

## Don't get short-changed

In 1903, Ellen White wrote a letter to her sons, Edson and Willie, explaining that her two books, *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *The Great Controversy*, were especially adapted for those new to the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. She said these books had been written so that newcomers could become established in the truth, and not be led astray.

“Many will depart from the faith and give heed to seducing spirits. *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *The Great Controversy* are books that are especially adapted to those who have newly come to the faith, that they may be established in the truth. The dangers are pointed out that should be avoided by the churches. Those who become thoroughly acquainted with the lessons in these books will see the dangers before them and will be able to discern the plain, straight path marked out for them. They will be kept from strange paths. They will make straight paths for their feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way.” (*Ellen G. White, Letter 229 1903, to J. E. White and W. C. White, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1903*)

In 1983, 3 years after the trinity doctrine was first voted into the fundamental beliefs of the SDA church, the White Estate authorised a condensed version of *Patriarchs and Prophets*. It is called *From Eternity Past*. It says at the beginning of this book

“This condensation is not a paraphrase. The author's own words are retained throughout, except when it has been necessary to substitute a proper noun for a pronoun to avoid confusion, to change a verb tense to maintain meaning and continuity, or to supply a word or phrase to make a sentence read more smoothly” (*From Eternity Past, page 3, 'A Condensation of Patriarchs and Prophets, 1983*)

I will leave you to reason out that one for yourself. This cut-down version is available free online from here

<https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/2772/info>

When I looked at this cut-down version, I was immediately drawn to the second page of the very first chapter. Before I quote from that page, I would remind you of three of the issues involved in the present trinity controversy within our church. They are as follows:

1. Our church teaches today, through its various publications, that Christ, in His pre-existence, was not begotten of God therefore He is not truly the Son of God. This is in direct contrast to what our church taught for over 100 years. During the entire time of Ellen White's ministry, it was taught that Christ, in His pre-existence, was begotten of God, therefore He is truly the Son of God.

2. Very often today, by the ministry of the SDA Church, it is denied that Proverbs 8:22-31 is referring to Christ. We saw this with Doug Batchelor in my recent little article, *Who is telling the truth?*

3. It is generally taught today, by the SDA ministry, that in the same sense as God and Christ are divine beings, so too the Holy Spirit is a divine being. It is concluded therefore, by the ministry, that there are three divine beings that comprise the one trinity God.

Bearing these three points in mind, take note of what Ellen White wrote on the second page of the first chapter of *Patriarchs and Prophets*

“Christ, the Word, **the only begotten of God**, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—the **only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God**. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6. His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2. **And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: “The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting.... When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.” Proverbs 8:22-30.**” (*Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, Page 34, ‘Why was sin permitted? 1890*)

It can be quite clearly seen here that (a) Ellen White does say that Christ, is “begotten of God”, and (b) that Christ was the “only being” that could enter into the counsels of God, and (c) that Proverbs 8:22-30 is speaking of Christ. This though is not the only reason why I have highlighted these things in red. It is because everything in red, in the cut-down version, has been removed. Here it is, as in the cut-down version

“Christ the Word was one with the eternal Father, one in nature, in character, in purpose. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6. His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2.” (*From Eternity Past, page 15, ‘A Condensation of Patriarchs and Prophets, 1983*)

What has been removed, and is therefore obscured from the reader’s eyes, is that Ellen White wrote that (a) Christ is the “only begotten of God” and (b) that Christ was the “only being” in the universe that enter into the counsels of God (thus eliminating the Holy Spirit as a being) and (c) that Proverbs 8:22-30 is referring to Christ. Was it just a coincidence that these three things are omitted in the cut-down version?

On the next page when speaking of Lucifer’s desire for exaltation, Ellen White wrote of him (again the red is omitted in the cut down version)

“Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. 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.” (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Page 35, ‘Why was sin permitted? 1890)

The cut-down version reads (speaking of Lucifer)

“Though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. This prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.” (From *Eternity Past*, page 15, ‘A Condensation of Patriarchs and Prophets, 1983)

Twice the cut-down version begins sentences with words, which, in the original, are actually in the middle of sentences. In the process it omits where Ellen White wrote that the Father had “invested His Son” with the glory He possesses. The latter of course, the investing of the Son with glory, is in keeping with the belief that Christ is begotten of God. The two go together.

On the next page, in the original, Ellen White had written about the time when, prior to the creation of this world, God summoned the heavenly host together to show the true position of His Son (again the red is omitted in the cut-down version)

“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.” (Ellen G. White, *Op cit*, Page 36, ‘Why was Sin Permitted? 1890)

The words in red are two very important omissions. The first omission is where God tells the heavenly host that Christ is the “Only begotten of God”, and the second omission is where Ellen White had said that God had “committed” to the Son to execute His will. In other words, God had *given* this prerogative to His Son. In the cut-down version, this is obscured. Here is the cut-down version. See how differently it reads to the original. It completely changes what Ellen White had written

“Before the inhabitants of heaven, the King declared that none but Christ could fully enter into His purposes and execute the mighty counsels of His will.” (From *Eternity Past*, page 16, ‘A Condensation of Patriarchs and Prophets, 1983)

So what is the moral of the story?

The moral is: Don't read compilations or paraphrases of Ellen White's writings. If you do, you might get short-changed. If you want the real deal, read the original – at least as far as possible.

One more thing before I close. As you probably know, in 2012, our church also authorised a cut-down version of the other book Ellen White said was especially written for newcomers. This book of course is *The Great Controversy*. The cut-down version is called *The Great Hope*. I am not going to comment on that one here but I will leave you with these words from Ellen White

“They come to me, those that are copying my writings, and say, “Now here is the better revised words, and I think I will put that in.” Don't you change one word, not a word. The revised edition we do not need at all. We have got the word that Christ has spoken Himself and given us. And don't you in my writings change a word for any revised edition. There will be revised editions, plenty of them, just before the close of this earth's history, and I want all my workers to understand, and I have got quite a number of them. I want them to understand that they are never to take the revised word, and put it in the place of the plain, simple words just as they are. They think they are improving them, but how do they know but that they may switch off on an idea, and give it less importance than Christ means them to have.”  
(*Ellen G. White, Ms 188 1907, Sermon, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1907, Glendale California, 'Thoughts on Revelation'*)

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26<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Website: <https://theprophetstillspeaks.co.uk>