

Building On Solid Rock



Re-Printed by:
emv (Shema) Publishers
P. O. Box 7137
Kariong, NSW 2250
Australia

www.acts321.org

(for more titles, see inside back cover)

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.' 2 Corinthians 4:1, 2, 13

INTRODUCTION

The Prophetess of the Lord once said, "There is absolutely no safeguard against evil but truth...There are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness." (*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 30)

About 1½ years ago I began to understand more fully what she meant by this statement. It was late spring, and I had driven north to visit a close friend. Upon arriving at her home and exchanging greetings she immediately began sharing with me her concern over one of the major teachings of Christianity. **The teaching she was having trouble with was the concept of the Trinity.** How could 3 persons really be one God? "The teaching of the Trinity is false," she said. My immediate reaction was one of frustration and anger. How could it be wrong? The Bible talks of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; isn't that a Trinity? Despite my apparent frustration she invited me to sit down and go through some Scriptures with her. Reluctantly, I obliged thinking I would set my friend straight. Imagine my surprise when God began to take portions of Scriptures that had been obscured to my mind, and began to bring understanding to me. Questions began to flood my mind. Was my belief that God is a Trinity really correct? Doesn't truth need to make sense? Can three really be one?

I recalled all the times I had attempted to teach my children about God. Inevitably I would go to the refrigerator and pull out an apple. Then I would go sit down between the boys and proceed to tell them God was like that apple. God was the family name, so the whole apple represented God. The Father might be represented by the core, the Son by the white fleshy part, and the Holy Spirit by the skin. Then, I would ask my boys if they understood. The response was always the same. They would look at me with bewildered eyes and shake their heads "no". My response, too, was always the same, "that's all right boys, nobody really understands because God is a mystery." Now I was beginning to wonder! Was God really that mysterious? How can we serve God when we don't even know who he is? I had to know the answers to the torrent of questions that were now racing around my mind. That day began a search for both Bob and I that has brought us the most abundant

joy we have ever known. As we attempted to put aside all our preconceived ideas and diligently searched the Scriptures to find out just who God is, a peace and joy filled our hearts like we had never experienced before. The God of Heaven has become very real to us and His love in giving His Son has filled our lives.

Bob and I would like to share with you what we have found in our study. We pray that you might see the simple truth about God that He so clearly gave us in His Holy Word. We are told that, "We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. **With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God.**" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 598)

Until someone challenged our belief, we didn't realize our weakness. Bob and I would like to challenge you to search the Scriptures as you never have before. Study for yourselves; prove all things and like the Bereans of old test to see if "these things are so." May the understanding of who God is, fill your heart with the deepest sense of joy and gratitude as it has for us! God bless you in your search for truth.

THE TRINITY

At the present time, the Adventist church has adopted the teaching of the Triune God. Few Adventists, however, realise that this was not the original teaching about God held by our church. I am also realising that many of our people do not really understand what the belief in the Trinity teaches. **The following quotes are taken from our doctrinal book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*.**

"...John's Gospel reveals that the Godhead consists of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal persons having a unique and mysterious relationship."

"There is no distance between the persons of the triune God. All three are divine, yet they share their divine powers and qualities. In human organisations final authority rests in one person- a president, king, or prime minister. In the Godhead, final authority resides in all three members."

"While the Godhead is not one in person, God is one in purpose, mind, and character. This oneness does not obliterate the distinct personalities of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Nor does the separateness of personalities within the Deity destroy the monotheistic thrust of the Scripture, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God." (*SAB*, p. 23)

"Within the Godhead an economy of function exists. God does not unnecessarily duplicate work. ... The Father seems to act as source, the Son as mediator, and the Spirit as actualiser or applier." (*SAB*, p. 24)

These few statements give us a picture of what the Trinity teaching says. We find:

3 beings who are co-eternal

3 beings who are all immortal

3 beings who are all powerful, all knowing etc.

3 beings who are worthy of worship and praise

3 beings each acting a different role

So then if all three members of the Godhead are all eternal, they have all existed throughout eternity as distinct persons. They all then must be the same age. If this is true, that they all are the same age,

then the **titles** which they possess merely reflect the roles taken to act out the plan of redemption. They cannot then be taken in a literal sense. For example, the **Son of God** then, is **not really God's Son, He is the member of the Godhead playing the role of the Son.** Elder Frank Holbrook explained it this way,

"The term Trinity is applied to the Christian doctrine of God **It may be inferred from the Scriptures** that when the Godhead laid out the plan of salvation at some point in eternity past, **They also took certain positions or roles to carry out the provisions of the plan"** (*Signs of the Times*, July, 1985)

The Scripture teaches us over and over again that God gave His Son, but the Trinity tells us that Jesus wasn't really God's Son, He was the member of the Godhead playing the role of the Son. The Trinitarian would say that Jesus was referred to as God's Son because of His birth in Bethlehem. The implication of the Trinity tells us that anyone of the members of the Godhead could have played the role of the Son.

Please notice this statement by J. R. Spangler:

"To me this signifies the **interchangeableness of the members of the Godhead** since they are one in action and purpose." (*Review & Herald*, Oct. 21, 1971)

This in abbreviated form is the teaching of the Trinity. Was this teaching established in our church from its earliest years? The answer is an unquestionable **"no."** *Issues*, the book put out by the church to discuss the issues dealing with the independent ministries makes this fact very clear. Read pages 45, 46, 437, 444. **The church has no hesitation at all in saying that we were not a Trinitarian church at our beginnings. This teaching has come into our faith in degrees:**

1928 -- L.E. Froom's book *The Coming of the Comforter*

1931 -- First use of Trinitarian concept in statement of beliefs (unofficial)

1955 -- Pro Trinitarian position taken with Evangelicals

1980 -- First time Trinity doctrine officially voted as part of doctrinal beliefs.

It is extremely interesting to see what was written in the Review about this issue shortly after its acceptance at the **Dallas Convention in 1980**.

"While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, **it is assumed** as a fact by Bible writers and mentioned several times."

"Only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity."

(Adventist Review, Vol. 158, No. 31, p. 4)

Is there any other doctrine that we as Seventh-day Adventists hold as truth that we have **to take by faith**? **Is there any other doctrine** that we have **no definite Scripture** that we can point to in proving our belief? **Absolutely not!** Shouldn't it **make us question** whether these things **are true**? Let's begin to take a **closer look** at this teaching.

Early Adventism

It is a well known fact, that all of the founding fathers of Adventism were not Trinitarians. As a matter of fact they had some very strong words to speak against this teaching. Some of the more notable men you may be familiar with are: E. J. Waggoner, J. H. Waggoner, Uriah Smith, A. T. Jones, James White, Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, J. N. Loughborough, R. F. Cottrell, A. J. Dennis and others. In the book *Issues* you will find the 1872 statement of belief, p. 437. You can readily note that it differs greatly from what we teach today on the Godhead. (See Appendix)

That the church acknowledges this fact about our pioneers' lack of agreement on this doctrine can be further noted from an article that appeared in Ministry magazine a few years back. It states that:

"Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism **would not be able to join the church today** if they had to subscribe to the denomination's Fundamental Beliefs."

"More specifically, most would **not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the Trinity.**"

(Ministry Magazine, Oct. 1993, p. 10)

The article then goes on to name some of the various men who would have objected. Let's take a look at some of the statements made by our founding fathers to see what they thought of this teaching.

"The greatest fault we can find in the Reformation is, the Reformers stopped reforming. Had they gone on, and onward, till they had left the last vestige of Papacy behind, such as natural immortality, sprinkling, **the trinity**, and Sunday-keeping, the church would now be free from her **unscriptural errors.**" (James White, *Review & Herald*, Feb. 7, 1856)

"The doctrine of the Trinity was established in the church by the Council of Nicea, A.D. 325. This doctrine destroys the personality of God, and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The infamous, measures by which it was forced upon the church which appear upon the pages of ecclesiastical history **might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush.**" (J. N. Andrews, *Review & Herald*, March 6, 1855)

"The Scriptures abundantly teach the pre-existence of Christ and his divinity, **but they are entirely silent in regard to a Trinity.**" (J. H. Waggoner, *The Atonement*, p. 173)

"Thus the remark is just, that the doctrine of a trinity degrades the Atonement..." (J. H. Waggoner, *The Atonement*, p. 166)

When questioned on the Trinity teaching Elder Loughborough said:

"There are many objections which we might urge, but on account of our limited space we shall reduce them to the three following: 1. It is contrary to common sense. 2. It is contrary to Scripture. 3. Its origin is pagan and fabulous... 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."** (*Review & Herald*, Nov. 5, 1861)

"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." (J. N. Loughborough, *Review & Herald*, Nov. 5, 1861)

"But to hold the doctrine of the Trinity is not so much an evidence of evil intention as of **intoxication from that wine of which all the nations have drunk.** The fact that this was one of the leading doctrines, if not the very chief, upon which the bishop of Rome was exalted to popedom, does not say much in its favor." (R. F. Cottrell, *Review & Herald*, July 6, 1869)

"Seventh-day Adventists claim to take the Word of God as supreme authority and to have 'come out of Babylon', to have renounced the vain traditions of Rome. If we should go back to the immortality of the soul, purgatory, eternal torment and Sunday Sabbath, would that be anything less than apostasy? If, however, we leap over all these **minor, secondary doctrines** and accept and teach the very **central root doctrine of Romanism, the Trinity**, and teach that the Son of God did not die, even though our words seem to be spiritual, **is this anything less than apostasy, and the very Omega of apostasy?**

"Thank God for the Spirit of Prophecy!" In the printed copy of Elder Prescott's sermon I noted that he quoted profusely from the teachings of Sunday keeping ministers of other churches- if he would read the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy more and the teachings of popular Sunday keeping ministers less; if he would in simple faith take the teachings of the testimony of Jesus, he would not make the mistake of teaching the heathen doctrine of the Trinity..." (1939 Letter by J. S. Washburn in response to an article by Elder Prescott)

It was very interesting to note that Elder Prescott in supporting the Trinity teaching was quoting Sunday keeping ministers. Elder Washburn thought this strange. He then pointed out that the Spirit of Prophecy was very clear on this issue. Elder L. E. Froom, perhaps one of the strongest proponents of the Trinity teaching in Adventism, in writing his book on this subject also made the statement that he needed to go to Sunday keeping ministers to get his information. Is that where God's people are directed to find their answers?

As you can see, many of our founding fathers of this great Advent movement had a great deal of difficulty with the teaching of a "Trinity." Why would so many of them object to this teaching? To begin with, the history surrounding its emergence into Christianity leaves one in question. **The Trinity was adopted as doctrine at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D.** You may recognise this time as the same council that brought **Sunday sacredness** to Christianity. **The defining of the Holy Spirit continued to evolve until A.D. 381**, when the present understanding was accepted. Another questionable factor is the fact that **Roman Catholicism uses this teaching as the core of its beliefs.**

"The mystery of the Trinity is the **central doctrine of the Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the church.**" (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p. 11)

What are some of those teachings of the Catholic faith that are rooted in the **doctrine of the Trinity?** A casual look gives us such teachings as: **natural immortality of the soul, Sunday-sacredness, tradition in place of the Bible, purgatory, eternal hell, the mass, praying to saints, the infallibility of the pope, the immaculate conception, and the priest's ability to forgive sins.** This should raise some very serious questions in our minds. **Can a doctrine that is the root, the very core of such error, be correct?**

Questions?

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a

rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." Matthew 7:24-27

1. Our text above from Matthew gives us a **very vital principle of Christianity**. It tells us plainly that when we **build on the solid foundation of truth** as it is in Jesus Christ, **the house will stand**. However, if we build on **the sands of error, the house will fall**. With that thought in mind let's look at a very interesting dilemma.

A. The Roman Catholic church has taken what we say is a pure teaching about God, the Trinity, and made this their foundational teaching upon which all others depend. They then have built on this foundation what we consider to be a **totally false and blasphemous system of worship that we identify as the antichrist system. Can this be?**

B. We then say that God's remnant church began their calling with a completely false and heretical view of God (**One God who brought forth a Son and they share the same Spirit**) and that on **this false foundation we have built a completely true system of worship. Can this be?**

Now the question we have to ask ourselves is: Does this make sense? Does it follow clear Biblical principles? Could it possibly be that our early pioneers **did** have a correct view of the Godhead and that they **did** build on a solid foundation to begin with? How could they be the remnant people when they had, according to our views today, such a gross misinterpretation of the very core of the Christian faith? **How could they call people out of Babylon when they were supposedly so steeped in error themselves?**

2. If the early Adventists had such a heretical view of God, **why didn't the prophetess ever rebuke them for their beliefs in this area?**

Ellen White's own husband was a solid anti-Trinitarian. Some have said that he changed his mind just before he died but notice this statement by Russell Holt:

"The evidence from his pen seems to indicate that from his spiritual affiliations with the Christian Connection, **until his death at the age of 60, James White opposed the Trinity, both on the basis of logic and Scripture, while holding a definite concept of the exalted position and divinity of Jesus Christ.** The conclusion reached is intriguing due to his unique and special relationship to the Lord's messenger, who happened to be his wife. **She was surely aware of his thinking on the subject. Did she approve? If not, why did he continue his belief? Did she simply refrain from correcting him? Why?**" (*Old Paths*, Vol. 3, No. 11 comment of Russell Holt)

It certainly is interesting that the prophetess of God would not correct her husband on such a foundational teaching if she thought he was wrong. **Could the reason be that she was in complete agreement with him and there was no need for correction?**

3. Why does neither the Bible nor the writings of Ellen White use the term "**Trinity?**"

4. Why in the *Story of Redemption, Patriarchs and Prophets*, and *Great Controversy* (especially the chapter 'The Origin of Evil') and in everywhere that she has written about Christ's pre-existence in Heaven, does she refer to Christ as "God's dear Son." or the "beloved Son," or the "begotten Son?" If He was not a literal Son in Heaven, but only a son by virtue of His birth at Bethlehem as some Trinitarians says, why does she call Him the Son before His incarnation?

5. Why in the same places where Ellen White talks of the plans of creation or of the rebellion in Heaven and the fall of Lucifer, does she never talk of the Holy Spirit as being involved? Could it be that the Holy Spirit is **not a distinct person separate from the Father and Son?**

6. Why did Lucifer get jealous in the first place? If Jesus was the Eternal God, why would he have even questioned His authority? We are told it was Christ's authority that was questioned, not the Father's authority.

7. Why do the Scriptures never tell us to worship or even pray to the Holy Spirit if He is God? Why do both the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy tell us that there are **only two beings** worthy of worship and praise, the **Father** and the **Son**?

8. Did God's **Son** really come to die as the Scriptures say, or was it the God **playing** the role of the Son who came? If in fact they took roles as the Trinitarian say they did, where is the biblical and Spirit of Prophecy proof for that?

9. We as Seventh-day Adventists take great pride in telling the world that doctrine doesn't change. We have often quoted Ellen White in this area, "**Don't remove a pillar!**" But in fact a pillar has been removed! **In 1872 we were not a Trinitarian church. By 1931 our unofficial beliefs reflected a Trinitarian tone. Is 'who God is' a pillar?** In 1 SM (chapters 24, 25) dealing with the **Alpha and Omega**, we are cautioned over and over again not to leave the platform on which we have stood for the past 50 years. (written around 1903) The question is- **Have we?**

These are some very important questions that need to be answered. As we now delve into the study on the Godhead, we will be using 3 witnesses: **The Bible**, for all our teachings must be rooted and grounded in the Holy Scriptures; **The Spirit of Prophecy**, for God has given us a "lesser light" to point us to the Scriptures; and **the Early Adventist pioneers**, because God has called these men out of Babylon and used them to form His remnant church.

We must remember that when we study any issue, we have to look at the evidence honestly and objectively. It's an easy matter to find Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy quotes **to "support" my personal view**, however, it is wise to take as much of the information on a subject that we can find, **and then** draw our conclusion. There are

certainly some texts, and some Spirit of Prophecy statements that might appear contradictory, but I believe when we look at the broad spectrum of information, **a perfect chain of truth develops. Without a doubt, I believe that the Scriptures, Ellen White, and the Adventists pioneers were in harmony on the doctrine of God.**

ONE GOD

When our mighty God had delivered the Israelites from bondage, led them through the Red Sea, and brought them to the foot of Mt. Sinai, He told the people to sanctify themselves for He had something very important to tell them. It was then that Moses climbed to the top of Mt. Sinai to receive instruction for the people of God. In Ex. 20:1-3 we read, *"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**"* Israel had just been delivered from a land where multiple gods were worshipped, so God immediately let them know **there is only one true God.**

During Israel's wanderings in the wilderness it seemed that God kept trying over and over again to impress this vital point on their minds. When the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, God on several occasions again reminded them of this truth. *"Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; **there is none else beside him.**"* Deut. 4:35 Then again, just before Moses relates God's command to conquer Canaan He says, *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is **one LORD.**"* Deut.6:4 It seems that this idea of multiple gods was of deep concern to the Lord, so much so that He kept reminding the people over and over again so that they would not fall into the error of worshipping multiple gods. To the Jewish mind, even today, there is One God. The concept of one God made up of three individual persons was foreign to them.

Looking at some other texts we find:

Mark 12:28-32 *"...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 the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, **thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:**"*

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

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

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

In these verses Paul is stating his belief that there is **one God, the Father**. He says that it is through the Father that all things exist. He also states that we have **one Lord Jesus, our Mediator** between the Father and guilty man.

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

Jesus, Himself says there is only one God, the Father. Eternal life is to know the true God, the Father **and** Jesus, whom the Father sent.

James 2:19 *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."*

The Scripture plainly teaches that there is **one God, the Father**. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that this one God is made up of three different individuals. The Trinitarian says there is "one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit." The Scripture says there is "**one God, the Father.**"

What did our early Adventist pioneers think of this?

"We are mindful of Paul's words, that "to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor. 8:6); just as we have already quoted, that it was by Him that God made the worlds. **All things proceed ultimately from God, the Father; even Christ Himself proceeded and came forth from the Father ...**" (E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 19)

"Again speaking of the appearing of Jesus Christ, the Word says: "In His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords; who **only hath Immortality**, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see." 1 Tim. 6:15, 16 Christ has brought this immortality to light...

Now as immortality is to be sought for, **And as God is the only One who has it, and as Christ is the only One who has brought it to light, it follows that immortality must be sought of God, through Christ"** (A. T. Jones, *Bible Questions and Answers Concerning Man*, par. 4, 6)

Please note that these two statements which are typical of our founding fathers belief are from Elders Jones and Waggoner of 1888 fame. You remember that they delivered the message of righteousness by faith to our people. Ellen White said of this message that these men were delivering a message from God to His people. **Could these men have given such a message had they cherished wrong concepts of God? If their view on God was so degrading, would the prophetess of the Lord have encouraged our people that God was sending a message through them that they should listen to?**

Ellen White says:

"Let them be thankful to God for His manifold mercies and be kind to one another. They have **one God** and **one Saviour**; and **one Spirit--the Spirit of Christ--**is to bring unity into their ranks." (*Testimonies Vol. 9*, p. 189)

THE SON OF GOD

If there is **one God, the Father**, *"of whom are all things,"* as the Scripture teaches, then who is Jesus? What is His relationship to the Father? Is He Divinity or is He some lesser being as some teach? I believe that as we look at the evidence we will see that Jesus is the **begotten Son of God**. He is Divinity. Jesus has inherited all things from the Father: His names, His power, all authority and is truly worthy of our worship and praise!

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

1 John 4:9 *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his **only begotten Son** into the world, that we might live through him."*

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

Please note: God **sent** the only Son He had. It does not say that Jesus became the begotten Son when born on earth. He was the begotten Son who was sent.

Begotten: "monogenes" means "only born" - some lexicons say this word could mean "unique", thus the Trinitarian would state that it must apply to His birth in Bethlehem. **However**, we have to remember that the word begotten is used to describe the Son's existence **in Heaven before He ever came to this earth**. **Ellen White also calls Jesus the begotten Son prior to His birth in Bethlehem**. His existence surely is unique since He is the only **Son of God**.

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

Note: Jesus *proceeded forth* and *came from God*- two actions.

Who did the disciples declare Jesus to be?

Matthew 14:33 *"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the **Son of God.**"*

John 6:69 *"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, **the Son of the living God.**"*

John 11:27 *"She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art **the Christ, the Son of God,** which should come into the world."*

Who did the evil angels say Jesus was?

Matthew 8:29 *"And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, **Jesus, thou Son of God?...**"*

Who did Jesus declare Himself to be?

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?**"*

There are a multitude of other texts that tell us clearly that Jesus was God's Son. None of them say He was a Son only because of His birth in Bethlehem.

Luke 22:70 John 11:4 John 3:18 John 5:25
Acts 8:37 Romans 1:4 Gal. 2:20 Eph. 4:10-13
1 John 3:8 1 John 4:15 John 1:34 Mark 3:11
1John 5:10, 13, 20

The Scripture is clear that Jesus is God's Son, not a member of the Godhead **playing the role of the Son as the Trinity teaches**. To say that Jesus was only 'called' the Son because of His anticipated birth in Bethlehem, as Trinitarians do, is **pure conjecture**, nowhere substantiated by Scripture.

It is because Jesus is the Son of God that He has been given all things of the Father.

Hebrews 1:1-3 *"God ...Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"*

Note: Christ received all things by inheritance.

Christ was the express image of the Father - He was exactly like Him, a duplicate. That is why Jesus could say, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father."* John 14:9

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

The Scripture teaches us that Jesus received by **inheritance all things from the Father**. The early Adventist pioneers believed that God granted all power and authority to His Son. He was the **express image of the Father**, exactly like Him. Jesus was the **only Son God had** and thus was the heir of all that God possessed: His power and authority, His name, His Divinity. Everything that was the Father's was to belong to the Son. Jesus was truly **Divinity**. Our founding Fathers did not believe Christ to be a created being, but a **begotten Son**.

Please note, Solomon knew of a Son before Jesus ever came to this earth:

Proverbs 30:4 *"Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?... what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"*

Proverbs 8:22-25 *"The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way ... I was set up from everlasting... When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water ... before the hills was I brought forth."*

Many feel that these verses are not referring to Christ as a person, but to wisdom (used in an allegorical sense). However Ellen White states that they do indeed refer to Jesus.

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

The Scriptures also declare to us that God is not only the father of Jesus, but His God as well.

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

2 Corinthians 11:31 *"The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..."*

John 20:17 *"... Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."*

Mark 15:34 *"... My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*

Revelation 3:12 *"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God..."*

These verses are simply stating to us the same idea as was expressed earlier - that **all things proceed from the Father. The Father is the one true God of Heaven and Jesus, the Son, the exact image of the Father, acknowledges that fact.**

The Scripture teaches us that while the Son shares an equality of nature, glory and honour with the Father, these attributes of Divinity were inherited from the Father. It is for this reason that **the Scripture shows us that the Son is always in subjection to the Father.**

John 14:28 *"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."*

This verse was puzzling to me for some time because we know that the Father and Son are equal in power and authority. My dilemma was solved when I found that the Greek word for 'greater' is "*meizon*" **which means elder or more.**

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

Hebrews 1:8, 9 *"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever... therefore **God, even thy God,** hath anointed thee ..."*

The Father calls the Son, God. We have already stated that Jesus is truly Divinity because He comes from the very being of God. Therefore He possesses by inheritance all the names and attributes of the Father. Notice also that God calls Himself the God of the Son. However, because Jesus is truly Divinity, He is to be worshipped as is the Father. *"Let all the angels of God worship Him."* Hebrews 1:6

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

1 Corinthians 15:23-28 *"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; ...For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet... 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.**"*

Though the Son by virtue of His birth and by declaration of the Father is worthy of all praise and honour, He Himself will *"**subject unto him that put all things under him**"*

Spirit of Prophecy & The Son of God

In the Heavenly courts Ellen White gives us a vivid picture of Christ's position. We read:

"The King of the universe summoned the heavenly host before Him, that in their presence He might set forth **the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings**. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the **Eternal, self-existent One encircled both**. About the throne gathered the Holy angels, a vast unnumbered throng ... Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven **the King declared that none but Christ, the only begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will...** Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love." (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 36)

We find some very interesting information here. First that the Eternal Self-Existent One is the Father. Note also that Jesus is the begotten Son in Heaven and that He was the **only** being who could enter into God's purpose and plans. These thoughts are consistent with other statements she makes that there are only **two Divine Beings** involved in the plan of creation and who are worthy of our worship and praise. Note the following statements:

"The **only being who was one with God** lived the law in humanity, descended to the lowly life of a common labourer, and toiled at the carpenter's bench with His earthly parent." (*That I May Know Him*, p. 363)

"Let the brightest example the world has yet seen be your example, rather than the greatest and most learned men of the age, who know not God, nor Jesus Christ whom He has sent. **The Father and the Son alone are to be exalted**" (*The Youth's Instructor*, July 7, 1898)

"Christ, the Word, **the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father**--one in nature, in character, in purpose--**the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God ...** There was one who perverted the freedom that God had granted to His creatures... And coveting **the glory with which the Infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.**" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 34, 35) *See also GC p. 493*

"Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the **Father and the Son** had united in a covenant to redeem man ... **The Father's arms encircle His Son**, and the word is given, **"Let all the angels of God worship Him"** (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 834)

Please note that there are only **two Divine Beings** that formulated the plan of redemption. Zech. 6:12, 13 told us years ago that this was so. *"...Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: 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."*

There are only two on the counsel of peace, the Father and the Son.

What else do we learn about Christ?

"Christ is our example. He was **next to God in the heavenly courts.**" (*Notebook Leaflets Vol. 1*, p. 114)

"Our great Exemplar was **exalted to be equal with God.**" (*Testimonies Vol. 2*, p. 426)

"...Hebrews 1:1-5. **God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God.** To Christ has been **given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father.** All the counsels of God are opened to His Son." (*Testimonies Vol. 8*, p. 268)

"The Son of God was **next in authority to the Great Lawgiver.**" (*The Spirit of Prophecy Vol. 2*, p. 9)

"The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that He might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon His Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that **Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself; so that wherever was the presence of His Son, it was as His own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father.**" (*The Story of Redemption*, p. 13)

"The world's Redeemer was equal with God. His authority was as the authority of God. **He declared that He had no existence separate from the Father...** He was so perfectly connected with God, so completely embraced in His encircling light, that He who had seen the Son, had seen the Father, **His voice was as the voice of God.**" (*Bible Commentary Vol. 5*, p. 1142)

Ellen White's comments are consistent with Scripture. The Father granted to the Son to be equal with Himself. The Father, being first, is the source of all. But to the Son, He gave equality of power and authority. His voice was the very word of God. His life was the very life of God, the Father.

"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." (*Review & Herald*, July 9, 1895)

"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.**" (*Bible Commentary Vol. 5*, p. 1114)

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

May 30, 1895)

Over and over again Ellen White confirms the truth that Jesus was truly the Son of God. **This was not a role play.** Jesus was the begotten Son in Heaven before He ever came to this earth to die for you and me. Note where she says that in His incarnation He gained the title of the Son **in a new sense. This is because He really was God's Son before He came.** The teaching of **the Trinity makes Jesus a Son only upon His incarnation.** The teachings of Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy do not support this supposition.

What a glorious truth! God sent His Son to earth for He was willing to give of Himself to save mankind. What wondrous love the Father and Son have for us.

The Adventist Pioneers

Now that we have looked at the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy on the Son of God, let's look and see what the early Adventist pioneers had to say about God's Son.

"The Father is the **greatest in that He Is first. The Son is next In authority because He has been given all things.**" (James White, *Review & Herald*, Jan. 4, 1881)

"And as to the Son of God, he would be excluded also, for he had God for His Father, and did, **at some point in the eternity of the past, have beginning of days.**" (J. N. Andrews, *Review & Herald*, Sept. 7, 1869)

"The Word then is Christ. The text speaks of His origin. He is the only begotten of the Father. Just how he came into existence the Bible does not inform us any more definitely; but by this expression and several of a similar kind in the Scriptures we may believe that Christ came into existence in a manner different from that in which other beings first appeared; That He sprang from the Father's being in a way not necessary for us to understand." (C. W. Stone, *The Captain of our Salvation*, p. 17. 1886)

"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 ... Micah 5:2, margin. We know that **Christ "proceeded forth and came from God"** (John 8:42), **but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man.**" (E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 9)

"He was born of the Holy Ghost. In other words, Jesus Christ was **born again**. He came from heaven, **God's first-born, to the earth, and was born again.**" (A. T. Jones, *Review & Herald*, Aug. 1, 1899)

These few statements from the Adventist pioneers give us a good idea of the church's thinking at its beginnings. Please note that they **did not believe Jesus was a created being, but a begotten Son**. Many have said that these are the same thing-- begotten and created. However, the pioneers didn't think so. To create something out of nothing, or out of another substance, is a **far different** mode of thinking than to believe that Jesus came from the very being of the Father, the begotten Son. In fact E. J. Waggoner went to great lengths in his book *Christ and His Righteousness* **to show the falsehood of the idea some held that Christ was created.**

"Before passing to some of the practical lessons that are to be learned from these truths, we must dwell for a few moments upon the opinion that is honestly held by many who would not for any consideration willingly dishonour Christ, but who, through that opinion, do actually deny His Divinity. It is the idea that Christ is a created being, who through the good pleasure of God was elevated to His present lofty position. **No one who holds this view can possibly have any Just concept of the exalted position which Christ really occupies.**" (E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 19, 20)

The early Adventists believed that in some point in eternity past, the Father brought forth a Son. The Scripture does not reveal how this was accomplished but tells us plainly that the Father had a begotten Son. This Son was not a created being as were the angels,

but a Son begotten from the very being of the Father and was the express image of His person. The Son was exactly like His Father. They believed Jesus to be the literal Son of God. They believed that by virtue of His birth and by right of inheritance, Jesus received **all things** from the Father: His power, authority, names, everything. He, as God's Son, is truly **Divinity and possesses all the attributes of God the Father**. They believed that when God said that He sent His Son to die for us, He meant it! God **did** send His **only begotten Son to die for you and me**. They did not try to philosophise away the true Father-Son relationship of God the Father, and Jesus, the Son. Jesus is **not** a lesser God. He is God manifested to us! The teaching of the Trinity denies the true Father-Son relationship of Jesus and the Father. As you can readily tell, the position taken by the pioneers is in complete harmony with the Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. If you have any further doubt about Jesus' Sonship in Heaven prior to His existence on earth, spend some time reading *The Story of Redemption* chapters 1-5. There you will find a beautiful account of the plan of salvation and the relationship that exists between Jesus and the Father.

Antichrist

In Matt. 16:13-17 there is a very interesting conversation between Jesus and His disciples. Jesus said, "*Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*" The disciples then gave some answers like Elijah and Jeremiah. Jesus then said, "*But whom say ye that I am?*" Peter's answer was absolutely correct. He said, "***Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.***" Jesus confirmed Peter's answer, "*Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*" **Peter knew that Jesus was the Son of God!**

With that thought in mind, let's look for a minute at what the Scripture teaches us about the antichrist.

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

This verse tells us that the antichrist will deny the Father and the Son. We as a church have taught for years that the Catholic system is the

antichrist power. But, don't they teach that Jesus was God's Son? Don't they declare belief in a Father and a Son? Yes, they do. How then does the Catholic faith fit this description? Could it be that through the teaching of the Trinity this has been achieved? **Remember, the Trinity teaching,** tells us that Jesus was not really God's Son in Heaven before His coming to this earth, but only by virtue of His birth in Bethlehem. Jesus, according to this teaching is a God **playing the role of the Son.** It denies the very heart of the gospel message that tells us that God sent His Son to die for you and me.

It was at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. that the Trinity teaching took root. Remember also, that this teaching is the **central doctrine** of Catholicism, upon which all the other false teachings depend.

Is it a coincidence that Jesus follows Peter's confession that He is the Son of God with a confirmation of the fact that He will build His church upon that solid foundation? *"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. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven..."* Matt. 16:18, 19 These are the very verses that the Roman Catholic Church has twisted to build on a different foundation- the pope.

The belief that Jesus is the literal Son of God is the heart of the gospel. Take out the foundation and the building crumbles around it. There are a number of individuals that have pointed to **our church's switch to a Trinitarian theology as the Omega of apostasy that Ellen White warned us about.** The Alpha dealt with the personality of God. Does the Omega? (1 SM 203, 204) Could the switch to this position, in changing the foundation upon which we are now building, be the reason that we are seeing so much of our distinctiveness as a people eroding away? It's very interesting to note Ellen White's statement in regard to the Omega of apostasy.

"We have now before us the alpha of this danger. The omega will be of a most startling nature. **We need to study the words that Christ uttered in the prayer that He offered just before His trial and crucifixion.**" These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy

Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. **And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**" (*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 197)

Why, of all the texts that Ellen White could have shared to prepare us for the Omega of apostasy, did she choose the one that most **clearly** tells us that Jesus is the very Son of God; The text that tells us **clearly** that there is only **one true God** and that eternal life is to know Him, and to know the Son whom He sent? I believe that this is no coincidence. The prophetess, under inspiration of God's Spirit is trying to warn us that God's remnant church would indeed slip off the very foundation it was established upon and get off into fanciful ideas of who God is. Have we shifted our foundation to the sands of error, and is the house falling?

THE HOLY SPIRIT

If there is only one God, one eternal supreme being of the universe; and if Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the express image of the Father, one equal in power and authority with Him, **then who is the Holy Spirit?**

As we study the Scriptures we will find something very interesting. The Bible **never** uses the term "God the Spirit" which is how we identify the Holy Spirit in our teachings today. Terms such as "God's Spirit", "the Spirit of God", the "Spirit of Christ", the "Holy Spirit" are used. This becomes a very important observation as we shall see. We might also note that the Bible never tells us to **'pray to'** or to **'worship'** the Spirit. As we shall see there is a very good reason for this.

The early Adventist pioneers taught that the Holy Spirit was the personal presence of God with us, His personality. They also believed the Spirit to be termed a 'person' in the sense that it was **the personality** of the Father and the Son with us **but never** with the view that the Holy Spirit was a **separate and different individual** from the Father or the Son. We have already established the fact that there are **only two Divine beings** worthy of our worship and our praise! We can understand then that He isn't sending some other person to us, but He is **sending Himself**.

Let's see if this view by the pioneers is in harmony with the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Ephesians 4:4 *"There is one body, and one Spirit... "*

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

What is Jesus saying here? He is telling the disciples plainly that He isn't going to leave them alone. He is coming back to them; **He is the other Comforter to come.** Through His Spirit **He would be with them.** This was not another individual God coming to them, it was the Saviour Himself.

You see, there is only **one Spirit** as the Scripture in Ephesians told us. That Spirit is the very life of God, the Father. Because Jesus is the very essence of the Father, they share the same Spirit. Christ then gives us of that Spirit.

It is interesting to note that the Greek word for "**Comforter**" and for "**Advocate**" is the same word. In John 14:16 it says, *"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter..."*

Comforter = Parakletos **Note: talking of the other Comforter.**

1 John 2:1 *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an **advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:**"*

Advocate = Parakletos **Note: Jesus is our Advocate.**

The point here is simply that Christ is the other Comforter.

Some have said that Jesus is the "Comforter" and that the Holy Spirit is the "other Comforter", a different and distinct person. But that would mean 2 comforters, not one. The Scripture does **not teach that Jesus sends another Spirit to us. He is the only Comforter.**

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

Hebrews 1:9 *"...therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."*

(Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit- the Son possesses the same Spirit as the Father.)

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

the Son to have life in himself;"

The Father and the Son share the same Spirit.

Galatians 4:6 *"And because ye are sons, **God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son** into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."*

Romans 8:9-11 *"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.**"*

Please note that the Spirit of the Father and the Son are used interchangeably. That is because there is only **one Spirit which they share. Within that truth is a most beautiful knowledge that Christ Himself will come to us to comfort us.**

There is one Spirit - **Eph. 4:4**

The Comforter is the Spirit - **John 14:26**

The Spirit is the Lord - **2 Cor. 3:17, 18**

The Lord is Jesus - **1 Cor. 8:6**

John 17:21 *"That they all may be one; as **thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee**, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."*

How are Jesus and the Father "in" each other? It is because they share the same Spirit.

John 10:30 *"I and my Father are one."*

How are they one? Are they the same person? No, they are one because they share the same Spirit.

Revelation 3:20 *"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."*

Matthew 28:20 *"... and, lo, **I am with you always**, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

Hebrews 2:18 *"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, **he is able to succour them that are tempted.**"*

Colossians 1:27 "... Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Note: Christ formed within is the main message of the gospel. Christ tells us repeatedly that **He himself** will come to abide with us. He is the one who comes to our aid in times of need and He is the one that makes His home with us. The Scripture does not say that a **different person from Christ, the Holy Spirit**, is to be formed within or to dwell within to bring us comfort and power to resist temptation. **Christ Himself will accomplish this for us. It is through His Spirit, the Spirit He shares with the Father** that this work is to be accomplished. **There is no other go-between!!!**

The Spirit of Prophecy

Does Ellen White agree with what we have just discovered from the Scriptures? Whenever we talk of the Holy Spirit it is inevitable that people will turn to the book *Evangelism* and pull out some quotes that Mrs. White has made about the Holy Spirit being the 3rd person of the Godhead. Their immediate response to these statements is that this **proves** there is a Trinity. Let's remember that we need to look at the whole picture given before we can determine exactly what an author actually believed on the subject. I believe that when we do this we will see that **she was in complete harmony with Scriptures and with the leading brethren of the Adventist faith.**

"The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but **divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof.** Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. ... By the Spirit **the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.**" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 669. 1898 edition)

"Cumbered with humanity, **Christ** could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. **The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He would**

represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent." (*Manuscript Release*, No. 1084)

Please note that in both of these statements the Holy Spirit is plainly stated to be **Christ Himself, without the cumbrance of humanity. It is His Spirit** - the Spirit He shares with the Father. This is **not a separate individual**.

"When God's people take the position that they are the temple of the Holy Ghost, **Christ Himself abiding within**, they will so clearly reveal Him in spirit, words, and actions, that there will be an **unmistakable distinction between them and Satan's followers.**" (*Notebook Leaflets Vol. 1*, p. 79)

"The impartation of the Spirit is the **impartation of the life of Christ.**" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 805)

"The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. He has sought to shut **Jesus from their view as the Comforter, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it."**" (*Review & Herald*, August 26, 1890)

"As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving us **Jesus the Comforter.**" (*Manuscript Releases Vol. 19*, pp. 297, 298)

"The work of the holy Spirit is immeasurably great. ... and **the holy Spirit is the comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul.**" (*Review & Herald*, November 29, 1892)

"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." (*Review & Herald*, May 19, 1904)

In all of these quotes we are seeing the same line of thinking. Jesus Himself is the Comforter that was sent to work with us. It is **His Spirit, His personal presence with us** that works in us to mould our characters and transform us into the image of Himself. Please note that in the last quote Mrs. White **clearly identifies what she means by the third person of the Godhead; it is the personal presence of Christ, His very life.** She does not give the indication at all that we are dealing with a different individual other than Jesus Himself. **The Holy Spirit is referred to as a person because it is the personality,** or the very life of Christ that is being sent to us. Ellen White refers to the Holy Spirit as the **third person** of the Godhead on a few occasions.

"The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in **the third person of the Godhead,** the Holy Spirit." (*Evangelism*, p. 617)

Please notice that again she describes what she means by the **third person: it is the power of God.** She does not say that this is a separate different personality.

In other places she refers to the "three powers" of Heaven. But does this mean they are **separate individuals**? In looking at the vast amount of information she has given that would be opposed to that line of thinking, I have to conclude that she **did not mean** that we should interpret her declaration of the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Godhead, to refer to someone other than Christ. She identifies her thinking on this when she says that it is the "**soul of His life.**"

"**The Saviour is our Comforter.** This I have proved Him to be." (*Manuscript Releases Vol. 8*, p. 49)

"... when on the Day of Pentecost the promised Comforter descended and the power from on high was given and the souls of the believers thrilled with the **conscious presence of their ascended Lord...**" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 351)

"The Saviour has not promised His followers the luxuries of the world; ...but His word is pledged that their need shall be supplied, and He has promised that which is far better than worldly good,--**the abiding comfort of His own presence.**" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 367)

"The mystic ladder of his dream represented Jesus, the only medium of communication between God and man." (*Steps to Christ*, p. 20)

"Christ is the connecting link between God and man. He has promised His personal intercession by employing His name. ... Yes, Christ has become the medium of prayer between man and God. He also has become the medium of blessing between God and man." (*Bible Commentary Vol. 6*, pp. 1078, 1079)

Note: Christ is the "other Comforter." He is the one who returned to us, without the body of humanity. **Christ is the one who intercedes in our behalf; there is no other go-between, only Christ.**

The present view that is held by most of Christianity that the Holy Spirit is a separate individual, distinct from Christ is not supported by the Scripture. It is clear that it is Christ who sends of His Spirit to work with us. He Himself is present with us in this way. We have learned that there are **only 2 beings in all the universe worthy of our worship and praise; the Father and the Son.** Today many are worshipping and praying to the Holy Spirit as if He were a separate individual. **With a correct understanding of who the Spirit is, this error would not be manifesting itself.** There are indeed some questions to ponder for those who believe in the Trinity teaching.

1. Why are we **never told to pray to or worship the Holy Spirit?**
2. Where is the Holy Spirit in the councils of Heaven when the plan of salvation was being laid out and when Lucifer was rebelling? **Inspiration never mentions the Holy Spirit but only the Father and the Son.**
3. Where is the Holy Spirit mentioned when talking of Heaven? We only see the **Father and the Son.**
4. Why did Ellen White say that **Christ was the only being in all the universe who could enter into God's councils?** Surely the Holy Spirit would have been included if there was a Trinity.

The answer to these questions is really very simple. The concept that

there are three beings who possess Divinity is false; **there are only two. The Father and the Son are the only beings worthy of our worship and praise, they alone are Divinity.** They are one because they share the same Spirit, the Father's Spirit from **whom all things come.** This understanding is the key to unlocking all the problems that have existed. The church calls the Trinity a mystery- it certainly is! **It is a mystery because it isn't truth.** Remember, the Scripture never uses the term "God the Spirit." That phrase is man's interpretation. When we understand who the Holy Spirit is, Satan's plans for the final counterfeit are unmasked. As we shall see, **Satan's goal is to interpose himself between man and his Saviour.** This he is doing through the Trinity teaching, setting himself up as the Spirit, the go-between. We have only one Mediator - Jesus Christ.

Through this teaching Satan has succeeded in placing the Father, the one true God, in the background and bringing the Spirit to the forefront. All we have to do is look at the vast amount of literature being printed emphasising the Holy Spirit in our church today, as in all faiths. **We are being taught to pray to the Spirit which is a totally unbiblical principle.** We as SDA's keep saying that the Pentecostals are praying to and receiving the wrong spirit. Why? **The Pentecostals believe in the same Trinity we espouse, don't they?** How then are we so sure they are getting a wrong spirit, but we are getting the right spirit? What is the difference? We will deal with this more a little later.

"The Father and the Son alone are to be exalted." (*Sons and Daughters*, p. 58)

"There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son." (*Bible Commentary Vol. 6*, p. 1068)

That is it!!! **The Father and the Son** are the only two beings worthy of our worship and praise.

The Adventist Pioneers

Were the Adventist pioneers in harmony with what the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy teach on the subject of the Holy Spirit? It is clear from the following statements that they were.

"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. (Ps. 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*, Sept. 13, 1898)

"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*, p. 23)

"The Holy Spirit is the mighty energy of the Godhead, **the life and power of God flowing out from Him** to all parts of the universe, and thus making living connection between His throne and all creation ... Thus the **Spirit is personified In Christ and God, but never revealed as a separate person. Never are we told to pray to the Spirit; but to God for the Spirit. Never do we find in the Scriptures prayers to the Spirit; but to God for the Spirit.**" (M. C. Wilcox, *Signs of the Times (Questions and Answers)*, pp. 181, 182) 1911)

Again, note that Elder Wilcox points out that the Scriptures tell us to pray **for the Spirit not to the Spirit.**

"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*, p. 9. 1877)

These are just a few of the statements of some of our leading men in the early years of our work. As you can see, **they are in complete harmony with what we have learned from the Scripture and from Inspiration.** Ellen White rebuked the church for a number of things during our formative years but **she never rebuked the brethren for their position on the Godhead.**

The Holy Spirit is the personal presence of the Father and the Son. The Spirit can be termed a "person" in the sense that it is the very life of Christ coming to us, His personality. **We have a very personal Saviour who longs to abide with us.** The controversy in Heaven was fought between Christ and Satan and still continues today. The Holy Spirit is **not a separate person, distinct from Christ.** It is **Christ,** through His Spirit, that works in our behalf to bring us through victorious in this battle between good and evil.

What Difference Does it Make???

The question that we pondered for a long time was "What difference does it make? Isn't this just a theological technicality?" Many have asked the same question over the past months. The answer to this question, however, has become increasingly more clear to us as we looked closer at the differences and pondered their ramifications. We believe it does matter. Concerning our salvation, the Scripture says:

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

John 3:36 *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."*

John 20:31 *"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, **the Son of God;** and that believing ye might have life*

through his name."

1 John 4:15 *"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the **Son of God**, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."*

1 John 5:13 *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of **the Son of God**; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.."*

It does matter!!! The Scripture says that life eternal is to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. God sent His Son!! This is the heart of the gospel message. The Trinity teaching says that **Jesus** was not really God's Son. **We have been told that we will respond to the sacrifice made in our behalf in proportion to our estimate of the value of the gift.** As parents ourselves, it strikes at our very hearts to realise God gave of Himself in the gift of His only begotten Son. **The Trinity teaching obscures that gift.** This was no role play; it was God's own dear Son that died for us. The plan of salvation takes on a much deeper meaning. Note the beautiful way inspiration describes what **the Father went through in yielding His Son to die for us:**

"Said the angel, 'Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? **No, no. It was even a struggle with the God of heaven**, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give **His beloved Son** to die for him.'" (*The Story of Redemption*, p. 45)

The teaching that God sent **His Son is the very core of the Christian faith.** Take out the foundation, **and everything tumbles with it.** Satan has tampered with the truth about the Son of God and hearts are now trying to respond to God with a faulty understanding of the sacrifice the Father made. From the very beginning Satan has been trying to distort the reality of who Jesus is. He never wanted to accept God's declaration that only Christ, God's Son, could sit with Him and reign with Him. (See *The Story of Redemption* ch. 1-5) Through the teaching of the Trinity, Christ's true position has been shrouded in "mystery." Satan surely doesn't want us to understand this beautiful Father-Son relationship, because as the Scripture tells us, this is eternal life.

We are once again on the borders of the Promised Land; this time it's

a Heavenly Canaan we are about to enter. The Lord is calling His people back to the worship of the **one true God**. Will we follow in the footsteps of the remnant church God called out to give the last day message or will we follow in the footsteps of Rome? Is it possible that the reason we look like the other churches more and more with each passing day, is **because we have inadvertently slipped off our foundation** and are now building on a **faulty understanding of who God is**? Note the words of the prophetess:

"As a people, we are to stand firm on the platform of eternal truth that has withstood test and trial. **We are to hold to the sure pillars of our faith. The principles of truth that God has revealed to us are our only true foundation. They have made us what we are.**"
(*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 201. 1904)

Please notice that when this statement was written, **the church still did not hold a Trinitarian belief**. We have been warned not to move off the platform already established. We did not heed the warning and it appears that the distinctiveness **of the Adventist faith has been spiraling downward since we shifted foundations**.

The Holy Spirit

Another main difference that we need to be concerned with deals with the understanding of who the Holy Spirit is. But why would it make a difference whether we believed the Holy Spirit to be Christ's Spirit or whether we believe Him to be a separate person, distinct and different from Christ?

In answering this we need to remember what Satan's original desire was from the beginning. You recall that He was upset because he was not allowed to enter the counsels of Heaven with the Father and the Son. **The Son was the only being in all the universe who could enter the counsels of God**. The reason God did not include Satan was that He was not Divine, Satan was a created being. It has always been Satan's desire to be equal with God. In Heaven Lucifer (Satan) tried to fight for what he thought his rights should be. **But we are told that now he uses a much more subtle device. He is seeking to copy God. To counterfeit God!**

"Satan is making desperate efforts to make himself god, to speak and act like God, to appear as one who has a right to control the consciences of men." (*Bible Commentary Vol. 7*, p. 981)

From the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 to the time of the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381 Satan was able to get the church to misinterpret two things; "**another Comforter**" and "**another day.**" The other "day" which was adopted was Sunday as God's holy day in the place of the Bible Sabbath. The other "Comforter" was the adoption of the Holy Spirit being the 3rd person to make up **the Trinity**, stating the Spirit to be a separate individual/person, different from the Father and the Son. You might recall from your church history that the Church that existed at the time of the Council of Nicea is represented by Pergamos in Rev. 2:12-17. This was a time of apostasy in God's professed church. The Dark Ages would follow this period of history. Today, both of these errors are still with us, and now God's remnant church has adopted one of them.

Do you remember when Ellen White said, "**Satan has sought to shut Jesus from view as the Comforter.**" You see, Satan fears the presence of God. He is desperately attempting to turn us from Christ to **another god - himself**. The teaching that the Holy Spirit is a separate person other than Christ takes our eyes off Jesus, and puts them on another person. **Just look at the emphasis today on the Holy Spirit.** The Father and the Son are pushed to the background. Who is it that will set himself up to be the go-between? Who wants to be answering our prayers and directing our lives? Who wants to be equal with God? Who has always wanted to be worshipped as equal with God? Yes, that's correct. Satan has always wanted to be the **third member of the Godhead**. Satan's most successful plan is to bring himself between us and the Saviour, to become 'another Comforter' in a sense, answering prayers and sending us power. There is a vision of Ellen White recorded in *Early Writings* pp. 54-56 that is very interesting. I recommend that you read the whole vision but let's note the quote that it ends with.

"Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, "My Father, give us Thy Spirit." Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace. I turned to look at the company who were

still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. **Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God.** I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, "Father, give us Thy Spirit." **Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence;** in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. **Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children."** (*Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56)

The context of the vision is dealing with Christ's removal from the Holy Place to the most Holy Place in the Sanctuary. But the point should be noticed **that Satan was answering the prayers of those who thought they were praying to God.** Satan is always trying to parallel the work of Christ. By getting us to believe in **the Trinity doctrine, placing the Holy Spirit, as a separate person, 'God the Spirit,'** we have now been set up to pray to this being. We have already verified that this is not in harmony with the Scripture. My question then is, **"Who is answering those prayers?"** Are we shutting out Christ as our Comforter, and putting in His place a false comforter, Satan himself? Could it be that the reason we are beginning to look so much like the other churches around us is because we are getting our answers about what is right and wrong from the same place? If we are now believing that the Holy Spirit can be worshipped and prayed to just like the Father and the Son, where are we being led? **What an opening we have made for a false spirit to sweep through Adventism!!**

CONCLUSION

What difference does it make? I believe it may be the difference between standing firm for Christ during all the trials we have awaiting us or being swept away in the many delusions Satan has prepared for the world. **We must be rooted firmly on solid ground and if the foundation is faulty, the building will fall.**

As Seventh-day Adventists we have always believed that all our teachings should be based on the Scriptures. Yet in the 1980 General Conference session at Dallas, Texas when **we officially adopted the Trinity** as a teaching of Adventism we stated: "**While no single Scripture passage states the doctrine of the Trinity, it is assumed as a fact... only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity.**" (Special Edition of the *Review & Herald*)

There is no other doctrine that we hold as a people that we cannot plainly prove by the Scripture. The truth about the Godhead is that it is very clear who the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are. While there are areas that we cannot understand because the Lord has chosen not to reveal that information to us, **who we are to worship is plainly shown in God's Word. This is not a mystery.**

There is one God, the Father! There is one begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who is the express image of the Father and possesses all the attributes of His Father. Jesus is the Divine Son of God. There is one Spirit, the shared Spirit of the Father and the Son. We see two Divine beings who share a common Spirit making them one in purpose, thought, and action.

We stated at the beginning that when the house is built on the Rock, it will stand; but when built on the shifting sands it will fall. We need to ever remember this principle. We have pointed out that over the past few years our distinctiveness as a people seems to be eroding away. **WE HAVE DRIFTED INTO ECUMENICALISM,** adopted styles of

worship that are questionable, changed our Sabbath observance, dress, and we even hear Adventists who don't believe that God's law can be kept. The list could go on but that isn't the purpose of this paper. **The point we are trying to make is that if we have a faulty concept of God, we can't build on solid ground.** As we pointed out, **the Catholic Church** has the teaching of **the Trinity** at its **very core** and look at what's been built upon that foundation. We really need to give this some serious consideration.

God's church, His people with the remnant message will go through!! But we need to ever remember that to be a **remnant**, we **must be like the original**. At the heart of the remnant message is "Fear God, and give glory to Him...." Rev. 14:7 **Our Adventist pioneers knew who that God was, that's why they could sound the message with a distinctive tone.**

Elder R. F. Cottrell sums this whole issue up very simply. He says:

"But if I am asked what I think of Jesus Christ, my reply is, I believe *all* that the Scriptures say of him. If the testimony represents him as being in glory with the Father before the world was, I believe it. If it is said that he was in the beginning with God, that he was God, that all things were made by him and for him, and that without him was not anything made that was made, I believe it. If the Scriptures say he is the Son of God, I believe it. **If it is declared that the Father sent his Son into the world, I believe he had a Son to send.** If the testimony says he is the beginning of the creation of God, I believe it. If he is said to be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, I believe it. And when Jesus says, 'I and my Father are one,' I believe it; and when he says, 'My Father is greater than I,' I believe that too; it is the word of the Son of God, and besides this it is perfectly reasonable and seemingly self-evident." (*Review & Herald*, June 1, 1896)

The founders of Adventism were strong Bible students who took the word of God as it read. They did not spend their time trying to philosophise away the plain and simple teachings found in the Scripture. It has been an interesting observation that when we have discussed the Trinity teaching with most pastors or theologians their first response is that you have to go back to the Greek to understand

the concept of the Godhead. While we believe that the Greek is important, **we have to be careful not to place all interpretation of Scripture into the hands of the theologians alone.** If you must be a theologian to understand, think of the message we are sending to the laymen of the church! The Greek certainly helps, but it certainly does not contradict the plain and simple teachings of Scripture.

We have found **the Trinitarian view** to be confusing, nebulous, and contradictory to Scripture.

1. **The Trinitarian** tells us that we must understand that when the term **Son of God** is used in talking of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, this term is used **only** in the sense of **pointing forward** to the time He would be called the Son because of the incarnation. This would apply both to the Scriptures and to the Spirit of Prophecy. **However, nowhere does the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy make such a statement. This is pure supposition.** The fact is that both speak plainly that Jesus is God's very own Son and existed as such before He ever came to this earth.

2. **The Trinitarian** view asserts that it was not really God's Son who came to die for you and me, but the member of the Godhead who was **playing the role of the Son.** However, the Scripture clearly says "For God so loved the world that **He gave His only begotten Son...**" John 3:16

3. The Trinitarian tells us that three persons make up one God and because each is God in their own right, **each is worthy of praise and worship, and that each may be prayed to.** However, the Scripture tells us there are only **two beings worthy of worship and praise, the Father and the Son.** It also tells us we are to **pray to the Father,** through the Son.

4. The Trinitarian calls **the Holy Spirit, 'God the Spirit',** but the Scriptures nowhere use this terminology.

Have we philosophised away the plain and simple teachings of the Scriptures and adopted in their place man's ideas of what is right and wrong? **The Trinity has come into God's Remnant Church gradually.** Today it is widely accepted to the point that when

someone is confronted about its validity the response is always the same; **they never even thought of questioning it.** Were the Adventist pioneers truly the remnant? If they were, then we must believe that they had come out of Babylon in their teachings because **that is the mark of the Remnant Church.** They could not call others out of Babylon if they themselves were still in "confusion."

Our prayer is that you will study for yourselves. "Study to show thyself approved **unto God.**" The only way to decide what is truth is to do what the early Adventists did. **They put away all preconceived ideas and went to the Scriptures to find truth.** Once the Scriptures had been exhausted on a subject we are told by Elder Haskell that the Lord would put His seal upon their Study by **prophetic guidance.** We can do the same through **the writings of Ellen G. White.**

May God bless each one as you study for a clearer understanding of the God we serve.

APPENDIX

We have listed below some of the texts and quotes that have been confusing to many, as they consider this subject. Study for yourselves as you harmonise all Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy statements.

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

Note: "US" does not have to mean three as some have stated. Ellen White tells us very clearly what God meant when He used this word in this Scripture.

"After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the **Father and Son** carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man **in their own image**. **They had wrought together in the creation of the earth** and every living thing upon it. And now **God said to His Son**, "Let us make man in our image." (*The Story of Redemption*, p. 20, 21)

There were only **two beings** involved, the Father and the Son.

Genesis 11:7, Isaiah 6:8 These two verses also use the word "Us". Could they be referring again to the Father and Son only, as we are told Gen. 1:26 does?

John 1:1, 2 *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."*

The word was in the beginning, the beginning of what? It has to be the beginning of something. Was it the beginning of this world? Was it the beginning of the creation of the angels? Whichever beginning you place it at, it has to be the beginning of something. Many Trinitarians use this to say that Christ always was, and had no beginning. That is not what the verse says. Also the word *with* has to mean something. The Word was *with* God. They cannot be the same being, or one could not be with the other. You cannot walk to the corner *with* yourself.

Scriptures that have the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all listed.

John 14:16 Acts 1:2-5 Matt. 28:19
John 15:26 Acts 10:36-38 1 Cor. 12:3-6
John 16:6-15 Titus 3:4-6 2 Thess. 2:13-16

There are others we could list also. While it is true that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all listed, **none** of the verses state that they exist **in the relationship that the Trinity teaches**.

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

There is no question at all that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all play a role in conversion of souls. However, this still does not prove the Holy Spirit to be a separate person distinct from the Father and Son.

Luke 3:21,22 *"... Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."*

The Spirit of God descended from the Father and rested upon the Son. The dovelike figure does **not** represent another individual coming to Jesus, but simply is an acknowledgment of the Father that Jesus received of God's Spirit.

Spirit of Prophecy Quotes

The quote that many people point to as the main reason for changing their views to a Trinitarian stance is found in *The Desire of Ages* p. 530. It reads:

".. In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived..."

It is said that Ellen White's statement here is proof that Jesus has always existed as a separate distinct person and thus the belief that God is a Trinity. They say that it refers to His physical life that has always existed. Please note however what directly follows this statement.

"He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 5:12 The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life." (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 530)

An article appeared in *Signs of the Times* one year prior to the writing of *The Desire of Ages* in which she used this same terminology. This article was reprinted in 1 SM p. 296. Here is the statement in its original context.

""In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). **It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality**, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. **But the life of Christ was unborrowed.** No one can take this life from Him. "I lay it down of myself" (John 10: 18), He said. **In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ.** He cannot earn it; **it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour.** "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3)." (*Selected Messaged Book 1*, pp. 296, 297)

It can be seen from the context that Ellen White **did not use this phrase to refer to the physical existence of Christ but to eternal life, life which is exclusively the property of God.**

Another quote that has been used to point to a Trinitarian view is:

"Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God." (*Evangelism*, p. 615)

This is the part of the statement that is always quoted. Trinitarians point to this as proof that Christ as always existed as the 2nd person of the Godhead. Let's look closely at the whole paragraph.

"Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent **Son** of God... In speaking of his pre-existence, **Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not**

in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening **had been with God as one brought up with Him.**" (*Signs of the Times*, Aug. 29, 1900; *Evangelism* p. 615)

Note that Christ is called the self-existent **Son**, as contrasted later in the paragraph with the **Eternal God (the Father)**. Remember that "*For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he **given to the Son to have life in himself.***" John 5:26 She goes on to say that there was never a time that Christ was not in close fellowship with the Father. Many might point to that and say that she is saying Christ had no beginning. But please note that she then clarifies her statement by saying that He was with God as **one brought up with Him**. This is the same terminology used in Proverbs 8 which she stated refers to Christ. Surely, since Christ was brought forth He has from that point always been in close fellowship with His Father. We have to also remember that Christ's life has always existed in the life of the Father, since Christ is the exact duplicate of His Father, and of the very same essence.

Another difficult passage for people is found in 1 SM 247:

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, **existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father.**"

If I was to just read that portion I could very easily read a Trinitarian view into it. But, again, let's look at the whole quote,

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, **existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father.** He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God. "**The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,**" He declares, "**before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,** or ever the earth was. **When there were no depths, I was brought forth;** when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was **I brought forth:** while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there:

when he set a compass upon the face of the depth" (Prov. 8:22-27)." (*Selected Messages book 1*, pp. 247, 248)

This whole paragraph deals with the pre-existence of Christ with the Father even before the worlds were made. Note that here in the same paragraph where she states that Christ existed from all eternity as a distinct person, she also talks of Him being brought forth before the worlds were ever in existence. E. J. Waggoner would say that Christ was brought forth so far back in the eons of time that it is beyond our comprehension of time. This thought would bring harmony to the statement. Christ has existed as a distinct person since the eons of eternity past since He was brought forth from the Father.

We also might remember that we as Adventists have used the words "eternal", "everlasting", "forever" to mean that they existed as long as was necessary to accomplish their purpose.

In *Evangelism* p. 616 we find this quote:

"We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds."

If one was to read this part of the statement alone you would think she was saying that the Holy Spirit is a person separate from Christ or the Father. But again, let's look at the context.

"**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, **that the Lord God is our keeper, and helper. He** hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind." (*Manuscript Release*, No.487)

As you can readily see, the context is talking of Christ being present on the school grounds, not a separate person called the Holy Spirit.

These are some of the texts and Spirit of Prophecy quotes that many

have used to teach a Trinity. We had previously touched on a few that talked of the Holy Spirit being the third person of the Godhead. I believe that these can all be harmonised with the multitudes of Bible and Spirit of Prophecy statements that are **clearly not Trinitarian**.

Doctrinal Beliefs

1872

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

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...

Issues p. 437

1931

That the Godhead, or **Trinity**, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; The Lord Jesus Christ, The Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption.

Issues p. 444

1995

The Trinity: There is one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all powerful, all knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole

creation.

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“With a great show of prudence the rabbis had warned the people against receiving the new doctrines taught by this new teacher; for His theories and practices were contrary to the teachings of the fathers. The people gave credence to what the priests and Pharisees taught, in place of seeking to understand the word of God for themselves. They honored the priests and rulers instead of honoring God, and rejected the truth that they might keep their own traditions. Many had been impressed and almost persuaded; but they did not act upon their convictions, and were not reckoned on the side of Christ. Satan presented his temptations, until the light appeared as darkness. Thus many rejected the truth that would have proved the saving of the soul.

The True Witness says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Rev. 3:20. Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the word of God or through His messengers is a knock at the door of the heart. It is the voice of Jesus asking for entrance. With every knock unheeded, the disposition to open becomes weaker. The impressions of the Holy Spirit if disregarded today, will not be as strong tomorrow. The heart becomes less impressible, and lapses into a perilous unconsciousness of the shortness of life, and of the great eternity beyond. **Our condemnation in the judgment will not result from the fact that we have been in error, but from the fact that we have neglected heaven-sent opportunities for learning what is truth."**

(The Desire of Ages, pp. 489, 490)

Here is a heaven-sent opportunity.
Will you take it, or will you neglect it?