



Theos

Volume 3

The Battle Over Begotten 3

The Battle over Begotten

Part 3

“That which was truth in the beginning is truth now. Although new and important truths appropriate for succeeding generations have been opened to the understanding, the present revealings do not contradict those of the past. Every new truth understood only makes more significant the old.”

Ellen White, *Review & Herald*, March 2, 1886

Volumes 1 and 2 of this series examined the doctrinal understanding of God’s begotten Son among the early pioneers during the formative years of the Seventh-day Adventist movement from 1844 - 1888. We noted their unanimity in rejecting both the Unitarian and Trinitarian teachings popular among the other mainstream churches. During this time a consistent belief in a literal Son—begotten of God in eternity, two separate persons who shared the same spirit—was traced through the writings of 21 notable writers and leaders including Ellen White.

Volume 3 follows the history of Adventist Christology after the death of Mrs. White in 1915. We begin with an event that had remained unknown for 65 years. It is important to us today because of the detailed discussions that were carefully preserved.

1919 Bible Conference

In 1984 an entire record totaling 2,494 typewritten pages was discovered in the General Conference Archives documenting a meeting held at Tacoma Park, Washington D.C. in the summer of 1919. The month long Bible Conference and Teachers Council was attended by 65 chosen administrators, editors and teachers. Stenographers transcribed nearly every word spoken except a couple times when A.G. Daniells, General Conference President, requested that they not record what was spoken.

Much has been said about the exclusive nature of the meetings and speculation as to the reason why the transcript of the proceedings was not then made public but, as Daniells put it, “sealed away in a vault.” Most of the record has been preserved and is available to anyone at the Seventh-day Adventist Archives website. After

downloading all 23 DeJaVu image files and reading all 1,226 available pages (there were two copies found in the archive), the topics of discussion can be summarized into just a few categories:

1. Morning devotionals by W.W. Prescott on the Person of Christ
2. The “daily” of Daniel 8
3. The Interpretation of Daniel 11 and the King of the North
4. The Eastern Question
5. The Sanctuary Doctrine

A final discussion on the inspiration of Ellen White occupied the final two days of the Teacher’s Council.

While some claim that the final discussions on the inspiration of Ellen White were “the central issue,” the bulk of attention was actually focused on prophetic interpretation in light of the recently ended WWI with considerable dispute over whether the pap-

acy would ever be a world power again. But there were several days during Prescott's presentations that some differences of opinion were expressed in regards to the eternity of Christ and the proper terminology to use in describing it. On this we shall concentrate our attention.

Those mentioned in the following transcripts include:

- W.W. Prescott, GC Field Secretary
- G.B. Thompson, GC Field Secretary
- W.T. Knox, GC committee member
- M.C. Wilcox, Pacific Press editor
- C.P. Bollman, Review & Herald Editor
- W.H. Wakeham, EMC bible teacher
- C.M. Sorenson, EMC history teacher
- H.C. Lacey, Foreign Mission Seminary
- J.N. Anderson, FMS Bible teacher

Prescott's second morning "bible study" on July 2 brought up the concept of Christ existing in both the eternity *before* and the eternity *after* the period of sin. Beginning on page 31 he reads Colossians 1:12-17 and refers to Revelation 3 in which are encountered two expressions: "the first-born of all creation" and "the beginning of the creation of God." Then he says,

"Some have used that text to prove that Christ was a created being, trying to parry the force of the text by saying we should say beginning. No. 'He is before all things.' There would be no visible things except for his pre-existence, and when the only-begotten came into the world, all manifestations that have appeared since that time were potentially in him." pp. 32-33

He then discussed John 1:1 "In the beginning the Word was" (Revised Version). underlining in the original:

"There is a great difference in the way you read that. **We have to have the beginning of things. To us, there is a beginning;** but when you strike that which to us was the beginning, you can look back and say the word was, with **no time limit at all.** It is because the Word was at that time that we call the beginning, that the beginning came, and that all things have come since the beginning, and that **all things are now in our period of existence that we measure by time as finite beings** must do." p. 35

In the afternoon session for that day, Prescott entertained questions. The first was from W.E. Howell, editor of the Christian Educator, who asked if Professor Prescott would "enlarge" on the point of "beginning." Beginning on page 76 he responds:

W.W.Prescott: Taking the first chapter of John, the 3d verse: At a certain point where finite beings begin time, it does not mean that that is where the word began. When the scripture says, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God," it does not mean that when you get back to that point that we denominate the beginning, then looking back into eternity, you can point to the time when the word was.



H.C.Lacey: Can we go one step further and say that **the word was without beginning?**

W.W.Prescott: I was going to raise the question. **Are we agreed** in such a general statement as this, **that the Son of God is co-eternal with the Father?** Is that the view that is taught in our schools?

C.M.Sorenson: **It is taught in the Bible.**

He does not say where.

W.W.Prescott: **Not to teach that is Arianism. Ought we to continue to circulate in a standard book a statement that the Son is not co-eternal,** that the Son is not co-eval or co-eternal **with the Father? That makes Him a finite being. Any being whose beginning we can fix is a finite being.** We have been circulating for 40 years a standard book which says that the Son is not co-eternal

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with the Father. **That is teaching Arianism. Do we want to go on teaching that?**

He is referring to Uriah Smiths "Daniel and the Revelation". But we as humans are not able to "fix" the Son's beginning, only to the extent that it is in "the days of eternity"

Micah 5:2 margin. He and the Father both exist in the realm of eternity.

G.B.Thompson: "All things were created by him," Do you understand that to mean more than this earth?

W.W.Prescott: Yes, whether they be thrones or principalities or powers or things visible or things invisible, all were created by him. That is, all existences of every kind depend upon His pre-existence; and all present existences depend upon His present existence. Without Him there would be nothing in existence, and without Him that which is now in existence would fall out of existence.

C.P.Bollman: Isn't that usually applied to His having **existed before the incarnation?**

W.W.Prescott: I am using it as applying to His **existence previous to the existence of anything else.**

C.P.Bollman: I would like to ask, **Do you think it is necessary, or even helpful in the defining of Christian doctrine, to go outside of the New Testament for terms to use in the definition?**

He is objecting to the use of co-eternal, coeval...non-scriptural terms.

W.W.Prescott: As to whether or not we shall accept dictionary terms?

C.P.Bollman: No, I do not mean that.

W.W. Prescott: Please illustrate what you mean.

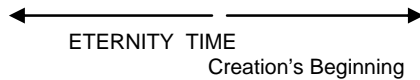
C.P.Bollman: The scripture says **Christ is the only begotten of the Father. Why should we go farther than that and say that He was co-eternal with the Father?** And also say that **to teach otherwise is Arianism?**

W.W.Prescott: I do not find in the New Testament expressions

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as "co-eternal," but **I find expressions that are equivalent to that,** as I understand it.

C.P.Bollman: Give an example, please.

Eternity Past
"this eternity"
"that eternity"



W.W.Prescott: I think **the expression "I am"** is the equivalent of eternity. I think these expressions, while they do not use the term co-eternal, are equivalent in their meaning. That brings up the whole question of the relation of the Son to the Father. **There is a proper sense, as I view it, according to which the Son is subordinate to the Father, but that subordination is not in the question of attributes or of His existence.** It is simply in the fact of **the derived existence**, as we read in **John 5:26: "For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself."**

This is a surprise reversal! Prescott was apparently opposed to any suggestion that the Son had any sort of beginning but now states that it is a "fact" that he has a "derived existence."

Using terms as we use them, the Son is co-eternal with the Father. That **does not prevent His being the only-begotten Son of God.** We cannot go back into eternity and say where **this eternity** commenced, and where **that eternity** commenced. There is no contradiction to say that the Son is co-eternal with the Father, and yet the Son is the only-begotten of the Father.

Prescott seems to accept a quasi-co-eternal status to the Father-Son relationship by applying "one eternity" for the Son and "another eternity" for the Father, both "eternal," the Son is just "essentially" eternal, so that the Son can still be begotten and yet also be eternal just not "exactly" eternal with the Father. He regards John 5:26 as evidence that the Son has a "derived" existence.

C.P.Bollman: I think **we should hold to the Bible definitions.**

W.W.Prescott: We take **the expression co-eternal, and that is better.**

Why? It is Trinitarian language.

C.P.Bollman: My conception of the matter is this; that **at some point in eternity the Father separated a portion of Himself to be the Son.** As far as the substance is concerned, **He is just as eternal as the Father, but did not have an eternal separate existence.** I do not think that approaches any nearer to Arianism than the other does to _____ . (blank in original)

We can only speculate as to what the blank word was, but "Trinitarianism" would be a logical assumption. Bollman is here presenting the standard, traditional Adventist position championed by James White, Waggoner, Uriah Smith, and even Prescott himself in his earlier years: the Son was "brought forth" (Prov 8:24-30), "came out from" (John 16:27, 28; 17:8, "proceeded forth and came from" (John 8:42; Matt 4:4), was "possessed" or gotten by the LORD (Prov 8:24), "begotten by" (John 1:14,18;3:16; 1Jn 5:1,18; Heb 1:5) the Father "in the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2 Margin), on the "day" that he was "begotten" (Ps 2:7) "from the womb of the morning" (Ps 110:1-4, Isa 49:1-6).

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W.W.Prescott: Suppose you say, there is the point where He had His beginning, and that back of that there was a time when the Father went forth in His Son. **When you say a point, you conceive of it as a definite place and bring it into finite terms.** (underline in original)

This is very interesting. Prescott now moves, without hesitation, from humanly unknowable infinite eternity to what he labels a "finite" point of time, even though it is still in eternity. I'm surprised Bollman or anyone else did not challenge him on this. Just because finite humans can understand the concept of "a definite place" or "point in time," we presume to understand and possess a command of that far distant "point" despite the fact that

it just happens to be *in* eternity, an infinite amount of time in the past, in which we have absolutely no possibility of understanding. The so-called "finite" point, being as it is in eternity, is surely "out of bounds" to human consideration—or at least it should be. We must take off our mental shoes when we dare enter into God's eternal territory.

H.C.Lacey: May I say something on that point? **Every year** I am brought in touch with this from two points of view—one in the Greek class, and the other in Bible Doctrines. **Twice a year**, and sometimes more frequently, **I am brought face to face with this.** **"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." **The eternity of the Word is emphasized** in that. When you come to the study of the deity of Christ, the fundamental attribute is **eternity of existence.** If Jesus is divine, He must have that essential attribute, and so **I have dared to say that Christ is absolutely co-eternal with the Father.** You can not say that back in some point of duration the Son appeared, and prior to that He had not appeared. I take it that **God has no beginning.** The Greek does not read, "In the beginning," but "In beginning,"—any beginning, every beginning. There is no article to it. It means that Christ antedated all beginning. **The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit antedated all beginning.**

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I am just stating what I teach. I want to know whether this is so. **That is what this council is for.** I say that God was always in existence. **Just as the light is always with the sun; the light comes from the sun, and so Jesus was always with God,** always reigning with him. I have explained the meaning of the son in this way. A son is always younger than his father. But **if we bring** into this divine conception **the thought of motherhood** and fatherhood as humanly understood, **I think we are astray.** It does not mean that Jesus had a mother, God is a Father. I am trying to explain what is meant by that expression that Michael in his ante-human existence was the son of God. I think those words are **human words,** used to express to us humanly speaking, the relation existing between the **first and second person of the deity,**

and the **priority of rank** of the first person. The word is an expression of the relation of that second person to the first. He is as a son to the first. The Lord said of **Israel, you are my first born. I will be a father to Israel**, for the love that existed between them. To the first and only begotten son was a specially tender feeling, and to indicate **the wondrous love of the first person of the Deity to the second**, this expression is used. **Never to indicate that the son came into existence after the father.** Let us say this represents the six thousand years. Now back of this eternity, without end, God the Father spans that eternity.

I think we ought not to teach that there was a time when

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He produced another being who is called the son. I want to know. The son is called eternal with the Father, another person **living with him, a second intelligence** in that Deity. The relationship between them is **expressed by our human words father and son.** The one was first in rank, the second, second, and the third third.

Lacey begins his extensive retort by ignoring the Law of First Mention that Wilcox had just discussed in the previous session. “In the beginning” is first introduced by Scripture in the context of the earth’s creation. This is the time frame spoken of by Proverbs 8 (“before the hills”) and Psalm 90 (“before the mountains”). John 1:1 should therefore pertain to the same beginning of the world. He disallows this by observing that the Greek literally reads “in beginning” and equates this with “absolute” eternity. He then demands that the Son must possess exactly the same eternity as the Father on the basis that both are called God. He apparently is not satisfied with Prescott’s relative co-eternal status but “dares” to insist on their “absolute” co-eternity.

The private, exclusive nature of the 1919 Bible Conference is then explained: it was explicitly called, according to Lacey, for the purpose of discussing Trinitarianism. He then plunges into overtly Trinitarian language: the Sun and sunlight explain

and, apparently to Lacey, prove the essential co-eternal truth around which Trinitarian doctrine is anchored. This is the same example used by Tertullian and Boardman and denounced by Ellen White just 17 years earlier (as we saw in Part 2) when dealing with Kellogg’s foray into the Trinity.

Lacey accuses Bollman (and Prescott?) of “bringing in...the thought of motherhood” when, in fact, it is he that introduces that language. Bollman had clearly described an asexual fission of God’s substance. A human-like sexual begetting was not being discussed at all. Instead, Lacey unfairly charges him with imposing on God a human form of procreation. Having effectively discredited his straw man notions, he dismisses God’s choice of terminology (“Father, Son”) as only “human terms” and replaces them with the preferred Trinitarian language: “first and second person of the Godhead.”



“Father and Son,” he claims in presuming to explain God’s true intentions, are only used to denote “priority of rank” between them and this is better expressed by using “first and second”. But then he finally resorts to “father and son” because these terms are better at conveying “the love between them.” He appeals to the symbolism that God used in calling “Israel my first born” stating that God would

be “a Father” to Israel. This is reverse logic employed with the intent to minimize the Real by maximizing the Type. This is tantamount to sweeping away the reality of Christ’s crucifixion by stating it was no more valid than the symbolic sacrificial offerings of the Old Testament. To clinch this argument he boldly states that God’s use of “Father and Son” was “never” meant to imply that God the Father existed before His Son. He implies, once again, that the terms “Father, Son” are merely human terms, used by human writers to convey a human relationship of filial love. Such is the marvelous superiority of the Trinitarian concepts of God.

But Lacey’s not through. He next proposes that Bollman believes the Son was begotten just prior to “the beginning” of the world’s creation, just a little over 6000 years ago. Then he demonstrates how unreasonable this is by comparing this essentially finite beginning with the Father’s very infinite age. This embarrassing discrepancy should be rejected as untenable, he concludes in triumph. He thus rests his case on a series of straw man arguments.

PRESCOTT:

I think it well for us **instead of attempting to reason out or to explain these things, to read a scripture.** I think that will be a better plan than to spend a long time discussing themes, only that we may get the meaning of the scripture. Brother Lacey said **eternity is an attribute of Deity.** It is proof of the Deity. Now let us see how the scripture deals with it. **Hebrews 1.** The whole purpose of the chapter is to set forth the exalted character of the Son, and you will observe it is **somewhat in harmony with what Brother Lacey has said.** “God, having of old times spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he **appointed heir** of all things, through whom also he made the worlds. (R.V.) The article is not used. It is the relationship that is emphasized. The chapter is to tell us of the Son. Here we find that expression, “whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he

made the worlds.” “Who being the **affluence** of his glory,” or the **emanation** of his glory, the **raying forth** of his glory, and the very image of his substance, in person.

Prescott should be commended for his appeal to scripture. He observes that God “appointed” His Son heir. This would be consistent with “appointing” roles, i.e., God appointed him His Son. Of course! The Son was not “born” as a human son. He “proceeded and came out from” God. The Son is the “outshining” of His glory. Just as Moses’ face shown with the glory of God. But, obviously, Moses was not co-eternal with the source of that glory.

This word person

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is one of the evidences of theological controversy that was attempted to be settled by translation. It is the idea of the fundamental. Going on: “**Upholding all things** by the word of his power.” There we have **the existence of all things being dependent upon him**. Now it goes on in the fifth chapter, verse one, and proves that he is above angels. “Thou art my son. **I will be to him a father.**” Eighth verse: “But of **the Son** he saith, Thy throne, O **God**, is for ever and ever.” In the tenth verse, “And, Thou, Lord, **in the beginning** didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou **continuest**,”—a much better word than “remainest.” Him it was that continues. That is an **eternal presence**, simply, “Thou continuest.” That is the attribute of his being as God. **He is called God** here in this very chapter. As a sort of evidence of the scriptural teaching that he is God, here is this expression, Thou continuest, **without regard to beginning or end**. In the thirteenth chapter of the same epistle: “He is the same **yesterday, today, and forever.**” When did yesterday commence? **Simply yesterday, that’s all.** “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.” I think that is parallel with the 90th Psalm: “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations...**From everlasting to everlasting**, thou art God. I think **those statements apply to the same being**. The same is true in the Book of Deuteronomy the 33rd chapter.

Prescott introduces, but does not pursue the concept of nature’s dependence on the Son’s existence. This will ultimately lead to the Trinitarian dictum that Christ could not have really died or even left the Father’s presence during the incarnation because the universe would have collapsed. Again the proclamations by God of “son” and “father” are emphasized to suggest that the relationship is only metaphorical. Interestingly, he seizes on the word “continuest” as evidence for the Son’s “eternal presence.” This is admittedly true for continuation into the future after “the works” of his hands perish. But Prescott extends this to continuation into the eternal past. To support this he cites Hebrews 13:8, admits that “yesterday” commenced “simply yesterday, that’s all” but then asserts that it is parallel to Psalm 90’s “From everlasting to everlasting.” How is this parallel?

Origination in the infinite past

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Deut. 33:28: “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. **The eternal God** is thy dwelling place and underneath are the **everlasting arms.**” There is **no revelation of God except in the Son**, and here where it says that the eternal God is thy dwelling place, it **must be the Son**. Underneath are the everlasting arms. **The only support that we receive is from Christ**, and in Christ. **The only knowledge we have of God** is through the Son, and the **only relationship** we have to God is through the Son. **Every revelation** of him of every sort whatsoever is through the Son.

The eternal God is the Father. The everlasting arms is the Son. Prescott seems determined to make the Son equal *to* rather than equal *with* the Father on the philosophical conviction that the Son is the only revelation of God. He believes that somehow the perfect character revelation mandates an eternal substance equality. In the

sense, as the “Rock cut out without hands,” the “Arm of the Lord,” the “BRANCH,” the Son is just as eternal as the Father from whom he came.

C.P.Bollman: Do you think that all those expressions there refer **not to the Father but to the Son?**

Bollman suggests that even the “everlasting arms” applies to the Father as well.

W.W.Prescott: They refer to both, but the only revelation of him we have is in the Son, and therefore the Son **must be with the Father, co-eternal**, and the same expression applies. The Jehovah. Take the word Jehovah. The **Jehovah** of the Old Testament is manifested in Jesus in the New Testament. It shows in the word itself, as well as in the general teaching. **Jehovah—Jesus in Joshua**, are the same. Joshua is simply the contraction for Jehovah. (number of root words mentioned) Jehovah manifested for salvation is Jesus, and the Jesus of the New Testament is manifestly a manifest-

Continuation into the infinite future

ation of the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Prescott takes the other extreme and insists that they must refer to both, therefore making both eternal and everlasting. He submits the name Jehovah supports this as it was claimed by both the Jehovah of the OT and Jesus in the NT.

J. Anderson: Did you state that **he derived life from the Father?**

Referring to Prescott’s earlier reading of John 5:26.

W.W.Prescott: No. Simply in the fact that **equality with the Father is derived equality**, but equality is the same.

This is equally true for the Son who comes out from the Father. He inherently has the Father “in him.” And what the Son “is” is also “in” the Father. Naturally he has the same attributes, the same qualities, the same power, the same authority, the same

name, the same nature. Why should he not have the same life?

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J.Anderson: I thought you said that he **derived life from the Father**.

W.W.Prescott: No. I used the Scripture statement—John 5:26: “As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he **given to the Son to have life in himself**.” But the two expressions referred to must apply equally both to the Father and the Son.

What is equal is the life. The same immortal, self-existent, eternal, everlasting, original, unborrowed, underrived life that is in the Father was “given” by the Father to the Son. Both have the same life. In this, as well as in character, and divine substance they are equal, but not in individuality. They are separate persons and each has a separate, individual experience.

Question: Simply a difference in what respect—that of **rank with the Father**?



This is referring back to Lacey’s differences between the persons of the Godhead, which he maintains is only rank, not origin.

W.W.Prescott: He himself says that “the Father is greater than I. He also said “I and my Father are one.” And both are true.

The paradox of comparative difference and unity. Both are true only if the difference and the unity apply to different attributes. James White, Smith, Loughborough, Waggoner all maintained that the Father was “greater” than the Son in that He was first; whereas the Father and Son are “one” in that they have the same character, love, and purpose.

J.Anderson: **If he is inferior** in any respect to the Father, **how can he be God**?

Anderson assumes that “Greater” requires a corresponding “Lesser”

which he equates with “inferior.” This is not the case when Greater means Older. James the son of Alphaeus was also known as James the lesser or younger.

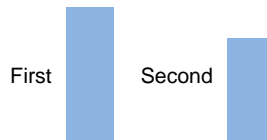
W.W.Prescott: I do not think that I used that term “inferior”

J.Anderson: But others may use that word in some instances—that the Son was inferior to the Father, and my inquiry arises that if it were true that Jesus the Son was **inferior** to any respect—in age, or in nature, or attributes; if that be so, **how could he be God**?

W.W.Prescott: I would not say that he was. I do not think I used that expression.

H.C.Lacy: Is it not that he is **only inferior to the Father in rank**—he is second in rank with the Father, and **in all other respects is equal**?

Anderson and Lacey both fixate on the word “inferior” even though Prescott denies using the term. While Anderson cannot accept anything less



than perfect equality *with* God as qualification to *be* God, Lacey relaxes the criteria to accommodate an inequality in “rank.” The Son voluntarily stepped down to assume a subordinate position of lower rank to meet the needs of his fallen creatures.

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W.W.Prescott: We must, of course, in our dealing with the question, take his own statement both ways. When he said, “The Father is greater than I,” we deal with that, and when he said, “I and the Father are one,” we deal with that. We must have a conception of each one that will allow his own statement, what he himself says, to be true.

Question: As to Christ’s preexistence, and the fact that he **“emptied” himself**.

W.W.Prescott: He was **still divine**.

Question: The question which comes to my mind is, **How could Jesus being God, still be inferior to God**?

They are still preoccupied with the word “inferior.” If “greater than” and “less than” are understood in terms of age, and qualifications for being God recognize His divine nature then there is no conflict. The Son, coming out of the Father has the same God nature, same divinity, but is lesser than the Father who is greater than the Son, being first. This is first in rank by age. Just what constitutes being divine, the definition of divinity is crucial in expressing correctly and understanding rightly the words of Scripture. If divinity is measured by God’s primary quality: love—divine love, then the Son is just as much God as the Father if they both share the same infinite love, regardless of age. What text of Scripture requires equal age?

W.W.Prescott: Yes, I think we must take that into account. **I would not use the word contradictory** to any expression of the Scripture. That shuts our minds to any understanding. Take the two statements referred to: “I and my Father are one,” therefore they took up stones to stone him. What were they going to stone him for? “Because thou being man makest thyself God.” He also said, “The Father is great than I,” Now to say these are contradictory shuts up the mind to correct comprehension of the truth. We must not say that. We must not use such expressions. We must not ask, How do you reconcile these two? I do not like to hear that expression, because it implies something that needs explanation or is contradictory. The contradiction is not in the word. The only difficulty is in the ability of the finite mind to comprehend all of God. And we shall always face difficulty. But I try to stay as closely as possible to the Scripture statement, and be careful in the use of words, and I do not try

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to apply to reasoning power that will enable me to explain any Biblical terms.

Now Prescott campaigns for staying “as close as possible” to the Scriptures! When Bollman complained about using non-biblical terminology like co-equal, Prescott essentially ignored him and said such terms are “better.” Better than what? Biblical terms. But the Bible should explain

itself. We cannot simply use our own reasoning power.

That will be impossible. Rather, as the question rose, as we referred to it this morning, we will get light, not by questioning, but by saying it is so first, then waiting for more. That is the only way we can get it. **We know it is true. We know it is so. We know that what the Scripture says is so; there is no contradiction;** and now wait till we see further light in regard to it. But if we start with the thought that this is contradictory, the Spirit cannot bring light to bear upon it.

H.C.Lacey: Is not the thought, **second in rank**, preferable to the term “**inferior**”?

Lacey introduced the term “inferior” and then argues against it! He is still lobbying for “second in rank,” placing it in a “superior” position for the group’s consideration by pitting it against his own pejorative “inferior”.

W.W.Prescott: One with the Father, **one in authority, in power, in love, in mercy, and all the attributes**—equal with him and yet second in nature. **I like the word “second” better than “inferior,”**—second in rank.

What scripture uses “second” to describe the Son of God? Prescott nicely obscures the issue of age and eternity by hiding it in “all the attributes”. He votes for “second.”

C.P.Bollman: **Subject to the Father**—is not that the meaning of the word?

He is referring to 1Cor 15:26.

W.W.Prescott: We might speak of many **things beyond our comprehension.**

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PRESCOTT: Would Brother Wilcox be willing on the last point to state what relation exists between our own view of interpreting scripture and what should be given to what others have taught or written, when we come to the study of Scripture?

Prescott conveniently dodges this reference to 1Cor 15 (dismissing it as one of the many things beyond our comprehension) by changing subjects and shifting the floor to Wilcox who instead shares his personal testimony.

WILCOX: I would state, so far as my own personal experience is concerned, I have not accepted of any view easily. **I was an infidel when this message reached me and did not believe anybody’s view** of things scriptural. Consequently it was hard for me to embrace the truth—it was hard at that time. But when I gave myself to God I made up my mind I would follow any way he led, and **I have taken the statement of others who had gone before.** I did not have the time to investigate when I heard the message. But I have found real satisfaction in later years **as I have studied the Word for myself to find that my view coincided with theirs**—that the view I had accepted was in harmony with the Word of God. I can say so far as I know myself **I have never departed or tried to find one single new thing—that was contrary to this great message and movement** with which I am connected; but that did come to me came because it seemed **the only logical outcome there was from the Scripture itself.** I would like to say again I have never found anything yet that I studied earnestly and sought

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God earnestly, and followed all the light I could get in every way—still **holding to the Word, as the early men of the message did**—that had taken me away from the message in any way or made me to look upon it with any less degree of devotion. In fact it has endeared it to me more and more, and I have seen more and more in it and the men connected with the movement, that has increased my confidence in the message and in its triumph.

Instead of jumping into the subordination of Christ, which we will explore next, Prescott hopes that Wilcox will save him from that prospect by digressing into a comparative analysis of what others teach. But Wilcox only confirms that what the original “men connected with the movement” taught and believed is consistent with his own study of God’s word.

On page 97 the questions were now being directed to M.C. Wilcox and his morning presentation on the rules for interpreting prophecy. In the midst of it a question is raised concerning the secondary fulfillment of Joel 2.

J.N.Anderson: I had one little thought in my mind **in regard to Pentecost.** Now it seems to me that **that cannot be fulfilled a second time.** I understand (I would like to be corrected if I am mistaken) that **the Lord promised to send the Holy Spirit as a third person,** coming ten days after the ascension of our Lord. And I understand **that person has been in the world ever since that time.** Now, **that person can never be sent from heaven again,** for He has never been withdrawn from the world, so that Pentecost can never be fulfilled again. **We cannot say that half of the Holy Spirit came then, and the other half will come later,** because **the third person** was sent then, and **has been here ever since.**

Even though Psalm 139 is used by our Fundamental Beliefs to establish the omnipresence of God by His Spirit, Anderson limits the Spirit to a “person” who is stuck here in the world, hasn’t been withdrawn, and so can’t be sent again unless “he” returns to heaven to do so. This reduces the capabilities of the Spirit to essentially those of the incarnate Christ when he said that it was “expedient” that he leave, so he could send the Comforter. The original Adventist understanding of the Spirit is that it is not a person as the Father and Son are persons, but rather their personal presence. Thus it can be “poured out”, “shed abroad”, and sent to “anoint” as God desires: when, how often, and to what degree.



July 6 afternoon question and answers again brought up the question of Christ’s eternity on page 240.

WILCOX: **We all believe the deity of Christ.** It is not a question as to his deity or non-deity. In all this discussion there is no question regarding this.

WAKEHAM: **Would you consider the denial of the co-eternity of the Father and Son was a denial of that deity?**

PRESCOTT: That is the point I was going to raise: **Can we believe in the deity of Christ without believing in the eternity of Christ?**

BOLLMAN: **I have done it for years.**

PRESCOTT: That is my very point—that we have used terms in that accommodating sense that are not really in harmony with the Scriptural teaching. **We believed a long time that Christ was a created being, in spite of what the Scripture says.** I say this, that passing over the experience I have passed over myself in this matter—this accommodating use of terms which makes the Deity without eternity, is not my conception now of the gospel of Christ. I think it falls short of the whole idea expressed in the Scriptures, and leaves us not with the kind of a Saviour I believe in now, but a sort of human view—a semi-human being. As I view it, the deity involves eternity. The very expression involves it. You cannot read the Scripture and have the idea of deity without eternity.

Adventists have never believed or taught that Christ was a created being. This was denied repeatedly in our publications. Lacey, Wakeman and even Prescott were pushing for a concept of eternity not defined in Scripture, an eternity that forced a denial of the Son's begotten identity. Bollman had no problem with this paradox and his acceptance of Christ's deity without eternity was more a denial of their definition. He still believed Christ came *from* eternity.

KNOX: I believe all the statements that were made this morning by Elder Prescott concerning the promises that are

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given to us through Jesus Christ—that is, the many Scriptures that were read; and I believe that are made sure to us because they are bound up in the Deity of Jesus Christ. **I think that we are all agreed in the deity of the Son of God (Amens).**

I think also that we ought to remember what Brother Daniells reminded us of this morning, that we cannot by searching find out God—that this is a matter—a subject that will be unfolding all through the days of eternity. And yet I do believe that **the Lord has given us glimpses in his Word,** which he has intentionally placed there, to draw our minds out into the contemplations of **truths concerning God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.**

“God the Father” is found within God's Word, but “God the Son,” and “God the Holy Ghost” are not.

Now I cannot but believe as Brother Prescott has said, the **Deity must be eternal.** But the difficulty with me is that **I cannot believe that the deity of the Son as a separate existence is eternal. I believe in the trinity of God, and I believe that Jesus is God.** It says, “Unto us a son is born?” and then you remember the names by which he is called—the **Everlasting Father**—the Prince of Peace—in Isaiah. The same Scripture speaks of him as **the Son and as the Everlasting Father.**



You remember the Word says that “**in the beginning** was the Word.” Now that has been spoken a number of times, and by it we are carried **back through eternity.** But the same words are used exactly concerning the existence of matter. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now some time God called the things that we see out of the things that did not appear. I do not suppose there is one here that will contend the co-existence of matter without God. Matter has been called into existence by God; but it was called into existence

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“in the beginning,” and “in the beginning” was the Word. Now **the Word was the agency God used** to call matter into existence, for “by him were all things made that were made.”

Now again **the servant of God speaks of the Son as the first created being.** I never saw that, and never believed that, but it speaks of him as **having sprung from the bosom of the Father.** Now the **Word also speaks of Levi paying tithes while he was in the loins of Abraham.** Now it would have been equally true if the Lord's Spirit had carried the acts of Levi back to the time where **he was in the loins of Adam.** From God's viewpoint Levi had existed in the loins of his forefathers from the very beginning of time, **but he did not have a separate existence until he was born.**

Who is the “servant of God”? Ellen White. She says that the Eternal Father “tore from His bosom” His Son (RH July 9, 1895). Knox then applies Paul's analogy of Levi's pre-existence to that of Christ (Heb 7:9,10).

And so Christ, with the Father, and of the Father—and the Father—from eternity; and there came a time—in a way we cannot comprehend nor the time that we cannot comprehend, when by God's mysterious operation the Son sprung from the bosom of the Father and had a separate existence.

This is almost a verbatim rehearsal of Uriah Smith's description in *Daniel and the Revelation*.

PRESCOTT: I would like to call Brother Knox's attention to this, and ask how on that basis he would deal with John 8:58 “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was born I am.” What does “I am” as to our conception of time, mean?

KNOX: His personal existence. **I believe in the eternity of Jesus Christ. I cannot grasp the eternity of his separate and distinct existence.**

Knox appreciated the eternal immortality of Christ. He certainly existed prior to the birth of Abraham, before Adam, even before the creation of the angels. But his separate existence as the Son of God is as distinct in eternity as his existence as

the Son of man which also had a distinct beginning in time.

Then on July 7 in the morning study, Prescott touched on Proverbs chapter 8 beginning on page 269.

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

PRESCOTT:

He is made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: Then **wisdom is a person**. The wisdom we must deal with is a personality, and not mere intellectual keenness. The **righteousness** that we must deal with **is a personality**, and not a mere abstract idea about goodness. The **sanctification** that we must deal with **is a personality**. The **redemption** that we must deal with **is a personality**. **He** is made unto us redemption, **He** righteousness, **He** sanctification, **He** wisdom. It would have been impossible that we should have known such wisdom, such righteousness, such sanctification, such redemption, had not **he who from eternity had been God’s wisdom (read it in the 8th chapter of Proverbs, which sets Him forth as wisdom from eternity)**, if he had not taken the flesh, otherwise he could not be made to us in sinful flesh, wisdom, sanctification, righteousness, and redemption.

Prescott appeals to Proverbs 8 as evidence that Christ is “from eternity” because as “the wisdom of God” he would have existed as long as God has! The personification of Wisdom and righteousness require that they must be eternal attributes of God and if they are identified with Christ, then Christ must be as eternal as God. This is certainly true. He has all the fullness of the Godhead bodily because He came out from God. He has, in that sense, always been with God. But as to his appearance as a separate person, the Agent of creation, the Son in Proverbs 8, is simply said to be “before the mountains”, “before the hills,” “before ever the earth was.”

On July 14, Prescott identified who the Holy Spirit was beginning on page 710.

PRESCOTT:

Now shall we advance one step farther and call attention to this fact. Read John

15:26: “And when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the **spirit of truth** which **proceedeth from the Father**.” This is the spirit of truth. **He is, and announces himself as, the spirit of truth**. The spirit of truth is the spirit of Christ. The spirit in Jesus.

Therefore we read as in Acts 16:6,7: (after this Spirit of truth had been given, speaking of the missionary work of Paul): “And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been **forbidden of the Holy Spirit** to speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and **the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not**.” Here is the Spirit that guided them in their work, being called the **Spirit of Jesus**.

The whole **book of Acts** is a revelation “of the things which **Jesus continued both to do and to teach**.” The **Gospels** are the record of the things **he did and taught personally**, individually in the body; and the **Book of Acts** is the record of the things he continued to do in the person of his disciples who were **endowed with his Spirit**.

Now let us turn to John 14:16—“And I will pray the Father, and **he shall give you another Comforter**, that he may be **with you forever** (17 vs.) even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive.” There is that same idea again: Give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever. Jesus was about to take away from them his bodily presence. He says, “He (that other Comforter) **will abide with you forever**.”

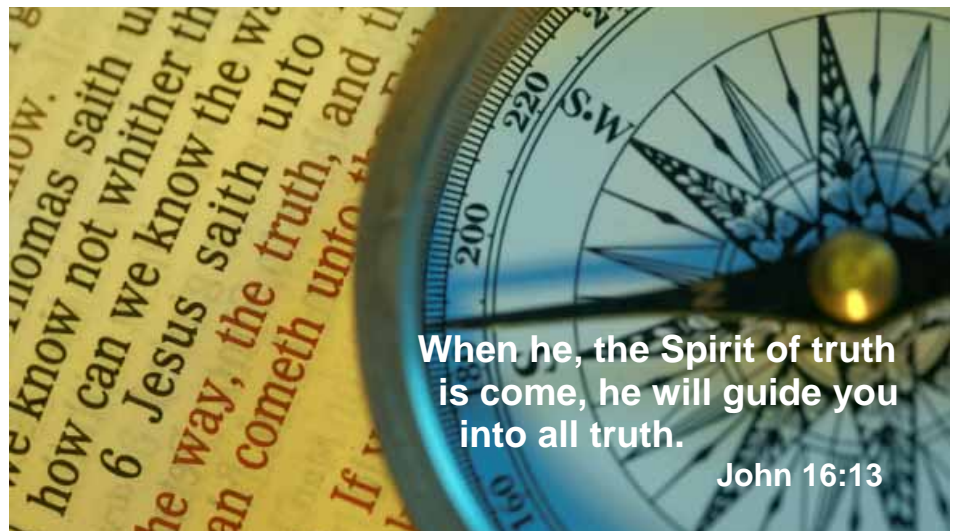
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This is fulfillment of his promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end

of the world.” “Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive; because it beholdeth him not; neither knoweth him.” The world deals with visible things. We have to learn to deal with invisible things. These invisible things are clearly perceived in the things that are made. “**Ye know him, for he abideth with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate, I come unto you**.” The advent of the Spirit is the advent of the Spirit if [sic] **Jesus Christ—his personal presence**. The impartation of the Spirit is the **impartation of the life of Christ**. “Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me, because I live, ye shall live also. In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and **I in you**.”

The transcription appears to contain a typographical error. It is grammatically illogical as written, but would make complete sense if it said, “The advent of the Spirit is the advent of the Spirit of Jesus Christ—his personal presence.” Prescott, like Ellen White, said that the Holy Spirit was the life of Christ. That is why Jesus said that he himself would come to us.

Now the promise of the Spirit—the Comforter—in the 17th verse was that “**he shall be in you**” which was to be fulfilled “in that day when ye shall know that **I am in you**.” That is the **advent of the Comforter, the advent of this person of Christ in the Spirit—divested now of his humanity** to dwell with our humanity. To get this clear **we must take all the Scriptures**: “That **Christ may dwell in your heart**,” “Crucified with Christ”, “**Christ living in me**.” All these Scrip-



tures that speak of **the indwelling Christ are fulfilled by the indwelling of the Comforter**, and we have just that measure of the indwelling Christ that we have of the indwelling of the Comforter.

This is the glorious reality that Satan so longs to obscure and hide from us. This is why the churches are so weak and feeble. It is Jesus we are to pray for. We must become acquainted with his Spirit now to recognize him later!

But now he ministers that Comforter, he ministers that life himself, as found from the second chapter of Acts where it says “he is at the right hand of God, the minister of the true sanctuary of the Lord. **He ministered that gift of the Comforter.**”

No disagreement is expressed from the group on Prescott’s teaching that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, His personal presence, His life living in us. The power that created the universe and holds the worlds in space is able to save to the uttermost, is able to do far exceedingly abundantly more than we can ask or think, for He who spoke and it stood fast—this same power also works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. The three persons of the heavenly trio are thus identified: The Father, the Son in his spirit, and the Son in his humanity.

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PRESCOTT: The Bible is just as clear in the statement that **God is present everywhere**—Whither shall I go from thy

Spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I descend into hell, lo Thou art there, if I fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, Thou art there, etc. But there is a distinction. It also points out that **there is a place where God is and he is not any place else.** The Bible teaches both, **but I cannot reason them out.**

God is bodily present on His throne as Sovereign Ruler of the Universe in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, but he sends forth His Spirit into all the earth—into all the earths! This same Spirit is the agency, the medium by which both the Father and the Son manifest their personal presence to us.

The 1919 Bible Conference is the first documented discussion between church leaders over the nature of the Godhead. But it was not the first published discussion by the church of what Lacey referred to as “rank” among members of the Godhead.

Samuel Spear

The year after the historic 1888 Minneapolis General Conference, Samuel Spear, pastor of the South Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York, wrote an article in the *New York Independent* which appeared in the religious journal’s Nov. 14, 1889 issue under the title “The Subordination of Christ.”

The article was reprinted again with the same title in the *Signs of the Times* over two issues (December 7 and 14) in 1891 and then adapted with

some modification and included in the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students Library as tract No. 90 when it was published by Pacific Press in 1892. But in pamphlet form it bore the title “The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity.”

A superficial analysis by observing that this title included the word “Trinity” in an Adventist publication in 1892 has led some to conclude that Trinitarianism was a widely accepted belief among Adventists at this time.

“The most striking acknowledgment of Trinitarianism” Christy Mathewson Taylor, 1953

“...a Trinitarian article...” Erwin Gane, 1963

“Thus the truth of the Trinity was set forth in tract form...” LeRoy Froom, 1971

“The first positive reference to the term “trinity” in Adventist literature” Merlin Burt, 1996

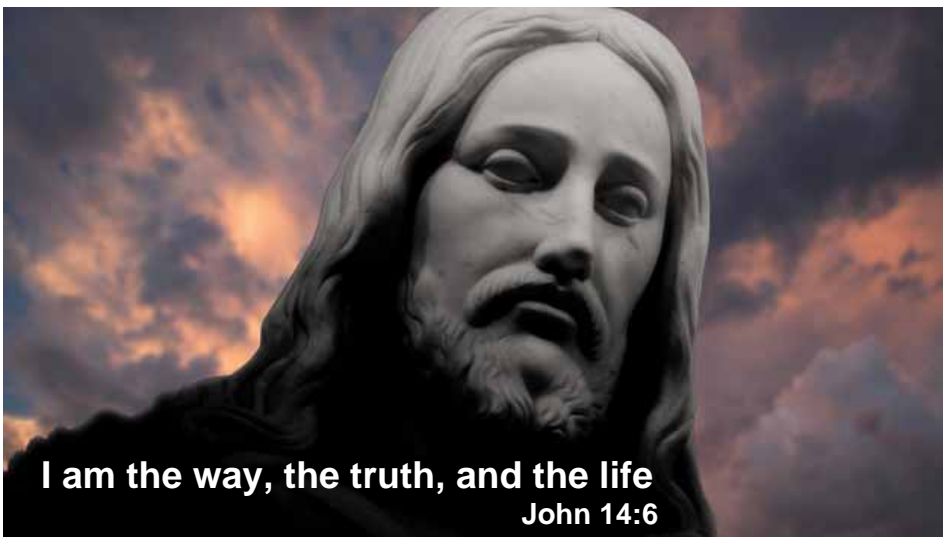
“The first positive reference to the Trinity in Adventist literature” Gerhard Pfandl, 1999

“...corrected two prevailing misconceptions of the Trinity doctrine” Jerry Moon, 2002

Use of the word “Trinity,” however, was quite common in both major Adventist publications (*Review and Herald* and *Signs of the Times*) during the 19th century. But it was routinely used in opposing the doctrine not in support of it. The *Signs* described the tract in a May 1894 issue.

“This tract of 16 pages is a reprint of an article in the *New York Independent*, by the late Samuel Spear, D.D. It presents the Bible view of the doctrine of the Trinity **in the terms used in the Bible**, and therefore **avoids all philosophical discussion and foolish speculation.**” *Signs of the Times*, May 28, 1894, ‘No.90, The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity’

It was apparently important to Adventists that Bible terminology be used in presenting the nature of God. Bollman, as we saw, certainly supported such a position.



I am the way, the truth, and the life
John 14:6

When the Pacific Press first printed the tract in 1892 it ran this explanation:

“While there may be **minor thoughts** in this worthy number which we might wish to express differently, on the whole we believe that it sets forth **the Bible doctrine of the trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit** with a devout adherence to the words of Scripture, in the best brief way we ever saw it presented.” *Signs of the Times*, April 4, 1892, Volume 18, No. 22, page 352

When the original article appeared in 1891 it was introduced with the following:

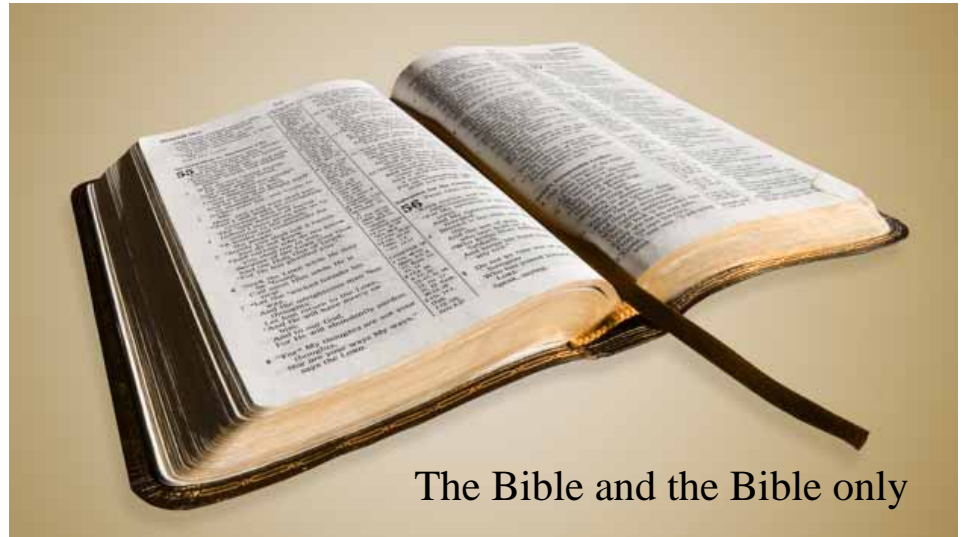
“We call attention to the article entitled “The Subordination of Christ,” by the late Samuel T. Spear, taken from the Independent. It was so long that we found it necessary to divide it. We trust that **this candid setting forth of the Trinity** will be read with care.” *Signs of the Times*, December 7, 1891

The following week provided this endorsement:

“In this number is included Dr. Spear’s article on the “Subordination of Christ”. To this candid setting forth of the Trinity **we believe that no Bible student will object**. It is worthy of careful reading, not only for the subject matter it contains but for the way in which it is presented.” *Signs of the Times*, December 14, 1891)

Now, let’s examine tract No. 90.

“The distinction thus revealed in the Bible is the basis of the doctrine of the tri-personal God.... This doctrine, as held and stated by those who adopt it, is not a system of tri-theism, or the doctrine of three Gods, but is the doctrine of one God subsisting and acting in three persons, with the qualification that the term “person,” though perhaps the best that can be used, is not, when used in this relation, to be understood in any sense that would make it inconsistent with the unity of the Godhead, and hence not to be understood in the ordinary sense when applied to men. Bible trinitarians are not tritheists. They simply seek to state, in the best way in which they can, what they regard the Bible as teaching.”



The Bible and the Bible only

Notice the ellipsis after the first sentence. The Adventist editors chose to not include a significant phrase which did appear in Spear’s original 1889 article *The Subordination of Christ*. They purged “or Triune God, which has so long been the faith of the Christian Church.” A “Triune God” was not acceptable; it implied an indivisible being that they believed could not be supported by Scripture. Froom in *Movement of Destiny* p. 323 misquotes Spear as saying “Trinitarians are not tritheists” capitalizing the T to make it appear as if he is quoting the entire sentence. Froom exercised this same technique again in compiling the book *Evangelism* as we saw in part 2.

Erwin Gane in his Masters Thesis for Andrews University, Gerhard Pfandl of the Biblical Research Institute in his 1999 research paper, “The Doctrine of the Trinity among Adventists” (reprinted in the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Spring 2006), and Jerry Moon in his 2002 book “The Trinity” also indulge in selectively quoting this paragraph. By not including the first and final two sentences, all reference to the Biblical basis of Spear’s argument was conveniently concealed. Spear emphasized that any doctrine of a trinity must be limited to only what is “revealed in the Bible,” what one finds “the Bible as teaching.” Such individuals are “Bible trinitarians.” Spear, however, contrasts and makes a distinction between Bible trinitarians

who accept only what Scripture says and Trinitarians who go beyond the Bible to indulge in human speculation and philosophical conjecture.

“The theory of the eternal generation of the Son by the Father, with the cognate theory of the eternal procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father, or from the Father and the Son, while difficult even to comprehend, and while at best a mystical speculation, is an effort to be wise, not only above what is written, but also beyond the possibilities of human knowledge.”

“It is only when men speculate outside of the Bible and beyond it, and seek to be wiser than they can be, that difficulties arise; and then they do arise as the rebuke of their own folly. A glorious doctrine then becomes their perplexity, and engulfs them in a confusion of their own creation. What they need is to believe more and speculate less.”

Spear refers to additional concepts of God that were included into the general idea of a trinity. Eternal generation and eternal procession were ways in which the proponents of a triune God could harmonize certain biblical facts about God which must be harmonized.

“These facts—namely, the **absolute unity of the God head**, excluding all multiplicity of gods, the **absolute divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ** and the **subordination of Christ** in some respect to God the Father — when taken together, have led Biblical scholars to consider the question which relates to

the method of harmonizing them. What shall be said on this point?"

He then lists several observations to the Biblical approach:

1. "All the facts above stated rest on the same authority, and, hence, no one of them can be denied without denying *this* authority or misinterpreted the language used."

2. "So the matter stands **in the word of God**; and if Christians were to **confine their thoughts to simply what that word says**, they would never raise any serious questions in regard to the subject, which is, perhaps, on the whole, the best course to pursue"

3. "**It is not necessary**, for the practical purposes of godliness and salvation, **to speculate** on the point at all, or know what biblical scholars have thought and said in regards to it. It is enough to **take the Bible just as it reads**, to believe what it says, and **stop where it stops.**"

4. "**All the statements of the Bible must be accepted as true** with whatever qualifications they mutually impose on one another. The whole truth lies in them all when **taken collectively**"

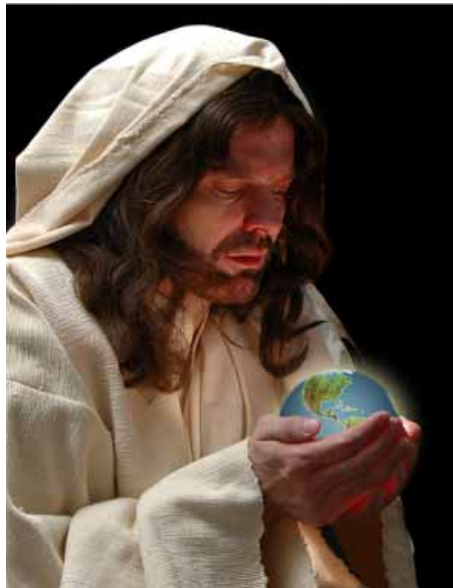
5. "**The subordination of Christ**, as revealed in the Bible, is not adequately explained by referring it simply to His human nature. It is true that, in that nature, He was a created and dependent being, and in this respect like the race whose nature He assumed; and yet the Bible statement of His subordination **extends to His divine as well as his human nature.**"

"There is, however, a sense in which the Christ of the Bible, while **essentially divine, is, nevertheless, in some respects distinct from and subordinate to God the Father.** He is spoken of, and frequently speaks of Himself, as **the Son of God, as the only-begotten of the Father**, as being sent by God the Father into this world, and as **doing the will of the Father.** He is **never con-founded with the Father, and never takes His place.**"

Spear thus confirmed the Bible's presentation of a begotten Son of the Father. This was exactly what Adventists taught during the lifetime of Ellen White. Spear also concluded

that the Son is a separate and distinct person subordinate to God the Father.

"There is no difficulty in finding in His ministry **abundant references to God the Father as in some respects distinct from and superior to Himself**, and, hence, involving the idea of His own subordination."



"Paul tells us that God 'created all things **by Jesus Christ**,' and that He is the person, or agent, '**by whom** also He [God] made the worlds.' Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2. Neither of these statements can have any relation to the humanity of Christ, and yet in both God is represented as acting in and **through Christ**, and the latter represented as the medium of such action. So, also God is described as **sending forth His Son** into the world, as **giving 'His only begotten Son'** for human salvation, and as not sparing 'His own Son' but **delivering 'him up** for us all.' Gal 4: 4; John 3:16; Rom 8:32."

"These statements imply that this Son who is none other than Christ Himself, existed prior to his incarnation, and that, as thus existing, He was **sent forth, given, not spared, but delivered up, by God the Father.** The act assigned to God the Father in thus devoting 'His own Son' to the work of human redemption, relates to Him as he was before He assumed our nature in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and **supposes in the Father some kind of primacy...**"

"The Bible, while not giving a meta-physical definition of the spiritual unity

of God, teaches His **essential oneness** in opposition to all forms of polytheism, and also **assumes man's capacity to apprehend the idea sufficiently** for all the purposes of worship and obedience."

"The same Bible as clearly teaches that the adorable Person therein known as Jesus Christ, when considered in his whole nature, is **truly divine and truly**



God in the most absolute sense. John 1:1-18; 1 John 5:20; Rom. 1:3, 4; 9:5; Titus 2:13."

Merlin Burt honestly observed that Spear's article-made-tract, despite it's new title, was not really Trinitarian.

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

He said that the tract was actually *not* sympathetic to the trinitarian doctrine. Consequently, the predominately anti-trinitarian 19th century Adventists did not have any objection to it.

This should not be surprising since it was originally written to address the subordinate relationship of the Son of God. It was not directly addressing the fact or fallacy of the Trinity per se. There is no denying of the existence of God's Spirit or the reality of three

identities at heaven's throne. These were not the subject matter of Spear's work.

Those who prefer to label the 19th century Adventism as Arian impose on them the belief that Christ was not divine, that the Son of God was created because He appeared at a point in time. But this is not what they believed. As late as 1894 Adventists taught that the Son of God was begotten of the Father, was a separate person not bound indivisibly with a single God being.

"To Alexander's opinion that there is but one Deity, who appears sometimes as the Father, and again as the Son, or as the Holy Ghost, or, if not exactly this, that three persons existed in one God, distinct, and yet of the same substance and the same eternity, **Arius rejoined** that, although the Son was of the same or like substance, yet **he was the offspring of the Father, and had a beginning.**" L. E. Kimball, *Signs of the Times*, June 25, 1894, 'The Arian Controversy'

Arius was quoted as believing in the begotten Son, underived, independent, before time (existed in eternity), immutable, "perfect God."

"But we say and believe, and have taught, and do teach, that the Son is not unbegotten, nor in any way part of the unbegotten; and that He does not derive His subsistence from any matter; but that by His own will and counsel He has subsisted before time, and before ages, **as perfect God, only begotten and unchangeable**, and that before **He was begotten**, or created, or purposed, or established, He was not. For He was not unbegotten." Arius quoted in *The Ecclesiastical History of Theodoret*, Book 1, Chapter 3, 'Letter of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia'

But the modern version of the Trinity goes beyond scripture to hypothesize an amalgamated coequal three person being. It was this that Spear had rejected. For example one recent confession states:

The Trinity is One. We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the "consubstantial Trinity".

The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of them is God whole and entire: "The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e. by nature one God."

Indeed, as many have observed, you can spend a lifetime seeking to understand such a mysterious triune God or go insane trying.

Our First Church Manual

In 1882 an attempt to create a Church Manual was made at the General Conference session that year. The following year it was voted down again because of fears that it would smack of being a creed.

"It is the unanimous judgment of the committee, that it would not be advisable to have a church manual. We consider it unnecessary because we have already surmounted the greatest difficulties connected with church organization without one and perfect harmony exists among us on this subject. It would seem to many like a step toward formation of a creed, or a discipline, other than the Bible, something we have always been opposed to as a denomination. If we had one [a church manual], we fear many, especially those commencing to preach, would study it to obtain guidance, in religious matters, rather than to seek for it in the Bible, and from the leadings of the Spirit of God, which would tend to their hindrance in genuine religious experience and in knowledge of the mind of the Spirit. It was in taking similar steps that **other bodies of Christians first begun to lose their simplicity and become formal and spiritless. Why should we imitate them?**" *Review and Herald*, November 20, 1883, 'General Conference Proceedings, Twenty-second Annual session'

The General Conference President, George Butler, explained why the church had rejected the church manual one week later in the *Review*:

"Thus far we have got along well with our simple organization without a manual. Union prevails throughout the

body. The difficulties before us, so far as organization is concerned, are far less than those we have had in the past. We have preserved simplicity, and have prospered in so doing. It is best to let well enough alone. For these and other reasons, the church manual was rejected. It is probable it will never be brought forward again" G. I. Butler, *Review and Herald*, November 27, 1883, 'No Church Manual'

Thus, when Wilcox reintroduced his own version of "Fundamental Beliefs" back into the SDA Yearbook in 1931, they, too, were unauthorized; no General Conference vote was taken approving them as official. In 1932, one year later, the church produced its first Church Manual.

Then in 1946 it was voted by the General Conference in session that all future changes to the Church Manual must be authorized. The same applied to any changes in the Fundamental Beliefs. By this time enough modifications had been made in moving the church toward Trinitarianism that it was now safe to "lock them in place" and insure against any further *unauthorized* changes. Loughborough's list of Creed Consequences was now entering stage two.

Eckenroth's Embarrassment

Smith's *Daniel and the Revelation* enjoyed numerous reprintings, unchanged for nearly 70 years. It was officially promoted by the General Conference as late as 1932.

"That in the operation of our field work we encourage colporteurs to use as far as consistent, the existing books which have formed the backbone of our work in previous years, such as 'Great Controversy,' 'Patriarchs and Prophets,' 'Desire of Age,' 'Bible Readings,' '**Daniel and Revelation**'" *General Conference Committee Minutes*, October 20, 1932

But five years later in 1937 a young Adventist evangelist, Melvin K. Eckenroth, was publicly embarrassed by a Nazarene preacher. Quoting from a 1926 edition of Uriah Smith's book, the Nazarene pastor read in front of the entire audience, "...as the Son he

does not possess a co-eternity of past existence with the Father, the beginning of his existence, as the begotten of the Father, antedates the entire work of creation...

The implication was that if "standard" Adventist literature was stating that Christ was not equal with the Father's "eternal existence" then we were also teaching that Christ was not equal with the Father's divinity. This was certainly not the case, but Eckenroth was surprised by the accusation and did not know how to defend it.

Eckenroth fired off a letter to LeRoy Froom complaining that Uriah Smith's theology was detrimental to the Adventist cause in its ability to attract converts because the competition was exposing us as a "non-Christian cult." "This was a challenge for which I was totally unprepared," Eckenroth recounted. "My feeble response was, "Sir, you must be mistaken." But when he checked his own copy of "D&R" Melvin was "Amazed, bewildered, and absolutely dumfounded" to read the very same words. (M. K. Eckenroth, letter, as quoted in LeRoy Froom's *Movement of Destiny* p. 625).

Though a graduate of Emmanuel Missionary College's class of 1937, Eckenroth was amazingly unaware of the original teachings of pioneer Adventists on the begotten Sonship of Christ "from the days of eternity." This is truly astounding in view of the fact that the Sabbath School lessons just the year before taught the very same thing.

"The direct statement of Jesus, '**I came forth from the Father,**' reads literally, '**I came out of the Father.**' Putting with this, His testimony in John 10:38, 'The Father is in Me, and I in Him,' we have **His personal witness** that **He truly was 'begotten of the Father,'** as John says in 1:14." Lesson 4, October 24, 1936, p. 12

"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.**" *Ibid* "The Deity of Christ", p. 13

These lessons were even approved by the General Conference.

"The outline at the close of each lesson will helpfully guide in the matter; and as the present lessons on doctrines are **fully authenticated** by the lesson committee of the General Conference Sabbath School Department, any one can know that what he teaches as he presents the lesson as a Bible reading or a sermon is correct." *Review and Herald*, Dec 7, 1936.

Book Censorship

By the end of the 1930's, however, the last remaining "old guard" pioneers had died and a new generation of Adventist leaders was coming into prominence. General Conference Session Minutes for January 16, 1940 recorded the discussion of editing of Uriah Smith's *Daniel and the Revelation*:

"The Chairman stated that the matter of the republication of the book 'Daniel and Revelation,' was brought up at the last Autumn Council, and in the discussion it was agreed that if the book were to be republished it should be a project undertaken by all the North American publishing houses, and that the book should be modernized."

But 9 months later still nothing.

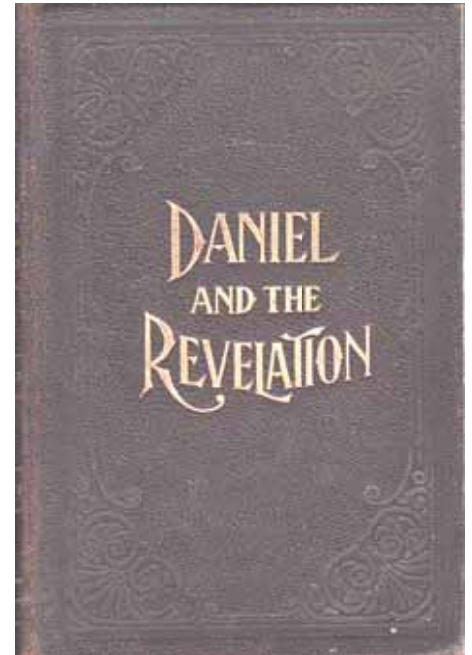
"Consideration was given to the question of the **revision and republication** of the book "Daniel and Revelation," which was **allowed to go out of print some years ago**. It was reported that **there is a large demand from the field** for its republication in subscription book form."

"While it was agreed that we ought to have a book for circulation at the present time on the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, there was **quite a difference of opinion as to the advisability of attempting to revise this book**. After discussion of the arguments offered in favor of, and **opposed to the republication** of the book, it was

VOTED, To **refer the matter** to the officers of the General Conference and

the heads of the three publishing houses **for further study.**" *General Conference Session Minutes*, October 23, 1940

Obviously there was a dispute over the use of Smith's book. It had long been a popular and profitable book and even yet there was "a large demand" for its continued availability. However, there was also significant opposition to its "republication," so much so that two years later progress on settling the matter was "still in committee"—now a subcommittee!



"The General Conference Committee at the time of the 1940 Autumn Council appointed a committee consisting of the managers of the "three publishing houses and the General Conference Officers, to give attention to the bringing out of a revised edition, which has in turn appointed a committee on the revision of the book. **This committee is not yet ready to report.**" *General Conference Committee Minutes*, January 1, 1942

Meanwhile, Southern Publishing had forged ahead with its own revision and even printed 5,000 copies.

"The Southern Publishing Association is now **requesting permission to sell a 5,000 edition of "Daniel and Revelation" that they have recently printed**. This edition **contains some changes** mainly perhaps having to do with statistical matter contained in the book. It was

VOTED, That a committee of five be appointed to **review the new edition** of "Daniel and Revelation" as published by the Southern Publishing Association, and report back to this Committee." *Ibid.* January 1, 1942

The committee came back two weeks later and reported that the original committee was nearly ready to present its recommendations on the production of a revised edition of *Daniel and the Revelation*. So it was

"VOTED, That we **earnestly recommend** to the Southern Publishing Association **that their edition** of "Daniel and Revelation" **be withheld from circulation** pending decision on the report of the committee appointed at the time of the Autumn Council of 1940." *Ibid.* January 19, 1942

When the subcommittee finally presented its report in April, it was recommended that

"1. The republication of 'Daniel and the Revelation' as a subscription book in a **revised Volume**.

2. That a **special book committee of eleven members on revision**, be appointed with representation from the three publishing houses of North America, giving them power to act in revising and preparing the book for publication.

3. That **the revised edition** of 'Daniel and the Revelation' be published by the three publishing houses.

4. That the proposed **revised edition** of 'Daniel and the Revelation' **take the place of all editions now published.**" *General Conference Committee Minutes* April 7, 1942

Warren Eugene Howell, chairman of the committee assigned the task of editing *Daniel and the Revelation*, included in his report a brief history of the book, noting it had began its life as a series of articles in the 1862 *Review and Herald*. It was then recorded in the minutes,

"An agreement was entered into at the beginning of the work that **in all matters touching doctrine** or the rights and privileges of the author, no action would be recorded to be **carried out until it could be made unanimous in**

the committee, and that resolution was carried through, there being unity and harmony throughout the work." *Ibid.* April 7, 1942.

The committee realized that "any revision of D&R was still a highly sensitive matter" (*Movement of Destiny* p. 424). Nevertheless,

"The next logical and inevitable step in the implementing of our unified "Fundamental Beliefs" involved **revision of certain standard works** so as to **eliminate statements** that taught, and thus perpetuated, **erroneous views on the God-head.**" "The first and most conspicuous of these involved **certain erroneous theological concepts** that had long appeared in Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation by Uriah Smith, who had died in 1903." LeRoy Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, pp. 422-423, 1971

Froom admitted that Smith's book had been "accorded an honored place" in our Adventist history and even "recognized by Ellen White" but then quotes her as the authoritative rationale for removing objectionable content: "she also said that errors in our older literature 'call for careful study and correction.' E.G.White Ms11, 1910; 1SM, p. 165)." *Ibid.*

Once again, Froom selectively quotes Ellen White. Notice what he did not mention:

"In some of our important books that have been in print for years, and which have brought many to a knowledge of the truth, there may be found **matters of minor importance** that call for careful study and correction." Ellen White, Ms No. 10, 1910

Are the Godhead and Christ's begotten Sonship to be considered "matters of minor importance"? It is obvious that LeRoy Froom did not. Nor did the members of the General Conference Committee that debated this issue for over two years. But Ellen White had more to say about these minor matters.

"Let such matters [of minor importance] be considered by those regularly appointed to have the oversight of our

publications. **Let not these brethren**, nor our canvassers, nor our ministers **magnify these matters** in such a way as to lessen the influence of these good soul-saving books. Should we take up the work of **discrediting our literature**, we would place weapons in the hands of those who have departed from the faith and confuse the minds of those who have newly embraced the message. **The less that is done unnecessarily** to change our publications, the better it will be." *Ibid.* 1910.

While Ellen White's comments originally pertained to the controversy over "the daily" of Daniel 8, Froom seized on the opportunity for "correction" that it afforded and applied it to the topic of God and His person. But Ellen White's wise advice was ignored.

Fierce debate continued. Froom admits that reaction to the proposed revisions was "rather vehement." *Movement of Destiny*, p. 424. At the Autumn Council Howell again reported.

"Apparently **I did not make clear to all what I said** as spokesman for our revision committee **on the doctrine of the eternity of Christ**. Let me say it more clearly. Our committee had no thought of making a pronouncement on the doctrine for the denomination. But knowing there are some **differences of view** among us, it was our judgment that it would be **better to omit the subject altogether from the book, without comment**, and leave the matter **open for all to study without let or hindrance.**" Warren Howell to the Cincinnati Autumn Council of Seventh-day Adventists October 28, 1942

If the intention was truly to take a neutral position on the issue and neither encourage nor hinder "the matter" and leave it "open," then why remove anything? Why not just publish a new book with updated views. Why change what was now part of history? Warren Howell only had 8 months to continue to "make clear" what he had said. He died July 5, 1943. W.H. Branson, General Conference Vice President, took over and finally reported at the 1944 Spring General

Conference Committee that it was decided to leave Uriah Smith's views on prophecy unchanged, but his theological views should be eliminated because they were

1. not an interpretation of prophecy
2. out of harmony with the fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventism
3. out of harmony with statements from the Spirit of Prophecy

Froom justifies this last point. "These statements [of Ellen White] were all written in the decades following the writing of Smith's book—and especially in the decade after his death. He was therefore not acquainted with them." LeRoy Froom (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 424).

Which statements would these be? Anything after 1903, the year of Smith's death. This would eliminate *Desire of Ages* and its singular expression "original, unborrowed, unde-

rived" which first occurred under her name in the 1896 *Review and Herald*.

Froom's explanation ignores the continued endorsement of Uriah Smith and his books by Ellen White a decade after his death; it ignores the plea from Ellen White in 1905 that our fundamental beliefs that had unified us as a people for "the past 50 years" specifically regarding the sanctuary and the personality of God not be abandoned.

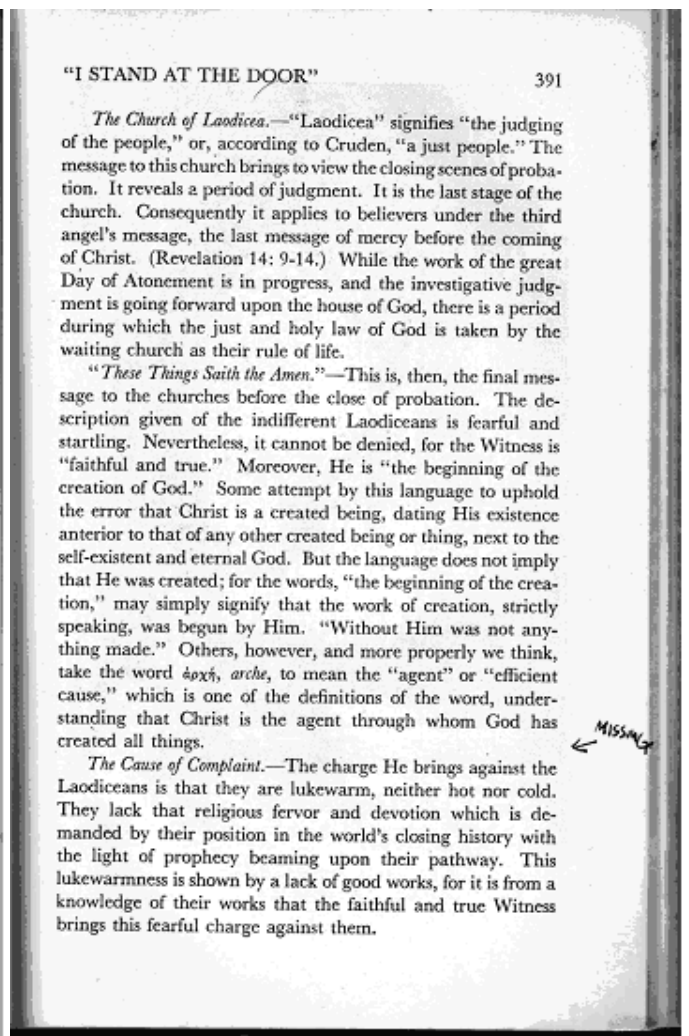
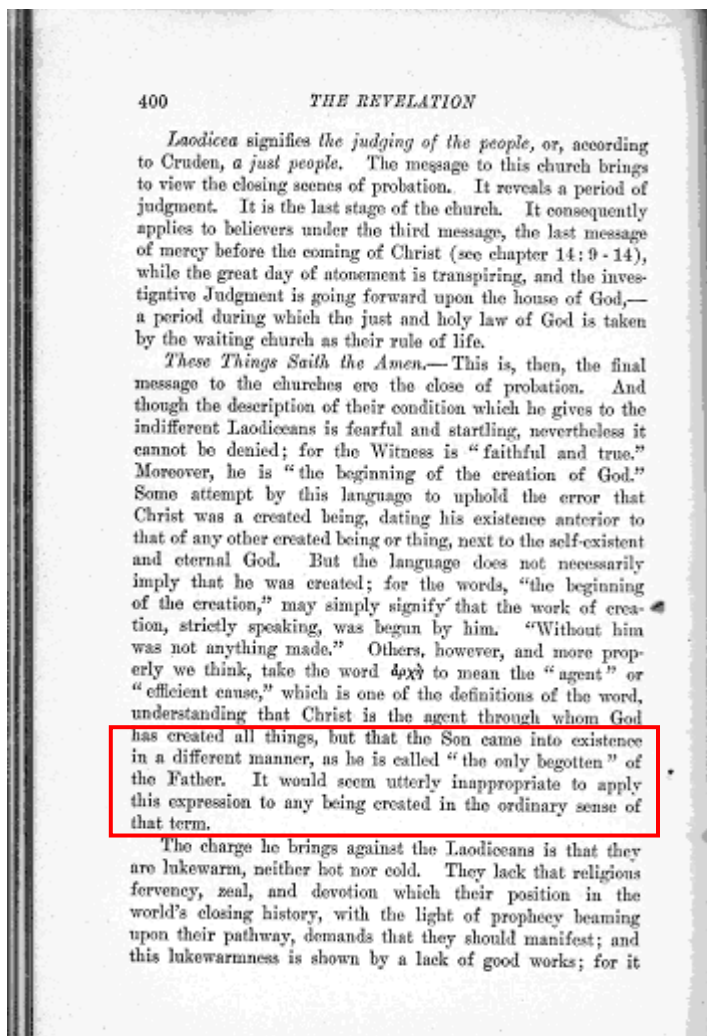
After the 1944 editing, Uriah Smith's material in the section of his book commenting on Revelation were reduced by two pages and 710 words. The two pages at the center of the cross-hairs were pages 400 and 430 of the pre-1944 editions as shown here with their 1944 counterparts.

The real Uriah Smith expressed his conviction that Christ was not a created being "but that the Son came into existence in a different manner."

Of course, "coming into existence" implied a beginning and denied the *absolutely* eternal existence that was demanded by the teaching of the co-eternal triune God. The updated Uriah Smith of 1944 made no such comments. On the pretense of updating prophetic interpretation and correcting many unintentional plagerizations, Uriah's "classic D&R" was completely altered (entire pages removed, others added) yet his name still remained on the republished work as if posthumously he had sanctioned the radical changes made by others.

With a note of triumph, Froom concluded

"The removal of the last standing vestige of Arianism in our standard literature was accomplished through the deletions from the classic D&R in 1944." Froom *'Movement of Destiny'*, page 465, 1971



Which is worse? Including words in a book that belong to someone else, or removing words from a book that belong to the author himself? The first indicates that the author is in agreement with the added words; the second would suggest to the uninformed reader that the author denied his original convictions. Such is the result of censorship. It changes history and makes it say something quite different from reality. The prohibition that concludes the last book of Scripture should apply here as well: "if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life" Revelation 22:19. Tampering with the original intent of an author's message carries serious consequences.

Again, page 430 of the 1897 edition is largely missing on page 423 of the 1944 edition because here Uriah expands on his belief that Christ, while not a created being, was "begotten of the Father." But even more

explicit here he now states that "as the Son he does not possess a co-eternity of past existence with the Father." His reasoning is clearly laid out. Scripture abundantly expresses the many gifts of the Father to the Son.

The Father has "given to the Son to have life in himself" John 5:26, "given him a name which is above every name" Phil 2:9, "by inheritance" Heb 1:4. Thus he came "in my Father's name" John 5:43. He has given him "all things" Matt 11:27; John 3:35; 13:3, "all that the Father has" John 16:15, "all power in heaven and earth" Matt 28:18; John 17:2, "all judgment" John 5:22, and pre-eminence over all things Col 1:18.

The following year *Ministry* magazine reported on the real reason for the revisions.

"It is a matter of record that **Uriah Smith once believed that Christ was a created being**. But later he revised his belief and teaching to the effect that Christ was begotten sometime back in eternity before the creation of the

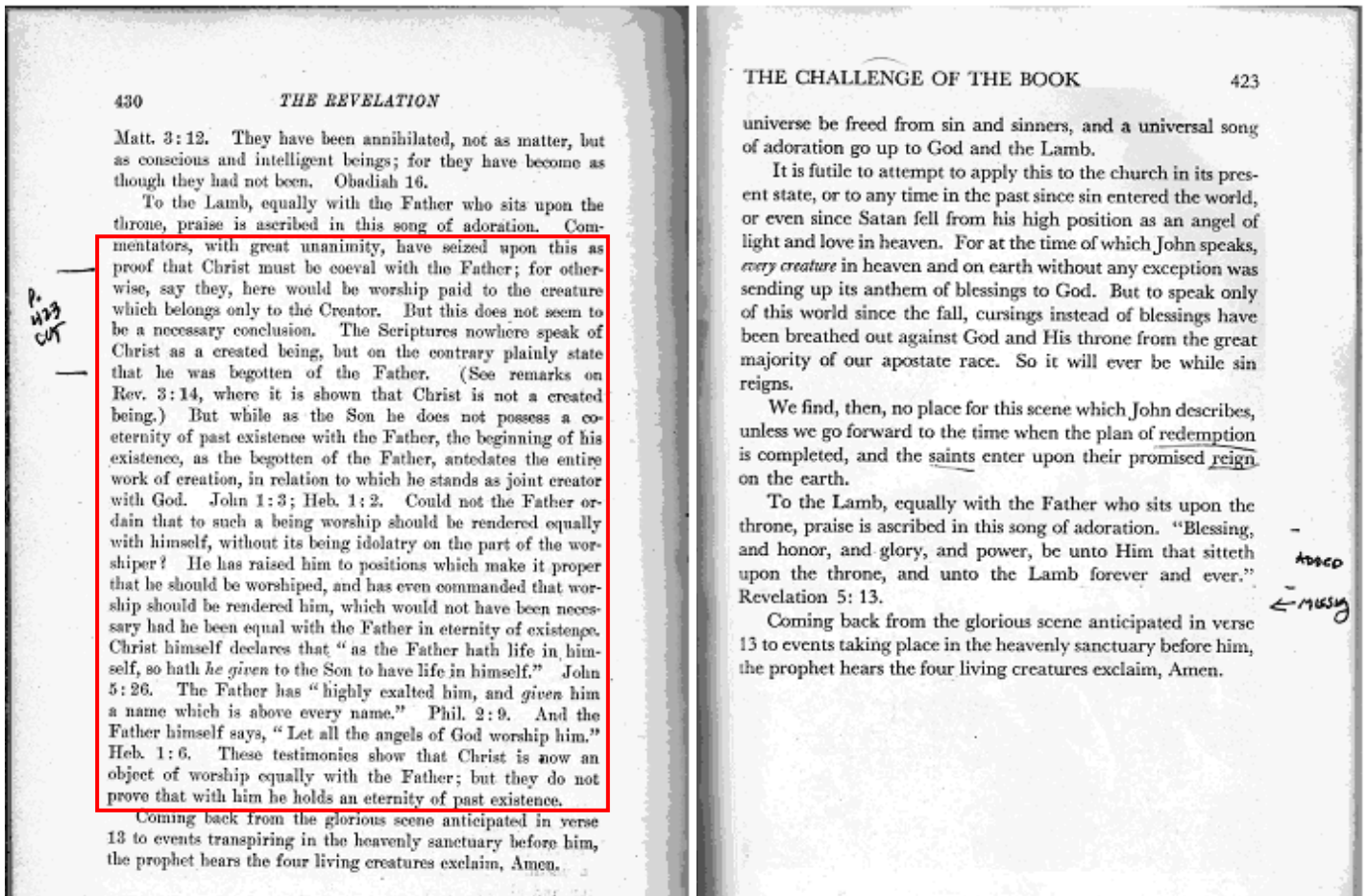
world." Merwin Thurber, 'Ministry' magazine, May 1945, article "Revised D & R in Relation to Denominational Doctrine"

This same teaching was present in the original 1865 edition of *Thoughts on the Revelation*. Thirty years later Ellen White made much the same statement:

"The Eternal Father, the unchanged-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." Ellen White, *Review & Herald* July 9, 1895

Now *there's* a word that could be improved. But it would seem that Ellen White already chose "made" as an improvement over a very similar statement she made in *Signs of the Times* just two months earlier:

"A complete offering has been made; for 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,'-- not a son



by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son **begotten** in the express image of the Father's person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection." *Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895.

Yet it appears that Ellen was simply confirming essentially what E.J. Waggoner had written five years earlier.

"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.**" *Christ and His Righteousness*, 1890

Crafty Compilations

LeRoy Froom pioneered the practice of compiling Ellen White statements and sound bytes into separately published books, adding his own section titles, punctuation and capitalization as suited his own preferences. We have already seen several examples. Here's another.

There is only one apparent exception to Ellen White's consistent use of person, personalities and beings. The following was not actually written by Ellen but reported by someone listening to a sermon which she gave in Oakland, California, Sabbath afternoon, October 20, 1906.

"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 . . . When I feel oppressed, and hardly know how to relate myself toward the work that God has given me to do, I just call upon **the three great Worthies**, and say; You know I cannot do this work in my own strength." *7 Manuscript Release* p. 267

The use of the term "beings" differs from all her other published statements where she uses "persons" or "personalities." The fact that this isolated comment, alleged to have been made by her, contradicts her other written and published statements, makes it applicable to the following words of caution from Ellen herself:

"And now to all who have a desire for truth I would say: Do not give credence to unauthenticated reports as to what Sister White has done **or said** or written. **If you desire to know what the Lord has revealed through her, read her published works.**" *Testimonies* vol. 5, p. 696

It is interesting that this statement of "three holiest beings" only saw the light of day very recently. The date of release is noted by the White Estate as "Released March 16, 1976." 7MR 273.

Ellen White emphasized the threeness of the Godhead in terms of thinking persons with personalities (not impersonal force fields). She explained the oneness of the Godhead in terms of having the same divine nature, character, purpose and love. She never spoke of three in one person or being; she recognized only two beings.

Judson Washburn



George Butler's nephew was converted to Seventh-day Adventism by J.N. Andrews at the age of 11, baptized by James White the following year, and entered the ministry in 1884. Washburn was well acquainted with Ellen White, citing his interview with her at Ottawa, Kansas as the turning point of his life. He committed large portions of scripture to memory. By 1918 he could recite Revelation, Romans, James and Second Peter. By 1948 he had memorized the entire

New Testament and was starting on Isaiah. In 1921 he wrote a letter to F.M. Wilcox decrying the 1919 Bible Conference as a serious setback to the church.

"You were in that **secret Bible Council** which I believe was **the most unfortunate thing our people ever did**, and it seemed to me you were **losing the simplicity of your faith.**" Washburn to F. M. Wilcox, letter July 3, 1921

He repeated the same thoughts in a letter to General Conference President A.G. Daniells the following year.

"Under the authority, and sanction or permission at least of this so called Bible Institute, teachers were **undermining the confidence of our sons and daughters in the very fundamentals of our truth**, while the parents were not allowed to inquire into **the sacred secrets of this private council**... One of our most faithful workers said the holding of this Bible Institute was the most terrible thing that had ever happened in the history of this denomination." J. S. Washburn, "An Open Letter to Elder A. G. Daniells and an Appeal to the General Conference," 1922, pp. 28-29

But it was a sermon delivered by W.W. Prescott in 1940 that inspired him to send a lengthy letter to the General Conference directly denouncing the invasion of Trinitarian doctrine into the Adventist Church, noting that "The doctrine of the Trinity is regarded as the supreme test of orthodoxy by the Roman Catholic Church."

Washburn's main concern was that the Trinity doctrine precluded the actual death of a fully divine Christ. And he continued to write caustic letters to the leadership opposing what he recognized as an intrusion of Babylonian wine.

While we have a responsibility to speak up when the enemy is at the gates, the spirit in which we make our appeals is critical. God has designed His body to function as a channel for the blessings of life and love to flow throughout His universe where God is the Fountain, the Source of all things.

God is the Head of Christ;
Christ is the Head of mankind;
Man is the Head of woman.
This is the teaching of 1Cor 11:3.

The river of life flows from the throne of God and the lamb. Rev 22:1. As we drink of that water, it becomes a well of water springing up, and out of us shall flow rivers of living water John 4:14;7:38. As we submit to the divine plan of Source and Agent, the blessings of God can freely flow. This is true for husbands and wives, fathers and sons, elders and laity. The flow can be disrupted if either the source or the agent fails in their part of the relationship. When that happens we must appeal, encourage, respect and pray.

The 1947 Longacre Paper

Charles Longacre was born in 1871. He was intimately acquainted with Ellen White, Uriah Smith and other Adventist pioneers. He was one of six pall bearers selected at Ellen White's funeral. He also attended the 1919 Bible Conference in his capacity as principal of the South Lancaster Academy. He served as editor of Liberty magazine for 28 years and was a member of the Bible Research Fellowship which was organized in 1940 by the North American Bible Teachers. Under the chairmanship of L.L. Caviness in 1944, he was offered the opportunity of presenting a paper at Pacific Union College on "The Deity of Christ" in January 1947. A sermon on the same subject was presented shortly thereafter at the Takoma Park Church in Washington, D.C.

Longacre began his discourse by presenting the various views of Christ's Godhood. After discussing the two extremes of both an only human Christ and a God the Father Christ, he continued,

"We now come to the third group which hold that Christ was the only begotten Son of God, the Father, and that He was such from the days of eternity and was the only one who proceeded directly from God, being begotten by the Father before all

creation, before anything was created in an empty universe. This group hold that the Son of God is equal to the Father, is the express image of the Father, possesses the same substance as the Father, the same life as the Father, the same power and authority as the Father, but that all these attributes were given to the Son of God by the Father, when He was begotten by the Father."

"This group believe that the Son of God existed "in the bosom of the Father" from all eternity, just as Levi existed in the "loins of Abraham," as the apostle Paul said; "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him." Heb. 7:9, 10." Charles S. Longacre, *The Deity of Christ*, paper for the Bible Research Fellowship Angwin, California January 1947, page 3.

He read, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" Rev 1:11, then commented.

"Not everything has a beginning nor does everything have an ending. **God Himself never had a beginning and He will not have an ending. He is the self-existent One**, who never had a beginning. **Eternity itself** never had a beginning and never will have an ending. **Space** has no beginning and no ending. Everything else had a beginning, but not all things that have a beginning are going to have an end." *Ibid*, page 4.

"Christ **always existed in the bosom of the Father**, even **before He was Begotten** as the Son of God, and God and His prophets **counted 'things which are not,' as though they were even before they were manifested**. Thus we read that Christ was **'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,'** and that 'Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot... was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifested in these last times.' So **Christ existed in the bosom of the Father from all eternity** but was **manifested when He was begotten** by the Father as His Son, as the apostle Paul says, "before all creation." *Ibid*, p. 19.

"But Christ, the only Begotten of the Father, **made in the 'express image' of the Father in person**. God not only **appointed [Him] to be the Saviour** of

men, but He **appointed Him 'heir of all things,' '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 (God) at any time, Thou art My son, This day have I begotten thee?" Heb. 1:2-5."

"Here we are told that the expression 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begot-ten thee,' refers only to Christ and not to any of the angels. Then there must have been **a time, a day, when the Son of God was begotten** by the Father. On that day, the Father saith unto His only Begotten Son: 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever ... 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.' Heb. 1:8-10." *Ibid*, p. 8.



"The Spirit of Prophecy says that there was and still is a difference in rank between God - the Father, and God's Son. We read in Vol. 1 of the old Spirit of Prophecy [p.17] thus: **'Satan in Heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son.'** The implication is that **God stands first in honor**, His only begotten **Son comes next**, and **Lucifer was next to the Son of God. If God and His Son were co-eternal, co-equal**, and co-existent so that there was no difference between them then we should not say **Lucifer was next to the Son of God but next to God as well.**" *Ibid*, p. 9

"Of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, it is said in the Scriptures, 'He is the only Begotten of the Father.' **The Son of God was not created like other creatures** are brought into existence. He

is not a created but a Begotten Being, enjoying all the attributes of His Father. Christ Himself explains His own relationship to the Father as follows: 'As the Father had life in Himself,' unborrowed, underived, original, independent, and immortal, 'so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.' John 5:26." *Ibid* p. 4.

"God 'only hath immortality.' He alone is the only self-existent God. But He gave His Son when He was Begotten the same life he had in Himself, therefore when Christ offered His life as a ransom for the sins of the world, He and He only could make an atonement for all the sins of all the world, because he made 'infinite sacrifice,' and it required an 'Infinite sacrifice' to atone for all the sins of mankind and angels who had sinned, in order to satisfy the demands of the law of God and infinite justice."

"Christ had unconditional immortality bestowed upon Him when He was begotten of the Father. Angels had conditional immortality bestowed upon them when they were created by Christ in the beginning. Angels are immortal but their immortality is conditional. Therefore angels do not die but live on after they sin just as Satan or Lucifer lives on in sin. But since Lucifer and the fallen angels only enjoy conditional immortality, God ultimately will destroy them and take from them the gift of immortality which Christ bestowed on them when He created them. Whatever God bestows he can take away whenever He sees fit." *Ibid*, p. 7.

"What kind of life did the Father have in Himself? In God 'is life original, unborrowed, underived,' 'immortal,' 'independent.' 'He is the source of life.' Christ says, 'As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given' - the same life, original, unborrowed, underived life to the Son. It was 'given' to Him by His Father. Christ was made the source of life just as the Father was the source of life. Christ had the same life the Father had in Himself in His own right. He did not have to derive or borrow it, it was now original with Christ just as it was with the Father. Christ's life was independent of the Father, hence not dependent, derived, or borrowed. He could bestow and give

life and create just as the Father could, but the Father gave this life to His Son." *Ibid*, p. 10.

"When this same life the Father had in Himself was given by the Father to His Son so He too had it 'in Himself,' we are not told. Nor does it make any difference how long it was before anything was created, the fact remains that the Son of God proceeded from the Father, that He was in the bosom of the Father, that His life, 'underived, unborrowed' and 'given' to Him by the Father, that the Father 'ordained' His Son 'should be equal with Himself;' that the Father 'invested' His Son 'with authority,' and that the Son does 'nothing of Himself alone.' *Ibid* pp. 10-11

"If it were impossible for the Son of God to make a mistake or commit a sin, then His coming into this world and subjecting Himself to temptations were all a farce and mere mockery. If it were possible for Him to yield to temptation and fall into sin, then He must have risked heaven and His very existence, and even all eternity. That is exactly what the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy say Christ, the Son of God did do when He came to work out for us a plan of salvation from the curse of sin." *Ibid* p. 13.

It was this last point that Longacre, like Washburn, saw as the critical factor under attack by the Trinity.

"Our life is finite - His is infinite. Ours is mortal - His is immortal. Our spirit is finite, His is infinite. We cannot take up our life after we lay it down. He could, so long as He did not commit sin. But if he had yielded to temptation and become guilty of sin, - and this was possible - His very existence, his eternal existence and heaven itself was possible of being forfeited. If it was not, then He never took a risk; and we are told He 'risked all,' even heaven itself, as 'an eternal loss.' This being so, then His corporeal body was not only put in jeopardy but His Deity. Because, if He could exist as a separate Deity, independent of His corporeal body, after He yielded up His life on Calvary, then He did not risk heaven nor would He have suffered 'all' as 'an eternal loss.'

"Since His spirit did not go to heaven, but the Father committed Christ's

spirit to the tomb and it slept with His body in the tomb, and 'all that comprised the life and the intelligence of Jesus remained with His body in the sepulchre,' we must conclude that if Christ had sinned all that ever belonged to Christ would have forever remained in the tomb and Christ would have suffered the 'loss' of His eternal existence. Then God would have taken back to Himself what He gave to His son, namely, the same life He gave His only Begotten Son when He proceeded from the bosom of the Father in the beginning when He became 'the First-born before all creation,' as Paul puts it." *Ibid*, p. 15.

Holy, holy, holy



Ellen White very wisely never used the word Trinity. It has different meanings to different people. To early Adventists, the Trinity conjured up an amalgamation of three persons in one being. Others, desiring to preserve distinct personages, still used the term but were left with "three Gods."

The hymn, "Holy, holy, holy" which was hymn 327 in the *Christ in Song* hymn book published by the Review and Herald in 1908, ended the first of three verses with "God over all who rules eternity." When the General Conference produced the *Church Hymnal* in 1941 it included, unchanged, this favorite as hymn number 73. After 44 years, the new 1985 revision, "*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*" still positions "Holy, holy, holy" in the familiar hymn number 73 position.

But despite its promise on page 7 that “With great caution, the text committee replaced archaic and exclusive language whenever this could be done without disturbing familiar phrases, straining fond attachments, or doing violence to historical appropriateness,” the text committee dramatically changed the wording of number 73. Though the hymn retained its familiar location in the hymn line up, it received an extreme makeover.

An additional verse was added (which essentially repeated the first) and the ending lines of the first and last verses now read: “God in three persons, blessed Trinity.” Instead of retaining the familiar and original phrase in at least one of these two copycat stanzas, the three-personed Trinity is duplicated for emphasis.

Credit for this change actually goes to Reginald Heber, bishop of the Church of England, who penned those words in 1826 especially for use on Trinity Sun-day of that year. The General Conference text committee favored the use of Heber’s original wording and all four of his verses *except* in verse two.

Here Heber’s original lyrics read: “Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee.” From the earliest use of this hymn, Adventists have modified this verse into the more theologically acceptable “Angels adore Thee.”

It is lamentable that the ambiguous term Trinity is being so freely used within our literature and hymnals. No damage or insult would have resulted from retaining the original 1908 wording for both verses one and four. “God over all who rules eternity” is true and undisputed by all Bible believing Seventh-day Adventists.

But the “new theology” proponents finally achieved enough support by 1980 after the “Trinity” was officially incorporated into the church’s Fundamental Beliefs, that in 1985 it was ushered into the new hymnal as well. This provocative decision was made in contradiction to Ellen White’s advice and example. She cautioned

that we should not enter into controversy over the “personality of God.” There is no need to say more than what Scripture states—unless you want to make a statement.

Dallas Doctrine

In 1980 the General Conference voted to officially adopt an orthodox belief in the Trinity.

“There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.”

The Church had spoken. Like the great ecclesiastical councils of ages past, the Advent Movement solidified its beliefs in formal dictum, proclaiming to all its adherents the final results of its own investigation.

Apostles

100 AD

Son of God – Bible

300 AD

Second Person Creed



Adventists

1844

Son of God – Bible

1980

Second Person Creed



“The Roman Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures. On the ground that ecclesiastics alone are competent to explain God’s word, it is withheld from the common people. Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the selfsame principle which was maintained by Rome prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves.” *The Great Controversy*, page 596, ‘The Scriptures a safeguard’

John Wycliff died the last day of 1384. Forty years later his bones were dug up and burned as a final insult to the first translator of the English Bible. Uriah Smith died in 1903. Forty years later his writings were desecrated by those who knew better than he what was best for the Church.

There is a startling parallel between the early Apostolic and early Adventist experience. We maintain that, like the original apostles, the pioneer Adventist students of the Bible discovered the same respect for God’s immutable moral law, for His

holy Seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial of His great creative power, and for the vindication of His character in raising the dead who sleep until the resurrection and letting go of the lost to suffer eternal separation from Him, the only source of life. Both confessed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Both trusted in the indwelling of his Spirit to give them power to overcome sin and cleanse them from all unrighteousness. Both anticipated this same Jesus who would come in like manner as he went into heaven. Both dared to come boldly through the veil into the sanctuary not made with hands.

While the Advent Movement has championed the restoration of Biblical

truths long obscured by an apostate universal church of the Dark Ages, it should be of paramount concern to our church historians in reviewing the development of a radically incompatible doctrine that cannot enhance but must eliminate our original faith in the begotten Son of God.

The parallel thus persists between the subsequent development of Trinitarian dogma in both systems of belief. As the apostolic purity of faith eventually succumbed to the doctrines of men under pressure to conform to the majority opinion, so too has the Advent message about God allowed itself to diverge in order to find harmony with the mainstream orthodox masses.

Today, the past history of the early Advent movement and its belief in the begotten Son of God is regarded “like an encapsulated cancer, gross but confined” (LeRoy Froom, *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, BRI 1981 p. 530). “Begotten” is condemned as a bad translation and is replaced liberally with “unique” and “one of a kind.”

The Son of God is denied his true Sonship and in exchange is offered an honorary title of merely human significance to grace his divine “role.” Ellen White had predicted as much. In 1904, recounting the experience of the church, she foresaw the future by writing,

“The **fundamental principles** that have sustained the work **for the last fifty years** would be **accounted as error**. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced.” *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 54; ISM p. 204.

God in Two Persons

And call no man your father upon the earth: for **one is your Father**, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for **one is your Master**, even Christ. Matt 23:9,10

You call me Master and Lord: and you say well; for so I am. John 13:13

There is one God, the Father; there is one Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. 1Corinthians 8:6

The 1905 General Conference specifically dealt with the Kellogg crisis. The new theology in *Living Temple* threatened the separate personalities of Christ and his Father. In that context Ellen White spoke of new theories that would threaten the ‘pillars of our faith’ such as the ‘personality of God’ and making Christ ‘a nonentity.’

“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.” Ellen G. White to the delegates at the 1905 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Takoma Park, Washington D. C., May 24, 1905, in MR p. 760

“All through the Scriptures, **the Father and the Son** are spoken of as **two distinct personages**. You will hear men endeavoring to make **the Son of God a nonentity**. He and the Father are one, but they are **two personages**.” *Review and Herald* July 13, 1905, to the delegates of the 1905 General Conference

These statements were made *after* John Harvey Kellogg confessed his new found Trinitarian belief in late 1903. Notice the chronological sequence of the following events.

“Soon after Dr. Kellogg first connected with the sanitarium, I was shown that he was in danger of **entertaining false views of God**.” Letter 214, 1903, p. 2. (To Brethren Sutherland and Magan, **October 9, 1903**) in 5MR p. 375

“I told him [A.T. Jones] that our brother [J.H. Kellogg] was **under the influence of Satanic agencies**, and that for so long a time had he been working away from the principles of truth and righteousness, that he had been entangled, and had in himself no power to escape from the snare of the enemy.” Letter 220, 1903, p. 7. (To David Paulson, **October 14, 1903**) in 5MR p. 375

“..within a short time he [J.H. Kellogg] **had come to believe in the trinity**...he now believed in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost;” Letter by A. G. Daniells to W. C. White **October 29, 1903**

“I hope that you will be true and faithful to help Dr. Kellogg. He is in a perilous condition. His case is a heavy burden on my soul. It would be a great relief to me to hear that he is reaching a place where he can see the **terrible mistakes** he has made. He needs to understand the **simplicity of truth**. He needs to realize that the Lord will not accept him unless he sees the mistake that he has been making, and turns to the Lord with full purpose of heart. How can a man who has had such great light **link up with evil angels?**” **Nov., 1903**, from St. Helena, California, to “My Brethren Laboring in Battle Creek” in 19MR p. 356

From October to November 1903 we find that Kellogg is “entertaining false views of God,” then 5 days later he is “under the influence of satanic agencies. Within the next two weeks he came to “believe in the trinity.” It is then that Mrs. White states that he has made “terrible mistakes” in departing from “the simplicity of truth” to “link up with evil angels.” Can the Trinity be categorized as “the simplicity of truth”? Hardly. Was it

simply the wrong version of the Trinity that was a terrible mistake?

Ellen White urged the church to remain faithful to their original beliefs about the Father and Son.

“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. There will be seen **that union for which Christ prayed** just before his trial and crucifixion.” *Review & Herald*, March 8, 1906

Her use of “**denies the personality of God and of his Son Jesus Christ**” is actually taken from a statement James White made nearly 50 years earlier.

“Here we might mention **the Trinity**, which **does away the personality of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ**, and of sprinkling or pouring instead of being ‘buried with Christ in baptism,’ ‘planted in the likeness of his death:’ but we pass from **these fables** to notice one that is **held sacred by nearly all professed Christians**, both Catholic and Protestant [the Sunday]” James White, *Review and Herald*, December 11, 1855

This was the conviction of many early Adventist pioneers. The Trinity was regarded as directly contradicting the distinct personhood of the Father and Son. The consubstantial, indivisible mystical three-faced concept of the orthodox Trinitarians rendered the Godhead but an amorphous, inconceivable Deity without form or feature.

“The **doctrine of the Trinity** which was established in the church by the council of Nice A. D. 325. This doctrine **destroys the personality of God and his Son Jesus Christ** our Lord. The infamous, measures by which it was forced upon the church which appear upon the pages of ecclesiastical history might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush.” J. N. Andrews,

Review and Herald, March 6, 1855, 'The Fall of Babylon'

"It is **not very consonant with common sense** to talk of **three being one, and one being three**. Or as some express it, calling God 'the **Triune God**,' or '**the three-one-God**.'" "If **Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each God, it would be three Gods**; for three times one is not one, but three. There is a sense in which **they are one, but not one person**, as claimed by Trinitarians. It is **contrary to Scripture**. Almost any portion of the New Testament we may open which has occasion to speak of **the Father and Son**, represents them as **two distinct persons**." John Loughborough, *Review and Herald*, November 5, 1861

"That God is an infinite and eternal Spirit, **without person, body, shape, or parts**; is everywhere and nowhere present; or, **is everywhere as a Spirit, and nowhere as a tangible being**. I ask, Is not this **making God almost a mere nothing?**"

"That **Jesus Christ is God himself; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one identical being**; hence **in describing one, we describe the other**. Certainly this is doing no better by the Son than by the Father." "Is this not **spiritualizing away God**, Christ, angels, saints, and Heaven?" A. C. Bourdeau, *Review and Herald*, June 8, 1869

There are three great powers in heaven. They are the three living personalities of God's divinity. They are

(1) "The only true God" John 17:3, the "living and true God" 1Thes 1:9, "Him that is true" 1John 5:20, who is the "one God the Father" 1Cor 8:6,

(2) "Jesus Christ whom he has sent", "the Son of the living God" Matt 16:16, "begotten of the Father" John 1:14, who is "in His bosom," and

(3) "the Spirit of God" which is "the Spirit of His Son" Gal 4:6, "the Spirit of Christ" Rom 8:9, who is the "Spirit of truth" John 14:17, because Christ is "the truth" verse 6, the "Comforter" (*paraclete*) who is also our "Advocate" (*paraclete*) 1John 2:1. There is only one mediator 1Tim 2:5.

This third personality is not another being, for there are only two beings that are God. Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son. 1John 1:3. There is but one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ. 1Cor 8:6.

Yet, the third personality is the mind of God the Father (Isa 40:13; Rom 11:34) expressed through His Son (1Cor 2:16; Phil 2:5).

"He [Christ] would represent himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the omnipresent." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, pages 23, 24; February 18 and 19, 1895

In Heaven: Christ's Humanity Represents us to the Father ↑

On Earth: Christ's Spirit Represents the Father to us ↓

The Son doesn't need someone else to dwell in His bride. He comes to us personally. "I will come to you," Jesus said. John 14:18.

"I am with you alway, even unto to end of the world" Matt 28:20. He is the Comforter who abides with us forever (John 14:16). "I will not leave you comfortless orphans" verse 18. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" Heb 13:5. Jesus is the one who stands at the door and knocks. He is the one who comes in and sups.

Many Christians think of the Godhead as a group, a kind of committee, a team or pact. This is a consequence of many centuries of tradition, permeated with the Trinity doctrine. But "Godhead" is found only three times in Scripture and is best translated "divinity." For example in Rom 1:20 the American Revised Version (quoted by Ellen White in *Ministry of Healing* p. 410) translates as "The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and **divinity**."

By the way, Mrs. White was writing to Kellogg when quoting this verse, in a chapter entitled "A true

knowledge of God." Kellogg said he now believed in the trinity; Ellen does not commend him for finally seeing things her way, but rather draws his attention to (not a Godhead) but God's divinity. Not only was Christ "filled with all the fullness" of God's divinity Col 2:9, but it is our privilege "to know the love of Christ" that we "might be filled with all the fullness of God," that we "might be partakers of the divine nature" 2Pet 1:4

■ A God who sacrifices His significant other instills considerably less admiration than a God who sacrifices His only begotten Son, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh, the "Son of His love," torn from His bosom, "His own right arm."

■ A God who pretends to be a father and just plays the part of a son, whether sequentially or simultaneously, is a deceptive deity who can't be trusted.

■ A God who uses His supernatural power during His incarnation to fight temptation and resist the devil is neither a practical example nor a source of hope to fallen, struggling humanity.

■ A God who doesn't really die is no better than a simple human sacrifice, imposing no real risk to Christ, and perpetuates the devil's claim that the soul cannot die.

■ A God who introduces another mediator only confuses the picture, and robs the benefit of Christ's human experience in "learning obedience" and giving us victory over sin.

The Battle Over the Begotten has deep significance for every Christian. Who we worship, what kind of a God we adore and praise, has tremendous consequences to our understanding of God's love, the integrity of His character, and the power of His salvation.