

A Reply to

THE TRINITY DEBATE

Defending the Indefensible . . .

BRIAN S. NEUMANN

(A concise reply to the points raised in the above said article which can be found at

http://amazingdiscoveries.org/assets/files/ADVENTIST_HISTORY_AND_THE_TRINITY.pdf

This paper has been written with you in mind,
so that you can go home after these meetings
and examine Brian Neumann's claims in more detail)

For by thy words thou shalt be justified,
and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Matthew 12:37

For His church in every generation God has a special truth and a special work. The truth that is hid from the worldly wise and prudent is revealed to the child-like and humble. It calls for self-sacrifice. It has battles to fight and victories to win. At the outset its advocates are few. By the great men of the world and by a world-conforming church, they are opposed and despised. {COL, 78}

We would like to share with you what we believe, presented by us who actually believe it. As faithful Seventh-day Adventists our position is very well put in the following words:

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

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

II. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom he created all things, and by whom they do consist; that he took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race [...]"(Taken from the Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists, 1889 Yearbook, p.147)

Note that this statement of beliefs served our church during the entire life of the inspired Messenger of the Lord, Mrs. Ellen G. White. It was a statement over which there was “entire unanimity throughout the body” of believers. It was good enough for them, and it is also good enough for us. Our belief is based solely on the unerring Word of God, the Bible.

God the eternal Father

(John 6:27; Galatians 1:1, 3; Ephesians 6:23; Philippians 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1

Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:17; 2 John 1:3; Jude 1:1)

One God alone without beginning

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” Deuteronomy 6:4. He is the true and the living God. “But the LORD is the *true God*, he is the *living God*, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.” Jeremiah 10:10. Jesus clearly identified who this one God is. His Father is the only true God “...Father...this is life eternal, that they might know thee *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:1, 3. God the Father is the living and true God. “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve *the living and true God* and to wait for his Son from heaven” 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10.

God the Father is our one God “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” 1 Corinthians 8:6. He is the great source of all things. He is above all “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:6. God the Father is the head of all things “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” 1 Corinthians 11:3. God the Father is the God of Christ. He is both the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him” Ephesians 1:17 “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.” 2 Corinthians 11:31 (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34; John 20:17; Revelation 3:12; Hebrews 1:9; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28)

When all things are restored, God the Father will continue to be over all. God the Father will be all in all. “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

Finally, in light of these clear revelations, we believe the truth. That “there is one God; and there is none other but he”, and it is our duty “to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength.” “And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.” Mark 12:34

The Divine Son of God, begotten of the Father in eternity

(Psalm 2:7; Proverbs 30:4; Daniel 3:25; Micah 5:2; Matthew 4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33; 26:63; 27:40, 43; 27:54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; 15:39; Luke 1:35; 4:3, 9, 41; 8:28; 22:70; John 1:34, 49; 3:16-18; 5:25; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4; 11:27; 19:7; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:20; 2 Corinthians 1:19; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 4:14; 1 John 3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10, 12, 13, 20; Revelation 2:18)

If asked what we think of Jesus Christ, our reply is, we believe *all* that the Scriptures say of Him. If the testimony represents Him as being in glory with the Father before the world was (John 17:5), we believe it. If it is said that He was in the beginning with God, that He was God, that all things were made by Him and for Him, and that without Him was not anything made that was made (John 1:1-3), we believe it. If the Scriptures say He is the Son of God (John 20:31), we believe it. If it is declared that the Father sent His Son into the world (John 3:16), we believe He had a Son to send. If the testimony says He is the beginning of the creation of God (Revelation 3:14), we believe it. If He is said to be the brightness of the

Father's glory, and the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:3), we believe it.

If He is declared to be the only-begotten Son of God (John 1:14), then we believe that He was begotten. If it is declared that He was brought forth before the creation of all worlds (Proverbs 8:22-30), we believe it is so. If He is said to have inherited a better name by virtue of His birth (Hebrews 1:4), we believe it to be true. If the testimony says JEHOVAH is the name of the Most High alone (Psalm 83:18), we believe it. If it is further declared that Jesus is the Son of that Most High (Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28), then we believe the Most High God is the Father. If it be said that the Father has placed His name in His Son (Exodus 23:21), we fully believe it. When Christ declares that He came in His Father's name (John 5:43), we believe it. And when Jesus says, 'I and my Father are one,' (John 10:30) we believe it; and when He says, 'My Father is greater than I,' (John 14:28) we believe that too; it is the word of the Son of God, and besides this it is perfectly reasonable and patently obvious.

Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God. He was begotten of His Father "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14. He was brought forth (begotten) in the beginning, before any works of old. "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth" Proverbs 8:22-25 (Note: That this passage is speaking of Christ will not be argued by any honest Bible student. Please see 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30 as to who is the wisdom of God. Also compare Luke 11:49 with Matthew 23:34 to see that Christ is the Wisdom of God).

Christ is the literal Son of God, being begotten of the Father. He proceeded forth from God "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." John 8:42 "Jesus said, 'If God were your father, you would love me, for God is the source of my being, and from him I come.'" (The New English Bible)

Christ was the Son of God long before He came to earth "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" Proverbs 30:4. Christ is fully divine for His Father is the only true and Living God "And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." John 6:69. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." John 5:18. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Colossians 2:9. It is a manifestation of the spirit of antichrist to deny the Father-Son relationship "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." 1 John 2:22. It is Satan who constantly questions the divine son-ship of Christ "And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God" Matthew 4:3, 5, 6

The Spirit of God (The Holy Spirit), the omnipresence of God and Christ

(Genesis 1:2; Genesis 41:38; Exodus 31:3; Exodus 35:31; Numbers 24:2; Matthew 3:16; Matthew 12:28; Romans 8:9; Romans 8:14; Romans 15:19; 1 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 7:40; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Ephesians 4:30; 1 John 4:2; Psalms 51:11; Isaiah 63:10; Isaiah 63:11; Luke 11:13; Ephesians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:8)

The Spirit of God is defined in the Bible as the mind of God "Who hath directed **the Spirit of the LORD**,

or being his counsellor hath taught him?” Isaiah 40:13 “For who hath known **the mind of the Lord**? or who hath been his counsellor?” Romans 11:34. The Spirit is also the life and breath of God “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63 “And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” John 20:22.

God the Father is a Spirit “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:23, 24. So also is Christ His Son “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” 1 Corinthians 15:45. There is only one Spirit “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” Ephesians 4:4 (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 2:18). This one spirit is shared by the Father and the Son “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Romans 8:9. It is the spirit of the Father “For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” Matthew 10:20, and also the spirit of His Son “For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” Philippians 1:19. When we have this spirit of God we actually have His very own presence “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” Psalm 139:7 (Psalm 51:11). By His own spirit God (not someone else) is everywhere present “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.” Jeremiah 23:24.

Therefore, the presence of the Holy Spirit is the very presence of the Father and the Son (not someone else) “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John 14:23. This Holy Spirit comes to us from the Father, it proceeds from Him “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” John 15:26. The Spirit comes to us through the Son “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Ephesians 2:18. The spirit of God and the spirit of man are comparable to each other. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:11. Therefore, just as the spirit of man is his very own person, so also the Spirit of God is His very own person, it is also the very person of Christ our Lord “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” 2 Corinthians 3:17. Therefore, in giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, not someone else “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” John 14:18. It is Christ (the Spirit of Christ) who comforts us in all our trials “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Galatians 4:6. This is the Bible teaching regarding the Holy Spirit of God. It proceeds from God, it is the presence of God in all the universe, it is the personal presence of God and Christ among their people on earth. This spirit brings us into fellowship with two beings “and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John 1:3.

We shall be true in presenting both sides of the question that the intelligent reader may be able to see the facts for himself. We have shown above what we believe and the Biblical basis for that belief. There are major flaws and errors in Br. Neumann’s paper that we shall examine in light of the inspired word of the Lord. Just to clarify for all those who read this paper, we have nothing against the author personally, but we do have a problem with what he has to say. It is this that we are commenting on. We make this response in love, not to argue and cavil. We have been misrepresented and we wish to set the record straight.

The Trinity position (from the author's paper) will be quoted as the **Trinity paper** with a reply to each one accordingly (All quotes from the author's paper will be referenced by page number).

Trinity

It is said that the position of our pioneers, including Ellen White, in regard to the Holy Spirit, was that He was not the third member of the Godhead but the power or essence of God – a force rather than a person. (p.3)

Reply

The Trinity paper has misunderstood our position. Let it be known unto all men that we *do not* believe the Holy Spirit is “a force rather than a person.” We do not teach it, nor have we ever printed anything that may suggest the thought. Our belief regarding the Holy Spirit is outlined above in the Bible definitions. It was seen plainly that we believe the Holy Spirit is the very personal (not impersonal) and intimate presence of God with us. The Spirit is God's very own person.

Trinity

I am more than confident now, after spending much time researching this topic and looking at the arguments from both sides, that it is not only possible, but an absolute certainty, that the Arian theology can be exposed for what it really is – a deception of gross proportions. I will attempt to expose it as such in this document. (p. 3)

Reply

To call our belief “Arian theology” is neither correct nor accurate. We have never met a Seventh-day Adventist who holds to “Arian theology.” It was Rome who adopted this method of branding her enemies as “Arian” to stigmatize them. Our historian B. G. Wilkinson notes this sad fact:

“Moreover, the Lombards, like the Goths before them, rejected so many innovations brought in by Rome that they never admitted the papal bishops of Italy to a seat in their legislative councils. **Therefore, they were promptly called Arians, the name given by Rome to her opponents.**” (B. G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*, p. 212 Ch. 15)

“**In an earlier chapter it was noted how the Papacy stigmatized as Arians those who disagreed with her in general**, and in particular how she branded those as Judaizers who were convinced that “the Sabbath” of the fourth commandment was the seventh day.” (B. G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*, p. 318 Ch. 20)

“The Goths refused to go along with the mounting innovations being introduced into the church of the caesars, **which church quickly branded any competitor Arian.**” (B. G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*, Ch. 10)

Trinity

It may be that those of us who today hold the anti-Trinitarian position may not agree with every aspect of Arius' position, but, the core of his notion is fundamentally the quintessence of what we hold as truth today. (p.5)

Reply

Again, this is not a correct or true representation of what we believe. We are not Arian or semi-Arian. We do not subscribe to Arius' position whatsoever (no one is sure what it was anyway). Please remember that it was Rome who used this tactic to demean her enemies, and it remains a false charge. Our Master was treated the same way (Matthew 10:25), warning us this would take place.

Trinity

These evidences, in and of themselves, should be enough to cause any Bible believing Seventh-day Adventist to summarily reject the teaching of a Trinity. But, to be sure, these evidences on their own will not be enough to clinch the case for most SDA's who have been indoctrinated, for generations now, with the Catholic philosophy of the Godhead. God's true church bases its doctrines on the Word of God, without exception – contrary to the practice of Rome, who relies on the opinions of man. (p.6)

Reply

The above statement is made after presenting a brief historical review of the trinity. As has been seen earlier, the Bible and the Bible alone is the foundation of our faith. Other sources only serve to confirm the facts outlined in the Word of God. Word of God. Our position has not been correctly presented in the Trinity paper from the Biblical point of view, which is its strongest and clearest evidence. This is how Mrs. White puts it:

“But don't you quote Sister White. I don't want you ever to quote Sister White until you get your vantage ground where you know where you are. Quote the Bible. Talk the Bible. It is full of meat, full of fatness. Carry it right out in your life, and you will know more Bible than you know now.” {EGW, *Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 174}

Our position has not been properly presented by the author from the Biblical point of view, which is the strongest and clearest evidence for it.

Trinity

There are other examples one can give but this is enough to resolve the matter. The Holy Spirit is not a person and is not God. It is the essence or power of God that flows from Him to His Son and to the World – Case dismissed. (p.16)

Reply

This is one of the many examples where the Trinity paper fails to understand what we are saying, and thus it does not present our case correctly. We do not teach that the “Holy Spirit is not a person”. The Holy Spirit *is* a person; it is the person and presence of God Himself “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” Psalms 139:7. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24. Jesus is here speaking of God the Father. Our case cannot be presented correctly by giving that which we do not believe.

Trinity

When John writes that the Word was there in the beginning, he is not referring to the beginning of the Father's existence, but the beginning of the Son's existence. Ever since He was born / created, He has been with the Father. (p. 16)

Reply

Once again, this common misrepresentation only serves to confuse the issue. To equate ‘born’ with ‘created’ is an inaccurate charge. We *never* teach or believe this heresy (that Christ is created). Born means begotten; it does *not* mean created. This fact is so overwhelmingly clarified in our literature that it

is truly a wonder how someone can still fail to see the difference. This charge is just not true. Please show us in any of our writings where we actually teach that Christ is created. For all who think that 'born' equals 'created', please read the words of inspiration carefully and note how Mrs. White gives a very clear distinction:

'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. . . ' (ST, May 30, 1895) (p.12)

This is a quote the Trinity paper uses to correct a false conclusion. It should settle the question once and for all. The Trinity paper actually notes this fact clearly, and in equating 'born' with 'created' shows a contradiction in an attempt to present our case. To point out this inconsistency we shall quote again from the paper:

It must also be pointed out, based on the evidence of Ellen White's testimony, **that Jesus was not created**, as some Arians try to suggest (Uriah Smith and Loughborough made this quite clear in the statements presented earlier). **Ellen White is quite emphatic on that point. She says he was 'not a son by creation as were the angels.'** Anti-Trinitarians do themselves no favour when they insist on trying to prove that Christ was a created being. There is no such evidence in the Bible, the pioneers, or the pen of inspiration. It is wiser to concentrate on the absolute and crystal clear statements than to support a case based on uninformed opinions and suppositions. (p.13)

The Trinity paper states plainly that Ellen White's testimony shows that Jesus was *not* created. This is correct and it is what we believe. To then equate 'born' with 'created' is truly turning things upside down. The trinity paper does not comment on the rest of the statement where we are plainly told *how* Christ is a Son "but a son *begotten*". Please keep this fact in mind, as it shall help to dispel some of the false charges.

Trinity

The best thing for us anti-Trinitarians to do would be to stick to the genuine evidences we have in the actual works of Ellen White. There is enough there to defend the case. *If we are right in taking an Arian position on the Godhead, and, if we have built on a solid premise, motivated by pure, holy and honest motives, then, the truth will triumph in the end.* (p.19)

Reply

This is a repetition of what has been dealt with earlier. The Trinity paper speaks of us as "anti Trinitarians" and our belief as "an Arian position". This is not so. We are not "anti" anything! We have never met an Seventh-day Adventist who calls himself "anti-Sunday" or "anti-immortality of the soul." Just because one is vegetarian does not make him "anti-meat", nor would we call him such. Attributing to us the "Arian position" only causes us to shake our heads in wonder. Indeed, there is nothing new under the sun. We said it before and we say it again, we are not Arian, semi-Arian, quasi-Arian, half-Arian, pro-Arian or any thing with Arian in it! We can only reply that we follow the God of our fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets, whether it is called heresy or not. Acts 24:14.

Trinity

Thus ends my defense of the ASDAT position. It does seem apparent that their case is a pretty solid one. But, regardless of how the strength of their case appears, on the surface, it is irreparably flawed and is constructed out of straw-men, hot air and a naïve ignorance of some very profound facts. In the next chapter we will examine their claims and will effectively take down the building blocks one by

one till their case is, essentially, left incoherent and indefensible. (p. 22)

Reply

The Trinity paper assumes our position has been defended (calling it ASDAT), but we see that this ‘defense’ has been more of a misrepresentation than a real defense. A case has indeed been presented with flaws and misunderstandings, which we neither believe nor advocate. Truth will give an answer to all who truly seek an answer.

Trinity

Much of the ‘pain’ and ‘heartache’ in this debacle is simply as a result of misunderstanding the facts (unfortunately there are some of us who thrive on the controversial and the sensational – the facts do not matter, no matter how obvious – the important thing is that you still have an axe to grind). (p. 23)

Reply

This is a very true statement. A good example is the very paper we are discussing. Let us list some facts that will serve in removing some of the misunderstandings presented.

Fact: Christ the Son of God is *not* created. He was begotten of the Father (John 1:14).

Fact: The Holy Spirit is *not* just a force or essence. It is the very personal presence of God (Psalm 51:11). It is the very mind and life of God (Isaiah 40:13; Romans 11:34; John 6:63).

Fact: We are not Arian, semi-Arian or any such thing. We just believe Bible truth, and unless shown from the Bible our error we shall continue to believe that truth. Calling us names does not alter the facts.

Trinity

Although they may be right in stating their opposition to the SDA Church adopting a Catholic Trinity, they have, without realizing it, revealed one of the primary weaknesses in their whole case. In effect, much of the ASDAT case (and this is what so many seem to miss) is built on a totally false premise. This flawed supposition is that the SDA Church has, in fact, adopted the Catholic Trinity. If it can be proven that the Church is not teaching a Catholic Trinity, then, the whole ASDAT case becomes, as stated in the introduction of this document, a suitcase full of stale air – nothing. The wind is taken out of their sails and one of their fundamental accusation lies lifeless and mute. (pp. 24, 25)

Reply

Yes, we all agree the Catholic trinity is incorrect. That is good. But our case is not built on this premise. We are fully aware that there are many in the church who do not hold to the same trinity as the Catholics. We are also well aware that there are also *many* in the church who believe and teach the Catholic trinity. We are not only talking about lay people, but we speak of ministers and church leaders! The point is simple: there is no uniformity in the ranks regarding this doctrine. It is confusing, and hardly two will agree on its points. The Trinity paper goes to great lengths to show that the trinity is not Catholic, and we commend this. Yet the brand of trinity being advocated is no better. The problem lies not with us as much as with leaders and ministers in the church who continue to advocate Rome’s God. Some of these leaders have admitted these facts. We quote:

In our discussions we were alarmed to hear a number of times the comment “Just because Rome believes it does not make it wrong”! And “Just because it’s Catholic doesn’t make it wrong”, “we can’t help it if Rome has some truth”! We leave it with the good judgment of every intelligent reader to consider the implications of such comments from the ministers and leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Sydney. (*The Full Story*, p.9. available from www.acts321.org)

The above is a report of a meeting that took place between the Greater Sydney Conference and some of the brethren from Restitution Ministries. According to this report the leaders see no problem with Rome's trinity. These are not insignificant leaders; as showed in the report:

Pastor David Blanch (President)

Pastor Bob Manners (General Secretary)

Pastor Bruce Grosse (Fairfield church pastor)

Pastor Garth Bainbridge (Ministerial Association - Secretary)

Pastor Graham Christian

Dr. Allan Lindsay (Writer/presenter of *Keepers of the Flame* series)

Br. Pablo Lillo

Pastor Paul Peterson (Field Secretary, South Pacific Division)

Pastor Max Hatton (Author of *Understanding the Trinity*) (*ibid*, p.7)

It does not help the case for any author where there is so much confusion and lack of agreement regarding this point. Everyone who presents the doctrine claims they are presenting the official church position, and yet there is no harmony. Is it any wonder the lay people have no idea what they believe about God? This need not be so (John 17:3). This is further confirmed when one reads the book *Understanding the Trinity* as shall be seen shortly.

Trinity

In A.D. 180, Theophilus of Antioch spoke of the 'the Trinity of God [the Father], His Word and His Wisdom,' using the word 'trias.' Whether he was totally correct in his theology is irrelevant to this aspect of our debate. The point made is that he was not a Catholic, and, interestingly enough, unlike men such as Origen and Thaumaturgus, authors of the Trinity model that was finally adopted by the counsel of Nicea in A.D. 325, did not study at the school in Alexandria. (p. 26)

Reply

This reasoning is quite amazing. One truly wonders what point is being proved. Is the Trinity paper suggesting that the trinity concept emerged in A.D. 180? Even if that were the case, it would be 180 years too late! No matter how much effort is expended to show that this idea is old, it still falls short of the mark. Neither our Holy Bible nor the Apostles, nor Jesus speak of 'a trinity'. Although the Trinity paper asserts that Theophilus was not a Catholic, it is amazing that the Catholic Church recognizes and lists him as one of their church fathers:

"The Fathers of the Church

...Theophilus of Antioch..." (The Catholic Encyclopedia, article: "The Fathers of the church")

It is truly alarming that when searching out the origins of this doctrine one is led to search history and not the inspired book of God. This argument only serves to confirm the fact that the idea emerged from paganism rather than from the Word of God. Theophilus himself was a pagan who converted to Christianity. We are plainly told in regard to consulting the church fathers:

"Search the scriptures." This is the word which comes to us from Christ. If it had been essential for us to search the [church] Fathers, Christ would have told us so. But the Fathers do not all speak the same

thing. Which of them shall we choose as a guide? There is no need for us to trust to uncertainty. We pass by the Fathers to learn of God out of His Word. {E.G. White, UL 52}

J. H. Waggoner correctly and clearly identified this problem that we are dealing with here.

“The 'Athanasian creed'...was formulated and the faith defined by Athanasius. Previous to that time there was no settled method of expression, if, indeed, there was anywhere any uniformity of belief. *Most of the early writers had been pagan philosophers, who to reach the minds of that class, often made strong efforts to prove that there was a blending of the two systems, Christianity and philosophy. There is abundance of material in their writings to sustain this view.* Bingham speaks of the vague views held by some in the following significant terms: “*There were some very early that turned the doctrine of the Trinity into **Tritheism**, and, instead of three divine persons under the economy of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, brought in **three collateral, coordinate, and self-originated beings, making them three absolute and independent principles, without any relation of Father or Son, which is the most proper notion of three gods.** And having made this change in the doctrine of the Trinity, they made another change answerable to it in the form of baptism.*”-Antiquities, book 11, chap. 3, & 4. “Who can distinguish between this form of expression and that put forth by the council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, wherein the true faith is declared to be that of ‘an uncreated and consubstantial and co-eternal Trinity?’ *The truth is that we find the same idea which is here described by Bingham running through much of the orthodox literature of the second and third centuries. **There is no proper ‘relation of Father and Son’ to be found in the words of the council, above quoted...*** Bingham says *this error in regard to a **Trinity of three coordinate and self-originated and independent beings arose in the church very early**; and so we find it in the earliest authors after the days of the apostles...* We leave it with the good judgment of every unprejudiced reader that **three baptisms are more consistent with the idea of “three collateral, co-ordinate, and self-originated beings”, than with the idea of baptism into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in the likeness of the Saviour’s death and resurrection.**” {J. H. Waggoner, *Thoughts on Baptism*, 1878}

This is precisely what the Trinity paper is teaching -- three beings who are all God, without any real relationship between the Father and the Son. In short, this is Tritheism; three gods. One may seek to deny this fact, but it still remains true, that if there are three beings who are each god, there are three gods. We shall see that this is indeed the case.

Trinity

The first thing, by way of summary, that needs to be made absolutely clear is this: The concept of a Godhead composed of three parts, is not, at its point of origin Catholic and did not even come from the same school that led to the final Catholic dogma. (p. 27)

Reply

Correct! The origin of the three-part-god is actually pagan. This fact is so well noted in many history books that we shall not take the time to repeat it. One prime example of this is the 19th century scholar and Protestant minister, Alexander Hislop, who devotes several chapters of his classic book *The Two Babylons* to show how the trinities of paganism were eventually absorbed into Catholic Church dogma. The Trinity paper only serves to confirm this fact for everyone. The idea of a Godhead composed of three parts was adopted by all adherents to any form of a trinity, whether Catholic or not.

Trinity

The Catholic position, when understood from these revelations, in a nutshell is: they seem to teach that the son has always existed with the Father, but they edify a literal birth process – a regenerating of the

Son's life – which is continuous. The Holy Spirit, though termed a person, is the essence of the Father which is, in turn, imparted to the Son. In other words, there is a bizarre, continuous genetic / biological amalgamation between the members of the Godhead, which does not make them separate beings in the typical sense of the term. (p. 29)

Reply

While this may sound convincing on the surface, the claim should be examined in light of what was actually quoted by the author from the Catholic sources. Far from it being a “literal birth process” the Catholics actually admit that it is

The Son proceeds from the Father by **an act of the intellect** and this is termed ‘eternal generation,’... (p. 28)

This “act of the intellect” is called by them “eternal generation.” It is not an act that has taken place in the past, but is rather an ongoing process that never had a beginning nor ever shall have an end. It is the way the Catholics attempt put forward the fact that Christ is the begotten of God. They say it is an eternal *process* rather than an *event*. We agree heartily with the author that this is indeed a most bizarre idea.

That Christ proceeded forth from the Father is not Catholic, it is what the Master Himself said “*Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*” John 8:42. The error is in the Catholic understanding which turns this fact into an “eternal generation” thus fully denying it. The other error is to deny the fact altogether and say that Christ *never* proceeded from the Father. Both positions are not correct. The correct and consistent understanding is that Christ was *begotten* (an event, not process) of His Father before all creation.

Regarding the Holy Spirit this is what Mrs. White has to say:

“The Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the only-begotten Son of God, binds the human agent, body, soul, and spirit, to the perfect, divine-human nature of Christ.” {EGW, 1SM 251.1}

“*And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*” John 20:22

Trinity

The concept of three separate, individual persons in the Godhead does not exist in the Catholic doctrine. (p. 29)

Reply

Rather than giving an answer ourselves, we shall let the Catholics answer that charge:

In adoring the Holy Trinity, life-giving, consubstantial, and indivisible, **the Church's faith also professes the distinction of persons.** (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part1 ch.3, article 8)

I. THE DOGMA OF THE TRINITY

The Trinity is the term employed to signify the central doctrine of the Christian religion – **the truth that in the unity of the Godhead there are Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and**

the Holy Spirit, these Three Persons being truly distinct one from another. (The Catholic Encyclopedia, article: "The Blessed Trinity")

No comment on the above should be required for any clear-minded reader, and therefore we shall not comment.

Trinity

These were aspects of the Catholic Trinity that our pioneers detested. The irony of the whole matter is that aspects of this Catholic dogma are some of the very things that the ASDAT themselves are disseminating. (p. 29)

Reply

Indeed, the pioneers rejected more than just the Catholic trinity. They rejected that doctrine in all its forms (including the form that is advocating in the Trinity paper). This shall be clearly seen soon enough. The charge is made that we (ASDAT) are disseminating some of these Catholic ideas. This is a most incorrect claim. We are actually disseminating the very things that the pioneers were disseminating. If the Trinity paper is suggesting that the pioneers were opposed to the Catholic trinity while we (the ASDAT) are similar to the Catholics then we have a flaw in reasoning. Let us quote the pioneers (from the very Trinity paper) themselves and let the reader judge how similar they were to the Catholics:

'The Scriptures nowhere speak of Christ as a created being, but on the contrary plainly state that he was begotten of the Father . (See remarks of Rev. 3:14, where it is shown that Christ is not a created being.) But while as the Son he does not possess a coeternity of past existence with the Father, the beginning of his existence, as the begotten of the Father, antedates the entire work of creation, in relation to which he stands as joint creator with God. John 1:3; Heb 1:2. Could not the Father ordain that to such a being worship should be rendered equally with himself, without its being idolatry on the part of the worshiper? He has raised him to positions which make it proper that he should be worshipped, and has even commanded that worship should be rendered him, which would not have been necessary had he been equal with the Father in eternity of existence. Christ himself declares that 'as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.' John 5:26. The Father has 'highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.' Phil. 2:9. And the Father himself says, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' Heb. 1:6. These testimonies show that Christ is now an object of worship equally with the Father; but they do not prove that with him he holds an eternity of past existence .' (U. Smith, Thoughts on the Book of Daniel and the Revelation, p. 430. 1882) (p. 10)

'God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be, - a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity, - appeared the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1. This uncreated Word was the Being, who, in the fulness of time, was made flesh, and dwelt among us. His beginning was not like that of any other being in the universe. It is set forth in the mysterious expressions, "his [God's] only begotten Son" (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9), "the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14), and, "I proceeded forth and came from God." John 8:42. Thus it appears that by some divine impulse or process, not creation, known only to Omniscience, and possible only to Omnipotence, the Son of God appeared. And then the Holy Spirit (by an infirmity of translation called "the Holy Ghost"), the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the divine afflatus and medium of their power, representative of them both (Ps. 139:7), was in existence also.' (U. Smith, Looking Unto Jesus, p. 10. 1898) (p. 10)

'Christ is the only being begotten of the Father.' (James Edison White, Past, Present and Future, p. 52. 1909) (p. 13)

Even Ellen White herself taught this truth in plain words:

‘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. . .’ (ST, May 30, 1895) (p. 12)

So while the pioneers were opposed to the Catholic trinity, they still maintained plainly that Christ was begotten of His Father in the eternity of the past. They understood the word begotten just as the dictionary explains it -- born. Below are further statements detailing the position of the pioneers in this regard:

Christ is the agent through whom God has created all things, *but that he himself came into existence in a different manner, as he is called **the only begotten of the Father.***” {J. N. Loughborough, Insert A-1, *Lest We Forget*, Volume 4, Number 2, Second Quarter, 1994}

*Back in the ages, which finite mind cannot fathom, **the Father and Son were alone in the universe. Christ was the first begotten of the Father, and to Him Jehovah made known the divine plan of Creation.***” {S. N. Haskell, *The Story of the Seer of Patmos*, pp. 93, 94. 1905}

Christ was the firstborn in heaven; He was likewise the firstborn of God upon earth, and heir to the Father's throne. *Christ, the firstborn, though the Son of God*, was clothed in humanity, and was made perfect through suffering.” {S. N. Haskell, *The Story of the Seer of Patmos*, pp. 98, 99. 1905)

“Christ is the only literal son of God. “The only begotten of the Father.” John 1:14. He is God because he is the Son of God; not by virtue of His resurrection. If Christ is the only begotten of the Father, then we cannot be begotten of the Father in a literal sense. It can only be in a secondary sense of the word.” {J. G. Matteson, *Review & Herald*, October 12, 1869 p. 123}

The Word was "in the beginning." ***The mind of man cannot grasp the ages that are spanned in this phrase. It is not given to men to know when or how the Son was begotten;*** but we know that he was the Divine Word, not simply before He came to this earth to die, but even before the world was created.... ***We know that Christ "proceeded forth and came from God" (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man.***” {E. J. Waggoner, *Christ And His Righteousness*, p. 9. 1890}

A son always rightfully takes the name of the father; and Christ, as "the only begotten Son of God," has rightfully the same name. A son, also, is, to a greater or less degree, a reproduction of the father; he has to some extent the features and personal characteristics of his father; not perfectly, because there is no perfect reproduction among mankind. But there is no imperfection in God, or in any of His works, and so Christ is the "express image" of the Father's person. Heb. 1:3. ***As the Son of the self-existent God, He has by nature all the attributes of Deity.***

It is true that there are many sons of God, but Christ is the "only begotten Son of God," and therefore the Son of God in a sense in which no other being ever was or ever can be. The angels are sons of God, as was Adam (Job 38:7; Luke 3:38), by creation; Christians are the sons of God by adoption (Rom. 8:14, 15), ***but Christ is the Son of God by birth.*** The writer to the Hebrews further shows that the position of the Son of God is not one to which Christ has been elevated, but that it is one which He has by right.” {E. J. Waggoner, *Christ And His Righteousness*, pp. 11-13. 1890}

All things proceed ultimately from God, the Father; even Christ Himself proceeded and came forth from the Father, but it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and that He should

be the direct, immediate Agent in every act of creation. *Our object in this investigation is to set forth Christ's rightful position of equality with the Father, in order that His power to redeem may be the better appreciated.*" {E. J. Waggoner, *Christ And His Righteousness*, p. 19. 1890}

The Scriptures declare that Christ is "the only begotten Son of God." He is begotten, not created. As to when He was begotten, it is not for us to inquire, nor could our minds grasp it if we were told. The prophet Micah tells us all that we can know about it in these words, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." Micah 5:2, margin. There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father (John 8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning. {E. J. Waggoner, *Christ And His Righteousness*, pp. 19-24. 1890}

While the pioneers were opposed to the Catholic trinity, they still emphatically taught that Christ was begotten (or born) of the Father in the eternity of the past. They, as well as the Lord's messenger, taught that Christ was indeed the Son of God. It is these ideas, in harmony with the pioneers and Ellen White, that we are disseminating, not the Catholic 'eternal generation'! Moreover, the fact that the pioneers believed that Christ was begotten born of the Father in heaven, and that He had a beginning, opposes any and every form of a trinity, for there is not a single brand of trinity that admits these facts.

Trinity

Although they do not believe that the Son was there for eternity they do teach that He was generated, born, or created by the Father. (p. 29)

Reply

This is a repetition of the now, all-too-common, misrepresentation. We do not teach that the Son was 'created'. We are innocent of the charge. The very quotes of the Trinity paper reveal the contradictions of a poor conclusion:

It must also be pointed out, based on the evidence of Ellen White's testimony, **that Jesus was not created**, as some Arians try to suggest (Uriah Smith and Loughborough made this quite clear in the statements presented earlier). **Ellen White is quite emphatic on that point. She says he was 'not a son by creation as were the angels.'** (p. 13)

Unfortunately, the Trinity paper repeatedly contradicts itself. We ask again, show us in our literature where we teach (or have ever taught) that Jesus was created. It is not there!

Trinity

They do, like the Catholics, teach that the Holy Spirit is the essence of God – not a person in the individual sense. They may counter what I am saying by pointing us to the fact that the

Catholics use the word 'person' to describe the Spirit, which they don't. (P. 29)

Reply

This is an attempt to turn the tables. Our teaching is not like the Catholics. Anyone who reads our material will readily see this for themselves. As was plainly presented from the Bible, the Spirit is the very mind and life of God. The pioneers and Ellen White taught this fact very plainly:

*We have a right to be positive in our faith and our statements only when the words of Scripture are so direct as to bring the subject within the range of positive proof. We are not only willing but anxious to leave it just where the word of God leaves it. **From it we learn that the Spirit of God is that awful and mysterious power which proceeds from the throne of the universe, and which is the efficient actor in the work of creation and of redemption.***” {J. H. Waggoner, *The Spirit Of God; Its Offices And Manifestations*, pp. 8, 9. 1877}

Finally, we know the Divine unity of the Father and the Son from the fact that both have the same Spirit.** Paul, after saying that they that are in the flesh cannot please God, continues: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8:9. **Here we find that the Holy Spirit is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. {E. J. Waggoner, *Christ And His Righteousness*, pp. 19-24. 1890}

“The Spirit of God is spoken of in the Scriptures as God's representative- the power by which he works, the agency by which all things are upheld. This is clearly expressed by the Psalmist...Psa. 139:7-10. *We learn from this language that when we speak of the Spirit of God we are really speaking of his presence and power.*” {J. N. Loughborough, *Review & Herald*, September 13, 1898}

“The divine Spirit that the world's Redeemer promised to send, is the presence and power of God.” {E. G. White, *ST*, November 23, 1891 par. 1}

It is a clear fact that we do not say the spirit is *not* a person. We plainly teach and confess that the Spirit of God is a person; it is the very person of God and the person of the Son. Mrs. White very plainly said:

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

We are confident that Bible students and Bereans will see through flimsy attempts to make it look as if we are in harmony with the Catholic trinity.

Trinity

First of all, James White and J. N. Andrews were, primarily, concerned about the fact that the *personality* of the Father and Son were destroyed by the doctrine of the Trinity. Why? Because the Catholics teach a continual birth of the Son and a disturbing ‘genetical’ status that exists between these two and the Spirit – this destroys their personalities if ever anything does. (p. 30)

Reply

For this claim to hold water, it must first be true. We saw earlier that the Catholics never claim a ‘genetical’ status. They actually say that it was “an act of the intellect”. Once again, this contradiction only serves to reveal the flaw in the Trinity paper’s conclusion. Andrews and White were both in harmony with all the pioneers in believing that Christ was begotten/born of His Father, but not created.

Trinity

I am not suggesting that the pioneers would, at that point, have been in total agreement with the way

our understanding of the Godhead has developed, but it is as clear as black on white, reflected in the above statements, that the essential problem they had with the Trinity was this physical / biological unity that destroyed the *personality / individuality* of the father and Son. This is something that the ASDAT adherents don't even seem to notice. (p. 30)

Reply

Yes, the Trinity paper is certainly correct there. The pioneers do not agree with the current theory of the trinity that the church holds. Were they alive today they would speak out against it just as they spoke in their days. It is true that they had a problem with the Catholic trinity, but it was not only that. They had an objection to all *variations* of the trinity including three gods, one in three, three in one, three beings, and any other variation of the trinity. People need to understand that the trinity is the trinity. Many people claim that this trinity is different to that one, and my one is different to his one, but at the end of the day they all agree that essentially God is composed of three, and that Christ was never begotten of His Father. It is this error that our pioneers countered and spoke against. God is not three but one, as the Bible plainly states. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29; Galatians 3:20). The Bible also clearly states *who* this one God is - He is not a trinity, not three beings, and not a union of three divine beings. The Bible plainly says that the one God is none other than God the Father, one being (not many). Here is how Paul the Hebrew understood who the one God of the Old Testament was: "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him" 1 Corinthians 8:6.

For the Trinity paper to suggest that we do not even notice these things really shows how much our material *has not been* studied. We appeal to all candid readers to **STUDY FOR THEMSELVES**. It is really not that hard to do.

Trinity

Loughborough's statement is a little more complex, but once again, we see that his central complaint was that *three persons cannot be one person*. Why? For the very same reasons expressed by James White, Joseph Bates and J. N. Andrews. He states, quite plainly, that '*there is a sense in which they are one, but not one PERSON.*' Surely it does not take a degree in English grammar to figure out what he was saying. One can obtain a greater appreciation of what Loughborough was getting at when you consider his statement about the origins of the Catholic Trinity. (p. 30)

Reply

Yes, Loughborough's statement is indeed more complex -- due to the words added by the Trinity paper! Loughborough is not just commenting on the Catholic trinity in his statement. Let us read the statement in its entirety without additions or alterations:

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. {J. N. Loughborough, Review & Herald, November 5, 1861}

Notice what else is opposed in the above quote. It is the idea of three beings who are each god, which makes three gods. The Catholics say there is one person, which the Trinity paper does not subscribe to. But the uncanny fact is that the Trinity paper subscribes to three individual beings who are all god (See pp. 52 & 72 of that paper). The result is: three gods, exactly what Loughborough said! Note how he continues:

Its origin is pagan and fabulous. Instead of pointing us to scripture for proof of the trinity, we are pointed to the trident of the Persians, with the assertion that "by this they designed to teach the idea

of a trinity, and if they had the doctrine of the trinity, they must have received it by tradition from the people of God. **But this is all assumed, for it is certain that the Jewish church held to no such doctrine.** Says Mr. Summerbell, "**A friend of mine who was present in a New York synagogue, asked the Rabbi for an explanation of the word `elohim'. A Trinitarian clergyman who stood by, replied, `Why, that has reference to the three persons in the Trinity,' when a Jew stepped forward and said he must not mention that word again, or they would have to compel him to leave the house; for it was not permitted to mention the name of any strange god in the synagogue.**" (Discussion between Summerbell and Flood on Trinity, p. 38) Milman says the idea of the Trident is fabulous. (Hist. Christianity, p.34) {J. N. Loughborough, *Review & Herald*, November 5, 1861}

It is very plain from the above that Loughborough also comments on the false belief that there are three divine persons in the trinity. He plainly shows that the Jewish nation held to no such strange notion. Someone has changed position and we do not believe it is the Jewish nation.

Trinity

James White, Ellen White's husband, would never have agreed with the idea that Christ was in any way inferior to the Father. He despised the doctrine of the Catholic Trinity, but he despised even more the concept of Unitarianism that makes Christ inferior to the Father:

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

No, He did not say that to an inferior. He said it to someone who was EXACTLY equal in status to himself. Yet, this is essentially what our modern day Anti-Trinitarians are saying. Of course, when they discover things like this they have to keep on tailoring their position so as not to contradict obvious evidence that does not support their theology. Either that or they need to deny that James White ever said a thing like that. (p. 31)

Reply

It is quite amazing that statements like this are made by the Trinity paper . They are definitely false charges. We do not need to tailor our position at all. It is rather the trinity that constantly needs to call people to come and defend it! And the sad fact is, that harmony does not exist among the so-called defenders of the trinity. It seems that every minister or lay person explains it in his or her own way; but the common denominator among them all is that they are seeking to defend something they do not understand. It is reminiscent of what Joash said to the men of his city (Judges 6:31).

When have we ever taught that Christ is inferior? We do not quote James White's statement in our own literature to prove that Christ is NOT inferior! (See the book *The Living Voice of the Lord's Witnesses* available at www.acts321.org) How can we deny what James White says when we actually believe it and quote it?

No, we shall not "deny that James White ever said a thing like that". We are actually in harmony with the position of James White. Perhaps the reader should be made aware that this same James White also said:

'The Father is the greatest in that he is first. The Son is next in authority because He has been given all things .' (J. S. White, Review & Herald, January 4, 1881) (p. 39)

*The way spiritualizers have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural Trinitarian creed, viz., **that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain scripture testimony in abundance that***

he is the Son of the eternal God.” {J. S. White, *The Day Star*, January 24, 1846}

Which thing we do not deny either. We are consistent in our position.

Trinity

Whether the pioneers believed that the Son was begotten or created is, at this point of our investigation, irrelevant – we will still get to that issue. (p. 31)

Reply

It does not seem that we ever get to that issue in the paper. It was admitted earlier in the Trinity paper that the pioneers clearly did *not* believe Christ was created. It is indeed strange that this is now being questioned again, as if the earlier points were missed somehow. Again we say this only serves to cause confusion and misrepresentation.

Trinity

The bottom line is this:

1. The ASDAT accuse the SDA Church of teaching a Catholic Trinity. The truth is, the SDA Church does not teach such a thing, although some have used this term to describe what we believe. (p. 32)

Reply

There are many Seventh-day Adventist ministers and teachers who teach the Catholic trinity. This is common knowledge as shall be demonstrated shortly. The Trinity paper does not agree with that stance, which is fair enough. But there is a problem within the ranks of the church with different beliefs on the subject. We can only hope and pray that this sad state of affairs will drive the people to the Bible, rather than seek the answer from any man. Please consider the following evidences that the Catholic trinity (among others) is indeed being taught in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Rome Says:

266 "Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son's is another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal" (Athanasian Creed: DS 75; ND 16).

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, <http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p1s2c1p2.htm#II>)

Seventh-day Adventist church says:

“Now, the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the Persons nor dividing the divine Beings. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit, but the Godhead of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is all one, their glory equal, their majesty co-eternal” (Max Hatton, *Understanding the Trinity*, p. 13)

“**This [Athanasian] formula has served Christians well for about two millennia.**” (*ibid*, p. 14)

Note: Pr. Hatton is a recognized authority by the Greater Sydney Conference on the topic of the Trinity. This is not an obscure author or book. This book represents the official position of the church. It can be found at your nearest *Adventist Book Center*.

Rome Says:

The dogma of the Holy Trinity

253 *The Trinity is One.* We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the "consubstantial Trinity".⁸³ 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."⁸⁴ In the words of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), "Each of the persons is that supreme reality, viz., the divine substance, essence or nature."⁸⁵
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, <http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p1s2c1p2.htm#II>)

202... We firmly believe and confess without reservation that there is only one true God, eternal infinite (immensus) and unchangeable, incomprehensible, almighty and ineffable, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; three persons indeed, but one essence, substance or nature entirely simple.⁸
(<http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccs/archive/catechism/p1s2c1p1.htm#202>)

Seventh-day Adventist church says:

“THE TRINITY DOCTRINE

Here is a very brief definition: Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

(Max Hatton in a sermon preached at Wahroonga Church. He is the author of the book *Understanding the Trinity*. Contact Wahroonga church for a copy of the sermon)

Rome says:

261 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, <http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p1s2c1p2.htm#II>)

“The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church.” *Handbook For Today's Catholic*, page 11

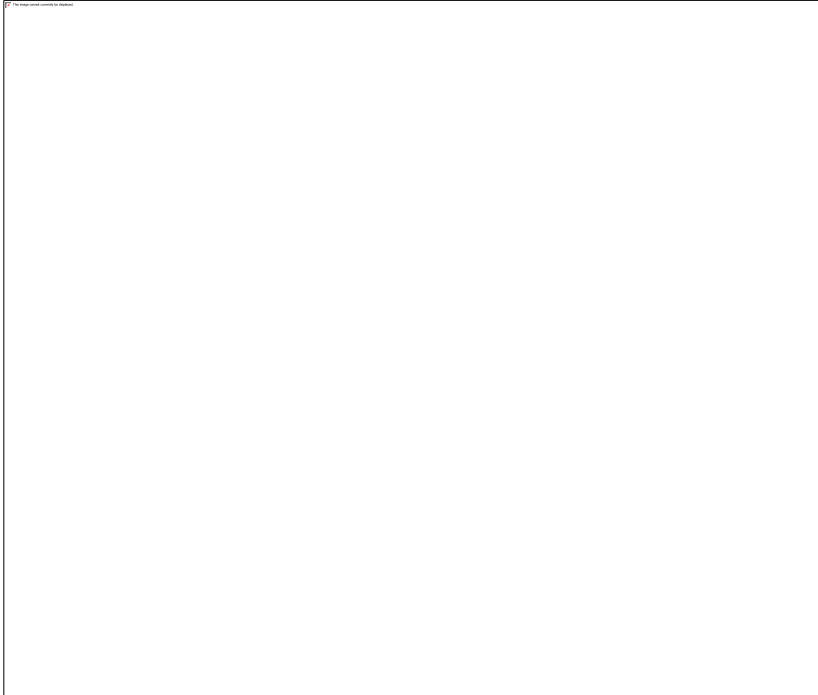
Seventh-day Adventist church says:

“The Mystery of the Trinity” “The doctrine of the Trinity ... lies at the root of every man's theology and affects his whole creed and practice.” Biblical Research Institute & Andrews University Seminary Studies. Volume 8, 1970, No. 1.

As we have already said, the trinity is the trinity. The difference the Trinity paper claims between the Catholic and the official Seventh-day Adventist trinity, is only a difference in explanation and interpretation. The basic notion of the trinity (that God is three) is a common denominator in all those who hold to that doctrine. While they may differ in their attempts to explain it, yet they all insist that God is three and agree that it is still a mystery which cannot be comprehended. One wonders why people even attempt to explain that which they do not understand! The Trinity paper admits this sad matter by saying "Again I emphasise, it may be hard for us to understand the mystery of the Godhead, how Father, Son and Spirit are still, all three, God." (p. 72)

We shall comment more on this statement further on. But, lest we be accused of presenting little evidence, let us look at another demonstration of the presence of the Catholic trinity in the ranks of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We shall let the reader think intelligently on these things. It does not need much commentary.

Rome illustrates her trinity thus:

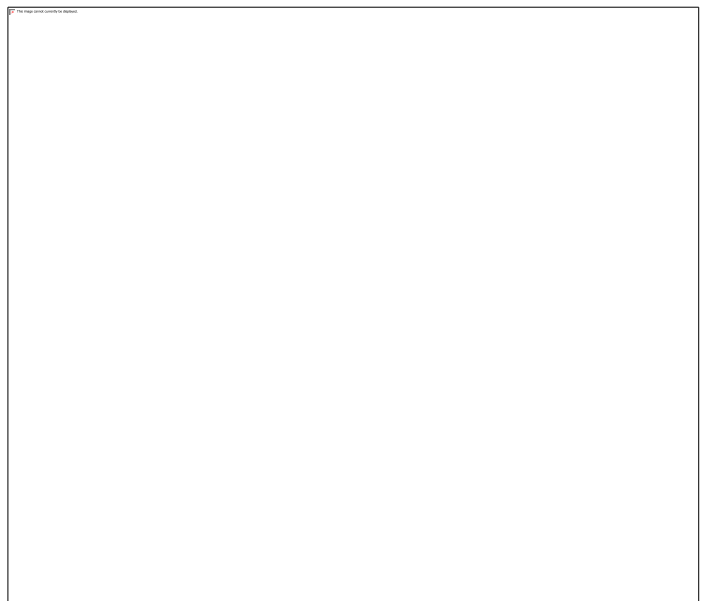


(From the book "My Catholic Faith" by Bishop Louis LaRavoire Morrow, S.T.D.)

<http://www.catholicsource.net/images/trinity2.jpg>

Seventh-day Adventist church illustrates its trinity thus:

(The New Pictorial Aid for Bible Study, p. 75. This Seventh-day Adventist publication is available from your nearest *Adventist Book Centre* as well.)



But, there is still more. Let us examine a side by side comparison and note the similarities:

Rome's position is now closely compared with the Seventh-day Adventist position as found in the

official book "Understanding the Trinity":

Rome: "each of the persons is that supreme reality, the Divine substance, **essence**."

Seventh-day Adventist: "three persons in one **essence**" (p. 133)

Rome: "the church's faith also professes the distinction of persons"

Seventh-day Adventist: "each person is distinct" (p. 130)

Rome: "The Divine persons are inseparable in what they do"

Seventh-day Adventist: "all participate in what is done" (p. 131)

Rome: "In adoring the Holy Trinity, life giving, consubstantial, and **indivisible**"

Seventh-day Adventist: "the being of the Godhead is thus one and **indivisible**" p. (130)

(Catholic statements are from the official *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s2c3a8.htm

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p1s2c1p2.htm>)

Ask yourself honestly, is the charge not warranted that the trinity is the trinity, whether Roman Catholic or Seventh-day Adventist or other? Rome even recognizes the Seventh-day Adventist trinity as a "valid" trinity. Read carefully these startling words:

"Seventh-Day Adventists agree with many Catholic doctrines, including the Trinity...By virtue of their ...belief ...in the doctrine of the Trinity, Seventh-Day Adventists are both ontologically and theologically Christians."

permission to publish this work is hereby granted.

+Robert H. Brom, Bishop of San Diego, August 10, 2004

www.catholic.com

Rome recognizes the Adventist Church as "Christian" because they adopted the trinity doctrine. While the Trinity paper explains the trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church differently to Rome (and differently to some of its pastors and church leaders), yet Rome is satisfied that the doctrine is in our ranks. You see, Rome does not really care how you explain it, as long as you agree with her that the trinity is true -- that God is three. Varying explanations only serve to illustrate the rampant confusion of this strange notion. Having demonstrated clearly that indeed there is ample evidence for the presence of the Catholic Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we now turn our attention to the brand of trinity that the Trinity paper is seeking to advocate.

Trinity

2. The ASDAT say that our pioneers opposed the Catholic Trinity. They are right, but they, themselves, seem to have no idea what the root problem with the Catholic Trinity really is. (p. 32)

Reply

We know from the Bible what the root problem with Rome's God is. The Bible makes it clear that Rome,

the antichrist, will deny a very plain fact regarding God. Here it is from the apostle John:

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 1 John 2:22

In what way does Rome deny the divine relationship of the Father and the Son? It is through the strange doctrine of the trinity. The Trinity paper follows in the steps of Rome by doing the very same thing. It denies that Jesus Christ is indeed the only begotten of God.

Trinity

3. The ASDAT say that the Catholic Trinity concept is pagan and that we should have nothing to do with it. Yet, some of their own beliefs have uncanny semblance to positions held by the mother of all harlots – the Roman Catholic Church. When will they, the ASDAT, reject the teaching that Christ came out of the Father and that the Holy Spirit is the essence of the Father and the Son and not a person in the proper sense – all of these, even in the ASDAT degree, are Catholic concepts – come out of her my people, is our call to the ASDAT believers, before you receive of her plagues. (p. 32)

Reply

This claim is just not correct. Those who do not study for themselves may be deceived, but those who know their Bibles and the Spirit of Prophecy will not be. First of all, the Trinity paper demonstrates a lack of understanding of the Catholic trinity (the Catholics themselves do not understand it!), when it says that what we teach resembles Rome's teaching. Rome does not teach that "Christ came out of the Father" as a *past* event. Rome actually teaches that Christ is always being generated, an eternal, ongoing process, rather than a past event. This is indeed far from the truth, and we teach no such thing. Rome actually teaches that this process is not a literal one but an "intellectual" one. This can be seen by reviewing the comments listed earlier. Rome teaches that the Spirit of God is indeed a person to the same extent as the Father and Son! They do not teach that it is an essence only (neither do we, for that matter). Let us quote again to demonstrate:

266 "Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; **for the person of the Father is one, the Son's is another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal**" (Athanasian Creed: DS 75; ND 16).

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, <http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p1s2c1p2.htm#II>)

We, on the other hand, do not teach that the Spirit is only the essence of the Father. As we have said a number of times earlier, it is the very person and presence of God with His people, and not a *different* person to them. We do not teach or believe that the person of the Holy Spirit is another being besides the Father and the Son. This is actually what Rome teaches, as well as all who hold to the same root theology of God being three, though in different forms. Let the reader refer to the Biblical explanation given at the start of this document.

Trinity

When will they, the ASDAT, **reject the teaching that Christ came out of the Father** (p. 32)

Reply

Let the Master reply

"For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." John 16:27

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

Trinity

It is what you believe and teach that makes all the difference. This is why it is not enough to carry the name Seventh-day Adventist. Carrying the SDA tag does not define your true position if you do not hold to the beliefs that confirm the biblical standard. It is what you believe and what you practice that makes all the difference. The fact that the SDA Church, either officially, or unofficially, happens to use the term Trinity is no standard by which to judge what they actually believe or teach. (p. 32)

Reply

Here the Trinity paper makes a great deal about the importance of what one believes being more important than the name, yet it fails to define or identify what is actually believed. There should be no problem in explaining and defining what we believe. We have had to do this time and time again in light of the constant misrepresentations that abound. Why does the Trinity paper not define what the Seventh-day Adventist Church is teaching? We are told what it does *not* believe, but what actually *does* the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Trinity paper believe? Can it be demonstrated from the Bible that Jesus Christ is *not* the begotten Son of God? Is this what is believed? Can it be proved from Scripture that the Holy Spirit is not the mind and presence of God Himself? Is this what is believed? We are not trying to make an issue, it is the Trinity paper that has done so.

Trinity

We may not be teaching what the ASDAT think we should, but a Catholic Trinity is certainly not what we espouse. (p. 32)

Reply

If the Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches differently from the Catholic Church, as is shown in the 28 Fundamentals, then there are actually three beings who are divine. Thus we can conclude correctly that there are three god-beings. To say this is to believe there are three gods. Let the reader consider the first commandment in light of this teaching.

Trinity

Anti-Trinitarians have taken the words of Scripture that refer to Christ as the begotten or first of the creation of God and have used these expressions to define Christ in terms of human concepts of origin and position. They have taken texts that speak about the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God and have restricted His existence and status in terms of finite definitions. Their attempts are no less contrived or foolhardy than their avowed opposition, the Catholics. Indeed, the similarities in certain of their inventions are not at all dissimilar. (p. 34)

Reply

Once again, the Trinity paper confuses the words ‘begotten’ and ‘created’, intimating that they mean the same thing. We have seen earlier that they are markedly different words, meaning totally different things. Our position regarding the ‘origin’ and ‘position’ of Christ is rooted in the Word of God and His testimony. Let us demonstrate:

“The Scriptures **clearly** indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. [Hebrews 1:1-5 quoted] **God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the**

Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” {EGW, 8T 268.3}

What about the Holy Spirit? What has the Holy Spirit revealed about itself in inspiration?

“The work of the holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the holy Spirit is the comforter, **as the personal presence of Christ to the soul.**” {EGW, RH, November 29, 1892 par. 3}

“Christ declared that after his ascension, he would send to his church, as his crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take his place. **This Comforter is the Holy Spirit,--the soul of his life,** the efficacy of his church, the light and life of the world. With his Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin.” {EGW, RH, May 19, 1904 par. 1}

“Jesus is seeking to impress upon them the thought that in giving **His Holy Spirit He is giving to them the glory which the Father hath given Him,** that He and His people may be one in God.” {EGW, 2MR 36, 37}

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

“In giving us **His Spirit,** God gives us **Himself,** making **Himself** a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” {EGW, 7T 273}

“Christ tells us that **the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and the Comforter is the Holy Ghost,** "the Spirit of truth, which the Father shall send in My name." ... **This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.**” {EGW, 14MR 179}

“**The Saviour is our Comforter.** This I have proved Him to be.” {EGW, 8MR 49}

“As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving **Jesus the Comforter.**” {EGW, 19MR 297, 298}

It is a lamentable fact in light of this abundant testimony that there are people who persist in teaching that the Spirit is someone different from God and Christ. The careful reader, with little effort, will be able to notice whether our position is closer to Rome or closer to the Spirit of Prophecy.

Trinity

To argue that because the Bible or Ellen White never used the term ‘Trinity’ suggests that the basic concept it encapsulates is heretical, makes no sense at all. There are a number of terms we use to describe biblical concepts, such as ‘incarnation’ for example, that are not used in the Bible. Yet, we do see that the theology described by that term is most definitely found there. (p. 35)

Reply

This line of reasoning can sound good, until we take it to its logical conclusion. Before we do that, let us

hear what Brother Cottrell had to say about this matter:

“The Trinity, or the triune God, is unknown to the Bible; **and I have entertained the idea that doctrines which require words coined in the human mind to express them, are coined doctrines.**”
{R. F. Cottrell, *Review & Herald*, June 1, 1869}

Taking the Trinity paper’s reasoning, would it not bring an objection should we choose to refer to the Lord’s Supper as the *Eucharist*. Would anyone object to this name? Why would this be so? What if we refer to our church services as *The Mass*? Would there be any problem in this terminology? Why?

It is indeed correct that what is more important than the words is the meaning, and it is the meaning of the word trinity that is the problem. The concept is always present among those who prescribes to that theory -- God is three.

The word ‘incarnation’ is used by the inspired messenger of God. It is safe for man to use the terms God has given us, rather than contriving a term and then defending it. We do try to remain within the confines of Scripture and inspiration, using their terms, rather than the terms that man may conjure up in his fallen mind. *"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."* 1 Corinthians 2:13.

Trinity

A considerable amount is assumed by the ASDAT adherents in using these statements to defend this position. It is assumed, first of all, that the essential pillars of our faith, established in those early years, included a full understanding of the role, function and status of the members of the Godhead – in particular, Christ. (p. 35)

Reply

No, we do not make that assumption. The pioneers had to have the correct understanding of Christ in order to better understand His mission and especially His work as High Priest. Mrs. White is very clear on this fact:

Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to ***Christ, His mission, and His priesthood.*** A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me. (**Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, Book 1, p. 206, 207**)

How can one understand the mission of Christ without understanding who He was? How can one understand the priesthood of Christ without having a correct understanding of who Christ is? It was imperative that this doctrine be clarified early in the church. The essential pillars of our faith *were* established in those early years! Notice:

Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me. During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until **all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds**, in harmony with the Word of God.” {1SM 206, 207} 1904

Is the doctrine of the Godhead a “principal point of our faith”? We believe it is, hence it’s inclusion as the

first clause in the statement of beliefs. The Trinity paper does not have a problem with us. The problem is with the prophet of the Lord.

Trinity

Early Adventists were more concerned with the sanctuary, the Bible over traditions of men, the seventh-day Sabbath, the ten-commandments, the three angel's messages and the non-immortality of the soul. Although they expressed their dislike of the Catholic Trinity and espoused their concept of the Godhead, it was not the focus of what God was trying to reveal to them at this time. (p. 36)

Reply

The early Adventists were from many backgrounds, and some of them held to the trinity while others rejected it. There had to be unity among the brethren on this doctrine as well as the others that were listed. As a result of the early Bible studies harmony and unity were indeed reached by the brethren. This is reflected in the statement of beliefs which listed the doctrine of the Godhead as the *first* clause! To state the obvious, it was listed before the Sabbath, immortality of the soul, etc. One cannot preach the three angel's messages without understanding who God is. How can one give the call "fear God" if they have a wrong concept of God? It is just not possible.

Trinity

Even though the early brethren did not have an absolute understanding of the Godhead, God did not feel that it was the most essential aspect of faith to bring to their notice in those early years. God had an order of priorities for introducing aspects of truth to His people. (p. 36)

Reply

God indeed does have an order of priorities. Rather than relying on the Trinity paper to give us that order we can obtain it directly from the Lord Himself. In the order of priorities, what did Christ consider of primary importance?

*And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, **The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:** And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. Mark 12:28-30*

The pioneers had understood this most basic and foundational fact of the faith. They were not in confusion over the God they worshipped for they had the inspired messenger of the Lord in their midst.

Trinity

Well if the brethren had to make a painful transition to a correct understanding of salvation in the 1880's, then why shouldn't there have been a change in their understanding of the Godhead? What should have made this issue an exception? (p. 37)

Reply

For the simple fact that it would mean that they were worshipping a wrong God all this time! The Bible is plain regarding the issue of worship. Any worship to strange gods is considered devil worship:

"They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not". Deuteronomy 32:17

If the pioneers (including Ellen White) had to change their understanding of the Godhead, it means they had a *false* understanding of the Godhead, and all their worship and preaching was based on this *false*

understanding. This is an absurd proposition.

Trinity

M.L. Andreasen, who had become an Adventist four years earlier, later said that some of the leaders doubted that Ellen White had actually written ‘*original, unborrowed, underived*’ in the Desire of Ages. In 1902 he took a special trip to California to investigate it for himself. After looking at these statements in Ellen White’s own handwriting, he was convinced that she had

indeed stated things as such. Of course, Ellen White was alive during this time when brethren were debating the apparent change in her description of the Godhead. Yet, Ellen White never wrote anything to negate the positions that she had taken in print. Of course, the ASDAT would rather write off Andreasen’s commentary on this and will either deny that Ellen White said those things, or will attempt to twist and interpret her comments to suit their own special brand of Catholic theology. (p. 37)

Reply

Here we are presented with the oft-used words "original, unborrowed, underived", so misunderstood today. We shall see the truth of the matter without twisting anything. The reader need only exercise his thinking.

“That which was truth then, is truth today.” {EGW, 2SM 104}

“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.**” {EGW, RH, March 2, 1886 par. 6}

We have just read two plain statements showing that "progressive truth" cannot contradict old truth. Thus, Ellen White fails her own counsel -- if she became Trinitarian. Furthermore, the Trinity paper bases the argument on the conclusions of one man. The reader would agree that it is not safe to trust man’s conclusions. Let us allow the prophet to explain herself, rather than Andreasen. Here is the full context, which is simple and clear:

“In Him [Christ] was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can **possess** it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; **it is given** him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). This is the open fountain of life for the world.” {EGW, 1SM 296, 297}

According to this statement, “original, unborrowed, underived” life can be **given**. It will be given as a free gift to those who believe. This is in harmony with the words of Christ when He said that God the Father **gave** Him that life (original, unborrowed, underived life):

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

This is the Son’s life by right of inheritance. He inherited that life of God the Father by birth (for He is the only-begotten Son). Therefore, Christ is the only one who has this life. It is His Father’s life, and Christ inherited it by virtue of being brought forth from Him. Christ received ALL things from the Father. That includes His life. Is it not true that *the Father’s life* flows through His only begotten Son? Notice:

“All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.” {DA 21}

The Messenger of God says plainly: The Father is "the great Source of all". He is the source of life. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is this life we can receive through Christ. Christ has this very same life by right of inheritance. This life was GIVEN, by virtue of birth, to Christ by His Father!

If Ellen White really changed the direction of the church through the book *The Desire of Ages*, why is it her sons continued to believe in the truth? They did not become Trinitarian. Why is that? Did she not teach them the 'new light'? Here is some evidence:

“Christ is the only being begotten of the Father.” {James Edson White, *Past, Present and Future*, p. 52. 1909}

“The statements and the arguments of some of our ministers, in their effort to prove that the Holy Spirit is an individual as are God the Father and Christ, the eternal Son, have perplexed me, and sometimes they have made me sad.” {Letter, Willie C. White to H. W. Carr, April 30, 1935}

Could it be possible that *many*, like Andreasen, have misunderstood the prophet? Perhaps even the reader?

Trinity

Failing to succeed in these attempts, they will bring out statement after statement by the pioneers to prove that Christ was begotten and did not exist from all eternity. To continually use the writings of our pioneers to prove the infallibility of their own position shows great blindness. (p. 37)

Reply

No, we shall not do that. We shall let the inspired messenger answer:

“Who is Christ?--He is the only begotten Son of the living God. He is to the Father as a word that expresses the thought,--as a thought made audible. Christ is the word of God. ... Christ was the likeness of God, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person.” {YI, June 28, 1894 par. 9}

‘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. . .’ (ST, May 30, 1895) (p. 12)

“The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave his only begotten Son, tore from his bosom Him who was made in the express image of his person, and sent him down to earth to reveal how greatly he loved mankind.” {RH, July 9, 1895 par. 13}

‘In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God . . . Thus He stood in our world—the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race.’ (Selected Messages Book 1, p. 226, 227) (p. 12)

“Angels of God looked with amazement upon Christ, who took upon Himself the form of man and humbly united His divinity with humanity in order that He might minister to fallen man. It is a marvel among the heavenly angels. God has told us that He did do it, and we are to accept the Word of God just as it reads. **And although we may try to reason in regard to our Creator, how long He has had existence**, where evil first entered into our world, and all these things, we may reason about them until we fall down faint and exhausted with the research when there is yet an infinity beyond.” {7BC 919}

Let the reader ask himself the questions: why is there no statement or verse that says Christ is *not* begotten? Why does the Spirit of Prophecy make a distinction between “creation” and “begotten”? Why would the Spirit of Prophecy speak of Christ saying “how long He has had existence” if He was never begotten? Why do people continue to ignore the plain testimony that God has given regarding His Son?

Trinity

In the next segment I will print the statements of Ellen White that warn God’s people not to change the landmarks of our faith. Next, I will present some of the statements by our pioneers concerning the nature of the Godhead. Finally, I will then present a clear statement by Ellen White on what she understood as being the ‘landmarks of our faith’ and the warning she gives regarding those who accuse the brethren of changing these landmarks. The reason why I feel it is necessary to do this is because the ASDAT use as one of their prime arguments against the SDA Church the accusation that our present teaching on the Godhead has been a rejection of the landmarks of the faith. Thus, by doing this, the SDA Church has gone against Ellen White’s instruction that we should look to the pioneers and what they believed when stablishing these landmarks – one of the landmarks, according to their evidence, being the Godhead. It will be shown, quite conclusively, that, once again, their whole case is built on a completely false premise and only serves to erect a straw-man that will totter and fall when the wind of truth blows its way. (p. 38)

Reply

The claims made here only need to be examined briefly to demonstrate their falseness. The careful Bible student will search the Scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy writings to see if these things are so. Please read carefully. Was the doctrine of the Godhead (the personality of God and Christ) a pillar doctrine of the pioneer believers or was it not?

“Those who seek to remove the **old landmarks** are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. Those who try to bring in theories that would remove **the pillars of our faith** concerning the sanctuary or concerning **the personality of God or of Christ**, are working as blind men. They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor.” {EGW, MR760 9.5} 1905

Notice how the personality of God and Christ is listed on the same level as the sanctuary. Was the sanctuary doctrine a pillar doctrine? Of course, and to the same extent, if not more, the personality of God and Christ is a pillar doctrine. Beware of men who say otherwise.

“I entreat every one to be clear and firm regarding the certain truths that we have heard and received and advocated. The statements of God’s Word are plain. Plant your feet firmly on **the platform of eternal truth**. Reject every phase of error, even though it be covered with a semblance of reality, which denies the **personality of God and of Christ**.” {EGW, RH, August 31, 1905 par. 11}

How did the pioneers understand the personality of God and Christ? What doctrine did they see as a denial of the personality of God and Christ?

“Here we might mention the Trinity, which **does away the personality of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, ...**” {J. S. White, *Review & Herald*, December 11, **1855**}

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

“Upon this foundation we have been building **for the past fifty years**. Do you wonder that when I see the beginning of a work that would remove some of the pillars of our faith, I have something to say? I must obey the command, “Meet it!” . . .” {EGW, 1SM 207, 208} 1904

Therefore we rightly conclude from the pen of inspiration that the Godhead doctrine as understood by our pioneers, and as outlined in the statement of beliefs *was* (and ever shall be) a pillar of our faith, part of the platform of eternal truth and an old landmark. The testimony in this regard is so plain, all can understand if they will.

Trinity

The question that needs to be asked is this: *are these views of the SDA pioneers reflections of the Adventist landmarks, or are they reflections of their own understanding and not what the Lord confirmed as final truth to His chosen servant, Ellen White?* What were the landmarks established after the passing of 1844? The best possible way to establish this is to let Ellen White herself enlighten us. (p. 40)

Reply

Certainly Sr. White has done so, as shown above. The servant of the Lord plainly identified the inclusion of the personality of God and Christ as a landmark.

Trinity

“The passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes *the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven*, and having decided relation to God's people upon the earth, [also] *the first and second angels' messages and the third, unfurling the banner on which was inscribed, "The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."* One of the landmarks under this message was *the temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God. The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment flashed its strong rays in the pathway of the transgressors of God's law. The non-immortality of the wicked is an old landmark. I can call to mind nothing more that can come under the head of the old landmarks. All this cry about changing the old landmarks is all imaginary.* Manuscript 13, 1889. {CW 31.1}

It would do well for the ASDAT brethren to consider that Ellen White, herself, did not see the doctrine of the Godhead as being one of the landmarks of our faith, thus, it is clearly seen that the whole accusation about departing from the landmarks is completely false. In fact, it would appear that the tables are turned. When considering the warnings Ellen White presented in this statement it would seem that the ASDAT themselves might be doing the work of the Devil in accusing people of departing from the landmarks of our faith by teaching the, so called, Catholic Trinity. Indeed, they shift the focus for this hour of earth's history to an issue that should not be the primary point of debate – that which Ellen White describes as a ‘mystery’ – instead of focusing on that which truly are landmarks of our faith such as: the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, the first and second and third angel's

messages, the ten commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, the light of the Sabbath and the non-immortality of the wicked – the very landmarks Ellen White defined herself. She said that she could ‘*call to mind nothing more that can come under the head of the old landmarks.*’ (pp. 40, 41)

Reply

Well, we have already shown that this is not correct. Let us examine this a little closer now. Who is the ultimate decider as to what constitutes the pillars/landmarks/platform of truth? Should it not be the very head of the church? Above we see a clear example in using one statement to try to prove a point while ignoring other statement and especially the counsel of the Master Builder Himself. We have the greater witness of our beloved Master Himself telling us what is the pillar and Rock of His church. He said is so plainly that none need to mistake it. Here is that familiar passage again:

*“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.** And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, **and upon this rock I will build my church;** and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* Matthew 16:15-18

“Said Christ, "Upon this rock," not on Peter, **but on the Son of God**, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."” {RH, March 2, 1905 par. 4}

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 3:11

On this Rock every other pillar stands. Without this Rock, every other pillar collapses. This Rock is the FACT that Christ *is* the Son of the Living God. This revelation comes not from any man, but from the Father Himself (v.17)! Our Master Himself and the Father above have testified to this FACT. This testimony alone should be *more* than sufficient for us creatures of dust!

But, let us comment on that statement where some old landmarks are listed by Mrs. White. Much point is made over the expression “I can call to mind nothing more”. The expression “I can call to mind nothing more” means, “*I can’t remember anything else*”. She is not saying “there are no more pillars” but she said “I can *call to mind* nothing more”. Ellen White did not always list all the pillars when she was talking about pillars, but only those ones that did come to mind or that concerned the topic at hand. The context of the above statement is the 1888 message. Let us ask a question that every Seventh-day *Adventist* knows the answer to. Is the Second *Advent* (coming) of Christ a pillar doctrine of our church? Why is it not listed?

Here are very plain statements telling us that the Godhead doctrine, that is the personality of God and Christ, is a pillar and foundation doctrine. (Note: the “personality of God and Christ”, that is only two beings, not three). This is according to the Prophet, not us:

“Those who seek to remove the **old landmarks** are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. Those who try to bring in theories that would remove **the pillars of our faith** concerning the sanctuary or concerning **the personality of God or of Christ**, are working as blind men. They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor.” {MR760 9.5} 1905

“I entreat every one to be clear and firm regarding the certain truths that we have heard and received and advocated. The statements of God's Word are plain. Plant your feet firmly on **the platform of eternal truth**. Reject every phase of error, even though it be covered with a semblance of reality, which denies the **personality of God and of Christ.**” {RH, August 31, 1905 par. 11}

She could make these statements because the brethren had studied this matter and they had come to understand who Christ really was. They understood the Rock of the church was the Son of God! This is what she said about it:

“Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce Elder {Hiram} Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in **1844**, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, “We can do nothing more,” the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. **Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ**, His mission, and His priesthood. **A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.** During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until **all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds**, in harmony with the Word of God.” {ISM 206, 207}1904

Thus it is clear that our founding brethren understood the scriptures “in regard to Christ”, which is the foundation of everything. Having understood *who* Christ was (the only *begotten* Son of God), they were in a better position to understand “His mission”, and naturally “His priesthood”. These things are all built on each other. Finally we are told that these were among the first of the “principal points of our faith”.

Is the knowledge of the God we serve a principal point of faith? Yes, else how could we proclaim the first angel’s message “Fear God”? Which God would that be, if we have not established it beforehand? Does not Ellen White herself actually list the first angel’s message among the old landmarks? She certainly does! It is the first angel who says “Fear God”, and how shall a people give that message except they know which God to fear? Therefore, we rightly believe, the correct understanding of God was revealed to our pioneers, and the messenger of God has confirmed it in so many words. This argument alone is sufficient to exclude any “theory” about God that contradicts with the pillar of our faith as was revealed to our founding brethren.

“When men come in who would move one **pin** or **pillar** from **the foundation which God has established by His Holy Spirit**, let the aged men who were pioneers in our work speak plainly, and let those who are dead speak also, by the reprinting of their articles in our periodicals.” {E. G. White, Manuscript Releases Volume 1, p. 55}

Interestingly enough, the foundation was established by God Himself (by *His* Holy Spirit). Would God have neglected to establish the correct knowledge of who He is?

Trinity

In these attempts to explain the position and role of the Holy Spirit the ASDAT have resorted to using an earth-bound paradigm. This is exactly what I was referring to in the previous section of my response. (p. 42)

Reply

The position we believe is the Biblical truth as given at the introduction. All students of Scripture can examine that for themselves and see if it is an “earth-bound paradigm” or a heavenly revealed truth!

Trinity

Willie White was not at odds with the concept of the Holy Spirit as a person. He was at odds with those who were trying to define the person of the Spirit in the *same* sense that they were defining the person of the Father and Son. He understood that which all thinking Bible students know and that is that the Holy Spirit is not an '*individual AS are God the Father and Christ.*' He is an individual in a different sense, in a sense which is far too mysterious and heavenly for our earth-bound imaginations to conceive. (p. 42)

Reply

First of all, the Trinity paper ignores the full context of what W. C. White said. Let us read the entire paragraph together and see:

"As I read the Bible, I find that the risen Saviour breathed on the disciples 'and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' The conception received from this Scripture, seems to be in harmony with the statement in 'Desire of Ages', page 669, also Gen. 1:2; with Luke 1:4; with Acts 2:4 and also 8:15 and 10:44. Many other texts might be referred to which seem to be in harmony with this statement in 'Desire of Ages.'

The statements and the arguments of some of our ministers, in their effort to prove that the Holy Spirit is an individual as are God the Father and Christ, the eternal Son, have perplexed me, and sometimes they have made me sad. One popular teacher said 'We may regard Him, as the fellow who is down here running things.' My perplexities were lessened a little when I learned from the dictionary that one of the meanings of personality, was characteristics. *It is stated in such a way that I concluded that there might be personality without bodily form which is possessed by the Father and the Son. There are many Scriptures which speak of the Father and the Son and the absence of Scripture making similar reference to the united work of the Father and the Holy Spirit or of Christ and the Holy Spirit, has led me to believe that the spirit without individuality was the representative of the Father and the Son throughout the universe, and it was through the Holy Spirit that they dwell in our hearts and make us one with the Father and with the Son."* {Letter, W. C. White to H. W. Carr, April 30, 1935}

This is in perfect harmony with what his mother taught:

"By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you." {EGW, BEcho, January 15, 1893 par. 8}.

*"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love **me**, he will keep my words: and **my Father** will love him, and **we will come unto him**, and make our abode with him." "Behold, **I** stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear **my** voice, and open the door, **I** will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with **me**."* John 14:23; Revelation 3:20

The Spirit of God and Christ is their own person, not another person. When the Father and Son come to us they do so by their own personal presence (not by sending someone different to them!) Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the person of God and Christ. It is the omnipresence of them. Notice:

"He [Christ] would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent." {EGW, 14MR 23}

Thus,

"This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter." {EGW, 14MR

But the Bible told us that long ago anyway:

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” 2 Corinthians 3:17

Second of all, the Trinity paper claims “the Holy Spirit is not an ‘*individual AS are God the Father and Christ.*’ **He is an individual in a different sense**”. How, then, can the spirit be “an individual in a different sense” and at the same time “the Father, Son and Spirit three separate, **coequal**, eternal beings, is quite correct indeed.”? (as is affirmed 10 pages later). How can the spirit be a different individual and still be “coequal”. That makes it not equal to the Father and Son on the individual level, for we are told that he is an individual in a *different* (not equal) sense. So, in other words, the spirit is not really coequal if he is different. The Trinity paper also says “the Spirit has a completely different kind of substance and person” (p. 44) so, how can the spirit be coequal in substance and person?

Trinity

Either the ASDAT take the prophet of the Lord seriously on this question or they do not. If they do not, then they will be rejecting the clear words of the one they so readily quote. What has God revealed regarding the nature of the Holy Spirit? We have only that which has been revealed in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. To be dogmatic about your position on the nature of the Holy Spirit is to wallow in the quagmire of infidel ignorance. (p. 43)

Reply

We have stated plainly (and repeatedly) what we believe, and it is solidly based on the Word of the Lord. Let the reader review some of the quotes mentioned above. When the Trinity paper asks “What has God revealed regarding **the nature** of the Holy Spirit?” it forgets that “***The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them.***” We readily subscribe to this divine instruction. The discussion is not over the *nature* of the Spirit. This is where the Trinity paper has missed the mark. The discussion is over the *identity* of the spirit. We are not dogmatic on the *nature* of the spirit (for it is a mystery), but we know full well what inspiration tells us regarding its *identity*! The *identity* of the Spirit is not a *different* one to the Father and Son. This is what W. C. White was trying to say. The prophet herself explained it so plainly that we need not be in confusion over the *identity* of the Spirit if it is different or the same:

“In giving us **His Spirit**, God gives us **Himself**, making **Himself** a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” {7T 273.1}

The prophet makes it plain that when God gives us His Spirit He does not give us a *different* individual to Himself. He actually gives us *Himself*! This should be plain to any unbiased reader. How God does this is a mystery to us, but while we do not understand it, we will not insist that the Spirit must be a *different and separate individual* to God Himself as the Trinity paper has done. On the one hand the Trinity paper says the spirit is separate and coequal to God, and on the other it says the spirit is a different kind of substance and person and individual. In order to maintain this apparent self contradiction, the paper uses the oft repeated excuse that this is all a MYSTERY! The only mystery gods are those of the whore (Revelation 17:5) and their spin-offs.

Trinity

God said ‘*let us make man in our image.*’ (Gen 1:26). In this case he *would* be talking to the Son

specifically. Man was made in the image of the Father and Son – ‘Let *us* make man in *our* image.’ We know that man was created by the hand of God out of the dust of the earth. In this act, the Father and Son are personally and intimately involved. So when God says, ‘let us . . .,’ He is referring to a specific task that He and the Son would perform. The end result of this task would be ‘beings’ made in their image, not in the image of the Spirit, since the Spirit has a completely different kind of substance and person which is a mystery to us all. Further more, the Bible says that it was by the Son that all things were created, suggesting a role of creator that the Son filled within the offices of the members of the Godhead. Thus, they, Father and Son were partners in this act. Why this should negate the status of the Spirit is beyond any rational mind. (p. 44)

Reply

This human reasoning not supported by any inspired passages. The Trinity paper is essentially saying, just because the Spirit is not mentioned does not mean that it was not there as an individual being. This method of arguing from silence based on no proof whatsoever is rather dangerous. Any intelligent reader should know that absence of proof is only proof of absence. Let us demonstrate how many beings were present in the creation process (from inspiration, not from human reasoning!):

“The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. **He had an associate--a co-worker** who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. . . . **The Father wrought by His Son** in the creation of **all** heavenly beings.” {EGW, PP 34}.

Please note how it says “a co-worker” (singular) not ‘co-workers’. Therefore, “The Sovereign of the universe” + “a co-worker” makes only two. There is no mention of anyone else involved in creation. Yet there is not a Trinitarian who will admit this fact. The Trinitarian insists that the Spirit (if it is indeed coequal) must have been equal in its involvement in the process of creation.

“The **Father consulted Jesus** in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth.” {EGW, ST Jan. 9, 1879}.

“**Especially was his Son to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth.** His Son would carry out his will and his purposes, but would do nothing of himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in him.” {EGW, 1SP 18}

“After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, **the Father and Son** carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. **They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it.**” {EGW, LHU 47 (1SP, 24)}

“Man became a living soul. **Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man** and endowed him with intelligence and power.” {EGW, MH 415}

“In the beginning **the Father and the Son** had rested upon the Sabbath after Their work of **creation.**” {EGW, DA 769}.

Question: How many divine beings rested on the first Sabbath after creation?

Answer: Two, but also there was the spirit (who is a separate and different divine being) but just because it was not mentioned does not mean it was not there!

Question: How many other beings were there that were not mentioned?

Answer: Well, we cannot be sure, but we *know* the spirit was the third individual there.

This is the type of reasoning used to defend a theory that is not defensible.

Trinity

When Ellen White uses the phrase: '*third person of the Godhead*,' how can you misinterpret such a clear remark and place it in some sort of figurative context. Firstly, the word, third, clearly suggests that there must be three, meaning, there must be two others besides the third. Why use the term third at all, when you do not mean three, but something else. The whole idea makes no sense at all. Then, to combine the word, person, to this expression makes it a definite prescriptive phrase. The word, 'person,' according to dictionary definition, means *individual, self, personality* or *being*. Ellen White is making a clear statement about the *status* of the Holy Spirit and this ASDAT argument wants to make it null and void and explain it in terms of allegory. Not only is this non-sensical, but it is a downright pathetic attempt at defending the indefensible. What is more, she defines, exactly, what He is a member of: 'the Godhead.' (p. 46)

Reply

Yes, there are certainly, but to insist that these three are "separate, **coequal**, eternal beings" is quite incorrect. We have said it before and we say it again, the Holy Spirit is the very person of God; the very person of Christ. Let the prophet explain herself:

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

The Holy Spirit is the person of Christ; it is the divinity of His character. This is the plain definition of the prophet of what she means when she says "third person of the Godhead". But, there is more:

Who is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead?

"Christ tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and the Comforter is the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of truth, which the Father shall send in My name." ... **This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.**" {E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases Vol.14*, p. 179}

Here is that very expression used again in this next paragraph and explained by the prophet herself in the context of the paragraph. One need not be confused as to what she means when she says "third person of the Godhead":

"The Spirit was given **as a regenerating agency**, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of man to this satanic captivity was amazing. *Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power.* It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. **Christ has given his Spirit as a divine power** to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress **his own character** upon the church." {E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, May 19, 1904 par. 3}

“The only defense against evil is **the indwelling of Christ** in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin.” {EGW, DA 324}

Simply put, the third person of the Godhead is the indwelling of Christ in the heart. This (not anyone else) is the only defense against evil and sin. What is more, the entire church at the time that statement was written was not holding to a trinity doctrine. Neither did they change that position when the statement was published. In other words, they did not understand that term like many people would like to understand it today. This fact alone should cause any reader to think again on these things. The entire church at the time was neither Trinitarian, neither did become one until many years later (well after the death of the prophet)! We can only define these expressions as the prophet explains them, not as *we* would like to explain them.

“Christ declared that after his ascension, he would send to his church, as his crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take his place. This Comforter is the Holy Spirit,--***the soul of his life***, the efficacy of his church, **the light and life of the world. With his Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin.**” {E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, May 19, 1904 par. 1}

Notice now how clearly Sr. White says that the Holy Spirit is the very soul of Christ's life. The life of Christ is His spirit (not someone else!). This is the Comforter, this is the Holy Spirit, and this is what is called the “third person of the Godhead.” It is not really difficult to understand.

Trinity

Ellen White speaks about the ‘*Three living persons in the heavenly Trio.*’ (Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7, pp. 62, 63. 1905; Ev 615.1). (p. 46)

To argue the point based on the fact that she used the term OF and not IN is exegetical nonsense as, in the very next comment, she uses the term IN and not OF to designate the position of all three.

When Ellen White talks about the ‘*Three living persons in the heavenly trio,*’ you are faced with a phrase that is just as prescriptive as the one dealt with before. In fact, this statement by Ellen White is even more definitive than the first. She refers to the members of the Godhead as *living persons*. If a person is an individual and if that person is alive, then what more do you want? Add to these clear designations the word, ‘trio,’ and you have an unambiguous statement of qualification – period. (pp. 46, 47)

Reply

The Trinity paper makes a blunder over the words OF and IN, insisting that Mrs. White used the word IN the Godhead. We fail to understand why people cannot quote the Spirit of Prophecy accurately, for then they have to resort to editing and tampering with the words of the prophet. Anyone with access to the Ellen White writings can see for themselves that Mrs. White did not say ‘*Three living persons in the heavenly trio,*’ (as the paper misquotes) but she actually says “There are three living persons **of** the heavenly trio”, and in her own handwritten manuscript she actually writes “the living three personalities of the heavenly trio”. The Trinity paper's argument completely collapses when truth is made clear.

Allowing the Testimonies to interpret themselves, here are the “heavenly trio” as defined by her:

“They have **one God and one Saviour; and one Spirit--the Spirit of Christ--**is to bring unity into their ranks.” {E. G. White, *Testimonies Volume 9*, p. 189}

“Christ tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and the Comforter is the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of truth, which the Father shall send in My name." ... **This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.**” {E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases Vol.14*, p. 179}

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

Trinity

The other phrase that is highlighted, where Ellen White refers to the ‘*eternal heavenly dignitaries – God and Christ and the Holy Spirit*,’ is, once again, an open and shut case. Not only does she mention them separately, confirming that she does see them as three distinct persons, but she ascribes the term ‘eternal’ to all three. They are ETERNAL HEAVENLY DIGNITARIES. To weave this phrase into something vague and formless is to make of non-effect something that was obviously meant as a specific declaration of fact. (p.47)

Reply

This statement (taken alone) only lists the heavenly dignitaries but says nothing as to the relation that they hold to each other. To insist that these dignitaries must be a trinity of 3 co-equal, co-eternal god-beings goes beyond the scope of the statement. All we learn from this statement is that there is God and Christ and the Holy Spirit and that they are heavenly dignitaries. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit *are* the eternal dignitaries of Heaven. There is not doubt that there are three. No one denies that there is a Holy Spirit! But, does that mean that they are three divine beings? Does a mere listing of the three indicate that they must be all divine beings? Or, are we told elsewhere what relation these three sustain to each other?

Let us allow Mrs. White to define for us the relation between those three, which is the point of question.

What relation is there between God and Christ?

“The Scriptures **clearly** indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. [Hebrews 1:1-5 quoted] **God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.**” {E. G. White, *Testimonies Volume 8*, p. 268}

“**Christ was the Son of God;** He had been one with Him *before the angels were called into existence.*” {E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 38}

What relation does the Spirit hold to the Father and Son?

“Christ declared that after his ascension, he would send to his church, as his crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take his place. This Comforter is the Holy Spirit,--**the soul of his life**, the efficacy of his church, **the light and life of the world. With his Spirit Christ sends a reconciling**

influence and a power that takes away sin.” {E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, May 19, 1904 par. 1}

“In giving us **His Spirit**, God gives us **Himself**, making **Himself** a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” {EGW, 7T 273}

“**Christ gives them the life of his life.** The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in mind and heart.” {E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, January 5, 1911 par. 6}

“**The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ.**” {E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 805}

“**Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life.** The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind.” {E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 827}

These are the “The eternal heavenly dignitaries”.

Trinity

The position that is being taken here – similar to one we have already dealt with – is lacking in some essential insight. Of course we are imbued with the life (spiritual life / attributes) of Christ when we give our lives to Him – it is the designated task of the Holy Spirit to impart this to us. He is the one who represents Christ. It is His job to give us the life OF Christ. (p. 48)

Reply

The Holy Spirit *is* the life of Christ (it is not someone who brings us the life of Christ. It *is* the very life of Christ). John 6:63 makes that very plain. Mrs. White’s comment on that verse cannot be mistaken either:

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

The Holy Spirit is the vital presence of God, and if appreciated will call forth praise and thanksgiving, and will ever be springing up unto everlasting life. {YRP 284}

The Holy Spirit is the breath of life in the soul. The breathing of Christ upon his disciples was the breath of true spiritual life. {RH, June 13, 1899 par. 6}

The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life **the Christ-life is manifested**, are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church. {RH, November 19, 1908 par. 10}

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, which is sent to all men to give them sufficiency, that through His grace we might be complete in Him. {14MR 84}

The work of the holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and **the holy Spirit is the comforter, as the personal presence of Christ**

to the soul. {RH, November 29, 1892 par. 3}

Trinity

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, in Christ's name. He *personifies Christ, yet is a distinct personality.* (20MR 324.2 Taken from Ms 93, 1893. Emphasis supplied) (p. 49)

Reply

This is a simple statement to understand when it is read in light of the other statements given to us in the Spirit of Prophecy.

“The Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the only begotten Son of God, binds the human agent, body, soul, and spirit, to the perfect, divine-human nature of Christ.” {RH, April 5, 1906 par. 16}

So, even though Jesus is not with us in his personal (physical) presence, yet His Spirit (His life which proceeds from Him) personifies Him. This personification is as real as Christ was here physically. It is a distinct personality. It is distinct in that it is “divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof”.

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

““I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” [John 14:16, 17]. **This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.**” {14MR 179}

Trinity

The essential problem is that ASDAT have fallen into that age-old trap of using the inspired words to prove their own theory. (p. 49)

Reply

This is not our own theory. Many of us were Trinitarian just like the author of the Trinity paper. It is not our effort to prove any theories, but our search and love of truth led us to abandon the theory of the trinity and accept the facts of truth about the Father and Son. What is termed as "our theory" was the doctrine of the entire church for over 80 years! Let history testify of that fact.

Trinity

If one wants to find out about the specific authority of the Father, Son or Spirit, then it is better to go to the clear expressions of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy that are obviously dealing with those things on a primary, theologically centered level. (p. 50)

Reply

The Trinity paper makes an appeal to the Bible, but fails to provide any Biblical evidence in support of

the theory of the trinity. It also fails to provide any Biblical evidence to correct the position we hold to. The Bible teaches that Christ *is* the Son of God.

♪ The B-I-B-L-E, yes that's the book for me ♪

I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E ♪

We used to sing that at Sabbath School. We hope that its application is not confined to the Sabbath School only!

Trinity

The important thing to bear in mind – which the ASDAT refuse to do – is to avoid any dogmatism or controversy over the personality of God. To speculate on these things, over and above that which has been revealed is to tread on forbidden territory:

'I was forbidden to talk with Dr. Kellogg on this subject, because *it is not a subject to be talked about*. And I was instructed that certain sentiments in Living Temple were the Alpha of a long list of deceptive theories.' (Ellen G. White, **Sermons and Talks Volume 1, 343**) (p. 50)

Reply

We ask that the Trinity paper share with everyone what Kellogg actually believed we are not to "talk about" and "not to touch." Indeed, we read:

Consider these communications between A. G. Daniells (GC President at the time) and Willie White:

'He [Kellogg] then stated that **his former views regarding the trinity** had stood in his way of making a clear and absolutely correct statement; **but that in a short time he had come to believe in the trinity** and could now see pretty clearly where the difficulty was, and believed that he could clear the matter up satisfactorily.

'**He told me that he now believed in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost**; and his view was that bit was God the Holy Ghost, and not God the Father, that filled all space and every living thing. He said that if he had believed this before writing the book, he could have expressed his views without giving the wrong impression the book now gives.

'I placed before him the objections I found in the teaching, and tried to show him that the teaching was so utterly contrary to the gospel that I did not see how it could be revised by changing a few expressions . . . I could not see how it would be possible for him to flop over, and in the course of a few days fix the books up so that it would be all right.' (Letter: A. G. Daniells to W. C. White. Oct 29. 1903, p1.2.)

So, Kellogg had actually come to believe in the very same thing that many people believe! This formed the foundation for his pantheistic ideas. Mrs. White said that this is "not a subject to be talked about." The words of the Master are always true:

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matthew 12:37

Trinity

This helps to highlight Matthew 28 verse 19 that commissioned the disciples to baptize in the name of, 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost.' (p. 52)

Reply

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:19) What did the disciples think when they heard this? Did they understand Christ to be commanding them to baptize people into a trinity? If so, we would expect to

find them using this formula whenever they baptized people.

Let's turn in our Bibles to where this command of Jesus was obeyed for the first time. In Acts 2:38 Peter said, "Repent, and be *baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ* for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Peter instructed these people to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, rather than in the names of three separate persons.

Just in case this was a slip on Peter's part, let us take a look at some of the other places where people were baptized. In Acts 10:48 we read that Peter "commanded [Cornelius and his brethren] to be *baptized in the name of the Lord*." From these verses it is plain that Peter didn't understand Christ to have commanded him to baptize into a trinity.

Peter must have understood the command of Jesus differently than most Trinitarians understand it today. As we continue in the book of Acts we find that Peter was not alone in his understanding of this command.

In Acts 8:16, when Peter and John came to Samaria they found a group of people who had been "*baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*."

What about Paul? Keep in mind that he claimed to have received the gospel directly from Christ. How did Jesus teach Paul to baptize?

When Paul visited Ephesus, he met some brethren who had only been baptized with John's baptism. Paul instructed them about Christ, and the Bible says, "when they heard this, they were *baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*." (Acts 19:5)

Why did the disciples baptize only in the name of the Lord Jesus? Please use the Bible only to give your answers.

Trinity

Taking into account the words of Ellen White, we can now say, quite emphatically, that the SDA understanding of Matthew, making the Father, Son and Spirit three separate, coequal, eternal beings, is quite correct indeed. (p. 52)

Again I emphasise, it may be hard for us to understand the mystery of the Godhead, how Father, Son and Spirit are still, all three, God. (p. 72)

Reply

This is the closest that the Trinity paper author comes to explaining trinity believed. It is clear from the above that the Trinity paper advocates the doctrine that is correctly termed Tritheism, which is admitted unashamedly. This belief is basically defined as three separate and coequal god beings. The Trinity paper says that all three are God, making three gods. This bizarre teaching is identified as a heresy by Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders! What a sad state of affairs. Let us quote and let the reader examine carefully:

"Remember that the [trinity] doctrine is always under siege from **aberrations** which threaten it from all sides. The two which are most notorious are Modalism, the belief that God is a solitary Being who only reveals Himself in three different ways, and **Tritheism, the belief that God is three separate Beings who are all one in purpose and suchlike**" (Max Hatton, *Understanding the Trinity*, p. 130)

"Tri-theism results from an overemphasis on the threeness. **It results really in there being three completely separate persons or Gods**. This is really Polytheism (which, really, is paganism). [...] They are seemingly unaware that what they offer is really only an ancient heresy in modern dress." (*ibid*, pp. 135, 136)

This book is recommended to all the pastors of the Greater Sydney Conference as an official definition of the Seventh-day Adventist trinity! Pastor Max Hatton is the recognized authority on the Trinity by

the Greater Sydney Conference, so we are not quoting an obscure author or book. This is the official material of the church.

The Trinity paper teaches that there are three separate beings who are all divine. Any clear thinking person will have to admit that if “all three” are “God” then you have three gods! There is no way around this plain fact. And all attempts to try to prove that these three gods make up only one god is an apparent contradiction of itself, reason, logic, and the Bible.

It is worthy of note that our Father in heaven does not regard very lightly the blasphemy of such doctrines. God has given specific instruction regarding people who teach *other* gods. Had we been living in the days of the Israelites the author of the Trinity paper would have been guilty of death.

“If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.” Deuteronomy 13:6-11

The worship of multiple gods is called polytheism (and it is identified as such by Pastor Max Hatton). This is the brand of trinity that is being advocated today! The author may deny this fact, but his honesty shines through. Anyone who can count knows that three separate coeternal God beings equals three Gods. And every argument to prove that these three gods are one God -- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, all of them separate, and every way equal to each other, and all three forming but one god -- contradicts itself, contradicts reason, and contradicts the Bible.

Trinity

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 267.2)** (p. 52)

Reply

The Trinity paper is using this statement to support the theory of three gods (three divine beings who are separate and coequal). It is truly alarming how people fail to do their homework properly in light of the momentous issues we are dealing with. Let it be known that Mrs. White *never* took pen to paper and wrote “three holiest beings”. She is not the author of these words. We shall examine closely now what the record reveals and let all men be informed of the facts of the matter.

This statement is actually a report of a sermon that Mrs. White preached on Sabbath afternoon October 20, 1906 in Oakland, California. The statement is also reproduced in the book *Sermons and Talks*, Book 1. In the forward of the book we are told:

ALL THE MESSAGES REPRODUCED IN THIS VOLUME WERE DELIVERED IN PUBLIC AND

STENOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED, OR WERE PREPARED WITH THAT PURPOSE IN VIEW. MANY OF ELLEN WHITE'S SERMONS MAY BE FOUND IN THE REVIEW AND HERALD AND SIGNS OF THE TIMES, BUT NEARLY ALL OF THOSE INCLUDED IN THIS SERIES HAVE BEEN DRAWN FROM PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS, AS THEY APPEAR IN OUR FILES. SO, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE NO TAPE RECORDERS IN ELLEN WHITE'S DAY, A PERSON MAY GET THE TRUE "FEEL" OF ELLEN WHITE AS A SPEAKER BY READING THIS BOOK. (p. i)

This is a very honest admission from the White Estate telling us that Mrs. White did not pen those words; rather they were a *report* of what she said. It is very obvious that a major blunder was made in reporting this sermon. Mrs. White herself warned us of this by saying:

“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.**” {5T 696.1}

She told us to read her published works. This is very important to keep in mind. Why does she highly recommend her *published works* rather than reports of what she may or may have not said? It is very simple, she knew everything that was published because she read all the manuscripts prior to publication:

“I read over all that is copied, to see that everything is as it should be. I read all the book manuscript before it is sent to the printer.” {3SM 90.6}

In other words, Ellen White could not check anything that was published *after* she died. Therefore she instructed us that we are to read her published works since she reviewed these works herself. 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 follows:

“Released March 16, **1976**.” {7MR 273.}

It was impossible for Ellen White to check and review this report of her sermon. She had been dead for a *long* time!

Now let us demonstrate why the reporter of the sermon made a mistake in claiming that Mrs. White said “three holiest beings”. All we have to do is examine *her published writings* as she has told us to do. How many divine beings are there according to Ellen White’s *published writings*?

“Christ the Word, the Only **Begotten** of God, was one with the eternal Father,--one in nature, in character, and in purpose,--**the only being in all the universe** that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.” {EGW, GC 493. 1888}

That plainly tells us that there is no other being besides Christ who enters into the counsels of God. No other being in all the universe! That makes two beings only. The Holy Spirit cannot be a being, for that would mean it cannot enter into all the counsels of God! But we knew that for the Bible made it clear long ago:

“*Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon*

*his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be **between them both**.*” Zechariah 6:13

Sister White never mentions another being besides Christ who is allowed into counsel with God. How can this be if she really was a Trinitarian, as the author claims on her behalf? Where is “God the Holy Spirit”?

The only other being in the universe who wanted to enter into counsel with God and His Son was a proud angel by the name of Lucifer. It was he who wanted the heavenly counsel to include a third member! Let the readers read the first chapter of *Patriarchs and Prophets* and see if this is true or not. But there is more:

“**The only being who was one with God** lived the law in humanity, descended to the lowly life of a common laborer, and toiled at the carpenter's bench with his earthly parent.” {EGW, ST, October 14, 1897 par. 3}

Here she clearly and plainly says Christ is the *only* being who is one with God. There is no mention of anyone else being “one” with God besides Christ. That is only two beings. Just in case someone may use the strange notion of “just because the spirit is not mentioned does not mean it is not there!” we again emphasize the word *only*. When using that word Mrs. White is excluding any other options or possibilities. It is impossible for her to say *only* and then elsewhere contradict it. Again, the same plain language and testimony is used in the following quote:

“The **Father and the Son alone** are to be exalted.” {YI, July 7, 1898 par. 2}

The above statement alone should be sufficient to abolish every theory of a trinity. Honestly, how could Ellen White (if she was really a Trinitarian) make a statement like that? Let us ask again the oft repeated question: where is ‘God the Holy Spirit’? If the Father and the Son *alone* are to be exalted, then what are we to do with ‘God the Holy Spirit’? Surely we say aright, the servant of the Lord was *not* a believer in that doctrine which is espoused by the mother of all harlots, neither in any of its varied and multitudinous forms.

These plain statements are from *her published works*, they are not statements that were produced long after she died. These are authentic statements that she reviewed and checked and that the whole church at the time subscribed to. On the other hand, statements that only make an appearance posthumously and which clearly contradict the authentic writings must be closely examined and studied. This is the only safe way to arrive at the truth. We cannot just grab one statement because we like what it says and ignore *her published writings* which she tells us are the most authentic and accurate report of her belief and teachings. Let those who desire to obey the prophet heed this counsel, is our prayer.

Trinity

How on earth can these statements be understood in the light of the ASDAT position? In this case, the Holy Spirit is stated as being one of the three holiest ‘*beings*’ of heaven (naturally, a ‘being’ of a different substance to Father and Son, but never-the-less a being), one of the ‘*three great Worthies*.’ Note the term, ‘worthies,’ is written with a capital ‘W,’ signifying supreme status. In light of all the evidences presented, to hold to the idea that the Holy Spirit is not an individual in His own right is, quite frankly, wanton blindness. An attempt at turning these comments into something figurative or emblematic would be just as ridiculous. (p. 52)

Reply

We have demonstrated how these statements are explained by examining the *published writings* that we were advised to examine. The Trinity paper makes quite a deal over the term “worthies” being written with a capital ‘W’. Please, what does that prove? Ellen White did not write or capitalize the words. The use of upper-case does not prove anything. Furthermore, the word “beings” is not written with a capital ‘b’! Where does this leave the argument? The “beings” do not have supreme status while the “Worthies” do? Further comment is unnecessary.

Trinity

There are *three living persons of the heavenly trio* [GODHEAD]; in the name of these three great powers --the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.-- **Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7, pp. 62, 63. (1905) {Ev 615.1}** (p. 53)

Reply

We have already dealt with this statement, but we only quote it here to demonstrate that it is actually quoted *correctly* by the Trinity paper (“*of the heavenly trio*”, not “*in the heavenly trio*”). This demonstrates that the author made a mistake (intentionally or not, we do not know) and used the mistake to strengthen his argument. For the same statement is quoted correctly here. This is sadly the way many Trinitarians have tried to defend their theory, but it is not very credible to those who know their Bibles and the Testimonies. All we ask is that the reader cease to rely on man, who is erring and fallible, but to please *study for themselves!* Do not even trust what we say but *check it out and study it!* This is the only way to arrive at the truth.

Trinity

Of course we would dissect the Bible in the same way – delete the verses that do not agree with us and choose only the ancient manuscripts that present what we believe.

If I was an ASDAT subscriber, I would also have a major problem with 1John 5:7. This verse so clearly states: ‘*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*’ Here we have a concept that quite clearly fits the SDA theology of a Trinity.

This statement is so definitive that you are left with only one alternative as an anti-Trinitarian – ‘delete the text, claim it is translated from faulty manuscripts,’ the same as you do with Matthew 28:19. ‘It cannot be true, even if it is in the Bible, because we all know that God is ONE and there are NOT three persons in that ONE Godhead.’ (pp. 53, 54)

Reply

The Trinity paper makes another untrue claim regarding our position. We do not delete verses from the Bible! We do not need to do that at all, for the truth can harmonize any verses. While the Trinity paper may believe we have a problem with 1 John 5:7, we actually have no problem with it. Let us examine this verse and then see who it is that thinks it should be deleted from the Bible.

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

The text from 1 John 5 and verse 7 lists the three and says they are one. The Trinitarian will understand that to mean that they are one God. This is done by supplying the word ‘god’ after ‘one’ when the Bible places a full stop. Every Trinitarian who uses that text explains it in this way. He would say “these three are one”, one what? “Obviously one god”! But this is not what is *obviously* stated there. The Trinity paper

goes so far as to say that this is the “concept that quite clearly fits the SDA theology of a Trinity.” The actual verse explains that the ‘one’ applies to the *record* that is borne, not to the persons of God. They are all one in bearing the same *one record*. From the context of the chapter (the whole epistle even) we learn that John is not expounding on the doctrine of who is God (or how many persons/beings). The immediate context of that passage offers the simple answer. Let us read verse 8 where another ‘three’ are listed:

*8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: **and these three agree in one.***

The oneness spoken of in this verse does not refer to the nature of the spirit, water and blood. It is rather a oneness in agreement. They are one in that they all bear the same testimony: “agree in one”. This is obvious to any reader. This is exactly what John means in verse 7. He uses almost the same words, elaborating more on them in verse 8. “These three” (Father, Word, Spirit) he says, “are one”. Not one god (or Godhead, as some call it), as many would like to believe, but **ONE IN TESTIMONY**. They all agree in giving the one testimony, **in bearing one record**. This is the plain meaning of the text, not what the Trinity paper would like it to mean when it says “John, saw the Father, Son (Word) and Holy Ghost as three distinct persons, yet one. (p. 54)”. The text does not even mention “persons” at all! John in this chapter is not dealing with “persons” or the Godhead at all!

What is that testimony that occupies John in this chapter?

*5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth **that Jesus is the Son of God?***

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

*10 **He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself:** he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not **the record that God gave of his Son.***

What is the record that God gave of His Son? What is that record that is testified to in heaven and earth? What is that record that “these three are one” in bearing? What record is it about the Son of God that John is pressing home?

The Father testified:

***Matthew 3:17** And lo a voice from heaven, saying, **This is my beloved Son**, in whom I am well pleased.*

***Matthew 17:5** While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, **This is my beloved Son**, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

The Son of God testified:

***John 10:36** Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?*

The Spirit also testified through the Apostles (John 15:26; 1 John 5:10):

***Acts 5:32** And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

Acts 8:37 *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, **I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.***

Acts 9:20 *And straightway he [Paul] preached Christ in the synagogues, **that he is the Son of God.***

(and many, many other similar testimonies given by men moved by the spirit of God)

Therefore, it is not dividing the word of truth correctly when we attempt to use that text to teach that there are three co-equal, co-eternal divine beings (as the author suggests). We are also breaking John's testimony when we deny that the son of God was begotten (John 3:16) (brought forth, born [Proverbs 8:22-30]) of the Father from the days of eternity (Micah 5:2), and that His existence did have a beginning (John 1:1) so far back in the ages of eternity that the prophet tells us it cannot be computed or calculated (7BC 919, ST, May 3, 1899 par. 4). To teach three co-equal, co-eternal beings is to deny the Father-Son relationship. It is to deny that Jesus *is* the Son of the living God, reducing that noble and ineffable relation to a mere metaphor and role-play! People who use this text to teach a trinity (denying the Son of God) only serve the purpose of obliterating the testimony that heaven is trying to reveal to us!

Now, having answered the verse plainly from the Bible, allowing the Bible to interpret itself, we now need to ask ourselves the question: who is it that tells us this verse does not belong in the Bible? The author says that this verse "quite clearly fits the SDA theology of a Trinity." Has the author actually read what the official Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary says regarding this verse (1 John 5:7)? Let us quote it and see:

The disputed words found their way into the KJV by way of the Greek text of Erasmus. It is said that Erasmus offered to include the disputed words in his Greek Testament if he were shown even one Greek MS that contained them. A library in Dublin produced such a MS (known as 34), and Erasmus included the passage in his text. It is now believed that the later editions of the Vulgate acquired the passage by the mistake of a scribe who included an exegetical marginal comment in the Bible text that he was copying. The disputed words have been widely used in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, but, in view of such overwhelming evidence against their authenticity, their support is valueless and should not be used. In spite of their appearance in the Vulgate, *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* freely admits regarding these words: "It is now generally held that this passage, called the *Comma Johanneum*, is a gloss that crept into the text of the Old Latin and Vulgate at an early date, but found its way into the Greek text only in the 15th and 16th centuries." (Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1951, p. 1186) (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 675)

This reminds us of what the author actually said in his paper "Of course we would dissect the Bible in the same way – delete the verses that do not agree with us and choose only the ancient manuscripts that present what we believe." (p. 54) "as an anti-Trinitarian – 'delete the text, claim it is translated from faulty manuscripts,'" (p. 54)

Let the reader see for himself who is deleting texts from the Bible! Once again, the words of the Master ring true:

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matthew 12:37

The above arguments by the ASDAT center on terminology such as begotten, born or created. (p. 57)

Reply

We have plainly demonstrated earlier that “begotten” and “created” do not mean the same thing. This we have seen from the writings of Mrs. White herself. The Trinity paper continues to confuse the issues and misrepresent us.

Trinity

The logic of this argument is actually self-defeating. Proverbs says that the Lord possessed me in the beginning of ‘HIS’ way. Sure, one could extract the word, ‘possessed,’ and say that this means that Christ was possessed at a *point in time*. But when you consider that the text speaks of the beginning of HIS (the Father’s) way, then you have to assume that the Father had a beginning too – which we know He did not. (p. 57)

Reply

The text in question is Proverbs 8:22 which says “*The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.*”

How the Trinity paper applies “his way” to the Father is honestly beyond our comprehension. One only need read the rest of the verse, and it explains itself. The “beginning of his way” does not apply to the Father, but it actually means “before his works of old”. It is plain and not hard to comprehend! Christ is simply saying that He was possessed by His Father before creation took place, that is, “before his works of old.”

Trinity

It is obvious that the words ‘beginning’ or ‘possessed’ are not meant to suggest a specific point in time, but, rather, describe **the eternal relationship** between the Father and Son in the language and concepts of earthly realities that cannot conceive the notion of existence in eternity past. (p. 57)

she is merely using this biblical terminology to express **a continual relationship** for which there is no possible human computation available. (p. 58)

Reply

The Trinity paper makes some startling admissions. Rather than admitting that the birth of Christ was a past event, it actually says this language only signifies “a continual relationship”! The reader will surely remember that it was Rome that described the birth of Christ as an “eternal generation”, rather than a past event that took place in the eternity of the past. We leave it with the good judgment of the reader to see who is really mirroring Rome’s theology. We know the Trinity paper would not agree with Rome, but the theology is based on the Roman idea of a Trinity. This being so, it is impossible to escape the obvious common denominators, some of which are: God is three, the three are all God, Christ was not begotten before creation (it is only a “continual relationship”, “an eternal generation”), the Holy Spirit is a third coequal member of God, etc.

Trinity

For example: When it is says, ‘I was brought up WITH him [the Father],’ it suggests that the

Father and Jesus were brought up together. It does not say that He was brought up *by* Him but ‘with’ Him. (p. 58)

Reply

The text in question is “Then I was by him, *as* one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight,

rejoicing always before him” Proverbs 8:30

We have quoted the verse to demonstrate how the argument of the Trinity paper is really not the issue. It is an argument over the *italicized* words, which most people know were added by the King James translators, and are not in the original text. They are only supplied to clarify meanings and therefore are indicated in the KJV by being *italicized*. What does this prove? Nothing. The translators could just as easily have supplied the words “by him” instead of “with him”, and it would still prove nothing. We do not use this type of reasoning based on supplied words. Furthermore, Dr. Richard M. Davidson (Professor of Old Testament Interpretation Department Chair, Old Testament Department at Andrews University) teaches very plainly that this passage is speaking of Christ and is speaking of a birth process. This is the honest admission of the church theologians and scholars. It would do well for the Trinity paper to be in harmony with the leaders of the church who are honest enough to admit some truth at least.

Trinity

Thus, when the expressions, ‘brought up,’ ‘possessed’ and ‘beginning’ are used it needs to be understood in a non-literal sense. (p. 58)

Reply

Why does the Trinity paper present a non-consistent position? Why are we told not to understand this passage in a literal sense? The entire context of the passage (vs.22-30) is a literal description of the work of creation. It is not consistent to insist that the work of creation was literal (which we all believe), but that the birth of Christ, which is in the very same context, is not literal.

Trinity

The difference between this way of understanding these expressions and the explanation of the ASDAT is that *the ASDAT interpret the eternity statements in light of the ones that use the word beginning or born, etc., taking them as literal expressions*, whereas the explanation of beginning, born and created, etc., which I have suggested, are *understood in the light of the evidences that speak of Christ in distinctively stated, eternal terms*. (p. 59)

Reply

Here the Trinity paper presents the two available options for this debate. In short -- either Christ was begotten (born/brought forth) from the Father in eternity of the past **OR** Christ was never begotten of His Father, and is therefore not a begotten Son. This is what the issue boils down to. Is Christ the Son of God or is He not? The Bible tells us *how* He is a Son of God (begotten). It is up to us to accept that fact or to reject it. Will you accept it, dear reader?

All will have had to have made a decision when they stand before the King of the universe. It would do well to remind ourselves who is really behind the idea of denying that Christ is the begotten Son of God. Let us read this most revealing statement from Mrs. White:

“Angels were expelled from heaven because they would not work in harmony with God. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus. This **fact** the [fallen] angels would obscure, **that Christ was the only begotten Son of God**, and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ.” {EGW, TDG 128}

Note, this is during the war in heaven. The fallen angels knew that Christ was the only begotten Son of God. This is long before the incarnation took place. It is even before the creation of any human race! Sister White says that Christ, being the only begotten Son of God, was a **FACT** (not a theory, not a play, not a prophecy, not a pretend, not an idea, not any of these things). No, she says it is a **FACT**, a

reality – real FACT.

This *fact* was established and known throughout the ranks of the angelic host. It was this very *fact* that a number of angels led by Lucifer wanted to obscure. There are human beings today who are pursuing the same goal. They are trying to obscure the FACT that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God from heaven. Let the reader take caution whose side he is on.

Trinity

Another point is that the ASDAT fraternity, themselves, cannot agree on whether Christ was actually born or created. (p. 59)

Reply

We have said it before and we shall say it again. We are happy to assure everyone that we all agree that Christ was begotten (born). Christ was *not* created! There is not one of us who believes Christ was created. We hope and pray that everyone who reads these words will not fail to remember this clarification. Again we say, born *not* created. This is what the prophet told us all (as the Trinity paper quotes):

‘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. . .’ (ST, May 30, 1895) (p.12)

If the Trinity paper insists that ‘begotten’ actually means ‘creation’, then we really cannot discuss the subject any further. The problem lies with acceptance of the words of the prophet, who clearly made the most plain distinction between the two words. She says Christ is *not* created, but is actually *begotten*. They obviously do not mean the same to her. We stay by the words of the prophet.

Trinity

Are the ASDAT not just as blind and infidel in the position they take (p. 60)

Reply

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.” Matthew 5:11

Trinity

When Ellen White, or the Bible for that matter, speaks about Jesus as being ‘begotten,’ it is with the view of Christ’s role in the plan of redemption in mind. (p. 60)

Reply

This is not correct. Christ is not the Son of God just as a result of sin (to play a role in the plan of redemption). Christ was the Son of God long before sin ever occurred and long before the plan of redemption took place. Mrs. White applies the birth of Christ long before the incarnation, as we saw plainly above. Let us have another testimony from her pen:

“The Scriptures **clearly** indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. [Hebrews 1:1-5 quoted] **God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.**” {EGW, 8T 268.3}

The Trinity paper is limiting the word “begotten” to the plan of redemption only. But why does Mrs. White say differently?

“Christ was the Son of God; He had been one with Him before the angels were called into existence.” {EGW, PP 38}

This makes Christ the Firstborn of heaven. Notice:

“The dedication of the first-born had its origin in the earliest times. God had promised to give the First-born of heaven to save the sinner.” {EGW, DA 51}

Therefore, we rightly conclude that Christ *is* the Firstborn of heaven. He was born first in heaven, and then later He came to earth to be *born again*! When He was born on earth He became the Son of God in **“a new sense”**. Notice:

“In His humanity He was a partaker of the divine nature. In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. Said the angel to Mary, “The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). While the Son of a human being, **He became the Son of God in a new sense.** Thus He stood in our world--**the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race.”** {EGW, 1SM 226, 227}

This means that Christ was already the Son of God *before* the incarnation and the execution of the plan of redemption. You see, He was the Son of God by birth, and He became the Son of man also by birth. That is why in His incarnation He gained the title of the Son of God in a new sense. He must have had it in an original or ‘old’ sense, or there is no sense in the prophet’s words. The only way He could already be a Son is through His birth before all creation. (Please look again at Proverbs 8:22-30, which should be understood just as it reads). It is plain from the evidence that Mrs. White did not just speak of Christ as the begotten of God in the context of the plan of redemption.

Trinity

As a result of His completed mission, as Son and Lamb of God (His birth, life and death), Jesus was crowned as King of the Universe. Now another phase of the roles designated Him would come into effect. (p. 61)

Reply

What a sad admission – that Christ as the Son of God is only “another phase of the roles” that He played! Reader, is this what *you* believe -- that Christ is only the Son of God in a role that is assigned to him? This makes the Sonship of Christ a mere role-play and a metaphor! This is far from being a *fact* as Mrs. White says. It is a sad denial of the Father and Son relationship when we begin to say that Christ is a Son by role play and role designation. Did the Father really give us His true Son? Did He really love us that much or was it just a role-play? Did Jesus actually mean what He said in John 3:16? It would do well to read the warning in 1 John 2:22. Please beware what positions you take.

Trinity

JOHN 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.

It goes without saying and requires no exegetical acrobatics, to understand that Jesus was declaring that *He* was I AM. The one who was in the burning bush, the one who gave the commandments at

mount Sinai, thus, the Y ê h ô v â h – the self-existent or eternal One, the ĕ l ô h î y m – the supreme GOD that the Hebrew nation worshipped. In simple, straight forward English language, supported by the very words of Christ, it becomes an irrefutable reality that Jesus is God. Indeed, if we are breaking the commandment that says: ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,’ then we are, in effect, blaspheming Jesus, for He was the one who spoke those words. Added to this, we have the testimony of Ellen White that says:

With solemn dignity *Jesus* answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM."

Silence fell upon the vast assembly. *The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence*, had been claimed as *His own* by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the *self-existent One*, He who had been promised to Israel, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." Micah 5:2, margin. (**Desire of Ages**, p. 469) (p. 63)

Reply

Christ claimed to be the I AM. This is exactly what we believe. Rather than trying to interpret this to suit anyone's theology, we will read the words recorded, which are easy to understand. The Bible tells us something about Christ having someone's name:

*"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: **for my name is in him.**"* Exodus 23:21, 22

In this verse the Father (Jehovah) is speaking about His Son (called Angel here) and saying that He has placed His name in His Son. This is how this verse is plainly understood.

*"In all the stupendous events of that deliverance **the mind of Jehovah was represented in Jesus.**"* {J. S. White, *Christ and the Sabbath*, p. 11}

The Bible also tells us *how* Christ obtained that name:

*"Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath **by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.**"* Hebrews 1:4

Christ inherited (by birth) a better name than all the angels. From whom did He inherit it? Let Him answer our questions:

*"**I am come in my Father's name**, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." John 5:43*

So, when Christ claimed the name "I AM" whose name was He claiming? Well, let the prophet of God answer (in the *Desire of Ages* quote above she said it plainly):

***The name of God**, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as *His own* by this Galilean Rabbi.*

*"**Christ was using the great name of God** that was given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence" {EGW, TMK 12}*

In claiming to be I AM Christ was actually claiming *the name of God*. What does that mean? What was

Christ trying to tell the Jews? Well, let us just read the next paragraph and see:

“Again the priests and rabbis cried out against Jesus as a blasphemer. His claim to be one with God had before stirred them to take His life, and a few months later they plainly declared, "For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." John 10:33. **Because He was, and avowed Himself to be, the Son of God, they were bent on destroying Him.**” {DA 470}

By claiming the name of God (His Father) Christ was highlighting to the Jews that He is the one who has the name of God. That He is the Son of God who has His Father’s name in Him. This is the meaning of Christ’s words.

“Before Abraham was, I am.” **Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God.** The message He gave to Moses to give to the children of Israel was, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." The prophet Micah writes of Him, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of Thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; **whose goings forth** have been from of old, from everlasting.” {ST, August 29, 1900 par. 13}

The fact that Jesus claimed “the name of God” (I AM) is evidence that He is the Son of the Great I AM, God the Father.

“All through the pages of sacred history, where the dealings of God with His chosen people are recorded, there are burning traces of **the great I AM**. . . . In all these revelations of the divine presence, **the glory of God was manifested through Christ.**” {TMK 102}

Christ has the name of His Father by inheritance (Hebrews 1:4). Therefore, in claiming to be I AM Christ is actually affirming His divine Sonship, for it is a divine title. He is saying that He is the self-existent One who was promised to Israel. Micah 5:2 is a prophecy about the Son of God, the King of Israel, whose goings forth (origin) is from the days of eternity (everlasting). He claimed to be one with God because He was brought forth from God. You see, when Jesus said “before Abraham was, I AM”, He was claiming to be the Messiah, the King of Israel, the One who had been promised to Israel. The One whose origin (birth) was from the days of eternity as the prophet states. It was the Son of God who had been promised to Israel. When Christ claimed the name of God he was claiming to be one with God. The priests and rabbis understood this for they were once again bent on destroying him because “He was and avowed Himself to be the Son of God.”

Trinity

Jehovah is the name given to Christ. (**The Signs of the Times, May 3, 1899, p. 2.**) (p. 63)

Reply

Let the reader ask himself the following question: Who *gave* that name to Christ, and why? The answer should be easy if one believes that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. But, if one chooses to reject the *fact* that Christ is the begotten of God, there is a serious problem. If Christ is begotten then He has the name of His Father by right of inheritance. But, if He was not begotten (as the Trinity paper asserts) then why should He be given the Father’s name? Why not have His own name?

Let us demonstrate that “Jehovah” is the proper name of God the Father:

*“That men may know that thou, **whose name alone is JEHOVAH**, art **the most high** over all the earth.”* Psalms 83:18

*“And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, **thou Son of the most high God?** I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.”* Mark 5:7

The Most High God is Jehovah. Christ is the Son of the Most High God, and therefore has the name of His Father which is Jehovah. Let us confirm from the Spirit of Prophecy:

“Jehovah is the only true God, and He is to be revered and worshiped.” {6T 166}1901

(See John 17:3)

“The sacrifice of **the Son of God** was made that human nature might be elevated, and restored to its original purity. **Jehovah suffered the glory of his Son** to be veiled that the fallen race might be redeemed.” {RH, July 15, 1909 par. 2}

“The stately tread of the Lord **Jehovah and of his Son** was upon that mountain. At intervals, between the bursts of the thunder were sounds as of a trumpet swelling louder and louder till it rose above the war of the elements.” {ST, December 11, 1879 par. 14}

“As **Jehovah, the supreme Ruler**, God could not personally communicate with sinful men, but He so loved the world that He sent Jesus to our world as a revelation of Himself.” {9MR 122}1903

“Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, **Himself the Source and Sustainer of all**, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship.” {PP 305.4}1890

“But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. “I do nothing of Myself,” said Christ; “the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father.” “I seek not Mine own glory,” but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, **the Father's life** flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to **the great Source of all**. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” {DA 21.2}1898

“The Ancient of Days is **God the Father**. Says the psalmist: “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.” Psalm 90:2. **It is He, the source of all being**, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the judgment.” {GC 479.2}1911

“He [God] is revealed as **the monarch of the universe**, about to set up His everlasting kingdom--**the Ancient of days, the living God, the Source of all wisdom, the Ruler of the present, the Revealer of the future.**” {16MR 333, 334}1896

This makes it very plain that “Jehovah” is the proper name of God the Father. Christ has that same name because He has been *given* it. He obtained it not because He accomplished some great achievement, but because He was *begotten* of God!

“This name was not given to Christ in consequence of some great achievement, but it is His by right of inheritance. Speaking of the power and greatness of Christ, the writer to the Hebrews says that He is made so much better than the angels, because “He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” Heb. 1:4. **A son always rightfully takes the name of the father; and Christ, as “the only begotten Son of God,” has rightfully the same name.”** {E. J. Waggoner, *Christ And His Righteousness*, pp. 11-13. 1890}

“Only one being in the universe besides the Father bears the name of God, **and that is His Son, Jesus Christ.”** {J. E. White, *The Coming King*, p. 33}

Having said all the above, we do not mean to suggest that Christ is not divine (is not God). He is indeed God in the highest sense because He was begotten of the only true God, and therefore has the same nature of His Father to the fullest sense. This is what He meant in John 5:23.

Trinity

It does not take much to figure out that Paul is not talking about the Melchisedec of Genesis 14. ... There is only one High Priest that could abide continually and that could fulfil the timeless criteria Paul lays out in his statement – that High Priest is Jesus Christ – who is, ‘*without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,*’ and who is, right now and for eternity, ‘*a priest continually.*’ (p. 67)

Reply

No, actually, Paul *is* talking about the Melchisedec of Genesis 14, as v.1 makes it very plain.

*“For **this** Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, **who met Abraham** returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him.”* Hebrews 7:1

Paul is *not* talking about Christ in this passage. He makes this plain through a number of things that he says. In v.3 he says “but made like unto the Son of God” thus showing that he is not talking about the Son of God Himself, but using Melchisedec as an *example* to represent Christ. The Trinity paper says Paul is talking about Christ Himself when he says “without father”. But this is false, for Christ does indeed have a Father!

Paul is likening the *priesthood* of Melchisedec to Christ’s priesthood. He is not talking about the *person* of Christ, but rather about the *priesthood* of Christ. This is further confirmed from v. 4 where it is plain that Paul is speaking of the man Melchisedec and not Christ “*Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.*” When Paul says of Melchisedec that he has no father or mother he is speaking of his lineage, as it says “without descent” and the margin says “without pedigree”. He explains what he means by that in v. 6 “But he whose descent is not counted”. That is why the *priesthood* of Melchisedec is considered “without beginning of days not end of life” for it represents the priesthood of the Son of God which is eternal “but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually”. This is the plain meaning of the text if we read the verses in their context. It basically is talking about the *priesthood* of Christ represented in Melchisedec, not the *person* of Christ.

Trinity

Another interesting text about the Saviour is to be found in this prophetic statement by Isaiah:

ISAIAH 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (p. 67)

Reply

The Son is the everlasting Father, not of himself, nor of his Father, but of his children. His language is “*I and the children which God hath given me.*” Hebrews 2:13.

“However much a shepherd may love his sheep, he loves his sons and daughters more. **Jesus is not only our shepherd; He is our "everlasting Father."** And He says, "I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father." John 10:14, 15, R. V. What a statement is this!--the only-begotten Son, He who is in the bosom of the Father, He whom God has declared to be "the Man that is My fellow" (Zech. 13:7),--**the communion between Him and the eternal God is taken to represent the communion between Christ and His children on the earth!**" {EGW, DA 483}

Trinity

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

1:9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, [even] thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

1:10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

These texts, although they speak of the Father conferring such status on the Son, are not an indication that the Son is in any way inferior to the Father. The terms for God and Lord, used in this passage, are used interchangeably for both Father and Son. (p. 68)

Reply

We do not seek to be understood to say that Jesus Christ is not God. He is God in the fullest and highest sense. He has the very nature of His Father, which is the divine nature. Christ has this divine nature because He is the only begotten Son of God. He came out of His Father. How can Christ be born of His Father and not have His very own nature? When we have children, how much less human are they than the parents? Not less at all, but they are equal. So also Christ is equal possessing the very nature of His Father. The Father says to the Son, “*Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.*” Heb. 1:8. The Son is called “*The mighty God.*” Isa. 9:6. And when he comes again to earth his waiting people will exclaim, “*This is our God.*” Isa. 25:9. It is the will of the Father that we should thus honor the Son. In doing so we render supreme honor to the Father. If we dishonor the Son we dishonor the Father; for he requires us to honor his Son.

But though the Son is called God yet there is a “*God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” 1 Pet. 1:3.

Though the Father says to the Son, “*Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever*”, yet, that throne is given Him of his Father; and because he “*loved righteousness and hated iniquity*”, He further says, “*Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee.*” Heb. 1:9. And God says further, “*Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands.*” Hebrews 1:8-10. Here we find the Father addressing the Son as God. When the Father Himself gives this honour to the Son, what is man, that he should withhold it? Let us uphold the direct testimony concerning the Divinity of Christ and the fact that He is the Creator of all things.

Let no one imagine that we would exalt Christ at the expense of the Father or would ignore the Father. That cannot be, for their interests are one. We honour the Father in honouring the Son. We are mindful of Paul’s words, that “*to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him*” (1 Corinthians 8:6); just as we have already quoted, that it was by Him that God made the worlds. All things proceed ultimately from God, the Father; even Christ Himself proceeded and came forth from the Father, but it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and that He should be the direct, immediate Agent in every act of creation.

The inspired messenger made it very clear for us:

“The Scriptures **clearly** indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. [Hebrews 1:1-5 quoted] **God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.**” {EGW, 8T 268.3}

Trinity

Those who in any way lessen, even in the smallest degree, the status and eternal origins of Christ, exhibit the same spirit that spurred Lucifer to reject Jesus as his superior...It may not be that we are aspiring to be as God and that we are trying to cause a conscious rebellion against Christ, as Lucifer did, but when we lessen His authority and claim that the Father alone is the supreme GOD we worship, then we are, in effect, manifesting the same logic and spirit that motivated Lucifer to make Christ less than what He really was. This type of definition of the status of Christ will not lead us closer to heaven or closer to Jesus, but will, as in the case of Lucifer, lead us further from Christ and straight to eternal damnation. (pp. 69, 70)

Reply

Let the reader remind himself of what Lucifer wanted to obscure in heaven. What was it that led Lucifer away from Christ and straight to eternal damnation? What were Lucifer and his angels trying to obscure in heaven?

“Angels were expelled from heaven because they would not work in harmony with God. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus. This **fact** the [fallen] angels would obscure, **that Christ was the only begotten Son of God**, and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ.” {EGW, TDG 128}

So, it is not lessening of Christ to confess that He *is* the only begotten of God! It is not in the smallest degree lowering of His divine heritage and status. On the other hand, it is those who side with Lucifer in trying to obscure the *fact* that Christ is indeed the only begotten Son of God that are lowering, demeaning, and robbing Christ of His divine heritage! There is no greater status to ascribe to Christ than that which His own Father declared “This is my beloved Son”. Let all people beware lest they make Christ less than what He really is by robbing His heritage. Let all men beware lest they be found on the side of the great

arch-rebel in denying the divine Sonship of Christ. You have been warned. He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear.

Trinity

Again I emphasise, it may be hard for us to understand the mystery of the Godhead, how Father, Son and Spirit are still, all three, God. We are not asked to understand the finer details, but to accept the simple fact that we are worshipping God without breaking the commandments when we believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit as being, in their different functions, God. (p. 72)

Reply

It is amazing that the Trinity paper makes this bold admission and yet people are not alarmed. If Father, Son and Spirit are all three God then you simply have three gods! Is this what we are to worship? And while the paper makes this bold claim, it is still asserted to be a mystery! It is not God's desire that we worship Him ('them', according to the Trinity paper) as a mystery! The words of Christ still apply to this day "*Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship*" John 4:22. It is God's desire that we *know* Him that we may worship *Him* in spirit and in truth. "*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*" John 17:3

Trinity

COLOSSIANS 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood,
[even] the forgiveness of sins:

1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the *firstborn* of every
creature:

... This is not a text that proves that Christ was born – thus did not exist from the beginning with the Father. Rather, this text speaks of Christ's exalted position. The expression, 'Firstborn,' 'prototokos,' in the Greek, is a title not a definition of His origins or biological status. (p. 73)

Reply

When the text says "firstborn" we understand that to mean "firstborn"! This is the exalted position of Christ. Notice how the prophet described this exalted position:

"The Scriptures **clearly** indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. [Hebrews 1:1-5 quoted] **God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.**" {EGW, 8T 268.3}

We see here that the prophet says Christ was "given an exalted position". Why was Christ given that position if He was already a co-equal God? Because He is the *Son* of God and the Firstborn of heaven. Here is how it is further explained:

"The dedication of the first-born had its origin in the earliest times. **God had promised to give the First-born of heaven to save the sinner.**" {EGW, DA 51}

It was this Firstborn of heaven that was sent into the world "*And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.*" Hebrews 1:6.

It is truly amazing how in order to defend the theory of the trinity (whatever brand it may be) one must believe that “one” means “three”, “begotten” does not mean “born”, “firstborn” does not mean “firstborn”, and “Son” does not mean “Son”, “Father” does not mean “Father”, “His Spirit” means another different being, and so on and so forth! Is this how the reader wishes to read his Bible?

Trinity

We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who *is as much a person as God is a person*, is walking through these grounds. **Manuscript 66, 1899. (From a talk to the students at the Avondale School.) {Ev 616.5} (p. 74)**

Reply

We said it before and we say it again. If people would just do their homework they would learn not to misquote and alter statement. The Trinity paper seems to either alter statements or to misquote them from unreliable sources. Once again, let us examine this in its context.

This classic example of misquotation is repeated time and time again. We were warned very plainly *not* to do this with the Spirit of Prophecy.

“There are some, who upon accepting erroneous theories, strive to establish them by collecting from my writings statements of truth, which they use, **separated from their proper connection and perverted by association with error**. Thus seeds of heresy, springing up and growing rapidly into strong plants, are surrounded by many precious plants of truth, and in this way a mighty effort is made to vindicate the genuineness of the spurious plants.” {E. G. White, *This Day With God*, p. 126}

Now let us look at that statement in its full context (which, not being quoted, is hidden from the reader).

“**The Lord** says this because **He** knows it is for our good. **He** would build a wall around us, to keep us from transgression, so that **His** blessing and love may be bestowed on us in rich measure. This is the reason we have established a school here. The Lord instructed us that this was the place in which we should locate, and we have had every reason to think that we are in the right place. We have been brought together as a school, *and we need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds*, **unseen by human eyes; that the Lord God is our Keeper and Helper. He hears every word we utter** and knows every thought of the mind.” {E. G. White, *Sermons and Talks Volume Two*, pp. 136, 137} {Also appearing in *Manuscript Releases Vol. 7*, p. 299}

As can be plainly seen, the statement appearing in *Evangelism* was doctored (altered) by the editors to suit their own thinking. In 1946 the editors and compilers of *Evangelism* (compiled by LeRoy E. Froom and friends) selected a number of E. G. White statements on the Godhead (about 6-8) which seemed to imply that she was teaching the trinity doctrine. Remember, the book *Evangelism* by Ellen White is a posthumous compilation (after her death) with subheadings she did not supply. They are supplied by Froom and friends, such as the use of the word ‘Trinity’. She never used the word in all her writings. It was LeRoy Froom who supplied the word trinity in the subheadings of the book *Evangelism*, as well as the carefully “selected” (and edited) quotes by Ellen White on the Godhead.

Yet the prophet has not failed to warn us of such attempts either.

“There will be those once united with us in the faith who will search for **new, strange doctrines**, for something odd and sensational to present to the people. They will bring in all conceivable fallacies,

and will present them as coming from Mrs. White, that they may beguile souls.” {E. G. White, *Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 41 }

Who has a right to meddle with the words of the inspired Messenger? Why should the editors of *Evangelism* feel a need to place a full stop where the prophet places a comma and continues her explanation? Why should they thus cut up this sentence? And why should the Trinity paper fail to check the original sources before presenting this argument before God’s people? Anyone reading the whole paragraph should know the answer.

Let us now examine the statement carefully in its full context. Mrs. White is not talking of more than one individual, for she is using the singular pronoun “he” all through. If she was talking of more than one she would have used “they” rather than “he”. Therefore, she is talking only of one person; “The Lord”. It is “The Lord” who is our keeper, not someone else. The Lord is the one who hears every word. It is the Lord who is “unseen by human eyes”. And even though He is there by His Holy Spirit yet He is as much a real person as if He were here physically! This is the meaning of that statement. His personal presence is His person, which is as much a person as He is a person.

Now let us compare the Spirit of Prophecy (the key) here a little and there a little:

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” Christ is not here referring to his doctrine, but to his person, the divinity of his character.” {E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 5, 1906 par. 12 }

How plain! When Christ speaks of the Spirit He is referring “to **his** person” (not to a different person other than Himself). This is why it is as much a person as God is a person, for it is His very own person!

“Christ walks unseen through our streets. With messages of mercy **He** comes to our homes. With all who are seeking to minister in His name, **He** waits to co-operate. **He is in the midst of us**, to heal and to bless, if we will receive **Him**.” {E. G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 107 }

“Remember that Jesus is beside you wherever you go, noting your actions *and listening to your words*. Would you be ashamed to hear his voice speaking to you, and to know that *he hears your conversation*?” {E. G. White, *The Youth’s Instructor*, February 4, 1897 par. 3 }

Who walks unseen in our streets? Who listens to our words and hears our conversation? Why, it is Jesus who is beside us. But, how is He beside us?

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

“By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you.” {E. G. White, *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, January 15, 1893 par. 8 }

Therefore, we rightly conclude that the Holy Spirit is the unseen personal presence of the Father and the

Son. The Holy Spirit is the unseen person of Christ.

“The Lord Jesus standing by the side of the canvasser, walking with them, is the chief worker. If we recognize Christ as the One who is with us to prepare the way, the Holy Spirit by our side will make impressions in just the lines needed.” {E. G. White, *Colporteur Ministry*, p. 107}

Trinity

The *Holy Spirit is a person*, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God. . . . **Ms 20, 1906. {Ev 616.6}**

The *Holy Spirit has a personality*, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God." **Manuscript 20, 1906. {Ev 617.1}** (p. 74)

Reply

Let us quote the entire statement and we shall see how things clear up. Here it is:

“The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."” {*Evangelism*, pp. 616, 617}

The quoted verse (1 Corinthians 2:11) is the key to understanding the statement. According to Paul man and his spirit is comparable to God and His Spirit. Just as man’s spirit is not a *different* person to man, even so God’s Holy Spirit is not a *different* person to God. Just as man’s spirit is his very own person, even so God’s Spirit is His very own person. When we use the Testimonies as the key, we will discover some very important basic principles.

“The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. "The Lord's throne is in heaven" (Psalm 11:4); **yet by His Spirit He is everywhere present**. He has an intimate knowledge of, and a personal interest in, all the works of His hand.” {E. G. White, *Education*, p. 132}

“In giving us **His Spirit**, God gives us **Himself**, making **Himself** a fountain of **divine influences**, to give health and life to the world.” {E. G. White, *Testimonies Volume 7*, p. 273}

If we keep the above principles in mind things will be much easier to understand. The Spirit has a personality because God has a personality. In giving us His Spirit, God is giving us Himself, not someone else. When God gives us Himself (in Spirit) it is not devoid of personality. It is not just some impersonal force or essence. No, it is very personal and intimate. It is God’s own person, having God’s very own personality. The same goes for the fact that the Spirit is a divine person. This is because God is a divine person. You see, God is a spirit, and yet a person.

“God is a **Spirit**; yet He is a **personal Being**; for so He has revealed **Himself**.” {E. G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 413}

The Holy Spirit is a person because God is a person, and the Holy Spirit is the person of God. It is also

the person of Christ.

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” **Christ is not here referring to his doctrine, but to his person, the divinity of his character.**” {E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 5, 1906 par. 12}

This is why the Spirit has a personality and is a person.

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

Trinity

We are to co-operate with the *three highest powers in heaven, --the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*,--and these powers will work through us, making us workers together with God.-- **Ibid., p. 617. {7ABC 442.5}** (p. 75)

Reply

The three highest powers in heaven are not here defined as three co-equal beings, but merely listed. There is no question that there are three powers in heaven (Father, Son and the Holy Ghost), but this statement tells us nothing more than that. Does this statement tell us the relationship between these three powers? To use this statement to prove a trinity of three co-equal, co-eternal beings would be poor scholarly work.

The three great powers can be correctly understood in light of what Ellen White means. She clearly understood and taught that there is a Father, and a Son and a Holy Spirit. That makes three. But it is the relationship between those three that is further clarified in other places. For example, it is clearly stated that God is the Father of Christ:

“God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” {E. G. White, *Testimonies Volume 8*, p. 268}

Elsewhere she explains the relation with the Spirit, it being the spirit of Christ:

“Let them be thankful to God for His manifold mercies and be kind to one another. They have one God and one Saviour; and **one Spirit--the Spirit of Christ**--is to bring unity into their ranks.” {E. G. White, *Testimonies Volume 9*, p. 189}

She tells us clearly the spirit of Christ is the soul of His life. It is the very life of His own life.

“Christ declared that after his ascension, he would send to his church, as his crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take his place. This Comforter is the Holy Spirit,--**the soul of his life**, the efficacy of his church, **the light and life of the world. With his Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin.**” {E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, May 19, 1904 par. 1}

“**Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life.** The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind.” {E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 827}

The breath of Christ is His spirit and life (John 20:22). It is in no way talking about another individual being. This is the correct and consistent understanding of “the three highest powers in heaven”; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Trinity

RESULTS OF REJECTING THE DEITY OF CHRIST: (p. 75)

Reply

The Trinity paper must be speaking of someone else, certainly not us. Anyone who is even vaguely familiar with our position will know that we uphold the divinity of Christ without any shadow of a doubt. Christ *is* the divine Son of God.

Trinity

It is obvious though, from a reading of Daniell’s letter and Ellen White’s correspondence on this issue that they were not at all focusing on a Catholic Trinitarian heresy but the heresy of pantheism – which is not the Catholic Trinity. (p. 76)

Reply

We do not say that Kellogg was teaching a Catholic Trinity. He was not. He was teaching a trinity of three co-equal god beings, namely, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Anyone reading his letter will see that plainly.

Trinity

Kellogg’s reason for mentioning his belief in the Trinity was not done to indicate the basis for his pantheistic philosophy (p. 76)

Reply

But, this is exactly what he actually said.

He said that if he had believed this [trinity] before writing the book, he could have expressed his views without giving the wrong impression the book now gives. (p. 74, 75)

That means that Kellogg’s pantheism was better understood by him when he accepted the theory of the trinity -- the theory of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This is his very own admission!

Trinity

He used the term Trinity in the same way that many SDA people use it today, to describe their belief in the existence of three coeternal, individual persons of the Godhead. (p. 76)

Reply

In other words, the Trinity paper admits the very thing that we are trying to say all along -- that Kellogg's trinity of three god-beings is rampant today. The author sees no problem with this brand of the trinity for it is the same one the paper subscribes to! So, if Dr. Kellogg were alive today he would have no problem with the Trinity paper and could worship the same god! If this is not sufficient to cause all Seventh-day Adventists to rise in alarm, we truly do not know what is. Let us hear Mrs. White's comments on the god that Kellogg had come to accept (the god of three co-equal beings):

“You are not definitely clear on the personality of God, which is everything to us as a people. **You have virtually destroyed the Lord God Himself.”--Letter 300, 1903.**

Obviously the Trinity paper sees no problem with this! It says Kellogg used the term trinity in the same way the Seventh-day Adventist people use it today! May the Lord have mercy upon His dear confused people! This brand of the trinity is certainly not the Catholic one. It is much worse, for it is Tritheism, the belief in three co-equal and separate god-beings; three gods! We have seen earlier how this belief is condemned by the very leaders of the church. The problem is compounded as more people speak on this topic. Hence there is much confusion and chaos. This was Kellogg's foundation for his pantheism, and people today are building on the very same foundation. Mrs. White made it clear what the doctor was doing:

“Your leader [Kellogg] has been moving the foundation timbers one by one, and his reasoning would soon leave us with no certain foundation for our faith.” (SpTB07 39.2)

Trinity

The ASDAT make a huge noise about the fact that Kellogg was teaching the Catholic Trinity (p. 77)

Reply

We need not make a noise about this, because we are all in agreement that it was not the Catholic trinity. It is actually the same trinity that that Trinity paper promotes. It is the trinity that is really nothing but polytheism, as identified by the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Australia. If the reader fails to see any danger in this, then we truly wonder what other means could be used to arouse one out of sleep.

Trinity

Another interesting straw man is the reference to the fact that the Bible and Ellen White never used the terms, ‘God the Son’ and ‘God the Holy Spirit.’ (p. 77)

Reply

This fact is actually true in every sense of the word. The Trinity paper tries to use human reasoning to defend these two gods which do not exist in any inspiration, either Bible or Spirit of Prophecy. We should ask ourselves: why do we have to insist on ascribing to God names and titles that He does not use for Himself? Does He not know best? This is not some name of a doctrine or a belief. These names are used to describe the very God that is being worshipped, and yet God has given us no liberty to pick and choose which names we ascribe to Him. Men should beware lest in their fallible might they overstep the bounds of God's majesty and holiness! Holy and reverend is His name.

Trinity

This is like saying that because my wife does not refer to me as ‘the father, Brian,’ I cannot thus be the father of my children. Does it make any difference whether she refers to me in this way or whether she says: ‘Brian is the father of our children?’ It makes no difference at all. Either I am a father or I am not. (pp. 76, 77)

Reply

Again, this is a human example, but without any Scripture to support the claim. Yet, even the human example falls short of successfully meeting the mark. We shall answer like with like. It is really not that hard to comprehend, if the reader will only exercise some thought. Let us say, if Jim had a son we would call it “the son of Jim”. Now what man in his right mind would turn that around and say “Jim the son” and insist that it holds the *same* meaning!?! Brethren, it is a Holy God that we are dealing with. Please, let us be reverent and respectful enough to call Him by the names He has chosen for Himself, not the names that *we* fallen mortals would like to call Him! It is for this reason that we abide with the words and terms that inspiration reveals to us, the words which the Holy Ghost teaches, not the words which man’s wisdom teaches. “*Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*” 1 Corinthians 2:13. If we be mocked as having “less common sense than one would expect from a five year old” because we desire to honor our God, so be it.

Trinity

It is unfortunate that George R. Knight states that ‘most’ of our pioneers would not be able to join the SDA Church today because of our fundamental beliefs. It would’ve been wise for him to have pointed out at what point in their experience they would have found themselves in opposition to what we believe today – especially with relation to the doctrine of the Trinity. (p. 79)

Reply

We notice that the Trinity paper is in disagreement with a noted church historian who has admitted a very sad fact -- that the pioneers would be unable to join the church they founded, because that church is today worshipping a *different* god!

Trinity

Would Ellen White, one of our most significant founding members, have been able to accept what we teach regarding the Godhead today? If not, then it would seem ironical that we use so many of her statements to clarify our position on this doctrine. The answer is plainly and simply, Ellen White, an Adventist pioneer, would have been able to accept belief number 2 that deals with our doctrine on the Trinity, in spite of the fact that the brethren choose to caption it as ‘Trinity.’ If she would not be able to accept it, then we had better stop using her statements on this belief as a means of giving added insight into the Godhead. (p. 79)

Reply

This is a good question. But only Ellen White can answer it, not the Trinity paper on her behalf. Certainly, some would like to comfort themselves by saying "Surely, Mrs. White would see no problem in what we teach today. Why, we even use her very own writings to teach it", but this is what Kellogg did in his day to teach his brand of the trinity. Was he correct in doing this? Let the prophet answer:

“I am compelled to speak in denial of the claim that the teachings of *Living Temple* can be sustained by statements from my writings. There may be in this book expressions and sentiments that are in harmony with my writings. And there may be in my writings many statements which, taken from their connection, and interpreted according to the mind of the writer of *Living Temple*, would seem to be in

harmony with the teachings of this book. This may give apparent support to the assertion that the sentiments in *Living Temple* are in harmony with my writings. But God forbid that this sentiment should prevail.” {EGW, 1SM 203}

“*There are many who interpret that which I write in the light of their own preconceived opinions. You know what this means. A division in understanding and diverse opinions is the sure result.*” {E. G. White, *Selected Messages Book 3*, p. 79}

So, not everyone who quotes Mrs. White (according to their own preconceived opinions) is correct. How, then, are we supposed to understand what Mrs. White writes? Well, let her continue:

“The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture.” {E. G. White, *Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 42}

This we have endeavored to do whenever we are faced with a statement disagreed upon. Rather than choosing to follow man, we would search the Spirit of Prophecy more deeply to determine the exact meaning. The Trinity paper suggests that Mrs. White would not have a problem with the brand of the trinity it espouses (three co-equal co-eternal god-beings who are all separate). Let us ask ourselves whether a believer in such a trinity would say any of the following statements?

“Christ the Word, the Only **Begotten** of God, was one with the eternal Father,--one in nature, in character, and in purpose,--**the only being in all the universe** that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.” {EGW, GC 493. 1888}

“**The only being who was one with God** lived the law in humanity, descended to the lowly life of a common laborer, and toiled at the carpenter's bench with his earthly parent.” {EGW, ST, October 14, 1897 par. 3}

“Let them be thankful to God for His manifold mercies and be kind to one another. They have **one God and one Saviour**; and **one Spirit--the Spirit of Christ**--is to bring unity into their ranks.” {EGW, 9T 189}

“The Scriptures **clearly** indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. [Hebrews 1:1-5 quoted] **God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.**” {EGW, 8T 268.3}

““God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,”-- **not a son by creation**, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, **but a Son begotten** in the express image of the Father's person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” {EGW, ST, May 30, 1895 par. 3}

“The human family cost **God and his Son Jesus Christ** an infinite price.” {*Special Testimonies On Education*, p. 21}

“No man, nor even the highest angel, can estimate the great cost; **it is known only to the Father and**

the Son.” {E. G. White, *The Bible Echo*, October 28, 1895 par. 4}

“The Father and the Son **alone** are to be exalted.” {EGW, YI, July 7, 1898 par. 2}

The above statement alone should be sufficient to abolish *any* theory of a trinity. Honestly, how could Ellen White (if she was really a Trinitarian) make a statement like that? What about the third co-equal being that the Trinity paper advocates? Where does this spirit fit in the picture if only the Father and Son are to be exalted? The reader should clearly see whether Ellen White is in harmony with the current brand of the trinity being advocated or not. It should be plain for all to see, and we have not even quoted the half! If Mrs. White believed any brand of the trinity, she certainly used the worst language possible to describe it! Either that, or she did *not* believe it. We believe the latter.

Trinity

The first thing that makes null and void the argument that the church is fulfilling the omega by teaching the Catholic Trinity, is the simple fact, as proven earlier, that she is not. Her teaching on the Godhead is not the Catholic Trinity. [...] Certainly, the omega has to do with rejecting truths, publishing books of a new order and accepting a system of intellectual Philosophy, but is this inclusive of the Catholic Trinity? If we were teaching this, then perhaps, yes. Might we still apostatize to the point of doing this? Only God knows the answer to that question. [...] If a Catholic Trinity was ever to be taught, then yes, we could include that in the description, but if and till such a time arrives, it would be a fabricated, fallacious accusation to make. (pp. 80, 81)

Reply

That the Catholic trinity is present among the ranks of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been adequately discussed. Maybe the author of the Trinity paper was not aware of this, but we leave it to the reader to judge the ramifications of this fact.

Conclusion

We have only given attention in this paper to the arguments and claims that directly deal with the doctrine of the Godhead. Other subject matter that the Trinity paper raises (such as the church and Babylon, which even many Trinitarians believe) has not been addressed here as it does not have relevance on determining the truth about God. We have just addressed the issue of the Godhead. This issue, very simply put, boils down to this:

Man has declared: One God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

God has declared: “But to us there is but one God, the Father” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

Shall we believe man before God?

“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” Romans 3:4

In closing we would like to appeal to the author of the Trinity paper and to every reader of this paper, to please study carefully what you profess to believe. We were once like you are now, zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. It is only by study and prayer that truth can be found, not in following or trusting in man and making flesh our arm. It is our sincere desire that every Seventh-day Adventist in the land would worship God in spirit and in truth; that we all may be in harmony over the God who raised this movement, and who will see it to the end, if it remains faithful to Him. Nothing breaks our hearts more than to see the confusion that is rampant among the ranks today; confusion over the God we worship. We

pray that this response helps to clarify our position and the truth we believe. We make this response only in love. If in anyway you have taken offence by anything we have said, please accept our humblest apologies. If you have taken any offence by anything we have quoted from inspiration, then please examine your heart before the Lord and respond to His Spirit. This is our sincere prayer in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Your brethren in the Lord

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