how to deal with this.

My convictions do not allow me to resign as I believe the Adventist church to be God's appointed covenant people on earth and I am not at liberty to reject that established authority – in terms of organization and leadership. So I am unsure what to do about this.

My understanding of the Father and Son in real terms is now the very centre of my theology and permeates every aspect of my belief system and therefore will underlay everything I present. I don't know how this can be resolved and I am not even sure if I need to burden you with this issue, but as you can

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appreciate, you above all have walked with me through this issue along with _____ and I don't know who else to talk to about this.

I know you have told me that the church can't remove people based on the 28 fundamentals, but my views are such that it would cause disruption to churches where ever I would present, either by reputation or by a small reference here and there. Two can't walk together unless they be agreed and yet I can't leave the church I love of my own choice – this would be rebellion to me. So I find myself in a very difficult spot.

I have wondered whether the church could resolve this tension be removing me. This still would not resolve the channel of authority through the church but it would resolve my integrity issue and that is my main concern at this time. In other words, if I was removed, I still would not feel at liberty to do as I feel because God has not removed His authority from the Adventist church and I am still subject to it whether in or out of this system. As I state, I only care for my integrity and I wish to avoid being accused of trying to undermine the church and its teachings and yet while I hold credentials and membership, I am fully vulnerable to this charge and I fear will bring dishonor to the title of SDA minister that I cherish so dearly and therefore wish to do nothing to dishonor this privileged title.

I have included you, _____, in this email because I value your counsel, input and friendship. You have supported me against many challenges for which I am deeply grateful and I am sorry for the burden I have placed upon you in this regard.

I ask you both to pray for me and if possible offer me some guidance as to what direction I might take – remembering that my conscience is the most precious commodity that I possess and I can't violate it under any circumstances. I did have a brief discussion with the head of the Theology Dept at Avondale last October and he supported me that above all that I must follow my conscience – but how to proceed with this and what to do is beyond my wisdom to know what to do.

Blessings

Adrian Ebens

43. My Appeal to the AUC

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

To the AUC Presidents Council of Seventh-day Adventists.

To my brothers in Christ

I wish to write to you as briefly as possible concerning my current position and understanding relating to the fundamentals of the church.

A. Introduction

As most, if not all of you will know, I have been engaged in a submission process with the BRC, seeking to resolve a number of biblical issues in my mind that I have documented in my manuscript “The Return of Elijah.” After a period of approximately 18 months this process is now complete.

I have tried my best to listen carefully to the suggestions made by my brethren in regard to that which has been placed before my conscience. I have even pled with the Lord to release me from the convictions that I now hold, if there was any possibility of self-deception, over emphasis or fixation on a subject that to many is either a complete mystery or a side issue. Try as I might, my conscience is unable to be swayed in its thinking.

Dr Neil Watts has asked me to outline where my major concerns are and I will try to do this briefly. My full expression of these thoughts is of course laid out in my manuscript, the Return of Elijah which I am happy to provide to those who request it.

There has been considerable controversy within the Adventist Church over the last 100 years concerning the issues of authority relating specifically to the role of Christ, the role of the spirit of prophecy and the role of women. The nature of this controversy has revolved around the nature of their authority in relation to their counterparts: namely – Christ to the Father, EGW to the Bible and the woman to the man both in the home and in the church.

As these three sets of authorities fall into corresponding pairs, the question has naturally arisen as to the relationship between them within their respective spheres. These questions have naturally led to a question of equality and how we define it. My observation of Adventist research

into these questions is that the nature of equality and how we define it has never been seriously questioned or challenged.

By definition, the word equality demands a value system of measurement and within the scope of Adventist thought this measurement system has appeared to default to the measurement of inherent power, ability and position. Yet, I have found much evidence to suggest that this value system is flawed and not based on biblical principles. In my dialog with my brethren, I have tried in vain to raise a level of awareness on this issue.

It seems to me an obvious point that the relation that the Father and Son possess towards each other would naturally lay the foundation for a universal authority and equality system, for the Bible tells us that by beholding we become changed and in beholding the relation of the Father to the Son, we see a pattern for how authority and equality manifest themselves. Speaking specifically: the relation of Father and Son forms a pattern for other instances of dual authority, namely: the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy and male and female relationships both in the home and the church.

It is my contention that an inherent power measuring system fails to allow these three sets of authorities to function as Biblically defined. Inherent power based equality demands extreme sameness at core levels leading to such terms as co-equal and in the terms of God co-eternal.

Such demands cloud both the roles and identities of these authority-equality systems and indeed create a large mystery as to how they should function correctly.

B. My Confession Concerning the Godhead

With this background in mind, I will lay out to you my confession of Faith in relation to the Godhead and specifically my issues with certain aspects of the 28 fundamentals.

I believe that God the Father is the great original life source from whom all things flow. 1 Cor 8:6; Ps 36:9; James 1:17

I believe that Christ came forth from the Father in eternity beyond the realms of human comprehension and has existed from eternity in fellowship with the Father. Mich 5:2; John 8:42; John 1:18; Prov 8:21-30

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I believe that as the Father has life in Himself, that He has given to the Son to have life in Himself and that the Son inherited all the fullness of the Godhead in the express image of His Father. John 5:26; Heb 1:2-4

I believe that Adam and Eve were made in the image of the Father and the Son as a unique creation and that just as Eve came forth from Adam and was formed from His substance and through Eve the entire earth was populated, So the Son came forth from the Father of His substance and through the Son, the Father created the entire universe. Gen 1:26,27; Rom 1:20; 1 Cor 11:3-9; Eph 3:9

I believe that the Holy Spirit is the personal and omnipresent Spirit of the Father and the Son and flows forth from the Father and Son as their representative. It is through this mighty agency that Christ personally comforts us and strengthens us. Rev 22:1; Rom 8:8-10; John 14:16-18; 16:7-16

C. My Difficulty with the Fundamentals

As a result of these beliefs, I find the following aspects of the 28 fundamentals impossible to reconcile.

Fundamental 2 “There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.”

- from my study of Scripture, this is a false god more akin to the religion of Baal than of Jehovah and is therefore a violation of the first commandment.

Fundamental 4 “God the eternal Son”

– in light of the above expression in Fundamental 2, this expression indicates that the Son is God not by inheritance but rather by self-originating power.

Fundamental 5 “God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in creation”

– in light of the above expression in Fundamental 2, this expression indicates that the Spirit is God not as the omnipresent representative of Father and Son but rather by self-originating power.

D. Consequential Implications

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There are secondary implications that these fundamentals incur – namely a spiritualized understanding of the terms Father and Son. This understanding is a clear departure from the literal rule of Bible interpretation and the theological materialism set down by our Adventist forefathers. This process leads me to a series of objections along with the chapter references from my manuscript:

A spiritualizing of the terms Father and Son to the intent that Christ is not literally the Son of God (has not inherited His Divinity). – (Alters Adventist principles of Bible interpretation) – See chapter 28

Placing the Godhead fundamentals of the church upon a number of assumptions that can only be inferred but not proven explicitly from Scripture. (Mixes tradition and Scripture) – See chapters 27 and 28

The use of a spiritualized methodology regarding Father and Son that creates a precedent for spiritualizing other Bible Doctrines such as the Sanctuary doctrine, a downplaying of the two apartments and a cloudiness of the actual work of salvation that began in 1844. (Alters other doctrines and invokes a train of heresies) – See chapter 8

A false view of authority derived from the Trinity that places the Father as assuming the senior position and the Son assuming the submissive position. Such a view presents assumptive authority as opposed to a literal Father that has absolute authority and Christ's submission is assumed for the purposes of salvation, as opposed to his submission being the WAY and example for all created beings to understand the principle of submission and how it operates. (Alters perception of authority and submission) – See chapters 31-34

The claim that the Trinity is a progression of the Pioneer platform is an impossibility. There is inherent in this claim of progression a notion of theological arrogance, suggesting an impossibility or error in this progression combined with historical naivety concerning the nature of a movement's natural progression in relation to truth – meaning typically downwards, not upwards. (Rejection of original Adventist doctrinal platform) – See chapter 26

A key element of Waggoner's message in 1888 was Christ's inherited Divinity. (The Trinity causes a rejection of the heart of the 1888 message) – See chapter 26

A false view of equality derived from the Trinity that is transferred to the drive for gender neutrality of church governance that is not supported by Scripture. (Alters perception of equality that impact Church governance)
– See chapter 33

E. Personal Ramifications and Reflections

I believe that every Adventist member has the right to believe that the ministers that serve them believe and teach the fundamentals of the church. It is evident that I do not believe this in regard to the Godhead.

It has been asked of me whether I could refrain from speaking openly about these things and keep them quiet, as many members have questions about the fundamentals. My response to this, is that my belief that Jesus truly is the Son of God is at the very heart and centre of my faith and therefore cannot be silenced for political expediency. I have searched my conscience and find that this is where I must stand.

It has been put to me that in taking this line that I am not submitting to my fellow brethren of experience in regard to new light and that indeed I have given assurances that I would submit to the findings of the BRC. In response I would state that the position I have taken is not strictly new light, but rather old light placed in a new context. Secondly, I don't think anyone could suggest that when we speak of submission that we include submission of conscience. I certainly submit to the church everything to which it has authority over me – my position, career and standing in the church. I might add that with hindsight, I might have expressed my position concerning submission more clearly, but at the time of expression, things were not as clear as they are now, neither were my convictions as clearly defined. I had hoped through the process to be led back to a more harmonious position (believe me, I prayed for it!) but this is not to be.

Some within the church have expressed to me the thought that why should I make such a fuss about something that is essentially a mystery and hard to understand. I would contend that in line with that mode of thinking I would answer that it is the church that has made a fuss of this issue and that if the fundamentals were not so specific, then I could hold my beliefs in good conscience and remain a faithful member of the church.

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Essentially, I think most of us realize that the two views are diametrically opposed and that they will never find harmony in the church and this is not helpful to the wellbeing of church membership.

So this is the position that I am now fully resolved to take after much prayer, anguish and soul searching combined with a deep love for my brethren and a sincere attempt to embrace their counsel. I intend to make this confession of faith available to the wider church in the near future.

I appeal to you to do whatever is needed to safeguard both my conscience and the church as a whole. As the BRC has made it plain to me that there is no flexibility on the fundamentals, then for me to remain an ordained minister exposes me to the charge of lack of integrity, a charge that I ask you to consider resolving. I must stop short of resignation as I still regard the Adventist church as God's covenant people and feel I have no right to walk away from it based on my own authority, but I believe that it is within your power and authority to resolve this issue by moving against me according to your convictions. I will not oppose such an action, nor speak ill of leadership for doing so.

In closing, I wish to thank you all for giving this consideration and finally appeal to you that Christ truly is the Son of God and that He that hath the Son hath life. I have found in the begotten Son, the pearl of great price for which I will happily sell all to possess.

Yours Faithfully

Adrian Ebens

44 AUC Response and My Final Response

18th May 2009

Australian Union Conference to Adrian Ebens

Thank you for your correspondence of 13 May 2009 to the Australian Union Conference Presidents' Council where you showed genuine transparency in regard to both your theological position as well as the process with Church leadership.

There was admiration for your transparency but certainly a unanimous concern for your position and decision. The presidents of the local Conferences, in council, would ask that you reconsider your stance and accept the wider counsel of your Church, especially in light of the significant review that has been undertaken by the Biblical Research Committee of the South Pacific Division.

If you still believe the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy, then submission to such a request would not be a submission of conscience as it would, in fact, be your conscience that takes the fore, providing you the strength to respect the Biblical conclusions and wider counsel of the men of experience that God has placed in leadership of His last-day Church.

But if you choose to hold firmly to your stated positions, then the presidents believe, with deep regret, that it would be appropriate for a man of such integrity as you have shown yourself to be, to actually request the Australian Union Conference Executive Committee to annul your ordination for the very reasons stated in your correspondence.

18th May 2009

Adrian Ebens to Australian Union Conference

Dear Brethren

Thank you for your email.

The only basis upon which I can reconsider my position is on the basis of Scripture conviction to my conscience and I have repeatedly asked to

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shown from Scripture where I am in error. I have tried my utmost to bring my conscience to the church's position, but I am not able to do this, because the church has failed to convince me of my error.

If you would have had the opportunity to read my document you may have a better understanding of my understanding of headship, submission and authority. The problem with your appeal to me to apply my belief that the Adventist church is the remnant church as a basis of abandoning my personal convictions to the wiser and collective wisdom of the brethren is that it comes very close to a doctrine of infallibility and that the church cannot err in doctrine. This is like asking a wife to trust her husband no matter what and we both know this is very dangerous line of reasoning. The Bible clearly states “as unto the Lord”. The Bible is replete with examples of God's people being in apostasy and yet God has not abandoned them but given them time to reconsider their position. It is in this sense that I still respect the remnancy of the SDA church – no longer as a holder of present truth but as an institution in grave danger. But I am not at liberty to move away from this covenant people until God determines this Himself. To do so would be to move ahead of Him.

As I consider myself a Seventh-day Adventist and part of God's remnant people, I maintain the right to present my understanding of the Advent message, now that I have adequately submitted myself to the church to have my position changed and yet my conscience is unaltered still. I wanted to offer you the opportunity to resolve ecclesiastical conflict that will ensue once I openly express my position which I contend is thoroughly Adventist and very defensible, Biblically. I was hoping that we could have saved a lot of controversy, but it appears that is not going to happen. I respect your right to see it differently.

To ask me to annul my own ordination shows a regretful lack of understanding of my position and understanding of the issue. I am not able to do this because I highly cherish the position of ordained minister of the SDA church and I will not cast this away lightly. In fact, my current position is part of my duty to my church to appeal, protest and watch on the wall of Zion.

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In my love for you all, I appeal to you all to reconsider that Christ is indeed the true Son of God.

Blessings

Adrian Ebens

45. Ordination Annulment Letter

Seventh-Day Adventist Church

(Australian Union Conference) Limited

24 December 2009

Dear Adrian

Your Ordination

As is always the case, there would have been great joy experienced by those close to you and the wider Church when you entered the full-time ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was our desire and yours, at that time, that this be a life calling.

But a tragic tension has come between you and your Church and for this we are saddened. Before proceeding further, though, we do affirm you for your open interaction with both the theological and administrative leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church over a long period of time now. The spirit in which you have participated has been contributory to maintaining a positive relationship. Nevertheless the outcome has been such that you have not taken counsel from the brethren but rather chosen to hold onto some very significant theological positions that are at variance with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And further, you have declared that you will actively share these variant beliefs.

You yourself acknowledge that your views are opposed to the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which include the doctrine of the Trinity, the co-eternal divinity of Jesus and the distinct personhood of the Holy Spirit. Much counsel has been passed on to you from senior leaders in the Church, including the Biblical Research Committee, Dr Paul Petersen and Dr Neil Watts, but without effect. It is your assertion that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has gone into apostasy and no longer holds present truth. By maintaining your position and advocating the teaching of variant doctrines, you have made void your ordination as a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Thus I must advise you that, with deep regret, the Board of Directors of the Australian Union Conference, in harmony with South Pacific Division Policy EMP.10.05 section 4.b. (relevant sections of this policy are

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attached) and the recommendation of the South Queensland Conference, have approved the recording of the annulment of your ordination.

While your choices have necessitated such a very sad outcome, I am sure you know that Church leadership longs for a time when you might choose to again believe as does the Seventh-day Adventist Church in those areas where you are currently in opposition.

You remain in our prayers.

Yours sincerely

Pr Ken Vogel
General Secretary

Encl: Copy of Policy EMP.10.05 sections 1-7

EMP 10.05 4b

Dissidence

Where an employee openly expresses significant dissidence regarding the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Continued and unrepentant dissidence may eventually be seen by the church to be apostasy and identified as such by the employee's administrative organisation after counselling with the next higher organisation.

46. Apology and Confession

Although extremely painful to lose my credentials, I did understand the implications of my decision to accept the Begotten Son of God. I understood that it would be impossible for me to operate within the Adventist Church with my convictions of Scripture and the transparency I believed was owed to the church.

As I pondered the events of the precious two and a half years, I recalled one night after I had finished writing the book. I had this overwhelming sense of shame from the idolatry I had been involved in and the pain and suffering it had caused me and my family and those under my influence. I confessed my sin before God and asked for His forgiveness. I claimed the assurance of our Father's love and I rejoiced in the knowledge of the begotten Son. No words can describe the freedom I felt in the truth of the begotten Son and what it meant for me. This is not simply an academic exercise of one belief against another. It is the difference between worshipping a real person and being seduced by a lie.

As I pondered these things I came under the conviction that I must apologise to all the people I have influenced with a wrong view of God. I also felt it was important to avoid the dangers of simply changing my belief and then pointing out the sins of others. The spirit of condemnation as a form of righteousness does not come from God but the enemy.

It was most difficult to make the deceiving power of Satan apparent. His power to deceive increased with practice. **If he could not defend himself, he must accuse, in order to appear just and righteous, and to make God appear arbitrary and exacting.**
{RH, September 7, 1897 par. 3}

I could not defend my actions in the false worship I engaged in. Therefore I had to confess my error in order to protect myself against accusing others to make myself look righteous. This is a great test for those who accept the truth of the Son of God within the Adventist Church. There is a great temptation to defend ourselves by blaming the church in order that we might appear righteous. This is the reason that many who accept the truth of the Son of God often become self-righteous and accusing in their spirit. It is a tool to cover the humiliation of having believed a grave error.

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I wrote a letter of apology to all those who had subscribed to my media ministry on the internet. There were about 1600 subscribers. The email came to many of my friends with the subject heading *apology and confession*. To some this sounded like I was backing down on my views about God and coming back to the beliefs of the church. When they read my email their joyful anticipation was turned to sorrow and anger. I am sorry that things turned out that way. The phrase *apology and confession* can be read differently depending on the context. The meaning I was giving to these words were my apology or defence of my belief and my confession of Christ the begotten Son. Here is what I wrote.

January 19, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Adventist Covenant Fellowship

I am writing to you under the conviction of the need to apologise. In my position as a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist church and as the director of Maranatha Media, I have held a position of influence and I have used these positions to support and promote teachings that are not Biblical.

In the year of 2007, through a series of providential events, I was convicted that the doctrine of the Trinity as expressed in the 28 Fundamentals of Seventh-day Adventists could not be supported by Scripture and is in fact a violation of the Commandments of God, most notably the first four commandments.

From my study of Scripture and prayer I found that God had laid a solid foundation for the Adventist movement through the conviction of its leaders that Jesus is in fact the very Son of God, not in symbol but in reality. I learnt that God is indeed the Father of Jesus and that Christ has received everything that He possesses by inheritance. In having this Son, I have found with great joy that I have life and have it abundantly.

I was also convicted that my belief in the Trinity as expressed in the 28 Fundamentals was offensive to God and the Spirit of repentance was given to me to confess my sin. I wept for this sin of breaking the Father's commandments. I also realized my sin in teaching this false teaching to many people both in the churches I pastored and through the websites that I have developed.

I offer to you my heartfelt apology for what I believe is a most offensive sin and transgression against the LORD in teaching and spreading the doctrine of the Trinity. It has come to my notice, that this teaching is a dangerous, spiritualistic tool of Satan to destroy the lifesaving truth of the Father and His precious Son.

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It also lays the foundation for the destruction of several other teachings delivered to the founders of our faith.

Over the last two years I have been in dialog with the Biblical Research committee of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists appealing to them to restudy this issue and consider the evidence that I put before them. The committee found no light in what I presented to them and asked me not to circulate my manuscript to the church in general.

I took their recommendations and counsel to the Lord and asked Him to help me listen carefully to what they had said as I respect their position as leaders of the Church. I asked the Lord to help me see where I might be mistaken. I did not want to cause unnecessary pain and division to God's church. I found no relief in the counsel given to me, it only served to further strengthen my convictions. I appealed to the church leaders to resolve this issue. I expressed my inability to change my conscience despite my sincere efforts to do so. I felt I could not resign as I recognize the Adventist Church as the covenant people of God, but I felt that if the leadership felt it best for the church, they might discipline me as they saw best.

In early December of 2009 I was informed that my credentials as a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist church have been annulled and that I am no longer a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist church. I accept full responsibility for this decision and cast no blame on the leaders for this decision. They continue to be in my heart and my prayers. The Adventist church is at the very centre of my affections and I continue to pray fervently for it as a member of its communion.

I have put together a website which explains some of the reasons for what I have found in Scripture. [No longer functioning] I also have put together more fully the story behind my manuscript called "The Return of Elijah" on my website adrianebens.com. My manuscript is only available upon direct request to me and is not to be passed to others as a means of undermining the leadership of the Adventist Church but only for the means of understanding my position. [This situation changed after my disfellowship in June 2012]

As you can imagine this has been a very challenging time. Most of my colleagues and friends have distanced themselves from me and not contacted me at all in regard to this process. I fully understand that upon receiving this letter, you might find it confronting and even offensive. I will fully understand if you wish to avoid coming to my websites or using my resources, this is entirely your decision. I only ask that if you have found any value or comfort in my ministry or friendship in the past, that you follow the Bible injunction to "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good." Many refuse to contact me so as to avoid being contaminated. I pray that your Christian affection combined with your confidence in your beliefs make it so you are not afraid to help a brother you may

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perceive has lost his way. It is easy to simply assume that it is a terrible tragedy and how could this happen to this pastor? But I appeal to you to search the Scriptures, pray fervently for light and prove all things step by step. Do not let fear of what others think be the deciding factor.

To my former colleagues, I appeal to you to consider your position and responsibility to the flock to lead them faithfully and only present the truth of the Word of God. Please be faithful in your searching of the Word and make certain that you are lifting up the true God of Scripture. We both know the consequences of failing to do this.

To church members I say, do not look to the ministers to lead out in this process as they have much more to lose than a church member, they face the loss of their career and reputation as I have done. The price is extremely high for being able to study this subject in a candid fashion.

To those I have pastored, I truly ask your forgiveness for teaching false doctrines and not being diligent to present you the pure word of truth.

To my dear friends that I have laboured with in the Lord's vineyard, my heart cries after you to not so easily surrender your affection for me and put me out of your mind. I treasure the memories that we had together and your silence is painful to me. If you feel that I have been attacked by the enemy and left to die on the road to Jericho, please do not walk past me on the other side of the road in silence because you have pressing business in the Lord's vineyard. If you believe I am in error, where is your loving, caring words and touch? Is this truly your policy to shoot the "wounded" and roll them into the ditch? Who has your heart? Any love you feel for me would demand you examine my appeal to you. Any failure to do so leaves you in the balances severely wanting.

I wish I could share with you the immense joy I have found in knowing the true Father and Son. Their fellowship is my constant solace and comfort. The spiritual victories now gained, the more consistent Christian life, the deeper joy that our family experience together are all fruits of following the true WAY, TRUTH and LIFE! I humbly and excitedly appeal to you: Come and see! Taste and see that the Begotten Son is a true delight and that His yoke is indeed easy and his burden is wonderfully light!

And finally, to our Dear Father in heaven, Sovereign of the universe, I thank you for your tender mercy in opening my eyes to the true identity of Yourself and your Son. What endless joy I have found in just knowing who you are. I was taught that you are a mystery, but you have taught me that I should not confuse your nature with your identity. Your identity is clear from Scripture, you are a Father and Jesus is your only begotten Son. My heart leaps for joy at the thought

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of it. I bow low before you and await with anticipation the seal of the Father's name as opposed to the seal of the whore whose mark is shrouded in mystery.

Father, you will triumph over your enemies and your Son will indeed be exalted as the name above all names to your glory. May your kingdom come speedily in my prayer – In the name of your most wonderful Son – The Lord Jesus Christ.

There is obviously a high degree of emotion in this email. I remember that moment of sitting at the computer, ready to hit the enter key to email it to many of my friends and acquaintances. Did I really want to do this? The truth was overwhelmingly clear to me from Scripture, and so I decided to move forward.

I am aware that several of my friends were deeply offended by what I had written. I acknowledge that some of the expressions were very strong, but this was not only in my rejection of the Trinity but in my affection for my church. Hindsight suggests a softer approach, but when you put together all the elements at play I feel I have lovingly discharged my duty to warn the church of a great mistake that has been made in rejecting the begotten Son of God.

There had been so many unanswered questions and so much confusion that vanished when I was led to the truth of the begotten Son. I cannot express to you fully the joy I experienced in having Jesus, the begotten Son revealed to me.

Section 9 – The Aftermath

47. Confessing the Begotten Son

The email I sent out explaining my position in regard to the begotten Son of God spread around the world rapidly. It was translated into several languages in a very short space of time. I received several frustrated and angry responses, but there was also a chorus of voices from members in the church who felt partly validated in their own research on this subject and therefore encouraged.

From the period of August 2007 until January 2010 I had tried to avoid sharing the contents of this book *Return of Elijah*. I shared with a few close friends so they were aware of what was taking place, but I asked them not to share it with anyone.

One of the main reasons I wrote *Return of Elijah* is because my media enterprise called Maranatha Media was of interest to a much larger self-supporting Adventist ministry. I was invited into dialog to begin merging my ministry into the other one. I felt that I had to alert them to my present appeal process with the church, as I did not want to adversely affect their ministry. When I completed the manuscript I took it to one of the representatives of this larger Adventist ministry. I spent several hours with this person and we spoke late into the night as I explained to him the beauty of the begotten Son. He listened graciously and pondered what I was saying. I asked him not to share the document with anyone except one other person in his ministry.

Sadly, the next day he took my manuscript directly to the leader of another ministry. This person then took the manuscript to my former mentor that I had served under in my first years of ministry. I started to receive phone calls from people asking me what I was teaching. I wondered how they found out. My former mentor had warned these people who were calling against me. I decided to call him as we had not spoken about it. He was very upset. He felt that if I had simply come to him and talked, he could have easily saved me from what he considered to be a soul destroying delusion.

It was made clear to me that every effort would be made to nullify my influence. It was a very tense discussion on the phone. The call ended abruptly and I pondered the cost of the steps I was taking.

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Due to this leaking of information to others in the church, I was being asked by a number of people of my situation. In answering these people I was accused by others of spreading my material within the church, which was not correct. I determined to follow a process of appeal through proper channels. If I tried to contact my friends in the church to try and alert them, it would be seen that I am seeking to undermine the church. I could say very little to anyone and just hope and pray that people would contact if they received information. Very few people did. The majority simply accepted the information that was presented to them from others in the church. They never questioned it and never ventured to examine the reasons for what I was advocating. It was a sobering lesson in how humanity operates in such situations. It made me more determined not to accept negative information about anyone without asking them directly in an open manner what they actually believe. This is much harder to do than many think. How easy it is to believe something false about someone without checking the evidence.

This human weakness goes right back to the garden where Eve accepted the lies of Satan against God without checking them to see whether they were true or not.

After I had completed my process with the church and realised that my convictions were unchanged, I willingly faced the loss of my credentials. Now I was ready to openly confess my belief in the begotten Son and not beforehand. At first I thought to just remain quiet for a time, but I felt that I owed everyone an apology and that is why I wrote my email to all who had been influenced by my ministry.

I was born in Sydney Adventist Hospital and attended Adventist Schools all through my life until university. I also attended Avondale and then I pastored in four different churches for over ten years. I was acquainted with at least 2500 people in the church. I was contacted by about 30 or 40 of them. The majority of the responses were not ones of enquiry, but rather efforts to correct my error without giving any serious consideration to the points I was raising. It was a burning reality that human nature does not typically seek to maintain friendship with someone that might place their safety within their tribe at risk.

One of my very close friends I offered to fly down to spend the weekend with me and just discuss things. My offer was rejected. He claimed he was too busy and it never happened. As far as the majority of my friends

47. Confessing the Begotten Son

in the church were concerned, my case was already closed; and this was the case without candid engagement in the Berean fashion of proving all things to see whether they are so. For many people, if the church leadership had decided there was no light in what I was saying then they did not need to examine it for themselves. Thus my relationships with hundreds of people were dashed to pieces with almost no effort to check for themselves. I was born into a new stark reality, but I would rather know now rather than later.

I began to write articles on my website about the Father and the Son in the context of the relational kingdom. Over a period of two and a half years I shared my love for the Begotten Son of God. It was during this time that I wrote the books, *Wisdom of God*, *Divine Pattern* and *My Beloved*. These books and other materials generated significant interest. I operated all my activities through my website. I did not want to hand out material in the SDA Church.

At the same time I approached the two churches that I had pastored in the South Queensland Conference and informed them that I believed that I had taught error to the congregations. I told them it was my duty to inform those that I had pastored of my error. I told them that I recognised their jurisdiction over the local congregation and that if they would take the responsibility before God for passing this on to the membership, then I would leave it with them, otherwise I would tell them myself.

I tremble to think how these men took that responsibility upon themselves before God as to whether they would let the people know of my confession of error or not. It is a weighty responsibility to carry, but I felt that I could not violate gospel order and speak to the members without their permission. This would only do great damage to operate in this way. My thought process for how to deal with the church I laid out in the book *Divine Pattern*.²³⁸

During this time period immediately after my credentials were removed I tried to reach out to a number of groups who had accepted the Father and the Son and were presenting this message. I tried to explain to them that God still had a covenant relationship with the Church and we would be wise to acknowledge this. I wrote two articles explaining my position.

²³⁸ <http://maranathamedia.com/book/view/the-divine-pattern-in-the-church>

47. Confessing the Begotten Son

- Why I Remain Part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church²³⁹
- Why I Cling to My Adventist Brethren²⁴⁰

I explained to them that as David remained faithful to the leadership of Saul even though the king was in apostasy, we should do the same and that there would be a blessing for us in this process. These brethren could not see any wisdom in what I was saying. Many of them believed the Adventist Church to be Babylon or of such a state that God no longer recognises her as His church. I spoke to a number of people on this question and found very few who saw any light in what I advanced. I also explained to them that if we separate from the church then we have no means to avoid the self-sufficiency of the Laodicean condition. A Pharisaical, critical spirit would be almost impossible to avoid. A number of these groups claimed the status of Philadelphia and spurned any suggestion that they were Laodicea.

My position placed me under suspicion from many. Even though we had agreement on the doctrine of the Father and the Son, our views on how the church operated were very different. I found this extremely frustrating, which probably speaks partly to the spirit of judgment that I still possessed. Strange as it seems to some, I felt a strong sense of loyalty to the Adventist Church even though the Church saw me as very disloyal and divisive. Of course this was a very awkward position to be in.

Due to the fact that I associated with these independent groups, in which I hoped to encourage them to respect the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church while advancing the name of the Begotten Son, the Adventist Church saw my attendance at these meetings as *adhering to and participating in divisive movements*. This was a key charge against me at my disfellowship from the Church in the middle of 2012.

²³⁹ <http://maranathamedia.com/article/view/why-i-remain-part-of-the-seventh-day-adventist-church>

²⁴⁰ <http://maranathamedia.com/article/view/why-i-cling-to-my-adventist-brethren>

48. Prelude to Disfellowship

I understood clearly that if the Adventist Church could not broaden its principles within the 28 Fundamentals to allow for my conviction of the Son of God, that it was only logical to annul my credentials as a minister of the Adventist Church. For the church to embrace two diametrically opposite views on the person of Christ would make things extremely difficult from an administrative point of view. When it comes to membership, that is another matter entirely. The church is at liberty to licence ministers that will adhere to the central tenets of the faith for the means of smooth administration. When it comes to membership, the church must counsel and instruct its members from the Bible alone as the basis of its authority.

During one of my two discussions with a representative of the Division, we talked about the issue of the 28 Fundamentals being used as a creed to discipline people. He assured me that he would tell the leaders of the conference that discipline in relation to membership should be based upon the Bible only. After I had lost my credentials and was now facing the prospect of disfellowship, I emailed the local conference and showed them the email that had been sent to me from the Division and asked the Division to confirm this, which he did below.

Nov 15, 2009

Dear [Conference President]

Please find attached a letter for the Exec meeting on Tuesday the 17th concerning my ordination.

If you could present my letter to the committee, I would be most appreciative. I also request a copy of the resolution that the committee concludes concerning my position.

I have copied in [the Division Field Secretary] due to a reference to a statement he made in conversations we had together last year.

In that respect [Division Field Secretary], if you could verify that I understood you correctly and also whether you were able to follow through **on your suggestion that you would write to the presidents concerning the use of the fundamentals in disciplinary actions.**

I am praying for your wisdom [Conference President] in dealing with this situation

48. Prelude to Disfellowship

Best Wishes

Adrian

Wahroonga, November 16, 2009

Dear Adrian,

Thank you for copying me in on this email. Let me hurry to ascertain that I did not forget my promise to remind the Presidents of the proper procedure in relation to church discipline and disfellowship.

At the meeting in the SPD Presidents Council immediately following our conversation, I had a presentation to the presidents in Australia and New Zealand, and **I strongly underlined that such discipline when being performed for reasons of faith and doctrine, is to use the Bible as its reference. I am sure that the message was heard and agreed on.** That will of course not always preclude some local churches from getting in wrong.

...

God bless,

Field Secretary

Director of Biblical Research

South Pacific Division

It was with quite some interest that I received the following letter from the local church where my membership resided.

14 May 2012

Dear Adrian,

As you would be aware the church membership records currently indicate that your church membership is still held at the Edens Landing Seventh-day Adventist Church. The advice that your ordination has been annulled by the Australian Union Conference has been received with sadness. However, the circumstances require that your continued membership of the Edens Landing Seventh-day Adventist Church be addressed.

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Edens Landing church board at its recent meeting held on the 23rd January 2012 resolved that your name be removed from membership. The reasons leading to this decision include **“Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the fundamental beliefs of the Church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.”** A further reason for discipline is, “Persistent refusal to recognise properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church”.

The main options in this situation are generally the resignation of membership through written correspondence or **confirmation that you uphold all the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.** Also, the church processes allow members the right to be heard at a disciplinary meeting. The calling of a disciplinary meeting will assist in resolving the situation and allow you to advise directly what your position is regarding this matter.

The church requests that you prayerfully consider your position and advise in writing of your decision. If you wish to continue church membership then it would generally be appropriate that you attend in person to clarify the matter directly with the church at a church business meeting. You are requested to advise if a meeting held at 7:00pm on Monday 4th June 2012 would suit your schedule. On receipt of this advice further correspondence will be provided confirming the date for this meeting.

Correspondence regarding the co-ordination of the church business meeting should be directed through the above postal address or email

Edens Landing Church thanks you for your dedicated ministry over the years and will attempt to resolve this matter without undue delay and in a Christian spirit, respecting each person's right to follow their conscience.

Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Sincerely,

Church Clerk

As can be seen in the letter above, the church moved directly to the charge that I was denying the fundamental beliefs of the church. I was informed that this can be rectified by simply stating I agree with the fundamentals of the church. This is how a Creed operates. The Bible was not quoted or referred to. A man is condemned according to the words of men who claim it is the according to the Word of God. This situation is exactly

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what our Pioneer J.N. Loughborough said would happen to the church if they went into apostasy.

The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is, to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And fifth, to commence persecution against such. J.N. Loughborough, Review and Herald, October 8, 1861.

When President N.C. Wilson was addressing delegates about the introduction of the 27 Fundamentals in 1980, he made the following comment.

There are others who think they know why this is being done. **They believe it is being prepared as a club to batter someone over the head, to try to get people into some narrow concept of theology not leaving any opportunity for individual interpretation of prophecy or certain areas of doctrine.** This is also unfortunate because this never has been and is not the intention of any study that has been given to the Statement of Fundamental beliefs. N.C. Wilson, RH April 23 1980

While it may not have been Elder Wilson's intention to use the Fundamentals in this way, that is exactly the effect that it has had. I accept the responsibility for my actions while pointing out that fact that through the use of this creed, my friendship with hundreds of people were destroyed. This creed and the way it was used in my disfellowship is the clearest evidence of J.N. Loughborough's diagnosis for a church in apostasy.

The local church could not be in a position to "get it wrong" because my disfellowship meeting was chaired by the Conference President, whom the Division representative told me was informed of the correct procedure. If this is the case, as it appears to be, then he elected to ignore it and use the creed to disfellowship. When I read the charge in the local church letter I knew that their case was fundamentally flawed, but I elected not to contest this point. It was clear evidence to me that if they were willing to bypass correct procedure, that resistance would be futile. The alternative was to contest their process, which would give the impression that I did not honour their leadership. This I could not do.

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I had urged the local board to pass my name to the conference to deal with my case to save them the responsibility of discharging this action. Sadly, they took that responsibility even though many of them had not read nor understood the material in this book to be able to make an informed decision. Lord Jesus, lay not this sin to their charge is my prayer.

My wife requested the local church to deal with her name at the same time. She indicated that she believed the same as I did and wanted to stand beside me to face the same process. The church denied her that right. They indicated that they would deal with this later. Why would they not wish to deal with my wife at the same time? Was my disfellowship actually a case of maintaining doctrinal purity?

In the next chapter I detail the process of my disfellowship, but I will mention here that my wife sent a 15 page document outlining her convictions about the Son of God, stating she believed from Scripture that Christ was begotten of the Father. She waited a number of months after sending the document but she received no reply. When she contacted them again, she was informed that if she did not plan to spread her beliefs that they had no plans to pursue the matter. My wife found it very disappointing that firstly she was denied the right to stand by her husband in the trial and secondly that the church did not consider her stand on the Bible worthy of discipline when she was supporting completely the stand of her husband.

My wife has been able to transfer her membership twice within the church system without difficulty, even though she believes Jesus is the begotten Son of God and fully supports my efforts to spread this teaching throughout the world. We are grateful that she can retain her membership, but the question that must be asked is one of consistency. What was the real motive for disfellowship? The same question can be asked of the case of Craig and Bronwyn Jacobson who confessed to the church they believed the same, and yet they still hold membership within the church. I rejoice that they can still be members, but the question remains as to the purpose of the church in seeking to disfellowship one but not the others. For those who have ears to hear, let them hear.

49. For My Love for the Son of God

This is modified version of the report I wrote a few days after my disfellowship on June 4, 2012.

The church where my membership is held is about 1900kms from my home. My son and I travelled this distance by car. As I travelled I had plenty of time to think and consider the matter. My belief that Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father had placed me in direct conflict with my beloved Church. Belief for me is something that you live, that you confess; it is not something you are silent about. This is why I say my belief brought me into direct conflict with my church.

My trip took me past the place where I was born, which is directly opposite the headquarters of the South Pacific Division. As I looked at the Sydney Adventist Hospital where I was born and then turned my eyes to gaze upon the symbol of my church that I had served all my life, I pondered the cost that I was about to pay. Racing through my mind were many experiences, faces, churches that I had worshipped in. I thought of my schooling right through the Adventist School system and the several teachers that had helped me develop and grow through my formative years. I remembered the rousing hymn singing that would often accompany a powerful sermon on Daniel or Revelation and I smiled as I thought about dear friends I had encountered along the way. These things were now placed at a distance from me and I had to question, was the Son of God worth the loss of all this?

There came to me a few simple statements from Scripture and a recollection of all the research and study I had engaged in over the past 5 years. My mind locked down like a steel trap upon the certainty of the Word of God and I felt that the truth concerning the Son of God could endure the pounding of a thousand sledge hammers. Nothing could shake my confidence in the Son of God and nothing would separate me from Him, not friends, nor church, nor sweet memories, nor career, nor honour, not one thing would stand before my choice of the only begotten Son of God.

On the Sabbath before my trial I attended the church that wished to disfellowship me. I saw many familiar faces, and to my great delight I found that I only felt love for them. I had prayed that our Father would help me to only reflect the spirit of Jesus in all I did. I was well aware that I might fail and that feelings of self-pity or frustration at the process might overtake me, but I spent the whole Sabbath worship time there without any negative feelings towards them. I recalled the years of service I had given to this very church as its pastor. Many warm memories returned as I recalled faces and the events that we had engaged together. Now from the very pulpit that I had preached of the love of Christ came the announcement that the church was planning to meet the following Monday

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night to decide my membership, announced by one of the wonderful young men that I had taught and trained in the gospel.

Is there no anger Adrian? Is there no frustration at such injustice for all that you did for this church? No, none,²⁴¹ only love and the sad reminder that I had involved myself in the worship of a false god and that I was more than worthy of this treatment – yes I deserved it all. So I had nothing to complain about. I trusted myself to my loving Saviour and contented myself that the knowledge of the Son of God was more than worth all this and much more besides.

On the day of the meeting, being June 4th 2012, I received a call from my conference president who was going to chair the business meeting. He told me that he had read my manuscript *Return of Elijah* and watched some of my DVD's and read some of my articles. He told me that he saw some lovely things in my writings but that he could not see the thrust of what I was saying. He told me that he was hearing many things and that I was causing much damage to the church. I thanked the president for taking the time to read my material and that I could not ask him to do more than this. He asked me how it could be possible that I alone could be right and the whole church incorrect. I indicated that there are thousands of laymen who have found joy in the Father and His Son. Do not all these voices count? I stated that I was only one of many who believed this. The president informed me that he had recommendations from every level of the church indicating that it was in the best interests of all that I be disfellowshipped. Our discussion ended cordially with only a short time before the meeting was to commence.

I knew that many people were praying for me for I only felt the love of Jesus in my heart. My main thought was of Him and what He had done for me and how sweet to me was the revelation of His Sonship to the Father. There was no struggle now, only peace. I knelt in prayer before the meeting and thanked our Father for the opportunity to represent His Son before my brethren.

As I walked out towards my car I looked into the cloudless heavens and beheld the moon broad and full shining down upon me. I trusted myself into my Father's care and drove to the meeting with Craig and Bronwyn Jacobson, my dear friends who were unafraid to declare their faith in the Son of God. As I walked into the hall I saw a number of men that I had baptised, married and mentored. I prayed that our Father would bless and help them. The local church pastor, a native of Poland, gave a devotional sermonette about the church as the apple of God's eye

²⁴¹ There certainly was none at the time. In the immediate years following, it would take an earnest effort to prevent a spirit of judgement and frustration from setting in. Sometimes I stumbled and fell, but I determined that if I would make this sacrifice that it would only be worth it if I was free from bitterness.

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and that he who touches the church touches God's eye and the need to protect the church.

The president of the conference then read the charges against me and then a third charge was introduced.

“Adhering to or participating in divisive movements or organisations”

We were told that this charge had been put together between the local conference and the local church eldership and was now being recommended to the church. Without discussion the charge was voted upon and apparently accepted. I did not follow too closely to verify this.

The president then outlined the history of my submission process of *Return of Elijah* to the Biblical Research Committee which led to the removal of my credentials. It was clearly established that I disagreed with some of the Fundamentals – namely those referring to the Trinity. The charges concerning the denial of the gospel and persistent refusal to submit to church authority or adhering to divisive movements were not directly addressed. (I since have written to the conference and local church asking for details of these charges and as yet have had no response) The only connection to any refusal on my part to submit to church authority could only be linked to the fundamentals. If the church believes it has the authority to enforce a teaching about God not found directly in Scripture, then I believe there is confusion as to the limits of church authority.

The church was then told that recommendations had come from several levels of administration indicating that I should be disfellowshipped.

I was then given 15 minutes to respond to the charges against me. I thanked those assembled (there were about 30 people I estimate) for the privilege of being a Seventh-day Adventist. I told them that I was a third generation Seventh-day Adventist and that my grandfather on my father's side received Great Controversy from a Colporteur in the Netherlands and accepted the Adventist Faith, and my Grandmother on my mother's side studied with an Adventist minister for seven years before accepting the message. I was born in Sydney Adventist hospital and attended Adventist Primary and High Schools for my entire schooling. I worked for Sanitarium health food company for two years and then later attended Avondale college to do training for the ministry. Beyond this I have married a wonderful fifth generation woman. My wife's great grandfather and great great grandfather were brought into the message by A.G Daniells in New Zealand. Ellen White referred to Captain George Masters in this way:

“Brother Masters and family live in Dunedin, and are doing quite a large work in canvassing for our books. He is sure and safe, and true as steel in his business with the office in Wellington.” 11MR 3

49. For My Love for the Son of God

My wife's great grandfather Fairly Masters attended the first Adventist School in Melbourne and would carry letters written by Ellen White to the post office to be mailed back to the USA. My wife's grandfather was the first missionary to the Indian Fijian people in Fiji. Indeed it has been a privilege to be connected to such rich Adventist History.

Beyond this I thanked the church for allowing me to be their pastor for 3 years and that I often would go to bed at night with a smile in my heart that I was enabled to be a minister of the Third Angel's Message. At that point I brought out a gift which I had purchased for the church and I handed it to the local pastor asking him to accept it as a token of my appreciation.

I then told them of the Bible promise which states:

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. John 8:36

I confessed to them that this promised freedom I would taste briefly and then lose under my former beliefs as an Adventist. I explained to them that I then realised that because I worshipped a Jesus that had the title of a Son and did the work of a Son and yet was not truly a Son, that by beholding this image I also had the title of a son of God and did the work of a son of God but I had no assurance that I was truly a son of God because the Jesus I worshipped was not truly a Son of God.

As for my supposed denial of the gospel, I told them that I believed that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that whosoever believed in Him should not perish but have eternal life. I stated that I believed that Jesus died and rose again for my justification and now ministers for me in the most holy place. I believe also that He will come again and receive me unto Himself that where He is, I may be also.

I then informed them that the only begotten Son of God was my master. (At this point the local pastor interjected stating that we do not use that language anymore.) I waited for him to finish and then continued. I stated that I represented the Father and His Son. I told them how that the church does not believe that Jesus has any kind of inheritance from the Father. I explained to them about the statement by Whidden Moon and Reeve that indicates that the terms Father and Son should be taken metaphorically²⁴², and the Adventist Encyclopaedia

²⁴² "Another important point involves how we interpret the Bible. Here the issue pertains to whether we should interpret some passages literally or whether we may treat them more figuratively. Maybe we could illustrate this way. While we often refer to Jesus as the Son and frequently call the first person of the Godhead the Father, do we really want to take such expressions in a totally literal way? Or would it be more appropriate to interpret them in a more metaphorical way that draws on selective aspects of sonship and fatherhood?" *The Trinity* by Whidden, Moon and Reeve, Page 94

49. For My Love for the Son of God

indicated that there is no idea of generation of the Son from the Father²⁴³. I indicated that the Church professes an unbegotten Son while I profess an only begotten Son. He is who I represent and it is Him that you are dealing with. I appealed to them that if they were not absolutely certain I was in error then they had something to consider.

As I went to sit down it was suggested to me that I was free to leave.²⁴⁴ I indicated that I would be happy to stay and learn the outcome of the vote. I then moved to another room and waited as my situation was discussed. I prayed for the people in the meeting that they would consider the actions they were taking and that they were dealing with my beloved master – the only begotten Son. Would they betray him and cast him out of the Adventist Church?

I spoke to my wife on the phone and assured her that my heart was at peace. As I sat alone in that room, I thought of the many implications that awaited the outcome of this decision. I prayed for our church, our beloved church, that our Father would help them.... And then I was called back in.

It was reported to me by some present in the meeting that the local pastor indicated that if they did not vote me out that he would no longer be their pastor. Another man indicated that he felt a lot of pressure to vote me out of the church.

The president announced that, by an overwhelming majority, the vote had been carried to disfellowship me. The vote was 24 votes to 4. I felt all eyes looking at me as I took in the vote. There was only peace in my heart and only joy on my face. I marvel now as I recall the event. Brethren, I invite you to test this spirit, test and see who gives men such grace to face their accusers? There is nothing to boast for me, only to marvel that I should be granted such freedom of spirit in the face of what should have been such a crushing blow. As I felt the peace all over my soul, I just silently thanked my Saviour for holding me so strong in the face of such things. Brethren, this Spirit I proclaim to you; it is the Spirit of the Son of God. It is most sweet and completely resilient. What strength, what incredible love in the face of such heartlessness towards the Begotten Son. I was

“Is it not quite apparent that the problem texts become problems only when one assumes an exclusively literalistic interpretation of such expressions as “Father,” “Son,” “Firstborn,” “Only Begotten,” “Begotten,” and so forth? Does not such literalism go against the mainly figurative or metaphorical meaning that the Bible writers use when referring to the persons of the Godhead?” (Woodrow Whidden, *The Trinity*, ‘Biblical objections to the trinity’ page 106, 2002)

²⁴³ “There is, therefore, no ground within the biblical understanding of the Godhead for the idea of a generation of the Son from the Father.” Fernando Canale, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia*, Volume 12, page 125, ‘The doctrine of God’)

²⁴⁴ Is this a case of not wanting to face the person you are about to expel from the church? Why would they desire me to leave at this point?

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reminded of what happened to Peter when he denied His Lord and I prayed that nothing on my face would indicate any self-pity or sorrow or bitterness, but only love that I might not discourage any once they consider the enormity of what they have done. As the people beholding me saw only joy, I saw some of their faces turn pale and begin to wonder if they had done the right thing. Some faces looked tortured, others came to hug me as if to comfort me, yet they were the ones who needed the Comforter that I possessed in my heart.

I went to the president and thanked him for chairing the meeting in a gracious manner and allowing me to add points to his presentation and allowing me to speak for 15 minutes.

When I arrived home I had no heaviness but only joy, and I slept soundly during the night and awoke with a deep sense of joy that my Beloved was mine and I was His.

To all my brethren around the world who read this, I bear witness to the joy I have found in the only begotten Son. He has given me the freedom to love in the face of loss, rejection and the shame of my church. Brethren, I proclaim to you with joy the only Begotten Son. If you allow Him to be your master, you too can have this freedom that I have found. Come to Him now while you can. He is worth it all.

50. Reflection

Four years after my disfellowship I penned these words on June 4, 2016.

By the providence of my heavenly Father I have been given a day for reflection this Sabbath. As I look outside my window the rain is streaming down in torrents; a fitting symbol to mark the fourth year since I was removed from my beloved church for my love for the begotten Son.

I am transported back to that night, and I remember well looking into the night sky just as I was leaving for that meeting and saw the moon broad and full. The scenes of that night pass before me, and as I reflect I am monitoring my heart. Is there any tightness in the chest? Are there any moments that cause irritation and possibly anger at the injustice?

This was my greatest concern. What would be the benefit in giving my life in open confession to the Son of God only to be engulfed in bitterness at the treatment I received for that effort? Truly the gate is narrow. Any seeds of bitterness undetected will likely grow into a spirit of defiance, aggression and rebellion. Whether in passive mode or in direct attack, the desire to prove others wrong and expose their folly finds its motivation in the bitterness of rejection and abuse.

It is a sad thing to contemplate that many Adventists who find the begotten Son will not find their way through the narrow gate of peace and tranquillity into the arms of the Prince of peace. Why? It is an inability to forgive those who have hurt us. This is the great test. This was the most important thought in my mind. The words “Father forgive them” must be repeated in every believer who is called to sacrifice their position in the church for the begotten Son. We must scan our hearts carefully and ensure there is no unforgiveness residing there.

I see the faces of those who voted me out. I question myself; do you love them? Do you desire only good for them? Then I consider who it was that was being voted out of the church. I represented the begotten Son of Scripture. It was my confession of Him that caused this despising and rejecting by those around me. I tremble at that thought. My brethren have treated the begotten Son with contempt and cast him from the synagogue thinking they are doing the will of God. If these deeds remain unconfessed, they will fall like great iron weights upon their souls and crush out their hopes of eternal life.

Lord Jesus I ask you to forgive them. I feel your love for them in my heart. I don't want any of them to be lost. I want them all to be saved and spared this crushing guilt of rejecting you through my testimony. How I pray that you will help them to awake to the reality of what has transpired. If only they could know the peace I experienced that night in the face of their charges against me.

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I recall with sadness the times over the past four years where self has been manifested. Selfishness expressed in self-pity and hurt feelings. Lord I am sorry to have misrepresented you at these times. How subtle are the thoughts of self-pity and frustration at being rejected.

Today, as I scan my heart for any land mines still lurking in my soul, I feel nothing but peace. This is a miracle of grace. This is a blessed victory. Yet there is no time to celebrate, for how easy is it to fall out of this place of peace and be drawn into a spirit of irritation at past events.

Dear Father, I pray for all those involved in removing your name from the church role. Forgive those who have done this to you, and please help them to realise what has occurred and find peace. I confess that as I am born of the same flesh, the ability to do the same thing resides in my heart and so I ask forgiveness on behalf of all my brethren.

I also pray for all my brethren who currently are being silenced in the church. I pray for those who have been sidelined by church nominating committees. I pray for those who have been treated falsely and accused of believing that Jesus is a created being. I pray for those accused of not believing in the Holy Spirit when this is clearly a false charge. Help my brethren to endure these trials patiently. Give them grace to love those who persecute them and speak evil against them. Grant us the victory to love those who reject, shun and mistreat us in your name. We need your grace to bear this patiently.

Lord I also ask that you still the raging seas in the hearts of many who confess your name. There is a profession of the Son of God, but there is a spirit of attack and self-righteousness. There is no virtue in knowledge, for knowledge without repentance always puffs up. Please help these brethren to see that the greatest obstacle for people seeing the begotten Son are those who profess Him without repentance. Let us work humbly and patiently, appealing to our brethren in the church with gentle grace and patient utterances. We pray for the Spirit of Hannah, Abigail and David, which was Christ in them the hope of Glory; a Spirit of humility that recognises those in authority and remains respectful of their positions in the church.

To all my friends facing church discipline, I pray you will be given grace to love those who persecute you and that the joy of finding the Father and Son is not destroyed by the spirit of persecution in the church. What profit is it to gain the knowledge of the Son of God and yet lose your soul in bitterness and unforgiveness.

Psalm 23:4-6 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (5) Thou preparest a table before me in the

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presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. (6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Looking back over these years I find it was a battle. Many times when our family would sing hymns together at home or if we would attend an Adventist Church, I would not be able to sing as I remembered the joyful times singing those exact hymns in the church. The temptation to be frustrated was often there and I would have to give it to Christ and remember that I had chosen this path and that I just needed to accept the consequences and count it all joy for the sake of the Lord Jesus.

How precious was the grace of Jesus in walking through these years. I want above all things to be seen as one who loves our Father and His precious Son. I desire the keynote theme of my life to be rejoicing in the love of God. This is what I have tried my utmost to do. I know I have failed at times and not always been cheerful, but I trust in our Father's forgiveness through His Son. I thank the Lord for this refining furnace of trial in my life. It taught me so many things about the reality of this world and how easy it is to be in the deceptive fog of human opinion and yet be convinced you have the truth. So accurate are the words of Christ to His endtime church.

Revelation 3:17-18 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: (18) I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

The experience of my confession of the begotten Son revealed so much wretchedness and blindness in me. I thank the Lord for refining me in this process and leading me deeper into union with the Father and the Son.

1 John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

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It was such a lesson to me to have grown up in the Adventist Church believing that the church had the truth without really testing it completely for myself. I was tested on several doctrines because of internal conflicts; such as the subjects of the Sanctuary, character perfection, the nature of Christ and the 1888 message. These things were contested in the church and I had to learn for myself what was the truth. As everyone agreed on the subject of the Trinity, I never had to be tested on this question and therefore never questioned it.

After my disfellowship I began to realise how much of a restraint had been placed upon my mind by worshipping God through the 28 fundamentals. It was not an obvious shackle, but once it was gone and my mind was truly free to read the Scriptures without it as a filter, I marvelled that I could be so blinded by my former slavery to a man-made creed.

Freedom requires responsibility. The process of being suppressed from the church will lead the disfellowshipped person into reading the Bible with a spirit of rebellion if he does not have a correct view of the church. I realised that if I incorrectly resisted the authority of the church, I could easily be beguiled into seeking to prove doctrines from Scripture simply because they disagreed with the authority figure that had tried to silence me.

This is where many people who accept the Father and Son truth fail. The truth is embraced with joy but when they face persecution, their joy is tuned to rebellion; and so Satan finds them easy prey to divert into many other falsehoods. The fact that a significant number of those who embrace the Father and Son are leaving the Adventist foundation is proof enough to the Adventist church that this teaching is false.

I thank the Lord for impressing me that if I wanted to survive the process of disfellowship, I must continue to acknowledge the church's authority and that God is still in a covenant relationship with the Adventist Church. This has been one of the most important things for me to keep on track with the progression of doctrinal truth. You can't proceed in the truth while in a spirit of rebellion or bitterness towards the church. Satan will eventually take such individuals into his hands. Therefore I would caution any Adventist who finds light in the Father and Son truth. I implore you not to undermine the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but rather pray for them and love them and thank God for all the wonderful

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things you have received in the Adventist Church. A failure to do this creates a high risk of being drawn into a spirit of acrimony and drinking the doctrines of rebellion. The begotten Son is not of this spirit, for His spirit is one of gratitude and peace.

Over the past 12 years I have been seeking to lay the pieces of the Adventist framework together upon the foundations of the begotten Son of God and the glorious light of the 1888 message. The greatest tool that I discovered was what I call the Divine Pattern of the Father and Son. I describe this in detail in the book called the *Divine Pattern of Life*.²⁴⁵

As man was made in the image of God and God is revealed in 1 Corinthians 8:6 as a source and channel system, so this whole creation is patterned on this source and channel system. This has been the single greatest truth upon which I have built my understanding of the Adventist doctrinal framework. Many doctrines that I had previously held together in awkward tension have come together into a beautiful harmony, opening up great vistas of truth that I never dreamed even existed.

As I continue to write and travel the world preaching the love of the Father and His only begotten Son, I can say with certainty that it has been worth it all. There are many who believe that I am against the Adventist Church, but I certainly do not see it this way. I do seek to honour the men who laid the foundations of this movement. I believe that God led them to lay a solid immoveable platform of truth. It is this platform that I intend to build upon.

I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps-- the first, second, and third angels' messages. Said my accompanying angel, "Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance.

The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received." I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform. I saw individuals approach the

²⁴⁵ <http://maranathamedia.com/book/view/the-divine-pattern-of-life>

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platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect, and the people much happier. Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it to be laid wrong. But I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform and exhorted those who had stepped off to cease their complaints; for God was the Master Builder, and they were fighting against Him. They recounted the wonderful work of God, which had led them to the firm platform, and in union raised their eyes to heaven and with a loud voice glorified God. This affected some of those who had complained and left the platform, and they with humble look again stepped upon it. {EW 258.3}

The Adventist Church has sadly stepped off this platform laid so firmly by our beloved pioneers. They not only have moved pins from the message, but the chief cornerstone Himself has been removed and an entirely new organisation has been built. Books of a new order have been written to fit with this new cornerstone of the unbegotten Son. But I shall no longer worship him. My mind has been set free to worship the begotten Son. In Him I see such matchless charms, and I cannot betray Him over the foundation He so faithfully laid through our Adventist Pioneers.

My appeal to you is to come back to the God of our fathers. They served the God of Israel faithfully and were not idolaters. They were cut out of the surrounding denominations and they ceased to worship the gods of Babylon in the form of the Trinity. If you believe that God has led the Adventist movement, then have faith that the foundations were laid correctly. I hope the material provided in this volume will provide you the evidence to show that God did not make a mistake in calling a group of people who believed that Jesus was the begotten Son of the Father.

My testimony is that I have found perfect freedom in the begotten Son. As He promised us:

John 8:32-36 And ye shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free.** They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**

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Appendices

Appendix A – Pioneer Statements on the Trinity

In the original volume, I placed ten pages of quotes from the Adventist pioneers showing their belief in a literal begotten Son of the Father. I chose seven pioneers as an expression of the completeness of their views. They were James White, J.N. Andrews, J.N. Loughborough, Uriah Smith, J.H. Waggoner, S.N. Haskell and R.F. Cottrell. There are several publications I can recommend that provide a more comprehensive list of quotes;

1. A Line of Truth – Gary Hullquist
2. The Source Book – Margaretha Tierney
3. Theos – Gary Hullquist
4. Godhead to Trinity – Gary Hullquist

All of these are available at maranathamedia.com

There are some who claim that James White changed his view of God, but I will present one quote just before he died to show his thinking on this subject.

“The Father is the greatest in that He is first. The Son is next in authority because He has been given all things.” {J. S. White, Review & Herald, January 4, 1881}

As listed in the resources above, the Adventist Church expressed a clear presentation of the Begotten Son of the Father in their statement of fundamental principles from 1872 until 1914. I think George Knight shows clearly that the pioneers didn’t believe the Trinity when he says:

“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 Knight, *Ministry*, October 1993 p. 10.

Appendix B – E.G. White Statements of Interest

In the original manuscript, I provided seven sections of statements from Ellen White that reveal the true Father and Son relationship. There are several resources that are available to show the Spirit of Prophecy quotations on the Father and Son, including the ones in the previous Appendix. The simplest and best for me is the first chapter of *Patriarchs and Prophets* and the first chapter of *The Desire of Ages*. I will quote just a few passages of interest in this updated version of the book.

“The **Sovereign of the universe was not alone** in His work of beneficence. He had **an associate--a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes**, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father--one in nature, in character, in purpose--the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. **And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."** Proverbs 8:22-30.” PP 34 (1890)

“The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence **He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both.** About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng--"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven **the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will.**” PP 36 (1890)

“"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,"-- **not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father's person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory,** one equal with God in authority, dignity, and Divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” ST, May 30, 1895 par. 3

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“The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality.” UL 367 (1905)

“But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. **All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.** And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” DA 21

“Satan in Heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, **next in honor to God's dear Son.**” 1 SP 17 (1870)

“Satan was well acquainted with **the position of honor Christ had held in Heaven as the Son of God, the beloved of the Father.**” RH, March 3, 1874 par. 21

“But when **God said to His Son,** "Let us make man in our image," Satan was jealous of Jesus.” EW 145 (1882)

“The Son of God was **next in authority to the great Lawgiver.** He knew that his life alone could be sufficient to ransom fallen man.” 2SP 9 (1877)

“Said the angel, "Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no." It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His darling Son to die for them.” EW 127 (1882)

“The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave his only begotten Son, **tore from his bosom Him who was made in the express image of his person,** and sent him down to earth to reveal how greatly he loved mankind.” RH, July 9, 1895 par. 13

Appendix C – Placing Apparent Trinitarian E.G. White Statements in Context

In the original manuscript, I addressed a few statements that appear to support the Trinity in some way. I have addressed this question in more detail and clarity in my article called *A Response to David Asscherick on the Trinity*. You can find the article here.

<http://maranathamedia.com/article/view/a-response-to-david-asscherick-on-the-trinity>

Another booklet I would recommend is *Putting the Pieces Together* by Nader Mansour available from Revelation1412.org

Appendix D – Miller's Rules for Bible Interpretation

Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible.
Matt 5:18

All scripture is necessary, and may be understood by a diligent application and study. 2 Tim 3:15-17

Nothing revealed in the scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering. Deut.29:29. Matt.10:26,27. 1Cor.2:10. Phil.3:15. Isa.14:11. Matt. 21:22. John 14:13,14; 15:7. James 1:5,6. 1 John 5:13-15.

To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence, and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in an error. Isa.28:7-29; 35:8. Prov.29:27. Luke 24:27,44,45. Rom.16:26. James 5:19. 2Pet.1:19,20.

Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound it to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed or wisdom is my rule, not the Bible. Ps.19:7-11; 119:97-105. Matt.23:8-10. 1Cor.2:12-16. Eze.34:18,19. Luke 11:52. Mal.2:7,8.

God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables, and in this way the same things are oftentimes revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures, and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one. Ps.89:19. Hos.12:10. Hab.2:2. Acts 2:17. 1Cor.10:6. Heb.9:9,24. Ps.78:2. Matt.13:13,34. Gen.41:1-32. Dan.2, 7, and 8. Acts 10:9-16.

Visions are always mentioned as such. 2 Cor. 12:1

Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy, to represent future things, times and events; such as mountains, meaning governments; beasts, meaning kingdoms. Waters, meaning people. Lamp, meaning Word of God. Day, meaning year. Dan.2:35,44. 7:8,17. Rev.17:1,15. Ps.119:105. Ezek.4:6.

Parables are used as comparisons to illustrate subjects, and must be explained in the same way as figures by the subject and Bible. Mark 4:13

Figures sometimes have two or more different significations, as day is used in a figurative sense to represent three different periods of time. 1. Indefinite 2. Definite, a day for a year. 3. Day for a thousand years. If you put on the right construction it will harmonize with the Bible and make good sense, otherwise it will not. Ecc. 7:14. Ezek. 4:6. 2 Pet. 3:8

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How to know when a word is used figuratively. If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally, if not, figuratively. Rev 12:1,2. 17:3-7

To learn the true meaning of figures, trace your figurative word through your Bible, and where you find it explained, put it on your figure, and if it makes good sense you need look no further, if not, look again.

To know whether we have the true historical event for the fulfilment of a prophecy. If you find every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is literally fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event. But if one word lacks a fulfilment, then you must look for another event, or wait its future development. For God takes care that history and prophecy doth agree, so that the true believing children of God may never be ashamed. Ps.xxii.5. Isa.45:17-19. 1Pet.2:6. Rev.17:17. Acts 3:18.

The most important rule of all is, that you must have faith. It must be a faith that requires a sacrifice, and, if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires, character, living, occupation, friends, home, comforts, and worldly honors. If any of these should hinder our believing any part of God's word, it would show our faith to be vain. Nor can we ever believe so long as one of these motives lies lurking in our hearts. We must believe that God will never forfeit his word. And we can have confidence that he that takes notice of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our head, will guard the translation of his own word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in his word, from erring far from the truth, though they may not understand Hebrew or Greek.

These are some of the most important rules which I find the word of God warrants me to adopt and follow, in order for system and regularity. And if I am not greatly deceived, in so doing, I have found the Bible, as a whole, one of the most simple, plain, and intelligible books ever written, containing proof in itself of its divine origin, and full of all knowledge that our hearts could wish to know or enjoy. I have found it a treasure which the world cannot purchase. It gives a calm peace in believing, and a firm hope in the future. It sustains the mind in adversity, and teaches us to be humble in prosperity. It prepares us to love and do good to others, and to realize the value of the soul. It makes us bold and valiant for the truth, and nerves the arm to oppose error. It gives us a powerful weapon to break down Infidelity, and makes known the only antidote for sin. It instructs us how death will be conquered, and how the bonds of the tomb must be broken. It tells us of future events, and shows the preparation necessary to meet them. It gives us an opportunity to hold conversation with the King of kings, and reveals the best code of laws ever enacted.

This is but a faint view of its value; yet how many perishing souls treat it with neglect, or, what is equally as bad, treat it as a hidden mystery which cannot be

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known. Oh, my dear reader, make it your chief study. Try it well, and you will find it to be all I have said. Yes, like the Queen of Sheba, you will say the half was not told you.

The divinity taught in our schools is always founded on some sectarian creed. It may do to take a blank mind and impress it with this kind, but it will always end in bigotry. A free mind will never be satisfied with the views of others. Were I a teacher of youth in divinity, I would first learn their capacity and mind. If these were good, I would make them study the Bible for themselves, and send them out free to do the world good. But if they had no mind, I would stamp them with another's mind, write bigot on their forehead, and send them out as slaves!

Appendix E – A Most Precious Message

The most precious message given to Jones and Waggoner, was a message that had power to release the power of the Latter Rain. Notice:

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His Divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” TM 91

The message of Jones and Waggoner was set in the context of Christ as the only begotten Son of God. As I have stated earlier in the book in Chapter 20, that the correct *identity* of Christ as Son of God and Son of Man is the central feature of righteousness by faith. Notice what Waggoner says of Christ:

“This name was not given to Christ in consequence of some great achievement, but it is His by right of inheritance.”²⁴⁶ Speaking of the power and greatness of Christ, the writer to the Hebrews says that He is made so much better than the angels, because “He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” Heb. 1:4. A son always rightfully takes the name of the father; and Christ, as “the only begotten Son of God,” has rightfully the same name. A son, also, is, to a greater or less degree, a reproduction of the father; he has to some extent the features and personal characteristics of his father; not perfectly, because there is no perfect reproduction among mankind. But there is no imperfection in God, or in any of His works, and so Christ is the “express image” of the Father’s person. Heb. 1:3. As the Son of the self-existent God, He has by nature all the attributes of Deity.

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

²⁴⁶ Waggoner clearly discerns the *performance* versus *relational* issue. He is working in a *relational* context.

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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. The writer to the Hebrews further shows that the position of the Son of God is not one to which Christ has been elevated but that it is one which He has by right. He says that Moses was faithful in all the house of God, as a servant, "but Christ as a Son over His own house." Heb. 3:6. And he also states that Christ is the Builder of the house. Verse 3. It is He that builds the temple of the Lord and bears the glory. Zech. 6:12, 13." (E. J. Waggoner, 1890, *Christ and His Righteousness*, pages 11-13)

"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. We know that Christ "proceeded forth and came from God" (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man. (E. J. Waggoner, 1890, *Christ And His Righteousness*, page 9)

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. Our object in this investigation is to set forth Christ's rightful position of equality with the Father, in order that His power to redeem may be the better appreciated. *ibid*, page 19.

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 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. There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from [22] the bosom of the Father (John 8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is

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practically without beginning. But the point is that Christ is a begotten Son, and not a created subject. He has *by inheritance* a more excellent Name than the angels; He is "a Son over His own house." Heb. 1:4; 3:6. And since He is the only-begotten Son of God, He is of the very substance and nature of God, and possesses by birth all the attributes of God; for the Father was pleased that His Son should be the express image of His Person, the brightness of His glory, and filled with all the fullness of the Godhead. So He has "life in Himself;" He possesses immortality in His own right, and can confer immortality upon others. *ibid*, page 21,22

Notice what Jones says of Christ:

"He who was born in the form of God took the form of man." "In the flesh he was all the while as God, but he did not appear as God." "He divested Himself of the form of God, and in its stead took the form and fashion of man." "The glories of the form of God, He for a while relinquished." (A. T. Jones, *General Conference Bulletin 1895*, page 448)

He was born of the Holy Ghost. In other words, Jesus Christ was born again. He came from heaven, God's first-born, to the earth, and was born again. But all in Christ's work goes by opposites for us: He, the sinless one, was made to be sin in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He, the living One, the Prince and Author of life, died that we might live. He whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity, the first-born of God, was born again in order that we might be born again. (Christian Perfection, paragraphs 53, 54 A Sermon by A. T. Jones, Review & Herald, July 7 - August 1, 1899)

Whenever quotes like these are presented, the immediate response is "Ellen White did not agree with everything Jones and Waggoner wrote", as if this will settle the question that she believed they were wrong on the Godhead. This is poor study of the facts. Notice the following statement that she did say about Jones and Waggoner's message:

"Messages bearing divine credentials have been sent to God's people; the glory, the majesty, the righteousness of Christ, full of goodness and truth, have been presented; **the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ has been set forth among us with beauty and loveliness**, to charm all whose hearts were not closed to prejudice. We know that God has wrought among us." EGW 1888 materials page 673

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She clearly says that they presented “the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ”. These men presented Christ as brought from the Father, which we say diminishes the fullness of the Godhead in Christ. Ellen White says it is the fullness of the Godhead. How long will we stubbornly refuse this message from heaven and put our fingers in our ears? If we can’t hear the truth in that statement, we can turn the volume up louder with this one:

“God is presenting to the minds of men divinely appointed precious gems of truth, appropriate for our time. God has rescued these truths from the companionship of error and has placed them in the proper framework.” EGW 1888 materials page 139, 140

If you notice the framework of Waggoner’s book, *Christ and His Righteousness*, you will see the headings:

How shall we consider Christ?

Is Christ God?

Christ as Creator

Is Christ a Created Being?

God Manifest in the Flesh

This is the framework of Waggoner’s presentation. Ellen White says the framework is proper. It is correct. Let us not say that Waggoner changed his position from 1888 to 1890, when he wrote his book. This is an argument from silence and Ellen White never points out that this was a problem. Let us cease grasping at straws on this issue.

If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory. (The Review and Herald, Oct 6, 1896)

Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God.-- Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 450. (1900)

It is quite obvious that the Trinity was not a key ingredient of the Adventist Church completing its work. Two years before the supposed watershed Desire of Ages statement concerning “Life original, unborrowed and underived”, Ellen White stated Christ could have returned. This is something we must consider very carefully.

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A study of history shows that the Trinity doctrine did not begin to be introduced into the Church until 1892 when Ellen White was in Australia. For three years from 1888 to 1891, Ellen White worked with Jones and Waggoner to get the message out. In 1888 there was wide-spread rejection of the message, but slowly over time key figures acknowledged their error – but the damage had been done.²⁴⁷ It is interesting to note, it was in the decade after the initial rejection of the 1888 message that the Trinitarian doctrine began to be introduced to the Church.

The 1888 message needed to clarify the pioneer position of the Son so that Christ could be proclaimed more fully. The rejection of the 1888 message opened the door to a view of Christ that reflected the hearts of the rejectors of the message – those who were performance-based. Even though the pioneers held a correct form of doctrine, the cleansing of the heart that the investigative judgment was designed to do did not occur. Rather than turn away from a performance-based mindset, the church began to change the God they worshipped to reflect their own mind.

Refusing to walk in light causes one to be left in darkness. I encourage you to study the facts of history other than through the unique and somewhat distorted lens of Leroy Froom's *Movement of Destiny*.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ See *1888 Re-examined* by Robert Weiland

²⁴⁸ Some good sources are: *Christ our Righteousness* by A.G Daniels and *Exodus to Advent in Type and Anti-Type* by Taylor Bunch.

Appendix F – Letters relating to the Kellogg Crisis

Kellogg to Prescott: “You, Elder Daniells, and others have spoken about a fine line of distinction, but I could not quite see what it was, but this statement by Sister White makes it clear to me. The difference is this: When we say God is in the tree, the word ‘God’ is understood in that the Godhead is in the tree, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, whereas the proper understanding in order that wholesome conceptions should be preserved in our minds, is that God the Father sits upon his throne in heaven where God the Son is also; while God’s life, or Spirit or presence is the all-pervading power which is carrying out the will of God in all the universe.” Letter: J. H. Kellogg to W. W. Prescott. Oct 25. 1903.

Kellogg to Butler: “As far as I can fathom, the difficulty which is found in ‘The Living Temple’, the whole thing may be simmered down to the question: Is the Holy Ghost a person? You say no. I had supposed the Bible said this for the reason that the personal pronoun ‘he’ is used in speaking of the Holy Ghost. Sister White uses the pronoun ‘he’ and has said in so many words that the Holy Ghost is the third person of the Godhead. How the Holy Ghost can be the third person and not be a person at all is difficult for me to see.” Letter: J. H. Kellogg to G. I. Butler. Oct 28. 1903.

A.G Daniells to W.C White regarding Kellogg’s View: “Ever since the council closed I have felt that I should write you confidentially regarding Dr Kellogg’s plans for revising and republishing ‘The Living Temple’.... He (Kellogg) said that some days before coming to the council, he had been thinking the matter over, and began to see that he had made a slight mistake in expressing his views. He said that all the way along he had been troubled to know how to state the character of God and his relation to his creation works... He then stated that his former views regarding the trinity had stood in his way of making a clear and absolutely correct statement; but that within a short time he had come to believe in the trinity and could now see pretty clearly where all the difficulty was, and believed that he could clear the matter up satisfactorily. He told me that he now believed in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and his view was that it was God the Holy Ghost, and not God the Father, that filled all space, and every living thing. He said if he had believed this before writing the book, he could have expressed his views without giving the wrong impression the book now gives. I placed before him the objections I found in the teaching, and tried to show him that the teaching was so utterly contrary to the gospel that I did not see how it could be revised by changing a few expressions. We argued the matter at some length in a friendly way; but I felt sure that when we parted, the doctor did not understand himself, nor the character of his teaching. And I could not see how it would be possible for him to flop over, and in the course of a few days fix the books up so that it would be all right.” Letter: A. G. Daniells to W. C. White. Oct 29. 1903 p1-2.

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Kellogg to Butler: “I believe this Spirit of God to be a personality, you don’t. But this is purely a question of definition. I believe the Spirit of God is a personality; you say, No, it is not a personality. Now the only reason why we differ is because we differ in our ideas as to what a personality is. Your idea of personality is perhaps that of semblance to a person or a human being.” Letter: J. H. Kellogg to G. I. Butler. Feb 21. 1904.

Butler to Kellogg: “So far as Sister White and you being in perfect agreement, I shall have to leave that entirely between you and Sister White. Sister White says there is not perfect agreement; you claim there is. I know some of her remarks seem to give you strong ground for claiming that she does. I am candid enough to say that, but I must give her the credit until she disowns it of saying there is a difference too, and I do not believe you can fully tell just what she means. God dwells in us by His Holy Spirit, as a Comforter, as a Reprover, especially the former. When we come to Him we partake of Him in that sense, because the Spirit comes forth from Him; it comes forth from the Father and the Son. It is not a person walking around on foot, or flying as a literal being, in any such sense as Christ and the Father are – at least, if it is, it is utterly beyond my comprehension of the meaning of language or words.” Letter: G. I. Butler to J. H. Kellogg. April 5. 1904.

In a vision Sr. White was “shown distinctly that these sentiments have been looked upon by some as the grand truths that are to be brought in and made prominent at the present time. I was shown a platform, braced by solid timbers – the truths of the Word of God. Some one high in responsibility in the medical work was directing this man and that man to loosen the timbers supporting this platform. Then I heard a voice saying, “Where are the watchmen that ought to be standing on the walls of Zion? Are they asleep? This foundation was built by the Master Worker and will stand storm and tempest. Will they permit this man to present doctrines that deny the past experience of the people of God? The time has come for decided action.” 1SM 204.

Sister White said he was presenting “spiritualistic theories regarding the personality of God.” 1 SM 204.

Some Observations:

It appears Kellogg’s conversion to a Trinitarian view opened the door for the crisis that followed.

The issue boiled down to whether the Holy Spirit was a separate person or not. The discussions involved an understanding of the personality of God.

Kellogg used Spirit of Prophecy statements to support his argument.

Pantheism was the fruit, but Trinitarianism was the root.

Ellen White said that his views were loosening the platform of truth.

She said his dangerous views were in relation to the personality of God.

Appendix G - The 1936 Sabbath School Lessons Quarterly

Listed below is the committee and information that led to a series of Sabbath School Quarterlies that presented the essential doctrines of Adventist Faith. Read carefully the names on the committee, and the backing of the church for these studies. Then observe what was written in regard to the Godhead. These lessons clearly state that Christ was begotten by the Father and received his life source from Him. This occurred in 1936 and was promoted by the General Conference committee at the time.

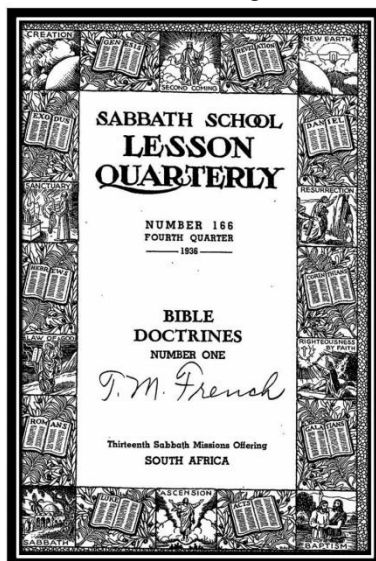
“The Sabbath School Department desiring special help in their Lessons Committee during the time when they will be considering the manuscripts for the lessons on Bible doctrines, it was

VOTED, That I. H. Evans, W. H. Branson, O. Montgomery, H. E. Kern, F. M. Wilcox and W. E. Howell be appointed to read the manuscripts and sit with the Sabbath School Department Lessons Committee when consideration is given to the lessons on Bible doctrines,” (*General Conference Committee notes, December 6th 1935*)

“Beginning with the fourth quarter of 1936, the Sabbath school lessons for the denomination for seven consecutive quarters are to cover the essential doctrines of this message. It was recommended that our people everywhere be encouraged to use these lessons as a basis for conducting Bible readings and cottage meetings in the homes of neighbors and friends, and that Bible training classes be organized in every church for this purpose.” (*Review and Herald, June 18th 1936, Report of the final day's session at the 1936 General Conference held at San Francisco, 'The Sabbath School Lessons for 1936'*)

Beginning with the fourth quarter of 1936, the Sabbath school lessons for seven quarters will cover the essential doctrines of our faith; therefore, we recommend:

1. That in connection with the study of this important series of lessons, our people throughout the world be encouraged to use these lessons as a basis for conducting Bible readings and



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- cottage meetings in the homes of their neighbors and friends.
2. That in preparation for this advance step, Bible training classes be organized in all our churches, as outlined by the General Conference Home Missionary Department.
 3. That our publishing houses be requested to provide suitable loose-leaf folders for the use of those who desire to keep on file the series of Sabbath school lessons on Bible doctrines." (*Review and Herald, June 18th 1936, 'Proceedings of the General Conference, Thirty-second Meeting'*)

Pre-existence of Christ

8. What is the source of the Son's life? John 5:26.

NOTE.—It is plain that the Son possesses the same kind of life as the Father—called here "life in Himself."

9. What kind of life does the Son possess? 1 John 5:11, 20.

10. When does the prophet say the life of the Son began? Micah 5:2, margin.

NOTE.—While we cannot comprehend eternity—without beginning and without ending—yet it is clearly affirmed here that the life which Christ possesses is "from the days of eternity."

11. What testimony does Jesus Himself bear concerning His existence before creation? John 17:5.

12. What testimony to the same thing do Paul and Peter bear? Eph. 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20.

13. What outstanding proof of the pre-existence of Christ does the work of creation give? Col. 1:16, 17.

NOTE.—Cumulative evidence that the Son existed with the Father before creation is abundant in the Scriptures. In the few passages we have studied here, we find that Christ was with the Father "before the world was," "from the days of eternity," "before the foundation of the world," "before all things." He was therefore no part of creation, but was "begotten of the Father" in the days of eternity, and was very God Himself.

teachers in the schools should be consecrated men and women, who understand the Scriptures, and can rightly divide the word of truth."—"Testimonies on Sabbath School Work," p. 29.]

- I. Christ Begotten of the Father. Ps. 2:7.

1. Like the Father.
2. Is called "God." Heb. 1:8.

- II. Pre-existence of Christ.

1. Source of the Son's life. John 5:26.
2. Existed before the world was. John 17:5.

- III. The Sinner May Have Eternal Life. 1 John 5:11-13.

Appendix H –Fundamental Statements of Beliefs

The previous edition of the book presented three appendices showing the two fundamental statements of the Adventist Church in 1872 and 1931. Gary Hullquist has covered the change in the Fundamental statements of Adventism well in his booklet *Godhead to Trinity*. Rather than list the full statements of belief here, I will simply show the statements concerning the Father and the Son.

1872 Statement

I. 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.

II. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God 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, with his own blood he makes atonement for our sins; which atonement so far from being made on the cross, which was but the offering of the sacrifice, is the very last portion of his work as priest according to the example 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; &c.

1931 Statement

2. That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom, and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption. Matt. 28:19.

3. That Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence as the Eternal Father. While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family, lived on the earth as a man, exemplified in His life as our example the principles of righteousness, attested His relationship to God by many mighty miracles, died for our sins on the cross, was raised from the dead, and ascended to the Father, where He ever lives to make intercession for us. John 1:1,14; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1,2; 4:14-16; 7:25.

Appendix I – Waldensian Confession of Faith 1544

1. We believe that there is but one God, who is a Spirit - the Creator of all things - the Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all; who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth - upon whom we are continually dependent, and to whom we ascribe praise for our life, food, raiment, health, sickness, prosperity, and adversity. We love him as the source of all goodness; and reverence him as that sublime being, who searches the reins and trieth the hearts of the children of men.

2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son and image of the Father - that in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells, and that by Him alone we know the Father. He is our Mediator and advocate; nor is there any other name given under heaven by which we can be saved. In His name alone we call upon the Father, using no other prayers than those contained in the Holy Scriptures, or such as are in substance agreeable thereunto.

3. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, proceeding from the Father, and from the Son; by whose inspiration we are taught to pray; being by Him renewed in the spirit of our minds; who creates us anew unto good works, and from whom we receive the knowledge of the truth.

4. We believe that there is one holy church, comprising the whole assembly of the elect and faithful, that have existed from the beginning of the world, or that shall be to the end thereof. Of this church the Lord Jesus Christ is the head - it is governed by His word and guided by the Holy Spirit. In the church it behooves all Christians to have fellowship. For her He [Christ] prays incessantly, and His prayer for it is most acceptable to God, without which indeed their could be no salvation.

5. We hold that the ministers of the church ought to be unblameable both in life and doctrine; and if found otherwise, that they ought to be deposed from their office, and others substituted in their stead; and that no person ought to presume to take that honour unto himself but he who is called of God as was Aaron - that the duties of such are to feed the flock of God, not for filthy lucre's sake, or as having dominion over God's heritage, but as being examples to the flock, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, and in chastity.

6. We acknowledge, that kings, princes, and governors, are the appointed and established ministers of God, whom we are bound to obey [in all lawful and civil concerns]. For they bear the sword for the defence of the innocent, and the punishment of evil doers; for which reason we are bound to honour and pay them tribute. From this power and authority, no man can exempt himself as is manifest from the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily paid tribute, not taking upon himself any jurisdiction of temporal power.

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7. We believe that in the ordinance of baptism the water is the visible and external sign, which represents to as that which, by virtue of God's invisible operation, is within us - namely, the renovation of our minds, and the mortification of our members through [the faith of] Jesus Christ. And by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing and declaring our faith and change of life.

8. We hold that the Lord's supper is a commemoration of, and thanksgiving for, the benefits which we have received by His sufferings and death - and that it is to be received in faith and love - examining ourselves, that so we may eat of that bread and drink of that cup, as it is written in the Holy Scriptures.

9. We maintain that marriage was instituted of God. That it is holy and honourable, and ought to be forbidden to none, provided there be no obstacle from the divine word.

10. We contend, that all those in whom the fear of God dwells, will thereby be led to please him, and to abound in the good works [of the gospel] which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them - which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, sobriety, and the other good works enforced in the Holy Scriptures.

11. On the other hand, we confess that we consider it to be our duty to beware of false teachers, whose object is to divert the minds of men from the true worship of God, and to lead them to place their confidence in the creature, as well as to depart from the good works of the gospel, and to regard the inventions of men.

12. We take the Old and the New Testament for the rule of our life, and we agree with the general confession of faith contained in [what is usually termed] the apostles' creed.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ www.creeds.net

Appendix J - Summary of My Objections

The Biblical Research Committee has asked me to give a brief summary of objections to the church's current position of fundamental beliefs. I will list the fundamental objections, and then list what I perceive to be the resulting implications of these issues. These statements are a highly condensed summary of this paper, to take exception to them without reading my manuscript would be irresponsible.

Objections²⁵⁰

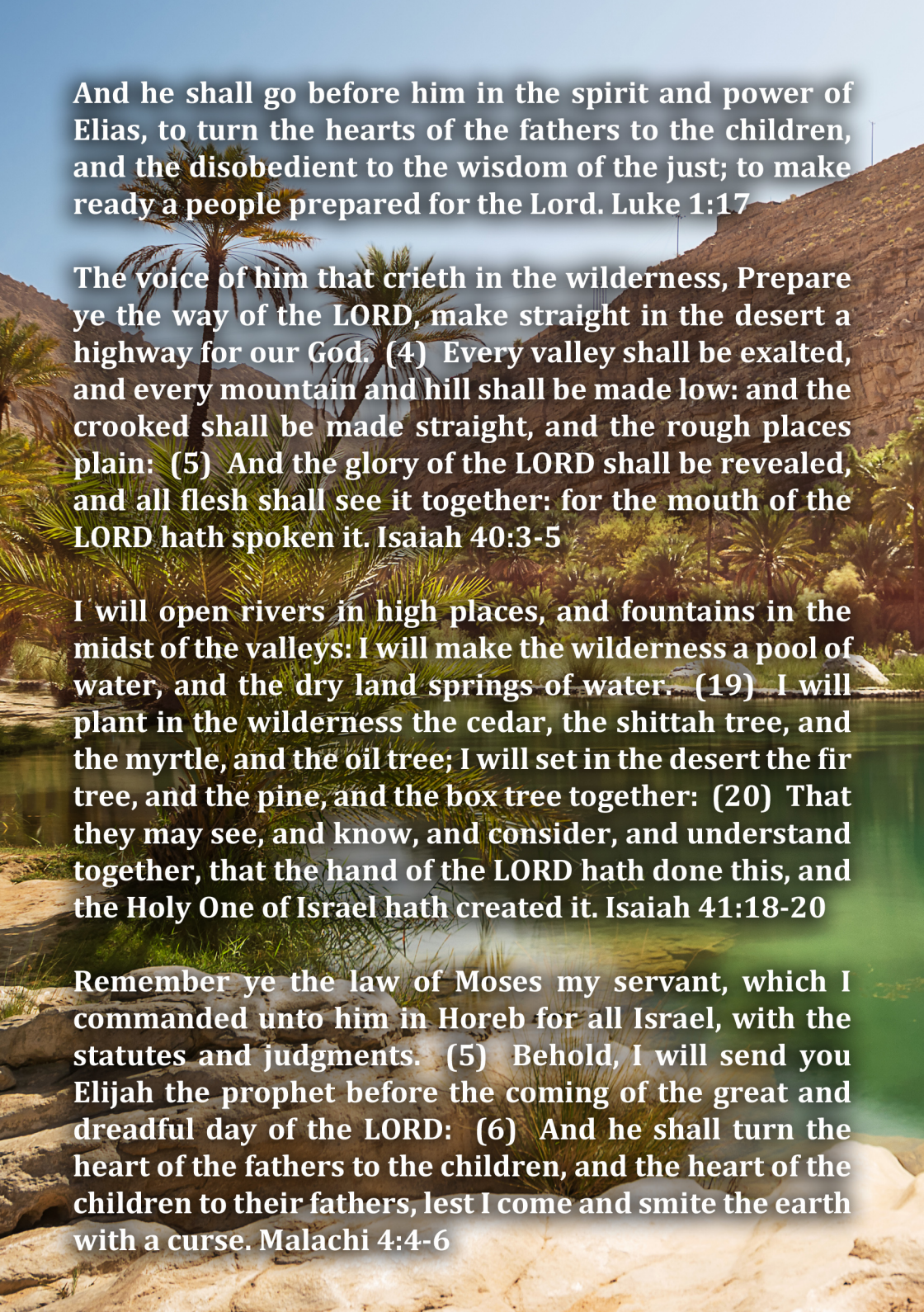
1. A spiritualizing of the terms Father and Son to the intent that Christ is not literally the Son of God (has not inherited His Divinity). – **(Alters Adventist principles of Bible interpretation)** – *See chapter 28*
2. Placing the Godhead fundamentals of the church upon a number of assumptions that can only be inferred but not proven explicitly from Scripture. **(Mixes tradition and Scripture)** – *See chapters 27 and 28*
3. The use of a spiritualized methodology regarding Father and Son that creates a precedent for spiritualizing other Bible Doctrines such as the Sanctuary doctrine, a downplaying of the two apartments and a cloudiness of the actual work of salvation that began in 1844. **(Alters other doctrines and invokes a train of heresies)** – *See chapter 8*
4. A false view of authority derived from the Trinity that places the Father as donning the senior position and the Son donning the submissive position. Such a view presents assumptive authority; Christ's submission is assumed for the purposes of salvation. This is opposed to what I believe is the truth: that a literal Father has absolute authority and Christ's submission to His Father is who He is, being the WAY and example for all created beings to understand the principle of submission and how it operates. **(Alters perception of authority and submission)** – *See chapters 31-34*
5. The claim that the Trinity is a progression of the Pioneer platform is an impossibility. **(Rejection of original Adventist doctrinal platform)** – *See chapter 26*

²⁵⁰ A more detailed list of direct objections can be found in chapter 28 of my manuscript

Appendices

6. A key element of Waggoner's message in 1888 was Christ's inherited Divinity. **(The Trinity causes a rejection of the heart of the 1888 message)** – *See chapter 26*
7. A false view of equality is derived from the Trinity that is then transferred to the drive for gender neutrality of church governance that is not supported by Scripture. **(Alters perception of equality that impact Church governance)** – *See chapter 33*

Placing the above in sequence, the spiritualised view of Scripture demanded by the Trinity doctrine causes a mixture of Scripture and human tradition that alters many of our teachings. Altered perceptions of Authority and Submission lead to a rejection of the pioneer platform and the 1888 message. Rebellion against the God-mandated authority of the pioneer foundation will seed the rebellion of membership against church leadership and fragment the church.



And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Luke 1:17

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (4) Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: (5) And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. Isaiah 40:3-5

I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. (19) I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: (20) That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it. Isaiah 41:18-20

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. (5) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: (6) And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:4-6