

# The Divine Persons of God and Christ

## A study of Scripture and the spirit of prophecy (in response to the claims and comments of Pastor Richard Mendoza)

### Preamble

During October 2015, a Seventh-day Adventist minister by the name of Richard Mendoza (of the Michigan Conference) sent me eight emails. In these emails he said that the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that I have on my website is, using his words, "a falsified history".

Amongst other things he accused me of disseminating "delusion", of being "a false prophet" and someone who is "fabricating false history". He also said I had demonstrated myself to be "a unreliable source of truth, willfully bearing false witness" and a person who "should not be trusted in the communication of Biblical and historical facts". He also described me as "unethical in Christian journalism" and someone who misquotes Ellen White. As I am sure you will agree, all of these really are very serious charges. These things were not just said to me alone. The emails in which he said them were also sent to others (including the ministry). How many people they passed them on to I have no idea.

In reply to his accusations I sent to him a 122-page rebuttal. Since then he has never emailed me. Neither in any way has he responded to my rebuttal. What he has done though through Facebook is to continue to disparage my beliefs. On a number of pages (forums), also on his own website, he has continued to say that my theology, also the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that I have on my website, is erroneous. He has been doing this since I sent him my rebuttal of his accusations. He is still doing the same today.

In response to his ongoing objections to my beliefs (this is on Facebook) I produced a 74-page document. You will find the content below. It is my belief, because this minister has made his remarks public on Facebook, that the only proper thing for me to do is to make my response public. This gives everyone the opportunity to decide who is right and who is wrong. I made this article available to him on the 24<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

In keeping with its title, the article itself concerns the divine personages of God and Christ. It is a study from both Scripture and the writings of Ellen White. It is a denial of this minister's trinitarian theology. I believe that the trinity doctrine takes away from Christ all that He achieved and risked in becoming incarnate. I also believe it takes away from God all that He did when He gave His only-begotten Son as a sacrifice for our redemption.

The article shows very clearly what I believe and why I believe it. It also shows what the Seventh-day Adventist Church, also its ministry, is teaching today.

I agree that it is a very large article (74 pages) but remember, the longest distance ever walked was achieved by taking the first step. There is an index to help the reader.

As one last parting shot for 2016 as midnight approached on December 31st, Richard Mendoza said on one Facebook group

**"Terry Hill is as far off the train tracks as the earth is from the sun..... "Even of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves!"**

## [Acts 20:20-29](#)

If you think I am “[as far off the train tracks as the earth is from the sun](#)”, or if you have any thoughts and comments on what I have written, please do not hesitate to contact me. I shall be very glad to hear from you. My only desire is to believe what is true. I have no ulterior motive. If I need to correct my beliefs I will be very happy to do so. All that anyone needs to do is to show me where I am wrong.

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(In response to the claims and comments of Pastor Richard Mendoza)**

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\*All Scripture quoted and referred to in this document is as the KJV unless otherwise stated.

## God and Christ – two separate personages

Throughout the Bible, God and Christ are spoken of as two individual personages (Psalms 2:7, 40:6-8, 110:1, Proverbs 8:22-31, Isaiah 53:2-6, Jeremiah 23:5-6, Zechariah 6:13, Malachi 3:1-3, Matthew 16:16-17, 27:46, Mark 15:34, John 1:1-3, 14, 18, 3:16, 34-36, 5:22-23, 6:32, 8:42, 17:1-3, 21, 18-23, 20:17, Romans 1:3-4, 7, 5:1, 10, 1 Corinthians 8:6, 15:28, 2 Corinthians 11:31, Galatians 4:4, 6, Ephesians 3:9, Philippians 2:6, Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:1-3, 5, 8-9, 10:5-7 [Psalms 40:6-8], 2 Peter 1:1, 17, 1 John 1:3, 2:1, 22-23, 4:9, 5:10, 2 John 1:9, Jude 9, Revelation 1:1, 1:4-6, 21:22 etc.). Needless to say, many more such verses of Scripture can be found. We have also been counselled through the spirit of prophecy

“Our ministers must be very careful not to enter into controversy in regard to the personality of God. This is a subject that they are not to touch. It is a mystery, and the enemy will surely lead astray those who enter into it. We know that Christ came in person to reveal God to the world. God is a person and Christ is a person. Christ is spoken of in the Word as “the brightness of His Father’s glory, and the express image of His person.” (*Ms 46 1904, Talk, Berrien Springs, May 18<sup>th</sup> 1904, Sermons and Talks, page 343*)

“Christians should bear in mind that God has a personality as verily as has Christ. They should so represent Christ’s person and conduct that by doing His works they will manifest the character and spirit of the Father. Christ is the express image of His Father’s person and character.” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 130 1902, October 27, 1902, Diary, ‘Christ Our Example in Every Line of Work’*)

“The Lord Jesus came to this world to represent the Father. He did not represent God as an essence pervading nature, but as a personal Being. Christians should bear in mind that God has a personality as verily as has Christ.” (*Ellen G. White, Letter 212 1903, to the Teachers, Emmanuel Missionary College, September 23, 1903*)

“Being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? (Note the two distinct personalities.)” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 57 1907, typed May 20<sup>th</sup> 1907, ‘Make a covenant by sacrifice’*)

“Christ is one with the Father, but Christ and God are two distinct personages. Read the prayer of Christ in the seventeenth chapter of John, and you will find this point clearly brought out. How earnestly the Saviour prayed that his disciples might be one with him as he is one with the Father. But the unity that is to exist between Christ and his followers does not destroy the personality of either. They are to be one with him as he is one with the Father. By this unity they are to make it plain to the world that God sent his Son to save sinners. The oneness of Christ’s followers with him is to be the great, unmistakable proof that God did indeed send his Son into the world to save sinners. But a loose, lax religion leaves the world bewildered and confused.” (*Ellen White, Review and Herald, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1905, ‘The work in Washington’*)

“In this Scripture [John 1:1-4, 14-16, John 3:34-36] God and Christ are spoken of as two distinct personalities, each acting in their own individuality.” (*Ellen G. White, Manuscript 760, Diary note, October 31<sup>st</sup> 1905*)

“In this Scripture [John 17:1-3] God and Christ are spoken of separately. They are two distinct persons, but one in mind, one in heart, one in holiness and justice and purify, and

one in the work of seeking to save the sinful race.” (Ellen G. White, Letter 311 1905 to Brethren Daniells and Prescott and their associates, October 30<sup>th</sup> 1905)

“These words [John 17:18-23] show that God and Christ are two personalities, distinct and separate. The unity for which Christ prays, which is to make believers one with Him, as He is one with the Father, does not destroy the personality of God or the personality of Christ.” (Ellen G. White, Letter 52 1906, to Bro and Sis Farnsworth, January 29<sup>th</sup> 1906)

"These words [John 17:20-21] present God and Christ as two distinct personalities." {Ms181 1905, Be Earnest and Steadfast'}

"Here [in 2 Peter 1:1] are brought to view the Father and the Son, in their distinct personalities, with all the power that we need if we will only ask for it.... Our heavenly Father is the God of the universe, and Christ is the divine Son, the One equal with the Father. And now here are the books I have written [Great Controversy, Patriarchs and Prophets, Desire of Ages etc.], in which is contained the light given me. I have been unable to attend school since an early age, and the teachings in these books originate from a source higher than that of man" (Ellen White, Sermon, Loma Linda, April 14<sup>th</sup> 1906)

"And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." All through the Scriptures, the Father and the Son are spoken of as two distinct personages. You will hear men endeavoring to make the Son of God a nonentity. He and the Father are one, but they are two personages. Wrong sentiments regarding this are coming in, and we shall all have to meet them." (Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1905, 'Lessons from the First Epistle of John')

"Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power." (Ellen G. White, Ministry of Healing, page 415, 'A True Knowledge of God')

"There is a personal God, the Father: There Is a personal Christ, The Son." (Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 17<sup>th</sup> March 1904, 'The revelation of God')

Did you notice that Ellen White did not say there is a 'personal God the Son'? Neither did she say there is a 'personal God the Holy Spirit'. She only said there is "a personal God, the Father". Nowhere in her writings did she use such phrases as 'God the Son' or 'God the Holy Spirit'. The same can be said of Scripture. In the Bible no such wording can be found. There is not therefore one inspired writer who used such terminologies. This is very significant. It should make those like us who are not inspired, very wary of using them.

The same can be said of the word 'trinity'. Never with respect to the Godhead did Ellen White use it although it cannot be doubted that she did understand both the history and the theology of the trinity doctrine. Certainly she would have understood the implications of this teaching. This again should be regarded as very significant. This is especially as our church today, when describing God, insists upon using words such as 'trinity' or 'triune'. It is also true to say that neither in Scripture or in the spirit of prophecy is God spoken of as a three-in-one composite entity. Both inspired sources speak of God as a person.

We also read from the spirit of prophecy (differentiating again between the two divine persons)

“The God of the universe has given our cases in the Judgment into the hands of his Son, one who is acquainted with our infirmities, and knows that we are but dust. He has taken our nature upon him, and has himself felt the force of our temptations; he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows” (*Ellen G. White, Bible Echo, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1889, ‘Christ our life’*)

“When we are having a hard time, let us consider how much that our salvation cost the God of the universe. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (*Ellen G. White, Letter 232, 1908 to Bro and Sis Hare, July 26<sup>th</sup> 1908*)

All the above statements (that have come to us through the spirit of prophecy) are reasonably easy to understand. They tell us, as do the Scriptures, that God is a person and that Christ is a person. God and Christ therefore are not the same person. This is why their individual personalities (their individual identities) must not be confounded. Each has a personal identity of His own (1 Corinthians 8:6).

As Ellen White so clearly put it

“Let those who name the name of Christ make an entire clearance of the soul-temple of all that is opposed to God. Believers are to [have] a confirmed, settled faith in a personal God and a personal Christ. The Father and the Son are perfect in their individual identity, and at the same time, they are perfect in their oneness.” (*Ellen G. White, Letter 343 1905, To the brethren in Nashville, typed August 5<sup>th</sup> 1905*)

This 'individuality' and 'oneness' is in agreement with Scripture (John 10:30, 17:3, 17:11, 17:21). Ellen White speaks of the Father (the God of the universe) as being the “personal God” whilst the Son (the divine Son of God) she describes as being the “personal Christ”. Again she emphasises that God and Christ (Father and Son) each have their own individual identities. In personal identity therefore, Christ is not God.

In Volume 8 of the Testimonies, after quoting John 5:17-20, we find this comment

“Wonderful statement! The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one.” (*Ellen G. White, Testimonies Volume 8 page 269*)

To a man named Church in 1890 it was explained

“Christ did not seek to be thought great, and yet He was the Majesty of heaven, equal in dignity and glory with the infinite God. He was God manifested in the flesh....The divine nature in the person of Christ was not transformed in human nature and the human nature of the Son of man was not changed into the divine nature, but they were mysteriously blended in the Saviour of men. He was not the Father but in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,...” (*Ellen G. White, Letter 8a 1890, to Bro Church July 7<sup>th</sup> 1890*)

Notice here it says that Christ was “equal” with “the infinite God” (meaning that Christ is not the infinite God) yet He was “God manifested in the flesh”. This is the begotten concept. We shall speak more of this later.

On a number of occasions Ellen White spoke of a 'personal God' and a separate 'personal Saviour'. Here are some examples. Notice how these two divine beings are differentiated.

"Through Jesus Christ a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power.... Christ and the apostles taught clearly the truth of the existence of a personal God." (*Ellen G. White, Testimonies Volume 8, page 264-265, 'The essential knowledge'*)

"Christ came to the world as a personal Saviour. He represented a personal God." (*Ellen G. White, General Conference Daily Bulletin, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1899, 'Special Testimonies'*)

"But Christ came as a personal Saviour to the world. He represented a personal God. As a personal Saviour, he ascended on high; and he will come again as he ascended to heaven,—a personal Saviour. He is the express image of the Father's person. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 8th November 1898, 'The revelation of God'*)

"We have got a God, a personal God and a personal Saviour, and Satan is seeking with all his wiles to seduce men and women to become as gods themselves and flattering them to have a higher and higher class of education. But we want the lower class. That is the highest for us to obtain, because self lives." (*Ellen G. White, Ms 153 1904, Sermon, August 14<sup>th</sup> 1904, Philadelphia, 'Thoughts on 1 John'*)

"Through Jesus Christ, God—not a perfume, not something intangible, but a personal God—created man and endowed him with intelligence and power." (*Ellen G. White, Ms 117, 1898, September 21<sup>st</sup> 1898, 'A personal God'*)

"Neither Christ nor the apostles taught the doctrines that are found in Living Temple. They taught clearly the truth of the existence of a personal God. Paul speaks of Christ as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." (*Ellen G. White, Letter 250 1903 to James Edson White, November 16<sup>th</sup> 1903*)

"There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son." (*Ellen White, MS 86 1898, July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1898, 'Notes of the week of prayer, No. 5'*)

"Christ gave his followers a positive promise that after his ascension he would send them his Spirit. "Go ye therefore," he said, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father [a personal God], and of the Son [a personal Prince and Saviour], and of the Holy Ghost [sent from heaven to represent Christ]: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1897, 'Words of comfort No. 2'*)

Throughout the spirit of prophecy, as they are in Scripture, the "personal God" (the Father) and the "personal Christ" (the Son), are always spoken of as two separate persons. Did you notice that it is said that Christ came to *represent* a personal God? A person cannot represent himself. The person represented therefore must be a different person from the one who is doing the representing. Christ therefore is not the personal God. As the same writer made clear

"Every church member will be vigorous and fruitful in proportion as he honors **the Father, who is not to be regarded as an essence but as a personal God** who made man in His own image and likeness.

The Son of God, who is the express image of the Father's person, became man's Advocate and Redeemer. He humbled Himself in taking the nature of man in his fallen condition, but He did not take the taint of sin." (Ellen G. White, Ms 93, 1893, *Privileges and Responsibilities of Sons of God*)

"Those who think they can obtain a knowledge of God aside from his Representative, whom the word declares is "the express image of his person," will need to become fools in their own estimation before they can be wise. Christ came as a personal Saviour to the world. He represented a personal God. He ascended on high as a personal Saviour, and will come again as he ascended into heaven, a personal Saviour." (Ellen G. White, *Unpublished Testimony, July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1898, 'The mystery of God'*)

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven"—a personal God who is in heaven." (Ellen G. White, Ms116 1904, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1904, 'Let this mind be in you')

"Men are to discharge their duty to God. They are to have reverence for, and a knowledge of, a personal God. They are to praise and glorify His name as the One who has placed many beautiful things in this sin-corrupted earth, that from the child to the man and woman of mature years, all may see that God loves His family here below. He so loves us, that He gave us a tangible proof of His love, by sending His only begotten Son to bear the sin of the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the church containing messages of warning and instruction to Seventh-day Adventists, Special Testimonies Series B NO 7, 1906, page 50, 'A great opportunity slighted, November 18<sup>th</sup> 1905*)

In all the above statements, Ellen White speaks of God as a person. Never did she describe God as three persons inseparably united together as the one God in one trinitarian being as depicted by the trinity doctrine. Neither can such a depiction be found in Scripture. No Bible writer described God in such a manner.

It is very noticeable that Ellen White did not say here that there is a personal Holy Spirit. What she did say was that Jesus had promised His followers that after His ascension He would send to them "his Spirit". This is the Holy Spirit – the Comforter (John 14:16-18, 26, 15:26, 16:7).

On the day of His resurrection, Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost) upon His disciples. The disciple John has told us

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:" John 20:21-22

Jesus did this for a specific purpose. Please note the highlighted words

"The Holy Spirit was not yet fully manifested; for Christ had not yet been glorified. The more abundant impartation of the Spirit did not take place till after Christ's ascension. Not until this was received could the disciples fulfill the commission to preach the gospel to the world. But the Spirit was now given for a special purpose. Before the disciples could fulfill their official duties in connection with the church, Christ breathed His Spirit upon them." (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages, page 805, 'Peace be unto you'*)



Notice again it says "Christ breathed His Spirit upon them". Regarding the Holy Spirit it is said

"This refers to the **omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ**, called the Comforter." (*Ellen G. White, letter to Brother Chapman June 11<sup>th</sup> 1891, Manuscript Release volume 14, No. 1107*)

Whilst it would be too much to go into here (it is also outside of the scope of this article), the spirit of prophecy is replete with statements saying that the Holy Spirit is the personal presence of Christ (Christ omnipresent). Here are some typical quotes

"The Lord is soon to come. We want that complete and perfect understanding which the Lord alone can give. It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. **We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ**. If we commune with God, we shall have strength and grace and efficiency." (*Ellen G. White, Letter 66, 1894 to E. W. Prescott, April 10<sup>t</sup>1894*)

"In giving His commission to His followers, Christ did not tell them they would be left alone. He assured them that **He would be near them. He spoke of His omnipresence in a special way**. Go to all nations, He said. Go, to the farthest portithon of the habitable globe, **but know that My presence will be there....The assurance of His abiding presence was the richest legacy Christ could give His disciples** " (*Ellen G. White, Ms 138 1897, December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1897, 'The Gospel'*)

"**That Christ should manifest Himself to them, and yet be invisible to the world, was a mystery to the disciples**. They could not understand the words of Christ in their spiritual sense. They were thinking of the outward, visible manifestation. They could not take in the fact that they could have the presence of Christ with them, and yet He be unseen by the world. **They did not understand the meaning of a spiritual manifestation.**" (*Ellen G. White, Southern Watchman, 13<sup>th</sup> September 1898, 'Christ's representatives'*)

"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.**" (*Ellen G. White, Letter 119, 1895, to James Edson White and Emma White, February 18<sup>th</sup> 1895*)

"**What saith our Saviour? "I will not leave thee comfortless; I will come unto you."**...When trials overshadow the soul, remember the words of Christ, **remember that He is an unseen presence in the person of the Holy Spirit...**" (*Ellen G. White, Letter 24 1897, to Sister Wessels, March 7<sup>th</sup> 1897*)

"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."" (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 26<sup>th</sup> August 1890, 'The righteousness of Christ'*)

All of the above is in keeping with Christ's promise that after His ascension His personal presence would continue to be with His followers (John 14:18, see also Matthew 18:20). As has already been mentioned, a more comprehensive study on the Holy Spirit is outside the scope of this article. On this subject there is much to be taken into consideration. Far much more than has been said here.

## Christ the divine Son of God

Jesus claimed to be the Son of God (John 3:16, John 5:25, 9:35-38, 10:36, 11:4, see also Matthew 22:41-46). Certain of the Jews regarded His claim as blasphemous (Mark 14:60-65 John 10:36). They knew He was claiming to be God (John 5:18, 10:30-33). It was this claim of Sonship He was challenged with at His trial (Matthew 26:63, Luke 22:70). The Jews said His claims made Him worthy of death (Mark 14:64, John 19:7, see also John 8:56-59). Jesus was mocked for claiming to be the Son of God (Matthew 27:40-43). It was on this point of Sonship with God that Satan challenged Christ in the wilderness (Matthew 4:3-6, Luke 4:3-9).

John wrote his gospel with the inspired purpose of showing Christ to be the Son of God (John 20:31). He does not say he wrote his gospel to prove that Christ is God although he does say that Christ, in His pre-existence, was “with God” and “was God” (John 1:1). This is the very essence of the begotten concept.

The Scriptures tell us that Christ is the “express image” of God’s person (Hebrews 1:3) - also that He is “the image” of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). Jesus referred to Himself as the only begotten of God (John 3:16). He said very plainly that He is the Son of God (John 9:35-38). The Jews understood Him perfectly (John 19:7). The disciples acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 14:33, 16:16, John 1:49, 11:26). So too, at His death, did the Roman centurion and others (Matthew 27:54, Mark 15:39).

The Father testified that Jesus is His Son (Matthew 3:16-17, 17:5). This must be regarded as of the utmost importance. What greater witness could there be? In fact Peter, when confessing Christ to be “the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16), was told by Jesus that it was not “flesh and blood” that had revealed this to him but God the Father (Matthew 16:17). The demons also addressed Jesus as the Son of God. They certainly knew His identity (Matthew 8:29, Mark 3:11, 5:7, Luke 4:41). The man in the tombs possessed of a devil also called Christ the Son of God (Luke 8:27-29).

John, in the opening of his gospel, said that Christ was the only begotten of God therefore He (Christ) was the only One who could declare God (John 1:18). Philip taught the Ethiopian eunuch that Christ was the Son of God (Acts 8:37). The first thing Paul taught after his 'blindness' was that Christ is the Son of God (Acts 9:20). His continuing theme was that God had sent His Son into the world (Romans 1:4, 8:3, 32, 2 Corinthians 1:19, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:13 etc.). Not surprisingly, John's little letters, as does the book of Hebrews, constantly refer to Christ as the Son of God (1 John 3:8, 4:15, 5:5, 5:10, 5:12-13, 5:20, Hebrews 4:14, 6:6, 7:3, 10:29). That Christ is the Son of God was also the testimony of John the Baptist (John 1:32-33). It is not surprising therefore that we find Jesus praying to His Father saying

“... 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. John 17:1-3

This Richard is exactly the opposite of what you are claiming. As a trinitarian you say

“Jesus Christ is the TRUE GOD, the Almighty God! not just the Father alone”. “They both [the Father and Jesus] are the True God...” (see page 1)

Regardless of what you say Richard, Jesus made it very clear that His Father is the “only [Gr.

monos] true God". This is why these two divine persons are not to be confused with each other. In personality, Christ is not the one true God although He is, because He is begotten of the Father, the personification (the express image) of the one true God. He is the personality of the Father revealed (Hebrews 1:3, John 1:1-3, 14-18, Colossians 1:15). He is the divine Son of the infinite God. It is just as though He is God's second self.

As the gospels are read (particularly John's gospel), the one thing that stands out is that the words "my Father" were constantly on the lips of Jesus. In John's gospel alone can be found over 30 instances. In the same gospel there is something like 60 times where Jesus refers to "the Father". Jesus appears to have been making a point. Throughout the New Testament there are numerous references to Christ being a Son. There are far too many to quote here. You can check these out for yourself.

Just as the Scriptures are replete with references to Christ being a Son, so too are the spirit of prophecy writings. In one such place Ellen White penned these words

"O what a gift God has made to our world! The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, liable to physical infirmities, tempted in all points like as we are. He was the Son of the living God. His personality did not begin with His incarnation in the flesh." (Ellen G. White, Letter 77 1894, to Bro Scazighini, August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1894)

The Jews of old understood the claims of Jesus. They knew that because He claimed to be the Son of God He was making Himself God (John 5:18, 8:58, 10:33). Why therefore should Seventh-day Adventists today have difficulty understanding it? The Bible is very clear that as said here by Ellen White, "God sent His own Son" to die as a sacrifice for sin (John 3:16, Romans 8:3, 32).

It is also confirmed here that the Son's "personality did not begin with His incarnation" This is why God's servant also said of Christ

"In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. Said the angel to Mary, "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" While the Son of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense." (Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1905, 'Christ our only hope')

It is being emphasised here that Christ was the Son of God *prior* to the incarnation. Jesus did not become the Son of God at His birth in Bethlehem. In the incarnation He gained this title in a "new sense". It follows therefore that there must be an 'old sense' in which He held it.

In an article called 'The Word made flesh' (which needless to say is based upon the opening dialogue of John's gospel) it is explained

"But while God's Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding his pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with his Father." (Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1906, 'The Word made flesh')

In the book the Desire of Ages we find these words

"Jesus claimed equal rights with God in doing a work equally sacred, and of the same character with that which engaged the Father in heaven. But the Pharisees were still

more incensed. He had not only broken the law, according to their understanding, **but in calling God "His own Father" had declared Himself equal with God.** John 5:18, R. V. (Ellen White, *'The Desire of Ages'* page 207, *'Bethesda and the Sanhedrin'*)

This Sonship referred to here was not from Christ's birth in Bethlehem. It was not this 'earthly' birth that made Him equal with God. The above is referring to His pre-existent Sonship. It was this that made Him equal with God (Philippians 2:5-8)

Notice here that Ellen White did not quote from the KJV of the Scriptures. Instead she used the (then quite recently published) Revised Version. Thus she said Jesus called God **"His own Father"**. She would not have been as specific as this if she had quoted the KJV. This version simply says, "God was His Father" (John 5:18). Ellen White must have had a very good reason for quoting from the RV. It appears she wanted to stress the reality of Christ's divine Sonship.

Another important point to note is that here, as in Scripture (see Philippians 2:5-8), the Son of God is said to be **"equal with God"**. Christ therefore, in personality, cannot be God (not if He is equal *with* God). We are also told that the Son is the **"image of the invisible God"** (see 2 Corinthians 4:4, Colossians 1:15). The same reasoning applies. Christ, in personality, cannot be **"the invisible God"**. On the basis of this it would not be reasonable to say that Christ is God in personality.

All of this of course, at that time, was in keeping with the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. Ellen White followed this by saying

**"The whole nation of the Jews called God their Father, therefore they would not have been so enraged if Christ had represented Himself as standing in the same relation to God. But they accused Him of blasphemy, showing that they understood Him as making this claim in the highest sense."** (*Ibid*)

There can be no doubt that God's messenger was also endeavouring to make a point. She was emphasising that Christ really is the Son of God - **"in the highest sense"**. A little earlier in the same book we find these words

**"It was natural for the parents of Jesus to look upon Him as their own child. He was daily with them, His life in many respects was like that of other children, and it was difficult for them to realize that He was the Son of God."** (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 81, *'The Passover visit'*)

In 1897 in a letter to A. G. Daniells, Palmer and Colcord, Ellen White wrote

**"The Father, in union and loving sympathy with His Son, subjected Himself to suffer with His Son. He spared not His only begotten Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all. This gift of Christ is the crowning truth of God's love and His Fatherhood through all time and through eternity. Here the love of God in His Fatherhood is shown. Let us drink in this love, that we may know by experience what a real, tender, joyful experience there is in a realization of the Fatherhood of God."** (Ellen G. White, *Letter 50 A 1897, to A. G. Daniells, R. E. Palmer and W. A. Colcord, March 12<sup>th</sup> 1897*)

As her ministry as God's messenger was drawing to a close she explained

**"The question was put to Christ at one time, If your doctrine is true, if you are, as you claim, the Son of God, why do you come to the world like this? Why do you subject yourself to humility and privation? Had it been possible for men to be redeemed with a**

smaller sacrifice than was made, the Son of God would not have taken the guilt of the transgressor upon his sinless soul. **But the spotless Son of God was the only offering that would atone; none but his life would suffice to save the sinner from ruin....**Those who have broken his law are sinners; but he says to them, **I gave my only begotten Son to die for sinners.** He bore the penalty of the sins of the world. He is sufficient for your redemption ”(*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 30th September 1909, ‘That they all may be one’*)

“Brethren and sisters, let us study carefully the prayer of Christ. Let us seek to experience the oneness in faith and works for which he prayed. **The Fatherhood of God is given to us in the gift of Jesus Christ; and as God was one with his only begotten Son,** so he would have his earthly children one with him.” (*Ibid*)

In another letter addressed to John Harvey Kellogg, we find the emphasis again on Christ really being the Son of God

“When Christ first announced to the heavenly host His mission and work in the world, He declared that He was to leave His position of dignity and disguise His holy mission by assuming the likeness of a man **when in reality He was the Son of the infinite God.**” (*Ellen G. White, letter, to J. H. Kellogg, Letter No. K-303, August 29th 1903*)

Note the following very important observation (this was regarding when Peter said to Jesus “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”)

**“The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer's faith. It is that which Christ Himself has declared to be eternal life. But the possession of this knowledge was no ground for self-glorification. Through no wisdom or goodness of his own had it been revealed to Peter. Never can humanity, of itself, attain to a knowledge of the divine. ... "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him;" and the fact that Peter discerned the glory of Christ was an evidence that he had been "taught of God" Ps. 25:14; John 6:45. Ah, indeed, "blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee." (Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, page 412, ‘The foreshadowing of the cross’)**

It is God who reveals to the individual that Christ is the Son of God. Ellen White refers to Peter's confession (that Christ is the Son of the living God) as “The truth”, also the “foundation of the believer's faith”.

Perhaps the one statement from the spirit of prophecy that helps us to understand a great deal is found in 'Spirit of Prophecy Volume 1'. This is where Ellen White wrote (when speaking of the rebellion in Heaven prior to the creation of our world)

“The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. **The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ, his Son, should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence.** The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. **His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host.** Especially was his Son to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out his will and his purposes, but would do nothing of himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in him. {*Ellen G. White, Spirit of Prophecy, Volume 1, page 17, ‘The fall of Satan’*}

This again shows very clearly the individuality of the Father and the Son. It shows too the authority that the “great Creator” (the Father) has over the universe. Important to note here is that it said that the Father had “invested” the Son with the “authority to command”. This must mean that the Father had the right to invest this authority. This invested authority is Christ's inheritance as the divine Son of God. This is the begotten concept. Notice too, also very importantly, it says that the “Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ, his Son, should be equal with himself”. Here again we see very clearly the pre-eminence of the Father.

Again we read of this rebellion in Heaven

“The angels were marshaled in companies, each division with a higher commanding angel at its head. Satan, ambitious to exalt himself, and unwilling to submit to the authority of Jesus, was insinuating against the government of God. Some of the angels sympathized with Satan in his rebellion, and others strongly contended for the honor and wisdom of God in giving authority to His Son. There was contention among the angels. Satan and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They wished to look into His unsearchable wisdom, and ascertain His purpose in exalting Jesus and endowing Him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son.” (*Ellen G. White, Early Writings, 1882, page 145, Spiritual gifts*)

Christ is spoken of as having been *given* authority, also having been *endowed* with power. Notice again that it is the Father who has the ultimate authority to both give and to endow. Again we read of this controversy

““Before the fall of Satan, the Father consulted his Son in regard to the formation of man. They purposed to make this world, and create beasts and living things upon it, and to make man in the image of God, to reign as a ruling monarch over every living thing which God should create.” (*Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, Volume 3, page 36, ‘The temptation and fall’, 1864*)

God's servant gives us a precious insight as to how the initial rebellion in Heaven came about

“When Satan learned the purpose of God, he was envious at Christ, and jealous because the Father had not consulted him in regard to the creation of man. Satan was of the highest order of angels; but Christ was above all. He was the commander of all Heaven. He imparted to the angelic family the high commands of his Father.” (*Ibid*)

Notice here that initially, the “high commands” spoken of here came from the Father. Christ was executing His Father's will. Here again is shown the pre-eminence of the Father. It was later explained (again concerning the continuing rebellion)

“All the angels were astir. Satan was warring against the government of God, because ambitious to exalt himself and unwilling to submit to the authority of God's Son, Heaven's great commander.” (*Ibid, page 37*)

It was the Son's authority which Satan questioned, not the Father's.

“While some of the angels joined Satan in his rebellion, others reasoned with him to dissuade him from his purposes, contending for the honor and wisdom of God in giving authority to his Son. Satan urged, for what reason was Christ endowed with unlimited power and such high command above himself! He stood up proudly, and urged that he

should be equal with God. He makes his boasts to his sympathizers that he will not submit to the authority of Christ.” (*Ibid*)

Here it is said that the “authority” possessed by Christ was given to Him by the Father – also that Christ was “endowed with unlimited power” (meaning furnished or supplied with). We are then told (in conclusion of Lucifer’s rebellion against the Son of God)

“At length all the angels are summoned to appear before the Father, to have each case decided. Satan unblushingly makes known to all the heavenly family, his discontent, that Christ should be preferred before him, to be in such close conference with God, and he be uninformed as to the result of their frequent consultations. **God informs Satan that this he can never know. That to his Son will he reveal his secret purposes**, and that all the family of Heaven, Satan not excepted, were required to yield implicit obedience. Satan boldly speaks out his rebellion, and points to a large company who think God is unjust in not exalting him to be equal with God, and in not giving him command above Christ. He declares he cannot submit to be under Christ’s command, **that God’s commands alone will he obey**. Good angels weep to hear the words of Satan, and to see how he despises to follow the direction of Christ, their exalted and loving commander.” (*Ibid*)

Here then was the problem. Lucifer (Satan) would not submit to the authority of the Son. He said he would only execute God’s commands. Lucifer therefore did not recognise Christ as God.

I would also ask you to note that it is said that God informed Satan that only to His own Son would He (God) “**reveal his secret purposes**”. Here again we see the two divine beings (God and Christ). We also see again the pre-eminence of the Father (God). He is the One doing the revealing to Christ.

As the New Testament is read, it cannot fail to be noted that the Father is depicted as having the primacy (the pre-eminence). The Son is seen to be sub-ordinate to the Father. This does not mean that the Son is not equal to the Father. Paul tells us that Christ, in the form of God in His pre-existence, thought it “not robbery to be equal with God” (see Philippians 2:5-8). We have also seen here that it is said that it was ordained by the Father that Christ should be equal with Himself. This equality therefore was by pleasure of the Father.

This subordination is also relational (as a Son is respectfully subordinate to his father) This is like Isaac was to Abraham (Genesis 22:1-18)

“It was to impress Abraham’s mind with the reality of the gospel, as well as to test his faith, that God commanded him to slay his son. The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of **the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man’s redemption**. No other test could have caused Abraham such torture of soul as did the offering of his son. God gave His Son to a death of agony and shame. The angels who witnessed the humiliation and soul anguish of the Son of God were not permitted to interpose, as in the case of Isaac. There was no voice to cry, “It is enough.” To save the fallen race, the King of glory yielded up His life. **What stronger proof can be given of the infinite compassion and love of God? “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32**” (*Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, page 154, ‘The test of faith’*)

Jesus said that God gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16, see also Romans 8:3, 8:32 and Galatians 4:4). Speaking of the Saviour’s discourse with Nicodemus we read

“Jesus unfolded before this noble Pharisee the whole plan of salvation, and his mission to the world. In none of his subsequent discourses did the Saviour explain so thoroughly, step by step, the work necessary to be done in the human heart, if it would inherit the kingdom of Heaven. He traced man's salvation directly to the love of the Father, which led him to give his Son unto death that man might be saved.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 15<sup>th</sup> November 1883, 'The all-important lesson')

It is the Father who did the giving. The Son was respectfully subordinate to the Father. Note where Paul wrote

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

Here as in other places, the Father is shown as the primal (original) source whilst Christ (the Son of God) is the intermediary. This can also be seen in other places such as John 1:1-3, Ephesians 3:9 and Hebrews 1:1:3 etc. It can also be seen where the apostle Paul wrote

“And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.” 1 Corinthians 3:23

John the Baptist said (again showing the subordination of the Son to the Father)

“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” John 3:35

Paul concluded

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

The primacy of the Father can also be seen where it says in Revelation 1:1

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.” Revelation 1:1

Again it is the Father who does the giving. The Son is the recipient. More in this respect could be shown.

Let none think though that Christ was obligated to come to earth. Regarding the salvation of mankind He was one in thought with God. His love for the fallen race was one and the same with God. They are our co-Creators (John 1:3, Hebrews 1:1-3, Genesis 1:26). The plan of salvation was worked by both. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). The counsel of peace was between them both (Zechariah 6:13). In the *Desire of Ages* it says (in the chapter 'God with us')

“This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father's side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father's hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing.” (Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, page 22, 'God with us')

Christ's character was opposite to the one developed by Satan. Satan said “I will be like the



Most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14) but Christ who thought it not robbery to be equal with God considered this not a thing to be grasped in order to save mankind (Philippians 2:5-8). The love of God and Christ for fallen humanity is a love that “seeketh not her own” (John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 13:5).

From what we have seen above, there can be no mistaking that in harmony with Scripture, we have been told through the spirit of prophecy that Christ really is the divine Son of God. Having said that, let's not conclude that He is not God. The fact that He is God's Son means that He is God – in the person of the Son. This again is the begotten concept.

The spirit of prophecy is also very clear that Christ is God. Here are a few of the more notable statements. There are numerous others.

“Jesus was free from all sin and error; there was not a trace of imperfection in his life or character. He maintained spotless purity under circumstances the most trying. True, he declared, “There is none good but One, that is God,” but again he said, “I and my Father are one.” **Jesus speaks of himself as well as the Father as God,** and claims for himself perfect righteousness.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 10<sup>th</sup> October 1892, ‘Draw from the source of strength’)

“Christ, the divine Teacher, came to reveal the Father as a merciful, compassionate Being, full of goodness and truth. The Saviour swept back the shadow in which the enemy had enveloped the Father, declaring, “I and My Father are one; **look on Me and behold God.**” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 1<sup>st</sup> May 1901, ‘The divine teacher’)

“The world was made by him, “and without him was not anything made that was made.” If Christ made all things, he existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. **Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity,** God over all, blessed forevermore.” (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald* 5<sup>th</sup> April 1906. ‘The Word made Flesh’)

“When we look with the eye of faith upon the cross of Calvary, and see our sins laid upon the victim hanging in weakness and ignominy there,--**when we grasp the fact that this is God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,**--we are led to exclaim, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!” (Ellen G. White, *Youth’s Instructor*, 11<sup>th</sup> February 1897, ‘The Mind of Christ’)

“**Christ had not ceased to be God when He became man.** Though He had humbled Himself to humanity, **the Godhead was still His own.**” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 663, ‘Let not your heart be troubled’)

“If they do these wicked acts to your divine Lord, what will they do to those that bear the testimony that He came from God, **that He was God in human flesh?**” (Ellen G. White, *Ms 101*, 1897, September 26<sup>th</sup> 1897, ‘The True High Priest’)

“He voluntarily assumed human nature. It was his own act, and by his own consent. He clothed his divinity with humanity. **He was all the while as God, but he did not appear as God.** He veiled the demonstrations of Deity which had commanded the homage, and called forth the admiration, of the universe of God. **He was God while upon earth, but he divested himself of the form of God, and in its stead took the form and fashion of a man.**” (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 5<sup>th</sup> July 1887, *Christ man’s example*)

“Christ was a real man; he gave proof of his humility in becoming a man. **Yet he was God in the flesh.** When we approach this subject, we would do well to heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”” (*Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1898, ‘Search the Scriptures, No. 1*)

“If the disciples believed this vital connection between the Father and the Son, their faith would not forsake them when they saw Christ’s suffering and death to save a perishing world. Christ was seeking to lead them from their low condition of faith to the experience they might receive **if they truly realized what He was,—God in human flesh.**” (*Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, page 664, ‘Let not your heart be troubled’*)

In 1890, Ellen White wrote (in an article called ‘God made manifest in the flesh’)

“Christ came to represent the Father. **We behold in him the image of the invisible God.** He clothed his divinity with humanity, and came to the world that the erroneous ideas Satan had been the means of creating in the minds of men, in regard to the character of God, might be removed. We could not behold the glory of God unveiled in Christ and live; but as he came in the garb of humanity, we may draw nigh to our Redeemer. **We are called upon to behold the Lord our Father in the person of his Son** “ (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, January 20<sup>th</sup> 1890, ‘God made manifest in the flesh’*)

On other occasions Ellen White wrote such as (many such more can be found)

“Jesus Christ “counted it not a thing to be grasped to be equal with God.” Because divinity alone could be efficacious in the restoration of man from the poisonous bruise of the serpent, **God himself, in his only begotten Son, assumed human nature,** and in the weakness of human nature sustained the character of God, vindicated his holy law in every particular, and accepted the sentence of wrath and death for the sons of men.” (*Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor, February 11th 1897, ‘The Mind of Christ’*)

“**Christ himself was the Word, the Wisdom, of God; and in him God himself came down from heaven,** and clothed himself in the habiliments of humanity.” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 1st February 1898, ‘The Plan of Redemption’*)

“**In the person of his only begotten Son, the God of heaven** has condescended to stoop to our human nature.” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 8th November 1898*)

All of this of course is why Jesus said to one of His disciples (when asked to show the Father)

“... Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” John 14:9

Yet you say of my beliefs Richard (on your Biblical Investigations Facebook page of July 12<sup>th</sup> 2016)

“Brother Terry Hill is a “errorist” promulgating the errors of ONE PERSON God theology.

Jesus Christ is the TRUE GOD, the Almighty God! not just the Father alone.”

<https://www.facebook.com/rpmbiblical.investigations/posts/1252409928132591>

By your accusations Richard, you are implying that I do not believe that Christ is God. This is a public misrepresentation of my beliefs. This can be seen by anyone who has taken the time to read the articles on my website, also by those reading this particular article. Misrepresenting someone is a very serious matter. Speaking of the 10 Commandments and the command that says "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor", Ellen White had this to say

"False speaking in any matter, every attempt or purpose to deceive our neighbor, is here included. An intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood. By a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression of the countenance, a falsehood may be told as effectually as by words. All intentional overstatement, every hint or insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood. This precept forbids every effort to injure our neighbor's reputation by misrepresentation or evil surmising, by slander or tale bearing. Even the intentional suppression of truth, by which injury may result to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment." (*Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, page 309, 'The Law given to Israel'*)

I do not dispute that Christ is God. I am simply emphasising that Christ is not God *in personality*. In personality, Christ is the Son of God. This is why He is God. This is the begotten concept. This is the emphasis (that because Christ is the Son of God He is God) that John made by reason of his gospel (compare John 20:31, 1:1-3).

### **Christ is not God in personality**

The New Testament Scriptures (such as Matthew 1:23, John 1:1-3, 8:58, Hebrews 1:8, Colossians 2:9, and Philippians 2:5-8 etc.) speak of Christ as God (therefore this is NOT the issue) but unlike you Richard with your trinitarian view, I do not believe that the Bible teaches that Christ is God in personality. I believe that a correct understanding of the Scriptures would lead us to conclude that

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality." (*Ellen G. White, Ms 116, December 19<sup>th</sup> 1905, 'An Entire Consecration'*)

This statement can only be understood by reason of the begotten (Sonship) concept (spoken of here by Ellen White). I do not know of any other way it can be understood. Certainly it cannot be understood in the trinitarian view of God. This is because in trinitarianism, as believed by you Richard, Christ is God in personality. This denies what Ellen White is saying here.

In this same manuscript God's servant went on to say

"God through Christ created our world and all that is therein, but this did not destroy the identity of Christ. Knowledge from God is supreme, not foolish, but sound and explainable, according to the light given of God." (*Ibid*)

In personality (personal identity), Christ is the Son of God. This though does not make Him any less than God. As Ellen White said (see above), He is God in the person of the Son. The Scriptures are very clear on this matter. They say He is begotten (brought forth) of God (see Psalms 2:7, Proverbs 8:22-31, John 1:14, 18, 3:16, Hebrews 1:5, 1 John 4:9). As I said above, it is just as though He is God's second self (John 1:1). This is in keeping with the words we have just read from the spirit of prophecy. As we read on, this will become even more apparent.

When instructing the youth of her day, Ellen White would have been very careful in her choice of words. She knew how Satan would rejoice to have these young people believe error. She understood therefore how important it was that they should be taught the truth. The year previous to the publication of *Desire of Ages* she had this to say to them

“From eternity there was a complete unity between the Father and the Son. **They were two, yet little short of being identical; two in individuality,** yet one in spirit, and heart, and character.” (*Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor 16<sup>th</sup> December 1897 ‘The New Commandment part 1’*)

Here the youth were reminded that the Father and the Son (God and Christ) are two individual personages. They were also informed that these two divine persons are NOT identical. Putting this and the penultimate statement together concludes that Christ is not God in personality – also that there is a difference between God and Christ. Once again this is not the trinitarian view. As you know Richard, it is the begotten concept. Notice it says that this is how it has been “From eternity”. To the youth she also explained

“Who is Christ?—He is the only begotten Son of the living God. He is to the Father as a word that expresses the thought,—as a thought made audible. Christ is the word of God. Christ said to Philip, “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” His words were the echo of God’s words. **Christ was the likeness of God, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person.**” {*Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor, 28th June 1894, ‘Grow in Grace’*}

Here the Father is referred to as the “living God”. Christ is referred to as “the only begotten Son of the living God”. Again Ellen White clearly delineates between these two divine personages. Notice too she describes Christ as “the likeness of God”, also the “express image of his [God’s] person”. If Christ is God in personality, none of this would make sense.

It is the same here. Again to the youth she said (in an article called ‘Words to the Young’)

“While we are favorably situated, let us make use of every opportunity **to know the one true God, and Jesus Christ** whom he hath sent. We do not need to experience what are the delusive snares of Satan” {*Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor, December 21, 1893, ‘Words to the Young’*}

In accordance with the words of Jesus (John 17:3), Ellen White makes the point here that “the one true God” is not Christ but the Father. Two years previously in 1891 she wrote

“Let the missionaries of the cross proclaim that **there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, who is Jesus Christ the Son of the Infinite God. This needs to be proclaimed throughout every church in our land.** Christians need to know this, and not put man where God should be, that they may no longer be worshipers of idols, but of the living God. Idolatry exists in our churches.” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 40 1891, January 21st 1891*)

Ellen White clearly differentiates between the “one God” and “the Son of the Infinite God”.

On the opening page of the very first chapter of *Patriarchs and Prophets* (this is the book that Ellen White said was especially adapted for newcomers to become established in the truth), the distinction between these two divine personages is immediately brought to the reader’s attention. She explained

"The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate--a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father--one in nature, in character, in purpose--the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 34, 'Why was sin permitted')

Throughout the spirit of prophecy it is repeatedly stated that Christ is the "only begotten" of God. God's messenger said that Christ was also "the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God". God created all things through and for Christ (John 1:1-3, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:16-17). Christ therefore is co-Creator with God (Genesis 1:26, Hebrews 1:1-3). The same writer followed on by saying

"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." (*Ibid*)

I would ask you to particularly note that Ellen White identifies Christ with the wisdom brought forth of Proverbs 8:22-31. This she did on a number of occasions. We shall see this later. Notice here the word "Me" has an upper case 'M' denoting a divine person. Four times in Ellen White's writings this verse is expressed this way.

In another chapter she wrote (referring to Enoch)

"In prophetic vision he [Enoch] was instructed concerning the death of Christ, and was shown His coming in glory, attended by all the holy angels, to ransom His people from the grave. He also saw the corrupt state of the world when Christ should appear the second time--that there would be a boastful, presumptuous, self-willed generation, denying the only God and the Lord Jesus Christ, trampling upon the law, and despising the atonement. He saw the righteous crowned with glory and honor, and the wicked banished from the presence of the Lord, and destroyed by fire." (*Ibid*, page 85, 'Seth and Enoch')

Again we see God's messenger differentiating between "the only God" and "Christ", In the same book this observation is made

"Since the sin of our first parents there has been no direct communication between God and man." (*Ibid*, page 366)

As you know Richard, this is not the trinitarian view. In the trinitarian view, God has continued to speak directly to men. This is because trinitarians deem Christ to be God in personality. This is why they refer to Him as 'God the Son' which as we have previously noted is a phrase not used by any inspired writer. Ellen White went on to say

"The Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through His mediatorial work He may redeem man and vindicate the authority and holiness of the law of God. All

the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ.” (*Ibid*)

When distinguishing between the two divine persons (as separate personalities), Ellen White did not regard Christ as God. If she had, then her statement would not make sense. In other words, if it is said that Christ is God in personality, it could not be said (as Ellen White says) that since the fall there has been “no direct communication between God and man”. This appears to be a reasonable conclusion.

If as you say Richard (as a trinitarian) that Christ is the Almighty God in personality, Ellen White’s statement would not even be reasonable. It would mean she is saying that since the first sin there has been no direct communion between God and man but there has continued to be direct communication between the Almighty God and man. What sense does this make? As I think you will agree Richard, if Christ is God in personality, then Ellen White must be wrong. It can only be one way or the other.

Notice too she says that after the fall, the Father GAVE the world into the hands of Christ. Once again we see the primacy of the Father.

It has also been revealed through the spirit of prophecy (very importantly)

“The wrath of God still hung over Adam, but the execution of the sentence of death was delayed, and the indignation of God was restrained, because Christ had entered upon the work of becoming man’s Redeemer. Christ was to take the wrath of God which in justice should fall upon man....The holy and infinite God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, could no longer talk with man. No communication could now exist directly between man and his Maker.

God forbears for a time the full execution of the sentence of death pronounced upon man. Satan flattered himself that he had forever broken the link between Heaven and earth. But in this he was greatly mistaken and disappointed. The Father had given over the world into the hands of his Son for him to redeem from the curse and the disgrace of Adam’s failure and fall. Through Christ alone can man now find access to God. And through Christ alone will the Lord hold communication with man.” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1874, Redemption No. 1*)

Here it says that after the fall, the “holy and infinite God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable” “could no longer talk directly with man. This is referring to the Father. The only communication would be through God’s Son. It is quite obvious therefore that Christ, in personality, is not the “holy and infinite God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable”.

In similar fashion she wrote

“As Jehovah, the supreme Ruler, God could not personally communicate with sinful men, but He so loved the world that He sent Jesus to our world as a revelation of Himself. “I and My Father are one,” Christ declared. “No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.”” (*Ellen G. White, Ms124-1903, October 14<sup>th</sup> 1903*)

The above begs a question. If Christ could communicate directly with fallen mankind but the Father (the supreme Ruler) could not, doesn’t this suggest there is a very important difference between these two divine persons? If so, this would be in keeping with where Ellen White said (see above) that the Father and Son (God and Christ) are not identical. In 1899, the year after the publication of ‘Desire of Ages’, Ellen White wrote in an article called ‘The Word made flesh’

**“Jehovah is the name given to Christ.** "Behold, God is my salvation," writes the prophet Isaiah; "I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation." (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1899, 'The Word made flesh'*)

This of course (God and Christ not being identical) would not be the trinitarian view because in trinitarianism, both persons are exactly the same. As you say Richard (see page 1), **“Jesus Christ is the TRUE GOD, the Almighty God! not just the Father alone”** ... **“They both [the Father and Jesus] are the True God...”**

Your 'trinity reasoning' was borne out in our Sabbath School lesson studies in 2008. This is when it was said

**“But imagine a situation in which the Being we have come to know as God the Father came to die for us, and the One we have come to know as Jesus stayed back in heaven (we are speaking in human terms to make a point).”** (*Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath School Quarterly, page 19, Thursday April 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, 'The Mystery of His Deity'*)

This is the role-playing idea that today is taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It teaches that the Father is not really a father, the Son is not really a son and the Holy Spirit is not really a holy spirit. They are just said to be three divine persons who, in order to accomplish the plan of salvation, chose to role-play (act out) these parts. This is why the study concluded

**“Nothing would have changed, except that we would have been calling Each by the name we now use for the Other.** That is what equality in the Deity means.” (*Ibid*)

I assume Richard that if you were a teacher on that particular Sabbath, this is what you would have taught your class. If you taught differently you would not have been teaching what our church today is teaching. What is said here is in harmony with your reasoning that both Father and Son are the one true God. This is trinitarian speak of course but it is not Scriptural.

This role-playing idea means that any of the three divine persons could have played the role of the Son. In other words, the One we know as the Holy Spirit could have taken the role of the Son whilst the One we know as the Father could have role-played the part of the Holy Spirit. This would have left the One we know as the Son to take the part of the Father. It is not surprising therefore that J. N. Andrews wrote of the trinity doctrine

**“This doctrine destroys the personality of God and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.** The infamous, measures by which it was forced upon the church which appear upon the pages of ecclesiastical history **might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush.”** (*J. N. Andrews, Review and Herald, March 6th 1855, 'The Fall of Babylon'*)

This 'trinity reasoning' is a far cry from what is taught in Scripture and the spirit of prophecy. Both of these inspired sources speak of the Father and Son as having their own individual identities. In fact as Ellen White wrote (we noted this previously)

**“Let those who name the name of Christ make an entire clearance of the soul-temple of all that is opposed to God. Believers are to [have] a confirmed, settled faith in a personal God and a personal Christ. The Father and the Son are perfect in their individual identity, and at the same time, they are perfect in their oneness.”** (*Ellen G. White, Letter 343*)

1905, *To the brethren in Nashville, typed August 5<sup>th</sup> 1905*)

It is worth noting again here that the teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today (as above) is diametrically opposed to that which God has revealed through the spirit of prophecy. Above we noted that Ellen White wrote that after the fall, the person of the “**holy and infinite God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable could no longer talk with man**” but our church today is teaching, in our Sabbath School lessons studies, that any of the three divine persons could have become incarnate – also that whoever had come He would be known as the Son of God. This is saying that all three are God and that all three are exactly the same. They are depicted as identical divine triplets.

The above (in the Sabbath School lesson study) is also contrary to where Ellen White wrote

“After the fall, **Christ became Adam's instructor. He acted in God's stead toward humanity, saving the race from immediate death. He took upon Him the work of mediator between God and man.**” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 29<sup>th</sup> May 1901, 'God's purpose for us', see also Letter 91 1900*)

Again Ellen White does not speak of Christ as God. She says that He “**Acted in God's stead**”. If this is true, how then can Christ be God in personality? Applying your reasoning Richard, you would have Ellen White saying that after the fall, the Almighty God (the one true God) acted in God's stead toward humanity. How is this reasonable?

From what we have read so far, it stands to reason that God and Christ must be two separate divine personalities, each possessing a personal identity of His own. This is why we have been told that since the fall “**there has been no direct communication between God and man**”, also that after the fall, Christ became the “**mediator between God and man**”.

At this time (1901), Seventh-day Adventists reading these statements would have understood Ellen White's words to be in perfect accord with what they believed and taught. They would have realised that her words fully supported their belief that in eternity Christ was begotten of God.

In another place we find the following

“After the transgression of Adam, **God no longer communicated directly with man**; earth was separated, as it were, from the continent of heaven: but Jesus was made our substitute, our surety, that he might bring us back to the Father....” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1890, 'Conditions for obtaining eternal riches'*)

There is therefore a sense in which Christ is not God. This is in the sense of personality. It was Christ who spoke directly with fallen mankind. In the same vein God's servant wrote

“The transgression of that law had caused a fearful separation between God and man. **To Adam in his innocence was granted communion, direct, free, and happy, with his Maker. After his transgression, God would communicate to man only through Christ and angels.**” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1879, 'The great controversy: The plan of salvation'*)

“Up to the time of man's rebellion against the government of God, there had been **free communion between God and man**. But the sin of Adam and Eve separated earth from heaven, **so that man could not have communion with his Maker.**” (*Ellen G. White,*



*Patriarchs and Prophets, page 184, 'Jacob's flight and exile')*

Again using your reasoning Richard, you would have Ellen White saying that after Adam's transgression, humanity had no direct communion with its Maker but the Almighty God (the one true God) continued to speak with man. This would be making a nonsense of that which the Holy Spirit led Ellen White to write

The above statement reminds me of where Ellen White once explained

"I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, "If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist." (Ellen G. White, *Early Writings, page 54, 1882*)

Notice particularly the final sentence. It is in keeping with her previous statement. This is also confirmation that God the Father and Christ are two separate persons (two separate individuals) each with a form of their own. If Ellen White is to be believed, this is indisputable. She later wrote

"I have often seen the lovely Jesus, that He is a person. I asked Him if His Father was a person and had a form like Himself. Said Jesus, "I am in the express image of My Father's person." (Ibid page 77, see also *Spiritual Gifts, Volume 2 page 74, 1860*)

Again are seen two separate personages – one of whom is the “express image” of the “Fathers person”. Notice that Ellen White did not mention the Holy Spirit – only the Father and the Son. She did not ask either whether the Holy Spirit has a form. I would say this is very interesting – also very significant.

Here is another very interesting quote. It is in keeping with the others we have seen

"After the transgression of Adam, The Lord spoke no longer directly with man; the human race was given into the hands of Christ, and all communication came through him to the world." (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1893, 'Christ as Teacher'*)

When speaking here of “The Lord”, Ellen White was not referring to Christ. She says it was Christ who spoke directly to fallen man, not “The Lord”. Christ therefore, in this sense (in the sense of personality), is not “The Lord”. This is a reminder of where Jude wrote

"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Jude 9

Christ (Michael the archangel) referred Satan to another authority than Himself. This could only have been the Father. Again we see the primacy of the Father. When speaking of this, Ellen White commented

"Moses passed through death, but Michael came down and gave him life before his body had seen corruption. Satan tried to hold the body, claiming it as his; but Michael resurrected Moses and took him to heaven. Satan railed bitterly against God, denouncing Him as unjust in permitting his prey to be taken from him; but Christ did not rebuke His adversary, though it was through his temptation that the servant of God had fallen. He meekly referred him to His Father, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee." (Ellen G.

*White, Early Writings, page 164}*

So as can be seen, the spirit of prophecy consistently presents the view that

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality.” (*Ellen G. White, Manuscript 116, Dec. 19, 1905, ‘An Entire Consecration’*)

As I said Richard, this is the begotten concept. There is no other way that I know of that this particular statement, also many of the other SOP statements we have just read above, would make any sense.

The Book of Revelation clearly distinguishes between God and Christ. In the very first verse we read

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.” Revelation 1:1

There is no Holy Spirit mentioned here. What we see is that God GAVE this revelation to Jesus. In the same chapter we read

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” Revelation 1:4 -5

The One spoken of here as “him which is, and which was, and which is to come” is God. As we can see, He is a different person from Jesus. The clause (“and which is to come”) does not refer to the return of Christ but means “which will be”. It denotes God's continuing eternal existence. As the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia explains

“The reference here to the Father sets forth His eternity and states that the same One who now continually exists has always existed and will always exist. God's personal existence transcends time, but a timeless eternity can be expressed in human words only by finite, temporal terms such as John employs here.” (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia Volume 7, page 732*)

In conclusion therefore from what we have seen already in this article, there is no reason, either from Scripture or from the spirit of prophecy, why this role-playing idea should be given any sort of credence. It is simply philosophical speculation that has no foundation in the revealed word of God. As we proceed, this will become increasingly evident. As can be seen very clearly too, in personality, Christ is not God therefore the trinity doctrine, which says that the three persons of the Godhead are all God in personality, must be error.

We have been clearly warned through the spirit of prophecy

“With many, a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few.” (*Ellen G. White, Great Controversy, 1911, page 583, ‘The impending conflict’*)

Every one who confesses to be a trinitarian would do well to ponder these words.

### **The begotten (Sonship) belief as expressed by early Seventh-day Adventists**

In order to show what was taught by Seventh-day Adventists about Christ during the time of Ellen White's ministry, I submit the following. This is typical of that which appeared in our various denominational publications. Ellen White had no argument with it. In fact as we shall see, she approved of it.

In 1867, Dudley M. Canright, when saying that it is stated in the Bible many times that Christ is "the only begotten Son of God", quoted John 1:14, 18, also John 3:16. He then explained

"According to this, Jesus Christ is begotten of God in a sense that no other being is; else he could not be his only begotten Son. Angels are called sons of God, and so are righteous men; but Christ is his Son in a higher sense, in a closer relation, than either of these. God made men and angels out of materials already created. He is the author of their existence, their Creator, hence their Father. But Jesus Christ was begotten of the Father's own substance. He was not created out of material as the angels and other creatures were. He is truly and emphatically the "Son of God," the same as I am the son of my father." (*Dudley Canright, Review and Herald, June 18<sup>th</sup> 1867, Jesus Christ the Son of God*)

He later concluded (this was after quoting Hebrews 1:1-8)

"By this we see that a very plain and great distinction is made between the Son and all the angels. They are all commanded to worship him. No created being can ever be worthy of worship, however high he may be, neither would it be right nor just for God to bid one order of his creatures to worship another. Divinity alone is worthy of worship, and to worship anything else would be idolatry." (*Ibid*)

Canright is emphasising here that Christ is divine. He says that Christ is not created but begotten of God. He is also emphasising that divinity alone is worthy of worship.

Canright eventually apostatised from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He became a minister in the Baptist Church – which of course is trinitarian in its beliefs. Canright continually 'attacked' the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He wrote a book called 'Seventh-day Adventism Renounced'. It was a very popular book. In its 14<sup>th</sup> edition published in 1914 he wrote concerning Seventh-day Adventists

"In doctrine they differ radically from evangelical churches. The main points are these as taught in all their books. They hold to the materiality of all things: believe in the Sonship of Christ, ..." (*D. N. Canright, Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, 1914, 14<sup>th</sup> edition*)

Canright correctly stated in 1914 (whilst Ellen White was alive) that Seventh-day Adventists were still holding to the belief that Christ really is the divine Son of God (begotten of God in eternity). This is testified as true by the records of our denominational history. We even held and taught this belief for decades afterwards. In fact in 1936, which was 21 years after the death of Ellen White, the General Conference declared it to be the official faith of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. That tells us a great deal. You can find an article detailing this here

#### **The Official 1936 official beliefs of SDA's**

Just a few months after Canright had published his article in the Review and Herald (June

1867), H. C. Blanchard wrote (this was in an article simply called 'The Son')

“We are well aware that there has been much disputation on the subject of the sonship of Christ in the religious world, some claiming that he is nothing but a man as to origin, being only about eighteen hundred years old; others that he is the very and eternal God, the second person in the trinity. This last view is by far the most widely entertained among religious denominations. **We are disposed to think that the truth lies between these views.**” (*H. C. Blanchard, Review and Herald, September 10th 1867, 'The Son'*)

This is absolutely correct. This is exactly what Seventh-day Adventists did believe at that time. Take note that Blanchard denies that Christ is “the very and eternal God, the second person in the trinity”.

In the 1882 edition of ‘Thoughts on the Book of Daniel and the Revelation’, Uriah Smith explained

“The Scriptures nowhere speak of Christ as a created being, **but on the contrary plainly state that he was begotten of the Father.**” (*U. Smith, Thoughts on the Book of Daniel and the Revelation, p. 430. 1882*)

The next year (1883), the following question was sent in by a reader of the Review and Herald (this was under the heading “Christ not a created being”)

“Will you please favor me with those scriptures which plainly say that Christ is a created being? (*Question No. 96, Review and Herald, April 17th 1883, The commentary, Scripture questions, 'Answers by W. H. Littlejohn'*)

W. H. Littlejohn, a prolific author and preacher who answered questions sent in by readers of the Review, who also that year became President of Battle Creek College, replied

“You are mistaken in supposing that S. D. Adventists teach that Christ was ever created. They believe, on the contrary, **that he was "begotten" of the Father, and that he can properly be called God and worshiped as such.**” (*Ibid*)

I believe it is reasonably easy to understand why those who did not know what was actually believed and taught by Seventh-day Adventists should think that our denominational belief was that Christ is a created being. It would have been because (a) we rejected the trinity doctrine and (b) we taught that Christ really is God's Son. This is more than likely one reason why Ellen White advised

“Our policy is, Do not make prominent the objectionable features of our faith, which strike most decidedly against the practises and customs of the people, until the Lord shall give the people a fair chance to know that we are believers in Christ, **that we do believe in the divinity of Christ, and in his preexistence.**” (*Ellen White, Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers, No. 5, 1896*)

It would be ridiculous to conclude that Ellen White did not realise what was being taught by Seventh-day Adventists. This is probably why she made this statement. If we had been a trinitarian denomination, our beliefs in this respect would not have been challenged. It is impossible to believe in the trinity doctrine and at the same time deny the divinity of Christ. Never regarding Christ did Ellen White say we needed to change our beliefs.

In 1886, Uriah Smith as editor of the Review and Herald, published a book called ‘The Captain

of our Salvation'. It had been written by Charles Wesley Stone who for a year had been secretary to the General Conference. He was also a teacher and an editor. Stone, who had been ordained in 1879, had written his book in 1883. This was whilst teaching in public school at Battle Creek. Unfortunately, the very year he wrote his book, he died tragically in a railroad accident. Smith regarded Stone's work as worthy of publication so 3 years later he published it. On page 17, in keeping with what was believed then by Seventh-day Adventists, Stone had written

"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*, page 17, 1886)

This just about sums up the begotten belief. The Scriptures tell us clearly that Christ is the Son of God but nowhere are we told the actual mechanics of how this was achieved. On this point therefore, silence is golden.

Three years later again, in an article called 'Christ and His work', R. A. Underwood spoke of the church's beliefs. After saying that John 5:26 "shows clearly that the Son of God received his life, and all his mighty creative power as a gift from the Father" he wrote

"The apostle Paul contrasts Christ with the angels, as follows: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Heb. 1:4. The inheritance of Christ from God the Father was such as no other being in the universe received. God the Father delegated to the "beginning of the creation," "the first-born of every creature," his own name, and his own almighty, creative, life-giving power. We are in ignorance of when this was done. We only know that it was in the eternity of the past; before the worlds and all that in them is, were created." (R. A. Underwood, *Review and Herald*, August 6<sup>th</sup> 1889, 'Christ and His work')

The latter is much the same as was said by W. C. Stone (see above).

The same year (1889), in an article refuting the claim that Seventh-day Adventists did not believe in the divinity of Christ (again this was probably because we rejected the trinity doctrine etc.) E. J. Waggoner, as editor of the 'Signs of the Times' explained (this was after quoting John 1:1-3)

"Indeed, we have never heard of anyone who doubted that the evangelist has reference to Christ in this passage. From it we learn that Christ is God. ...We believe in the divinity of Christ, because the Bible says that Christ is God" (E. J. Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1889, 'The divinity of Christ')

The following week when continuing the same refutation, Waggoner explained (this was after making a comparison of certain Old Testament Scripture with the New Testament)

"From these texts we have proof not only that the inspired writers call Jesus the divine Son of God, but that Jesus himself claimed to be God." (Ellet J. Waggoner, *Signs of the Times* article 'The Divinity of Christ (continued)', April 1st 1889)

The year previous in 1888, Waggoner had been one of the main speakers at the General Conference session held at Minneapolis. In 1890 he published a book called 'Christ and His

Righteousness'. It is said that his book summarised his message at the conference. In this book he wrote

"The Word was "in the beginning". The mind of man cannot grasp the ages that are spanned in this phrase. **It is not given to men to know when or how the Son was begotten**; but we know that He was the Divine Word, not simply before He came to this earth to die, but even before the world was created.... We know that Christ "proceeded forth and come 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', page 9, 1890*)

"The Scriptures declare that Christ is "the only begotten son of God." He is begotten, not created. As to when He was begotten, it is not for us to inquire, nor could our minds grasp it if we were told. The prophet Micah tells us all that we can know about it in these words, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; **whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.**" Micah 5:2, margin. There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father (John 8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning. **But the point is that Christ is a begotten Son and not a created subject.**" (*Ibid, pages 21-22*)

"Christ "is in the bosom of the Father;" being by nature the very substance of God and having life in Himself, **He is properly called Jehovah, the self existing one** and is thus styled in Jer. 23:5-Jeremiah 23:5-6), 6, where it is said that the righteous Branch, who shall execute judgment and justice in the earth, shall be known by the name of Jehovah-tsidekenu--THE LORD, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (*Ibid page 23-24*)

Ellen White consistently wrote that the message of Waggoner and Jones at the conference was the truth that God designed should be brought to His people. Copious amounts could be quoted from what she wrote upholding their message. Note the following as an example

"The Lord in his great mercy sent a most precious message to his people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. **This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour**, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world." (*Ellen G. White, Testimony to Battle Creek 1<sup>st</sup> May 1895 written from Hobart, Tasmania, Australia to O. A. Olsen, MR 1100 Vol. 14*)

"**Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to his divine person**, his merits, and his changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. **This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world.** It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure." (*Ibid*)

"The Lord wrought in our midst, but some did not receive the blessing. **They had been privileged to hear the most faithful preaching of the gospel**, and had listened to the message God had given His servants to give them, with their hearts padlocked. **They did not turn unto the Lord with all their heart and with all their soul, but used all their powers to pick some flaws in the messengers and in the message, and they grieved the Spirit of God**, while those who did receive the message were charmed with the presentation of the free gifts of Jesus Christ." (*Ellen G. White, Manuscript Volume 16, No 1216, 1889*)

“Some have made confession, yourself among the number. Others have made no confession, for they were too proud to do this, and they have not come to the light. They were moved at the meeting by another spirit, and they knew not that God had sent these young men, Elders Jones and Waggoner, to bear a special message to them, which they treated with ridicule and contempt, not realizing that the heavenly intelligences were looking upon them and registering their words in the books of heaven. (Ellen G. White, *The 1888 Ellen White 1888 materials, chapter 215, 1987*)

“The words and actions of every one who took part in this work will stand registered against them until they make confession of their wrong. Those who do not repent of their sin will, if circumstances permit, repeat the same actions. I know that at that time the Spirit of God was insulted, and now when I see anything approaching to the same course of action, I am exceedingly pained.” (Ellen G. White, *Letter to Uriah Smith, 19<sup>th</sup> September 1892, written from North Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia*)

“In rejecting the message given at Minneapolis, men committed sin. They have committed far greater sin by retaining for years the same hatred against God's messengers, by rejecting the truth that the Holy Spirit has been urging home. By making light of the message given, they are making light of the word of God. Every appeal rejected, every entreated unheeded, furthers the work of heart-hardening, and places them in the seat of the scornful.” (Ellen G. White, *Article read in the Auditorium of the Battle Creek Tabernacle to a large assembly, at the General Conference of 1891, Manuscript 30 1890*)

W. W. Prescott was a highly regarded biblical scholar. When President of Battle Creek College he wrote the following

“As Christ was twice born,— once in eternity, the only begotten of the Father, and again here in the flesh, thus uniting the divine with the human in that second birth,— so we who have been born once already in the flesh, are to have the second birth, being born again of the Spirit, in order that our experience may be the same,—the human and the divine being joined in a life union.” (W. W. Prescott, *Review and Herald, April 14<sup>th</sup> 1892, 'The Christ for today'*)

Ellen White, concerning Prescott, wrote in a letter to her son James Edson White (Prescott had joined her in the work in Australia).

“The sound has gone out everywhere of the wonderful meetings. Seldom can I give myself the pleasure of listening to discourses from our ministering brethren; but Sabbath forenoon I attended the meeting and heard Professor Prescott preach. I know that since coming to this place he has had the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; his lips have been touched with a live coal from off the altar. We know and can distinguish the voice of the True Shepherd. The truth has been poured forth from the lips of the servant of God as the people had never heard it before; unbelievers turn pale and say, That man is inspired. The people do not stroll about the grounds, but go immediately into the tent, and listen as if spellbound.” (Ellen G. White, *Letter 82 1895, to James Edson White, November 1895*)

It should go without saying that Ellen White knew exactly what Waggoner had preached at Minneapolis (also what he had written in his book 'Christ and His Righteousness'). We also know that she knew exactly what was published in our denominational literature – whether it

was written by Waggoner, Smith, Prescott or anyone else. In these publications, many such 'begotten' (Sonship) statements (as above) can be found but nowhere can it be found where she said to any Seventh-day Adventist (laity or ministry) that what they were teaching concerning Christ's pre-existence was incorrect. Should this be telling us something today – particularly as far as our Godhead controversy is concerned?

So did Ellen White say anything specific concerning what Seventh-day Adventists were teaching about Christ? She certainly did. Note it very well. It is very important.

In 1893 when speaking of a schoolteacher who was telling people that as a church we did not believe in the divinity of Christ (this is when she was in New Zealand) , Ellen White made very clear (again for the entire world to see)

**“This man [the schoolteacher] may not have known what our faith is on this point, but he was not left in ignorance. He was informed that there is not a people on earth who hold more firmly to the truth of Christ's pre-existence than do Seventh-day Adventists.”** (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 5th December 1893, 'An appeal for the Australasian field'*)

How can anyone mistake or misunderstand what Ellen White is saying here? It would be almost impossible. She is saying that concerning Christ's pre-existence, what Seventh-day Adventists were then teaching (in 1893) is the truth. Those reading this statement could only conclude that God, through the spirit of prophecy, was once again endorsing the begotten (Sonship) belief taught by them. What other way could it have possibly been understood?

This statement was made less than 5 years before the publication of her major work on the life of Christ. This is the book we know as 'The Desire of Ages'. She said nothing in this book that denied what she had previously written. In fact a large portion of it is made up of quotations from her past writings.

Can you imagine the multitudes that through our denominational publications were led to believe that what Seventh-day Adventists taught concerning Christ is the truth? The numbers are inestimable.

The question is therefore: is it possible that on such an important subject as this that God would have allowed His remnant people to deceive others (as well as being deceived themselves) for this length of time without saying anything about it? After all, for 71 years He did have His messenger in the church. Surely if this teaching was wrong He would have said so through her. This was not a side issue. It is the most important teaching of Scripture. As it is though, as we have just seen, Ellen White fully endorsed this Sonship belief. This created the impression that God approved of it.

If this begotten concept is not correct (not Scriptural) then Ellen White must take a very large share of the blame for people being deceived by it. This would include the people today (such as myself) who believe it. In fact she was so emphatic that she was correct, the next year she wrote in the 'Signs of the Times' (note also the title of the article)

**“The Bible to me is the voice of God. I have the witness in myself that the word of God is true, and that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God. I am following no cunningly devised fable.”** (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1894, 'Try the spirits'*)

How much more emphatic can anyone be? We need to be careful that we today, even as Seventh-day Adventists, are not following cunningly devised fables. Obviously Ellen White didn't think she was doing so.



Again it must be said that any Seventh-day Adventist reading this would have thought that God's messenger was confirming them in their begotten (Sonship) belief. What else could they have thought? The majority believed as she believed.

In our publications as the years progressed, the very same begotten (Sonship) belief was continued to be taught. Here again are a few examples. Needless to say, there are many more.

In a General Conference Bulletin in 1895, which was 15 months after Ellen White said that "there is not a people on earth who hold more firmly to the truth of Christ's pre-existence than do Seventh-day Adventists." (see previous page), A. T. Jones, another of the main speakers at the 1888 General Conference session at Minneapolis, expressed the following view

**"He [Christ] who was born in the form of God took the form of man."** In the flesh he was all the while as God, but he did not appear as God." "He divested himself of the form of God, and in its stead took the form and fashion of man" "The glories of the form of God, he for awhile relinquished." (A. T. Jones, *General Conference Bulletin, March 4th 1895, 'The Third Angel's Message – No. 23'*)

Here Jones is saying that Christ in His pre-existence was God. He is also saying that when Christ became incarnate He was still God although He did not appear as such. Ellen White wrote the same when she said

**"Christ had not ceased to be God when He became man. Though He had humbled Himself to humanity, the Godhead was still His own."** (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages, page 663, 'Let not your heart be troubled'*)

Concerning Christ, there was one book that encapsulated everything that during the early 1900's was believed and taught by Seventh-day Adventists. This book was called 'Looking unto Jesus'. It was authored by Uriah Smith. He was also the author of the classic 'Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation'.

It would be too much to tell here of how highly 'Looking unto Jesus' was rated by both Seventh-day Adventists and non-Seventh-day Adventists alike suffice to say that like his 'D&R' it received the highest of acclaim and promotion. Church members were strongly urged to purchase a copy. In the chapter called 'Christ as Creator' Smith explained

**"At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be,—a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity,—appeared the Word.** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1. This uncreated Word was the Being, who, in the fulness of time, was made flesh, and dwelt among us. His beginning was not like that of any other being in the universe. It is set forth in the mysterious expressions, "his [God's] only begotten Son" (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9), "the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14), and, "I proceeded forth and came from God." John 8:42. **Thus it appears that by some divine impulse or process, not creation, known only to Omniscience, and possible only to Omnipotence, the Son of God appeared."**(Uriah Smith, *Looking unto Jesus, page 10, chapter 2, 'Christ as Creator' 1898*)

We have seen this latter view expressed previously. How Christ became a Son we have not had explained to us. All that we know is that in eternity He was begotten of God. This is all we need to know. If it was necessary to know more, God would have told us.

After a lengthy explanation about Christ creating all things but making absolutely sure again that his readers did not conclude that Christ Himself was a created being, Smith wrote

**“With the Son, the evolution of deity, as deity, ceased. All else, of things animate or inanimate, has come in by creation of the Father and the Son — the Father the antecedent cause, the Son the acting agent through whom all has been wrought. No ranks of intelligences, it matters not how high, above or below; no orders of cherubim or seraphim; no radiant thrones or extensive dominions, principalities, or powers, but were created by our Lord Jesus Christ.”** (*Ibid page 13*)

Smith's book was one of the most highly rated books produced by Seventh-day Adventists. In one promotion in 1907 (this was now 9 years after its publication and 9 years after the publication of *Desire of Ages*) it said

**“LOOKING UNTO JESUS is a book that will assist the reader to look unto Jesus from every Scriptural point of view. In the words of the author: "To look unto Jesus is one of the most prominent injunctions in the Word of God. In him we find the acme of all divine excellence. We are to look to him as one sent forth by the Father, to be, in his own person, his representative among men.”** (*Review and Herald March 28<sup>th</sup> 1907*)

Smith's book was published the same year as 'Desire of Ages' was published (1898). Never though did Ellen White object to its contents. This is no more than she objected to any other writer's promotion of the begotten concept. This must tell us a great deal. At this time (1907), the begotten (Sonship) belief was still the faith generally held by Seventh-day Adventists. It would continue to be so for decades to come.

Our denominational records show that Smith's 'Looking Unto Jesus' was still being promoted in the 1920's whilst in 1938 it was recommended, along with 'The Cross and its Shadow', as being of assistance in understanding a set of Sabbath School lessons on the sanctuary (Eastern Tidings, March 15<sup>th</sup> 1938).

In a sermon preached at the 1899 General Conference session (this was the year following the publication of 'Desire of Ages'), A. T. Jones said of Christ

**“He was born of the Holy Ghost. In other words, Jesus Christ was born again. He came from heaven, God's first-born, to the earth, and was 'born again'. But all in Christ's work goes by opposites for us: he, the sinless one, was made to be sin, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He, the living one, the prince and author of life, died that we might live. He whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity, the first-born of God, was born again, in order that we might be born again.”** (*A. T. Jones, Sermon preached on March 6th 1899 at the General Conference Session in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, see Review and Herald, August 1st 1899, 'Christian perfection'*)

In 1907, a reader of the 'Signs of the Times' asked (amongst other things)

**“If those that believe on His name were begotten of God, then how is Jesus the "only-begotten of the Father"?”** (*Signs of the Times, February 20th 1907, 'Questions'*)

The answer was returned (presumably by M. C. Wilcox the editor)

**“Christ was not begotten in just the way in which men are. He Himself declares. "I proceeded forth and came from God." John 8: 42. Just how this all is we do not know,**

but we do know this, that He was THE Son of God in a sense that no other was, because He was God; and yet just as truly are those who believe in Him begotten of God and become His children. 1 John 3: 1." (*Ibid*)

Here again it is emphasised that because Christ is God, He is the Son of God in a sense that no other 'son of God' can be. Adam was a son of God by creation as were the angels (Luke 3:38, Job 38:7). We as Christians are sons of God by adoption (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:5, Ephesians 1:5, see also Ellen White's remarks on page 28 of this article).

In a book first published in 1909, which in 1914 had it's 6th printing (showing that it was a very popular book within Seventh-day Adventism), James Edson White, the son of Ellen White wrote

"From a reading of John 1:1-3, 10, it will be seen that the world, with all it contains, was created by Christ (the Word), for "all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." The angels, therefore, being created, are necessarily lower than Christ, their Creator. Christ is the only being begotten of the Father." (*James Edson White, Past, Present, and Future*, page 52, Chapter 'Angels their nature')

In the Preface there is a note which says

"The sixth edition of this book, issued in 1914, has been carefully revised. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the valuable assistance of C. P. Bollman, J. S. Washburn, and S. B. Horton on the original manuscript; and of W. A. Colcord and wife on the editorial work of this revision." (*Ibid, Preface*)

It should go without saying that James Edson White knew exactly the faith that had been endorsed through the spirit of prophecy. After all, he was Ellen White's son. If he had been teaching error in this book then I am sure it would not have had six editions. Certainly if it had been wrong his mother would have voiced her disapproval. She certainly did some years earlier when John Harvey Kellogg published his book 'The Living Temple'. This book did contain wrong views of God (too much to detail here). As it was, what her son had written in this book was completely in keeping with what was then (and had been for the decades previously), the denominational faith of Seventh-day Adventists. What more can be said? Concerning this matter we all need to use our common sense.

In 1905, Seventh-day Adventists were counselled

"Change not your faith for any phase of doctrine, however pleasing it may appear, that will seduce the soul.

The fallacies of Satan are now being multiplied, and those who swerve from the path of truth will lose their bearings. Having nothing to which to anchor, they will drift from one delusion to another, blown about by the winds of strange doctrines. Satan has come down with great power.... I entreat every one to be clear and firm regarding the certain truths that we have heard and received and advocated. The statements of God's Word are plain. Plant your feet firmly on the platform of eternal truth. Reject every phase of error, even though it be covered with a semblance of reality, which denies the personality of God and of Christ." (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 31<sup>st</sup> August 1905, 'Hold fast that which is good'*)

If at this time (1905) the Seventh-day Adventist Church had been teaching error concerning the most important teaching of Scripture (and had been for decades previously according to

our church today), why would Ellen White counsel us not to change our faith? If we were wrong on this point of Christ's Sonship with God, don't you think that God would have led His messenger to say something about it? As it was she said that what we were teaching concerning Christ's pre-existence was the truth. Surely concerning these things we really do need to use our common sense. Take note of the last sentence. Here again we return to the issue of the separate personalities of God and Christ. Two paragraphs later it was said

**“Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He was manifest in the flesh.”** (*Ibid*)

For those who would like to see how these 'begotten' (Sonship) views were expressed following the death of Ellen White, chapter 17 of this study found here will be of help

[A study of the Godhead – as it pertains to Seventh-day Adventism](#)

This Sonship belief was still being promoted in our publications decades after Ellen White had died. In fact in 1936, by the General Conference, they were declared to be the official faith of Seventh-day Adventists. This is dealt with in detail here

[The Official 1936 official beliefs of SDA's](#)

### **Spirit of prophecy confirmation of the begotten concept**

In summation of what has been revealed regarding Christ through the spirit of prophecy, the following should suffice. Ellen White explains it very clearly. There can be no disputing what she wrote. The only question is: do we believe it?

In 1895 for the entire world to see (this was in support of what was then believed and taught by Seventh-day Adventists), Ellen White wrote in the Signs of the Times (this was now 18 months after she had said “there is not a people on earth who hold more firmly to the truth of Christ's pre-existence than do Seventh-day Adventists” - see page 25 above)

**“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. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”** (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 30th May 1895, 'Christ our complete salvation'*)

In this statement we see three 'actions' (acts) of God. They reveal how various individuals become a son of God. An angel is a son by “creation” (an act of God). The forgiven sinner is a son by “adoption” (an act of God). Christ is a son because He is “begotten” (an act of God). The word 'begotten' is used here as a verb (an action). It is not used as an adjective (a describing word). Notice that Ellen White does not regard 'begotten' as being the same as 'created'. She clearly differentiates between the two concepts.

I think everyone would admit that if Ellen White did not agree with the begotten concept, this would have been a rather senseless, also very irresponsible, statement to make. Look at it this way: if you did not believe that Christ was begotten of God, would you have made it?

Just a few weeks later, this statement appeared in the same periodical. It shows what is believed by those such as myself who accept that Christ is begotten of God (is truly the Son of God)

“But who that is not infinite can understand the infinite? Christ declares, “No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him.” It is recorded of Epictetus that when his hearers said to him, “You have uttered many excellent things of God; but we cannot as yet understand what he is,” he truly and nobly replied, “Were I able fully to set forth God, I should either be a god myself, or God himself would cease to be what he is.” The greatness of God cannot be measured or comprehended. **And that doctrine that denies the absolute Godhead of Jesus Christ, denies also the Godhead of the Father; for no man knoweth the Son but the Father.**”  
(*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, June 27<sup>th</sup> 1895, ‘Christ object in coming to the world’*)

This is what is meant by the begotten belief. It means the “the absolute Godhead” of Christ. It means that Christ is God Himself in the person of the Son. Would we therefore deny Christ's Godhead by denying His Sonship with God (by denying that He really is the Son God)? This is what the Jews did In Christ's time. They denied He was the Son of God. In so doing they were denying He was God. It is Christ's Sonship with God that makes Him God.

Just over a week later, Ellen White wrote (again for the whole world to see)

“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.” (*Ellen G. White, Review & Herald 9<sup>th</sup> July 1895 ‘The Duty of the Minister and the People’*)

In the statement of 6 weeks previous (see above) we are told that Christ is “a Son **begotten in the express image of the Father's person**” whilst in the latter it says He “**was made in the express image of his [the Father's] person**”. Both “made” and “begotten” are actions (acts of God). It was this Sonship belief that was generally held at that time (1895) by Seventh-day Adventists. It was not believed that Christ is a created being (like angels and humans) but that He is begotten **of** God therefore He is God. It should be recognised here that because Ellen White says that Christ was “**begotten in the express image of the Father's person**” and not created, saying that Christ was “**made in the express image of his person**” does not mean created but begotten.

At that time (mid-1890's) when reading those statements, Seventh-day Adventists could only conclude that Ellen White was once again confirming them in their begotten (Sonship) belief. What other conclusion could they have drawn? We have seen above what was written in our publications during this time period. As I said previously, if Christ is not begotten then God's messenger is guilty of having led a great many people to believe error.

Unfortunately, the Seventh-day Adventist Church maintains today that

“The idea that Christ was “begotten” by the Father at some time in eternity past is altogether foreign in the Scriptures” (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 5, page 902, 1966*)

Obviously Ellen White did not think so. She believed that Christ was truly the Son of God, begotten of God in eternity.

Richard: Over and over again you also have denied that this Sonship (begotten in eternity) belief is true. On July 1<sup>st</sup> you made this comment (all your emphasis)

“Let's go right to the bottom of this Doctrine of God and Doctrine Christ and the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. . . and anyone who will travel to the very bottom will realize that the concept of theological BEGOTTENISM and Fatherism theology are NOT there and were in reality delusions.”

[https://www.facebook.com/PastorRichardPMendoza/posts/1714869812134061?comment\\_id=1716663075288068&reply\\_comment\\_id=1717794361841606](https://www.facebook.com/PastorRichardPMendoza/posts/1714869812134061?comment_id=1716663075288068&reply_comment_id=1717794361841606)

Quite recently (November 27<sup>th</sup>) you also made this remark (one of many such statements)

“ [name removed] the exact same thing can be said about you and your Anti-Trinitarian Doctrine and the doctrine of BEGOTTENISM and the doctrine of FATHERISM.

They are delusions . . . that's why you cannot accept the plain teaching of the Bible that the Son of God had "neither beginning of days. . . nor mother or father. . . " nor that He is the ALMIGHTY God- neither can you accept Ellen White statements that confirm the same.

That's called a delusion”

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1642153222742165/>

This is quite a claim Richard. It is saying that what the pioneers and Ellen White taught concerning God and Christ were, using your words, “in reality delusions”.

The next day (November 28<sup>th</sup>) you wrote (once again all your emphasis etc.)

“BEWARE of those Anti-Trinitarians who teach that Jesus Christ is NOT the Almighty God who BECAME a MAN and GAVE HIS LIFE for us and DIED on Calvary for our sins. They teach that a PRO-CREATED non-eternal "baby-son-god" was literally given birth to by God the Father in heaven, in the eteranl eons of the past. . . and that this LITERALLY BEGOTTEN BIRTHED Son took the place of God Himself so the Father/GOD did not really have to PERSONALLY Sacrifice HIMSELF for us but to procreate someone else to do this for Him. This is a false gospel.”

“IF Jesus was only a PRO-CREATED Son of God the Father, He then HAS BEEN CREATED, and thus a CREATED being died for us. PRO-CREATION "only begotten son" is still CREATION but the only difference is 9 months of processing.”

[https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10209132488404515?comment\\_id=10210343992451359](https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10209132488404515?comment_id=10210343992451359)

[https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10209132488404515?comment\\_id=10210343949250279](https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10209132488404515?comment_id=10210343949250279)

Richard: you know very well that the non-trinitarians do not believe such as stated here by you but I will pass this by without comment.

In November Richard, again on Facebook, you made a number of remarks concerning this Sonship belief. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of November you said

“Christ is the ETERNAL Son of God and WAS NEVER "MADE" a Son, He always was a

Son.”

“To say Christ WAS "MADE" in the express image is to say He was CREATED, or PROCREATED by LITERAL BEGOTTEN BIRTH. “

This statement is a direct contradiction to what we have been told through the spirit of prophecy. Ellen White would strongly disagree with your remarks. She said very clearly that Christ was begotten (or made) in the express image of God's person but she made it clear also that He is not a created being. The concept she enumerates here (the begotten concept) concludes that Christ is God in the person of the Son. I will return later to your remark that Christ “always was a Son.” You then deny that Christ was begotten in eternity by saying

“when the Son was begotten in the express image of God was at His BIRTH on Earth, NOT in Heaven at any time.”“

This again is not what was said by Ellen White; neither is it in keeping with what Seventh-day Adventists believed and taught whilst she was alive. Remember, she said in 1893 that there was “not a people on earth who hold more firmly to the truth of Christ's pre-existence than do Seventh-day Adventists.” (see page 25).

It is evident therefore that you are leading people to believe something that is contrary to what God has revealed through Ellen White. This is a very serious matter. Those you are teaching, because you are a Seventh-day Adventist minister, probably assume that you are teaching in accordance with what she wrote. Don't you think you should be making these people aware of what you are doing?

You also made the remark

“By the way Hebrews 1:3 is clear. . . The Son was NOT "made" in the express image of God but simply "WAS" existing in the EXPRESS IMAGE OF His PERSON.”

This is very true (this is what this verse says) but how did Christ become “the brightness” of God's glory, also, how did He become the “express image” of God's person? It was by being begotten of God. This is the point Ellen White was making (see above page 28). As the writer of Hebrews went on to say

“Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” Hebrews 1:4-6

Christ was not 'made better' than the angels at His birth in Bethlehem. It was the opposite way around. In the incarnation He was made 'lower' than the angels. As the same writer says

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Hebrews 2:9-10

In the incarnation, Christ took upon Himself our fallen humanity. At Bethlehem He was “made” equivalent of humanity In so doing He took upon Himself all of our liabilities and limitations

(see Luke 1:34-35, John 1:14, Romans 8:3, Galatians 4:4, Hebrews 2:16, 4:15). Ultimately this was so that He could die at Calvary (“for the suffering of death”). This is something He could not have done in His pre-existence as God. As God He could not die. By the means of the incarnation He made Himself voluntarily subject to death.

For it to be said that at Bethlehem God brought “the firstbegotten *into* the world”, Christ had to already have been begotten. This must have been in His pre-existence (in eternity). Christ's inheritance is the fact that because He is begotten of God, He is truly the Son of God. No one else has this inheritance. It is unique to Him. He is the only begotten of God. Nowhere in Scripture does it say this of the Holy Spirit.

On December 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 on Facebook you commented

“IF you dare to go to the bottom of this theology of Anti-Trinitarianism, BEGOTTENISM, and FATHERISM then let's get it done. . . It does not have to take 15 Years like Terry Hill's research and explanations have. . . IF you will accept the Bible as the SUPREME Authority in matter of faith and doctrine.

"The LORD appeared unto Abram and said I AM THE ALMIGHTY GOD" Genesis 17:1.... The simple FACT that the Bible teaches that the Son of God is the ALMIGHTY GOD and the TRUE GOD is sufficient to close down the manufacturing business of Anti-Trinitarianism from producing all kinds of confusionisms of every hue and color in order to PAINT over the TRINITY TRUTH so only their error appears. . . This simple FACT of the ALMIGHTY TRUE GOD The LORD Jesus Christ END the whole controversy in a matter of moments. . . as long as it took to read the above Scared Scriptures I have quoted, and BELIEVE what THEY SAY.”

It has already been shown previously that Christ is not God in personality so there is no point in discussing this again. Yes Christ is God but He is God in the person of the Son. In personality, Christ is the Son of God, begotten of God in eternity. God is the Father of Christ and Christ is the Son of God. Your aforementioned Facebook remarks can be found at the following links

[https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment\\_id=10210176153775497&reply\\_comment\\_id=10210208432702450](https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment_id=10210176153775497&reply_comment_id=10210208432702450)

- [https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment\\_id=10210176153775497&reply\\_comment\\_id=10210208428622348](https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment_id=10210176153775497&reply_comment_id=10210208428622348)

[https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment\\_id=10210176153775497&reply\\_comment\\_id=10210208422262189](https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment_id=10210176153775497&reply_comment_id=10210208422262189)

- [https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment\\_id=10210176153775497&reply\\_comment\\_id=10210208413421968](https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment_id=10210176153775497&reply_comment_id=10210208413421968)

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/DefendingThePillars/permalink/645942935566342/?comment\\_id=647767712050531&reply\\_comment\\_id=651685794992056&comment\\_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D](https://www.facebook.com/groups/DefendingThePillars/permalink/645942935566342/?comment_id=647767712050531&reply_comment_id=651685794992056&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D)

Richard: I believe it quite evident that Ellen White would not have agreed with your reasoning. She very clearly wrote that in eternity Christ is begotten of God. As we noted above she also wrote (when supporting the begotten belief of Seventh-day Adventists)



“The Bible to me is the voice of God. I have the witness in myself that the word of God is true, and that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God. I am following no cunningly devised fable.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1894, ‘Try the spirits’)

Just over a year later, in a letter addressed to A. O. Tait (the very first circulation manager for the Review and Herald), Ellen White wrote the following

“Christ is the star that should arise out of Jacob, and the one in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, **as the first born of heaven, and the only begotten of the Father**, filled with all the treasures of eternity. He assumed humanity, and impressed upon it the glorious image of the everlasting God. Then how dare men, who are brotherhood with humanity, act with so little tenderness toward the purchase of the blood of Christ? How dare they do what many have done—be unkind, unfeeling, cold, harsh, criticizing, accusing, revealing themselves to be imbued with altogether another spirit than that which dwelt in our Redeemer?” (Ellen G. White, *Letter 101 1896, To A. O. Tait, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1896*)

It is because Christ is begotten of God that He is God. He is the only One who is the “express image” of God’s person. He is the only One who is begotten of God (John 1:18, 3:16). Nowhere in Scripture does it say that the Holy Spirit is begotten of God or that the Holy Spirit is the express image of God’s person. Here Ellen White refers to Christ as “the **first born of heaven, and the only begotten of the Father**”.

This Sonship (begotten) belief was confirmed again in the book ‘Desire of Ages’. This is where it says

“The dedication of the first-born had its origin in the earliest times. **God had promised to give the First-born of heaven to save the sinner**. This gift was to be acknowledged in every household by the consecration of the first-born son. He was to be devoted to the priesthood, as a representative of Christ among men.” (Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages, page 51, ‘The Dedication’*)

Again it is said (as did other pioneers) that Christ is “the First-born of heaven”.

Here are some interesting statements regarding Christ 'being the Son of God'

“After deserting their Master in the garden, two of the disciples had ventured to follow, at a distance, the mob that had Jesus in charge. These disciples were Peter and John. The priests recognized John as a well-known disciple of Jesus, and admitted him to the hall, hoping that as he witnessed the humiliation of his Leader, **he would scorn the idea of such a one being the Son of God.**” (Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages page 710 ‘Before Annas and the court of Caiaphas’*)

“We rested well during the night. By having the window open in our berth we had plenty of fresh air and enjoyed our rest very much. Had conversation in the morning **with a Frenchman in regard to Christ being the Son of God**” (Ellen G. White, *Ms 13 1873, Diary November 9<sup>th</sup> 1873*)

“Even the common people, who were astonished at His miracles and charmed with His works of wisdom, pointed sneeringly at His origin. His own neighbors in His native town refused to accept Him as the Messiah, and refused to hear Him as a prophet of God. **His own brothers did not believe in His being the Son of God.** They became impatient that

His life was without display and worldly honor.” (Ellen G. White, Letter 2 1874, to J. N. Loughborough, August 24<sup>th</sup> 1874)

Every specification of the Old Testament prophesied was fulfilled in the New Testament. **There could be no uncertainty in regard to Christ being the Son of God.**” (Ellen G. White, Experiences in Australia, page 341)

“The stubborn priests and rulers may taunt Him and **ridicule His claims of being the Son of God.** They may mock Him while in His dying agony, and forever close to themselves the door of Paradise, notwithstanding their claims to pity and knowledge; but the thief who has received Him, who has believed on Him in His humiliation, shall have life with Christ in the paradise of God.” (Ellen G. White, Ms 105, 1897, September 28<sup>th</sup> 1897, The Penitent Thief)

Speaking of Christ’s claims to be one with God (John 10:30), Ellen White wrote the following

“The strong denunciation of the Pharisees against Jesus was, “Thou, being a man, makest thyself God;” and for this reason they sought to stone him. Christ did not apologize for this supposed assumption on his part.

He did not say to his accusers, “You misunderstand me; I am not God.” He was manifesting God in humanity.” (Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor, 16<sup>th</sup> September 1897, ‘What Think Ye of Christ’)

Richard: According to you, the begotten faith, held by the non-trinitarians (past and present), is a delusion yet nowhere did Ellen White ever say such a thing. In fact as we have seen, she upheld this belief. As I have said previously, if she had thought that Seventh-day Adventists were not teaching the truth she would have said so. As it is, all we find in her writings are counsels and warnings not to depart from the faith held by them. Huge amounts could be quoted. Here is just a very small sample

“**Satanic agencies are clothing false theories in an attractive garb,** even as Satan in the garden of Eden concealed his identity from our first parents by speaking through the serpent. These agencies are instilling into human minds that which in reality is deadly error. The hypnotic influence of Satan will rest upon those who turn from the plain Word of God to pleasing fables.” (Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1904, ‘Danger in Speculative Knowledge’)

“**For years the enemy has been seeking to bring false theories into the churches;** and God alone can help us to meet his work successfully.

Satan sought to produce the same results among the people of Israel as they journeyed from Egypt to Canaan... **To-day Satan is using the same devising to introduce the same evils,** and his efforts are followed by the same results that in the days of Israel laid so many in their graves. Let us study the record of how Israel, in the sight of the mount on which they had shortly before seen so wonderful a display of God’s power, were led into idolatry. While Moses was in the mount with God, receiving the sacred oracles, the people, in Aaron’s charge, were worshiping a golden calf, while their leading men proclaimed the sacrilegious message, “**These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.**”” (Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 4<sup>th</sup> February 1909, Lessons from the apostasy at Sinai, No 1’)

Very interesting is that in 1906, Ellen White made this comment

"A liar is one that presents false theories and doctrines. He who denies the personality of God and of His Son Jesus Christ is denying God and Christ. "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." If you continue to believe and obey the truths you first embraced regarding the personality of the Father and the Son, you will be joined together with them in love."  
(Ellen G. White, Ms 23 1906, 8<sup>th</sup> February 1906, see also Review and Herald, March 8<sup>th</sup> 1906, 'A God of knowledge by whom actions are weighed')

This would have told any Seventh-day Adventist not to depart from the begotten faith still held by them. This was in 1906. This faith was to continue for decades.

### **Christ – the Old Testament God (the I AM)**

The Bible is very clear that God conversed with a number of Old Testament individuals. These were such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Jonah and Solomon etc. (see Genesis 6:13, 17:1, 35:11, 48:3, Exodus 6:3, Jonah 4:9, 1 Kings 3:11 etc.). This though does not contradict where Ellen White said that after the fall it was not God but Christ who spoke directly to man. This is because she maintained, as was then believed by Seventh-day Adventists, that Christ is begotten of God therefore He is God. Many such statements can be found at the following link. They are well worth reading. They give an intriguing yet well balanced view of the matter.

#### **Some things are not easy to understand**

Christ is neither a 'demigod' nor 'a god' (another god). He is God Himself in the person of the Son. There are not two Gods (Isaiah 44:6, 8, 45:5, 21, Hosea 13:4). The apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 2:9 that in Christ "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (corporeally)" although it must be borne in mind that this indwelling was by pleasure (the willingness) of the Father (see Colossians 1:19). The Father and the Son therefore are both fully divine. They are both fully God. This again is the begotten concept. It is in keeping with the opening words to John's gospel (John 1:1)

As previously noted, we have been told through the spirit of prophecy that "All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ" (see page 17). In emphasising this, Ellen White continued on by saying

"It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man's Substitute and Surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face."  
(Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 366 'The law and the covenants')

This is in keeping where the same writer said (see above) that since the sin of Adam, "there has been no direct communication between God and man". It is true that the Scriptures say that the One who spoke to these faithful patriarchs is God but it was not the Father (the one true God in personality) but the Son of God (God in the person of the Son). The apostle Paul wrote

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

This is in harmony with the words of Jesus when He said that the one true God is the Father (see John 17:3). It is also in harmony with what we have read in the spirit of prophecy. Paul is saying here that God created all things *through* Christ (see also John 1:1-3, Hebrews 1:3, Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:16).

The above text (1 Corinthians 8:6) must not be taken as saying that Christ is not God. This would be in direct contradiction to the Scriptures that tell us that He is God (John 1:1 etc). Paul is simply differentiating, as I am in this article, between the two personalities (God and Christ). The same apostle wrote to the believers in Corinth

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

Ellen White repeatedly refers to Christ as the “Son of the infinite God”, also the “only begotten Son of the infinite God”. In one such place (‘Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers’) she wrote

**“Our workers should use the greatest wisdom so that nothing shall be said to provoke the armies of Satan, and to stir up his united confederacy of evil. Christ did not dare to bring a railing accusation against the prince of evil, and is it proper that we should bring such accusation as will set in operation the agencies of evil, the confederacies of men that are leagued with evil spirits? **Christ was the only begotten Son of the infinite God**, he was the Commander in the heavenly courts, yet he refrained from bringing accusation against Satan.” (Ellen White, *Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers*, No. 3 1895, page 55)**

Clearly God's servant differentiates between “the only begotten Son” and “the Infinite God”. Upon checking the Ellen White database (using 'Lifetime works') for the phrase “Son of the Infinite God” I had almost 200 hits. That alone must be telling us something. Here is one of them

**“Let the missionaries of the cross proclaim that **there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, who is Jesus Christ the Son of the Infinite God. This needs to be proclaimed throughout every church in our land.** Christians need to know this, and not put man where God should be, that they may no longer be worshipers of idols, but of the living God. Idolatry exists in our churches.” (Ellen G. White, *Ms 40 1891, January 21st 1891*)**

Now you may say: “Does not the Bible say that the Almighty God (El Shaddai) appeared to Abraham (Genesis 17:1)? Yes it does - and I believe it to be so. The divine individual person though who spoke directly to Abraham was not the “one True God” (the Father) but Christ who is God Himself (the Almighty God) in the person of the Son. This is the begotten concept. Christ is begotten of God therefore He is God in the person of the Son. It is in this sense that Christ is the I AM. We must remember, as said by Ellen White

**“In the person of his only begotten Son, the God of heaven has condescended to stoop to our human nature. **The Father in heaven has a voice and a person which Christ expressed.**” (Ellen G. White, *General Conference Bulletin, March 6<sup>th</sup> 1899*)**

It was God who was speaking through Christ during Old Testament times. It was the same when He became incarnate. The 'Old Testament God' is Christ. Christ is the 'I AM' (Heb. 'hayah') of Scripture (see Exodus 3:14, John 8:58). He is the One who spoke directly to the

patriarchs. This is in keeping with the begotten concept. In 1895 in a letter to her son James Edson White and his wife Emma, Ellen White wrote the following

“Christ was using the great name of God that was given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence..... The Pharisees were horrified at this declaration of Christ’s, “Before Abraham was, I am.” They were beside themselves with rage that He should express such awful blasphemy, claiming to be the I AM. They would have stoned Him then and there, but the I AM blinded their eyes that they should not see Him, although He went out of the temple, passing through the very midst of them.” (Ellen G. White, Letter 119 1895, to James Edson White and Emma White)

The above (re-worded) was transposed into the Desire of Ages. This is where it says in the chapter 'The Light of Life' (this is referring to when Jesus said “before Abraham was, I Am.”)

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

Again the priests and rabbis cried out against Jesus as a blasphemer. His claim to be one with God had before stirred them to take His life, and a few months later they plainly declared, “For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.” John 10:33. Because He was, and avowed Himself to be, the Son of God, they were bent on destroying Him.” (Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, pages 469-470, ‘The Light of Life’)

There are numerous other places in the spirit of prophecy where Christ is referred to as “the I AM”. Here are some of them

“Who is the I AM? Jesus Christ, who was in the pillar of cloud. The very I AM is speaking to you. He says that if you hear His words and do them not, your house is built upon the sands; but if you are hearers and doers, your house is riveted upon the eternal Rock, and as well might all heaven be swept away as that one soul perish. He does not want you to perish. He is giving you light.” (Ellen G. White, Ms 15 1894, Sermon/Talk at the Australian Bible School Chapel, Melbourne, Australia, February 23, 1894, 9:00 am)

“The truth of the third angel's message has been proclaimed by some as a dry theory. But we must all place in that message Christ, as the first and the last, the I am, the bright and morning Star.” (Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1897, ‘The Love of God’)

“It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, “I Am That I Am. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.” Ex. 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel's deliverance. So when He came “in the likeness of men,” He declared Himself the I Am.” The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God “manifest in the flesh.” 1 Tim. 3:16.” (Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, Page 24, ‘God with us’)

“The Shekinah had departed from the sanctuary, but in the Child of Bethlehem was veiled the glory before which angels bow. This unconscious babe was the promised seed, to whom the first altar at the gate of Eden pointed. This was Shiloh, the peace giver. It was He who declared Himself to Moses as the I am” (Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, page 54, ‘The Dedication’)

“The incarnate I Am is our abiding Sacrifice. The I Am is our Redeemer, our Substitute, our Surety. He is the Daysman between God and the human soul, our Advocate in the courts of heaven, our unwearying Intercessor, pleading in our behalf His merits and His atoning sacrifice. The I Am is our Saviour.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1899, ‘The Word made Flesh’)

“In Christ Jesus is a revelation of the glory of the Godhead....The most wonderful truth to be grasped by men is the truth, "Immanuel, God with us." Christ is the wisdom of God. He is the great "I Am" to the world.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 12<sup>th</sup> December 1895, ‘Character of the Law Revealed in Christ's Life’, see also *Signs of the Times* 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1907)

There can be no question that Christ is the “I AM”. He is God in the person of the Son. Just a few weeks later in an article called ‘The Word made Flesh’ it said

“Jehovah is the name given to Christ. "Behold, God is my salvation," writes the prophet Isaiah; "I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1899, ‘The Word made flesh’)

All of the above is in keeping with the begotten concept. For a more detailed study on this topic (the I AM), please see section 4 here

#### The Begotten Series

One very interesting quotation from the spirit of prophecy is when speaking of the meal that Gideon had prepared for the visiting Angel (see Judges 6:11-24), Ellen White wrote

“With the staff in his hand, the Angel touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and a fire rose up out of the rock and consumed the whole as a sacrifice, and not as a hospitable meal; for he was God, and not man. After this token of his divine character, the Angel disappeared.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1881, ‘Gideon called’)

In continuing we read

“When convinced that he had looked upon the Son of God, Gideon was filled with fear, and exclaimed, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face." (Ibid)

After reading all of the above, we can see the depth of meaning when Jesus said to the Jews

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” John 5:39

The same can be said of where John wrote in the introduction of his gospel

“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” John 1:10-11

Christ is the Creator of the world. The Jews believed themselves to be worshipping the Creator but when He came to them, they did not recognise Him. Such was the sad experience of the

Jewish nation.

Before moving on there are two observations I would like to make. The first is this: Quite possibly there will be those who will ask about 1 Timothy 3:16. This text of Scripture says

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16 (KJV)

This verse of Scripture is often disputed (usually by the non-trinitarians). This is because many early manuscripts do not read “God was manifest in the flesh but instead read “He who” [or which] was manifest in the flesh” (or words to that effect) referring to Jesus - meaning Christ was manifest in the flesh and seen by angels etc. Whilst grammatically the latter view appears more plausible than the KJV rendering (God manifest in the flesh), also whilst evidence is produced for both sides of the argument, the author of these notes you are now reading concludes that the weight of evidence, whichever side is the weightier, does not settle the debate. This is because we are not in possession of the original autographs but at the best we only have copies of copies of copies etc.

This author also takes the view that regardless of which way this text is rendered, it does not change the overall view of Scripture which is that Christ is God manifest in the flesh. I believe the evidence that we have for that particular conclusion, as presented above, is overwhelming. This is where I am going to leave any dispute concerning this verse of Scripture. In other words, my belief that Christ is God depends not upon any particular rendering of 1 Timothy 3:16 but rather upon the testimony of Scripture as a whole. I hope this helps clarify my position.

The second observation is this: It seems to me Richard that you do not understand what is believed by the non-trinitarians such as myself. On the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2016 you wrote on Facebook

“Why can't antitrinitarians accept the authority of the scriptures and the explanation of the devout trinitarian theologians? All that is necessary to prove anti trinitarian ism is a false Doctrine is to prove that Jesus is God and that only takes one or two texts”

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The non-trinitarians such as myself do not reject the authority of Scripture: neither do we reject the belief that Christ is God. One is left to wonder where you acquired these ideas. A person does not have to be a trinitarian to believe that Christ is God. This is clearly seen from what I have written above.

It was the same with our pioneers. They were not trinitarians but they did not deny the divinity of Christ. This was summed up very well by Russell Holt who, in a term paper for Dr. Mervyn Maxwell, wrote the following (this concerned the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists up to the time period of James White's death)

“A survey of other Adventist writers during these years reveals, that to a man, they rejected the trinity, yet, with equal unanimity they upheld the divinity of Christ.” (Russell Holt, “The doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination: Its rejection and acceptance”, A term paper for Dr. Mervyn Maxwell, 1969)

Holt then wrote of the pioneers' beliefs

**“To reject the trinity is not necessarily to strip the Saviour of His divinity. Indeed, certain Adventist writers felt that it was the trinitarians who filled the role of degrading Christ's divine nature.”** (*Ibid*)

As far as your other question is concerned (“Why can't antitrinitarians accept the... explanation of the devout trinitarian theologians?”), the answer is two-fold. First of all we are not to take the word of men for what we believe (whether they be theologians, ministers or otherwise). We are to study for ourselves the things that God has revealed in the Scriptures and through the spirit of prophecy. This is what will determine our beliefs – not what men teach.

Secondly, as non-trinitarians, we regard our Godhead beliefs to be in keeping with those things God has revealed through Scripture and through the spirit of prophecy. If you think we are wrong then show us from these two divinely inspired sources where we are wrong. Please do not say we must be wrong because the Seventh-day Adventist theologians say we are wrong. To us this is totally unacceptable.

### **A few thoughts on John 1:1 and the first-begotten**

John opened his Gospel with the words (KJV)

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”**  
John 1:1

The opening verses of John's Gospel are probably the most discussed and controverted verses in the entire Bible. Much has been said and I am sure that much more will be said. Having said that, it is interesting that the original Greek allows the verse to be translated this way

**“In beginning was the Word and the Word was with the God and the Word was God.”**

I have omitted the word 'the' that usually follows “In” (as the KJV above and other versions). This is because in the Greek manuscripts there is no definite article with the word “beginning”. I will return to this point later. As you can also see, I have included the word 'the' before the first use of the word 'God' because included here is a definite article. Interestingly there is no definite article used with the second rendering of 'God'. Thus the text could be rendered, “...the Word was with the God and the Word was God”. This the way it looks taken from the Greek

**“In beginning [arche] was the Word [logos] and the Word [logos] was [ēn] with [pros] the God [ton theon], and the Word [logos] was God [theos].”**

It can be seen here that the first use of 'God' has the definite article whilst the second does not. Origen, a third century Christian scholar, explained it this way

**“We next notice John's use of the article in these sentences. He does not write without care in this respect, nor is he unfamiliar with the niceties of the Greek tongue. In some cases he uses the article, and in some he omits it. He adds the article to the Logos, but to the name of God he adds it sometimes only. He uses the article, when the name of God refers to the uncreated cause of all things, and omits it when the Logos is named God”** (*Origen, Commentary on John, Book 2, Chapter 2*)



Please do not misunderstand what I am doing by quoting Origen. I am not saying I agree with his theology. I am quoting him with respect to the Greek language. This is in particular to his explanation of the use and non-use of the definite article in John 1:1. Born in Alexandria, Origen was a teacher in Greek grammar. He was a prolific writer. He excelled in the Greek language.

Some say that John meant “the Word was God” to mean that the Word was 'Godlike' or 'God in nature' or just simply 'divine' but I believe that if he had meant it to read this way he would have written it this way. After all, he was writing under the inspiration of God.

I believe that John meant what He wrote. This is that the Word was with the God and was God. In writing this verse this way he ensured that the Word (who was God) was not confused with 'the God' (the Father). John could not say that “the Word was with *ton theon* (the God) and the Word was *ton theon* (the God) because this would have been saying that 'the Word' and 'the God' were one and the same person, which they are not. Two persons cannot be the same person. In this verse, 'The 'Word' and 'the God' are revealed as two separate divine persons. One is the Father whilst the other is the Son. As we have seen from the above, the divine Word (the divine Son of God) is God in the person of the Son. When we behold the Son we behold God. It was the Word that was made flesh – not the Father (John 1:14).

I am sure there has been innumerable renderings and explanations of this verse (John 1:1). I am also sure there will be many more.

As previously noted, the very reason why John wrote His gospel was to show that Christ really is the Son of God (John 20:31). His opening words therefore would be crucial in conveying this point to his readers. His problem was (if it can be referred to as such) was to say that both are God without confusing the two personalities. Thus he used *ton theon* to specify (identify specifically) the one true God. This is God the Father (see John 17:3 and 1 Corinthians 8:6).

In 1903 when commenting on these verses (John 1:1-4), Ellen White wrote the following

“How precious are these words! By them some have been led to believe in Christ as the Son of God.” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 111 1903, 'October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1903, That they may be one; As we are one'*)

This is the very reason why John wrote them. It was to show that Christ really is the pre-existent divine Son of God (John 20:30-31). He was inspired to write these words. This therefore (in order to show Christ's true relationship to God) was the opening thrust of God's own theology. This 'divine theology' was to counteract the heresies that at that time were circulating amongst early Christians (too much to detail here). Interesting is that Ellen White did not say that these words have led some to believe that Christ is God.

From the beginning of his gospel, John made sure that his readers knew exactly what he was setting out to establish. He was showing that Christ is the divine Son of God therefore He is truly God. This is the concept that many of the Jews could not accept (John 5:18, 8:58, 10:33, 19:7). It is of course the begotten concept.

Following the above remarks (also after relating a story about a young boy who had once lived a careless life but was later converted through reading the opening words to John's gospel) Ellen White penned the following

“The writer of these words [John 1:1-4] plainly shows that Jesus Christ is one with the Father. Christ is called the Word. He is the first-begotten of the Father.” (*Ibid*)

Note the words “the first-begotten of the Father”. After quoting Hebrews 1:1-5 she then pressed home the point

“God is the Father of Christ; and Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the councils of God are opened unto His Son.” (*Ibid*)

This again is the begotten concept. In another place Ellen White wrote the following (this was in 1901)

“Satan has made men and women his prisoners, and claims them as his subjects. When Christ saw that there was no human being able to be man’s intercessor, He Himself entered the fierce conflict and battled with Satan. The First Begotten of God was the only One who could liberate those who by Adam’s sin had been brought in subjection to Satan. (*Ellen G. White, Ms 125 1901, December 9<sup>th</sup> 1901, ‘The unchangeable Law of God*)

That Christ is the “first-begotten” of God” was in complete accord with what was then, in 1901, believed and taught by Seventh-day Adventists. It is also in agreement where the writer of Hebrews penned these words

“For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” Hebrews 1:5-6

Here it says that Christ, *prior* to coming into this world, was “the firstbegotten”.

Some have enquired as to *how* Christ was begotten – also *when* He was begotten. On these two points the Bible is silent therefore we must not conjecture. Ellen White indirectly referred to this when she wrote (this was when expressly referring to the personality of God)

“From my girlhood I have been given plain instruction that God is a person and that Christ is “the express image of His person.” God always has been. That which concerns us is not the how or the wherefore.” (*Ms 137 1903, Typed November 12<sup>th</sup> 1903, ‘The Personality of God’*)

When commenting on Jesus saying to the Jews “Before Abraham was I AM (John 8:58) God's messenger commented

“Here Christ shows them that, altho they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1899, ‘The Word made flesh’*)

### **Literal or metaphorical (role-playing)?**

We have seen from the above that through Ellen White, God has made it abundantly clear that Christ really is His Son, begotten of Him in eternity. This is irrefutable. To deny it we would have to deny our senses. The question is though, as I have already asked, do we believe it? Do we believe that Christ really is the divine Son of God?

Through its denominational publications, the Seventh-day Adventist Church today denies that this Sonship belief is true. As we noted above, it is now taught that the three persons of the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) are only role-playing (acting out) their various parts (meaning they are not really a father or a son or a holy spirit). Today therefore, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is teaching contrary to what God has revealed through the spirit of prophecy. This is something else that cannot be denied.

So if the three persons are not who the Bible says they are (a Father, Son and Holy Spirit) then why, according to the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, are they called such?

In the book 'The Trinity', which is an official publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church published with the prime purpose of explaining (a) the Seventh-day Adventist version of the trinity doctrine also (b) the history of why and when our denomination changed from being non-trinitarian to trinitarian, Woodrow Whidden made the following statement

*“Another important consideration involves how we interpret the Bible. Here the issue pertains to whether we should interpret some passages literally or whether we may treat them more figuratively. Maybe we could illustrate it this way. While we often refer to Jesus as the Son and frequently call the first person of the Godhead the Father, do we really want to take such expressions in a totally literal way? Or would it be more appropriate to interpret them in a more metaphorical way that draws on selective aspects of sonship and fatherhood?” (Woodrow Whidden, *The Trinity, Biblical objections to the trinity*, page 94)*

After discussing a number of texts of Scripture including such as John 3:16, John 17:3, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Colossians 1:15, 18, Hebrews 1:5-6 and 5:5-10, Whidden concludes

*“Is it not quite apparent that the problem texts become problems only when one assumes an exclusively literalistic interpretation of such expression as "Father," "Son," "Firstborn," "Only Begotten," "Begotten," and so forth? Does not such literalism go against the mainly figurative or metaphorical meaning that the Bible writers use when referring to persons of the Godhead?” (Ibid, page 106)*

Notice first of all that Whidden calls these Father/Son/begotten texts of Scripture “**problem texts**”. He says they are a problem if they are taken literally. He also says that these expressions are meant by the Bible writers to be “**figurative or metaphorical**”. There is one huge problem with this reasoning. This is because many of the Father/Son expressions were not those employed by the Bible writers but were the words that were actually spoken by various individuals.

This is such as when God the Father said of Christ “This is my beloved Son” (see Matthew 3:16-17, 17:5). It is also when Christ repeatedly said that He was God's Son (see John 3:16, 9:35-38, 11:4, see also Matthew 27:43 and other numerous places). It was when the Jews accused Christ of blasphemy for calling Himself the Son of God (see John 5:18, 10:36), also when they said He deserved to die because He called Himself God's Son (John 19:7).

It is also when both Peter and John the Baptist called Christ the Son of God (Matthew 16:16, John 1:32-33), also when the demons did the same (Matthew 8:29, Mark 3:11, 5:7, Luke 4:41). The disciples called Christ the Son of God (Matthew 14:33), as did Martha (John 11:27). None of these times were when the Bible writers used this expression of their own choosing. They were simply recording the actual words spoken by these various individuals. If it were to be denied that these were the actual words spoken, this would deny the inspiration of Scripture. We must therefore, when speaking of these things, be very careful.

The question therefore is this:- Was God, when He called Christ His Son, being metaphorical? Was Jesus, when He called Himself the Son of God, being metaphorical? Was Peter or John or the Jews being metaphorical when they called Christ the Son of God? How about the Ethiopian eunuch? Was he being metaphorical when he confessed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"? It is quite evident that this is what Philip had taught him from the Scriptures. The narrative tells us this much (see Acts 8:35-38). How about the apostle Paul? Was he being metaphorical when he wrote to the believers in Rome that God had sent His own Son into the world to die for us (see Romans 8:3, 32)? Luke tells us that as soon as Paul had received his sight again "he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). Was he being metaphorical?

I believe it is all too apparent that the answer to these particular questions is an undeniable 'no'. None of these persons used this term figuratively or metaphorically. Think about it. Would it make sense to say that the demons were being metaphorical when they called Christ the Son of God? Would it make sense to say the Roman centurion was being metaphorical when he said, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54) or when the demon possessed man in the tombs did the same (Luke 8:27-28)? How about those who heard God say of Christ "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17, 17:5)? Would they have thought that God was being metaphorical? Whidden continued

"Can one really say that the Bible writers meant such expressions as "the only true God" and "one God, the Father" to exclude the full deity of the Son, Christ Jesus?" (*Ibid*)

First of all it was not a Bible writer who coined the phrase "the only true God". These were the actual words spoken by Jesus. This is when He prayed to His Father saying

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

Whidden is suggesting here that if these terminologies are taken literally it denies, as he puts it, "the full deity of the Son". We must ask therefore: was Jesus denying His full deity when He prayed these words to His Father? Need we answer that one?

In a chapter called 'Why the Trinity is Important', Whidden explains the role-playing idea.

"While the three divine persons are one, They have taken different roles or positions in the Godhead's work of creation, redemption, and the loving administration of the universe. The Father has assumed overall leadership, the Son has subordinated Himself to the leadership of the Father, and the Spirit is voluntarily subordinate to both the Father and the Son." (*Woodrow Whidden, The Trinity, page 243, 'Why the Trinity is important – part 1'*)

Here again we see the role playing idea.

The year following the voting the trinity doctrine into the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists for the very first time in their history, a reader of the Review asked

"I am a fledgling Christian and am mystified by the doctrine of the Trinity. To whom should I address my prayers?" (*These Times, June 1<sup>st</sup> 1981, 'Frank answers'*)

In replying to this question, Pastor Holbrook (a contributing editor) wrote

“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.” (*Ibid*)

Here we are asked, in one of our official publications, to believe that sometime in eternity the three persons of the Godhead decided upon who should role-play be the Father, who should role-play the Son and who should role-play the Holy Spirit – albeit according to Holbrook, this is what is “inferred from the Scriptures”. Now why would anyone say that this ‘role-playing’ (acting/pretending) is “inferred” in the Scriptures? It is simply because of the reluctance to accept the the divine testimony that Christ really is God’s Son. In other words, all sorts of reasoning must be produced to justify not taking the Bible as it reads.

This role-playing idea was also seen expressed in the 1996 week of Prayer readings. These readings were read by Seventh-day Adventists and non Seventh-day Adventists all over the world. Gordon Jenson wrote

“A plan of salvation was encompassed in the covenant made by the Three Persons of the Godhead, who possessed the attributes of Deity equally. In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered into, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son.” (*Gordon Jenson, Adventist Review, October 31, 1996, p.12 Week of Prayer readings, ‘article ‘Jesus the Heavenly Intercessor)*

Again we see the idea of a role-playing Godhead suggested. This would have been read by all who participated in this particular prayer reading. Jenson continued

“The remaining divine Being, the Holy Spirit, was also to participate in effecting the plan of salvation. All of this took place before sin and rebellion transpired in heaven.” (*Ibid*)

It does appear that Jenson could not bring himself to say that the third person of the Godhead was only role-playing the part of a holy spirit but what other conclusion can be drawn? In other words, the reality of the Holy Spirit actually being a holy spirit is lost. In this reasoning, the Holy Spirit is depicted as a person exactly like the Father and the Son. In other words, the Holy Spirit is a ‘third person’ – albeit exactly like the other two persons - acting out a role. The conclusion was (according to Jenson)

“As sin progressively developed in heaven and later, on earth, so the plan to deal with it was progressively revealed—the divine Beings entered into the roles they had agreed upon before the foundations of the world were laid (see 1 Peter 1:20).” (*Ibid*)

This ‘metaphorical sonship’ idea is still being taught today to Seventh-day Adventists. In the November 2015 issue of the ‘Adventist World’ (which is described as ‘The International Paper for Seventh-day Adventists’) there was an article called ‘A question of Sonship’. It had been written by Angel Manuel Rodríguez. He was once director of the Seventh-day Adventist Biblical Research Institute. He was answering the question ‘What does the Bible mean when it refers to Jesus as “the Son of God”?’

From the beginning of his article to the end, Rodríguez presents the idea that Christ is not really a Son (not really the Son of God). The following are the types of statements made in the article by Rodríguez. They are not contiguous.

“The metaphor of sonship means that although Christ and the Father have the same

nature, they are different persons, implying a plurality of persons within the Godhead.”

“The metaphor [father-son] is therefore a good symbol for the deep unity that exists within the members of the Godhead (John 17:5)

”“Fifthly, the father-son image cannot be literally applied to the divine Father-Son relationship within the Godhead. The Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father.”

“The term “Son” is used metaphorically when applied to the Godhead. It conveys the ideas of distinction of persons within the Godhead and the equality of nature in the context of an eternal, loving relationship.” (*Angel Manuel Rodriguez, Adventist World, November 2015, page 42, ‘A Question of Sonship’*)

If the latter is true, then why is the Holy Spirit called the Holy Spirit?

The above article was designed to have people, mainly Seventh-day Adventists, believe that Christ is not really the Son of God. This brings us back again to the role-playing idea. Strangely though Richard, as a Seventh-day Adventist minister, you appear to disagree with this role-playing idea. Over the months you have constantly maintained that the Father and the Son have always been a father and a son. On Facebook, on December 19<sup>th</sup> 2016, you wrote

“...the Bible teaches that the father and son are eternal they never became father and son they always were father and son...”

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/DefendingThePillars/permalink/645942935566342/?comment\\_id=650272278466741&reply\\_comment\\_id=650822455078390&comment\\_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D](https://www.facebook.com/groups/DefendingThePillars/permalink/645942935566342/?comment_id=650272278466741&reply_comment_id=650822455078390&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D)

This is the same as when you said (on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2016) (all your emphasis)

“Christ is the ETERNAL Son of God and WAS NEVER "MADE" a Son, He always was a Son.”

[https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment\\_id=10210176153775497&reply\\_comment\\_id=10210208432702450](https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment_id=10210176153775497&reply_comment_id=10210208432702450)

If these two divine beings (Father and Son) have always been a father and a son, how could they have begun, sometime in eternity, to role-play the parts of a father and son (as the Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches today)? This does not make sense to me. Surely by saying this you are at odds with the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The other point is this: To be a father, a person must literally have a son (that's the meaning of the word 'father') yet you say 'the Son' is not really a son of the Father. How therefore can 'the Father' really be a father? None of this makes any more sense to me than does the role-playing idea. As a matter of passing interest, are you saying that the Holy Spirit has always been a holy spirit?

Yet in another place you say (December 1<sup>st</sup> 2016) (again all your emphasis)

“The FACT that there are 3 POWERS is sufficient for the Divine TRINITY. . . How THEY choose to distribute THEIR roles and functions is irrelevant.”

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/DefendingThePillars/permalink/645942935566342/?comment\\_id=650272278466741&reply\\_comment\\_id=650286855131950&comment\\_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R9%22%7D](https://www.facebook.com/groups/DefendingThePillars/permalink/645942935566342/?comment_id=650272278466741&reply_comment_id=650286855131950&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R9%22%7D)

This appears to be in agreement with the role-playing idea. It just seems to be confusion after confusion. I will return to your statement about the trinity later. I disagree with it. To have a trinity doctrine it is not sufficient just to have “3 POWERS”. There is much more to the trinity doctrine.

It is reasonably evident that because Christ is begotten of God that He truly is God's Son. This must mean also that He is God – albeit in the person of the Son. As we have seen, this has been endorsed through the spirit of prophecy. Today though, through its publications, the Seventh-day Adventist Church denies this Sonship belief. It is said not to be true.

Since the death of Ellen White therefore, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, respecting Christ, has changed its beliefs. Whereas we once taught that He really is the Son of God, we now teach He is only acting out (role-playing) this part. As William Johnsson wrote in 1994 (this was as editor of the Review)

“Adventists beliefs have changed over the years under the impact of present truth. **Most startling** is the teaching regarding Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.”(William Johnsson, *Adventist Review*, January 6th 1994, Article ‘Present Truth - Walking in God's Light’)

Johnsson went on to say (concerning our past belief that Christ really is the divine Son of God, begotten of God in eternity)

“Only gradually did **this false doctrine** give way to the Biblical truth, and largely under the impact of Ellen Whites writings in statements such as “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. (Desire of ages p 530)” (*Ibid*)

This is the denial that Christ really is the Son of God. Today as a church we teach that Christ is just role-playing the part of a son. This ties in with what Whidden is saying (see above) – that the terminology 'Son', as are the terminologies 'Father' and 'Holy Spirit', is only meant to be metaphorical.

This is also of course saying that what Seventh-day Adventists taught about Christ during the time of Ellen White's ministry was “false doctrine”. This is quite a claim – especially as we have seen that God's servant said we were teaching the truth about Him. We need to ask therefore, who is telling the truth? Is it the Seventh-day Adventist Church today or is it Ellen White? Obviously it cannot be both.

In spite of all we have seen in this study so far, the Seventh-day Adventist Church today continues to deny the reality of Christ's Sonship with God. In their “Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology”, this is officially confirmed. Dr. Fernando Canale explains (referring to the Greek word 'monogenes' which in the KJV of Scripture when referring to Christ is always translated 'only begotten')

“In a similar vein, monogenes does not contain the idea of begetting but rather of uniqueness and, when applied to Christ, emphasizes His unique relationship with the Father.” (Dr. Fernando Canale, *the Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia Volume 12, pages 125-126*)

In the New Testament, the word 'monogenes' is used in 9 verses. These are Luke 7:12 and 8:42 where it is translated 'only son' and 'one only daughter' respectively, also Luke 9:38 where it is translated 'only child'. On each other occasion it is translated 'only begotten' (see John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16, 3:18, Hebrews 11:17 and 1 John 4:9). All of John's uses of this word he applies to Christ.

From what we see here written in the 'Seventh-day Adventist Handbook of Theology', we return to the idea that the Father and the Son are not really a father or a son so again we return to the idea of role-playing – meaning that in the plan of redemption, the three persons of the Godhead are all making themselves out to be something that in reality they are not.

As far as I am concerned, this is a denial of what both the Bible and the spirit of prophecy actually reveal. This we have seen in this article. I cannot see how there is any way that anyone can honestly say that Ellen White used such terminologies (as Father\Son\begotten etc.) metaphorically. The way she wrote shows emphatically that she was writing of these things as though they were reality (as opposed to metaphorical). In fact as we read above, Ellen White wrote

“When Christ first announced to the heavenly host His mission and work in the world, He declared that He was to leave His position of dignity and disguise His holy mission by assuming the likeness of a man **when in reality He was the Son of the infinite God.**”  
(*Ellen G. White, letter, to J. H. Kellogg, Letter No. K-303, August 29<sup>th</sup> 1903*)

In the *Great Controversy* we find this counsel

**“The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared: “Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God.” Mark 12:24.”** (*Ellen G. White, Great Controversy, page 598, 1911 edition, 'The Scriptures a safeguard*)

There then came the counsel applicable to our study. It said

**“The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise: “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” John 7:17. If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error.”** (*Ibid*)

Again she wrote in 1907

**“By the same boastful and deceptive work Satan will seek to draw converts from the faith. Theories will be brought in that will not be wise for us to handle. Satan is a cunning worker, and he will bring in subtle fallacies to darken and confuse the mind and root out the doctrines of salvation. Those who do not accept the Word of God just as it reads, will be snared in his trap”.** (*Ellen G. White, Manuscript 43, 1907, 'Exhortation to faithfulness to church members and elders*)

In the Scriptures there is no mention of the three persons of the Godhead pretending to be (acting/role-playing) what they are not. This is why Holbrook said (in his thinking) that this is only “inferred” in the Scriptures. I have not even seen it inferred.



## What about Melchisedec?

Richard: From what you have written in your continual berating of those who believe that in eternity Christ was begotten of God, the opening verses of Hebrews chapter 7 appear to play a vital part. In fact I would say that in your understanding of trinitarian theology, these verses have become absolutely crucial. I say this because in your posts on Facebook, you return to these verses over and over again. These verses tell us (I have highlighted the words upon which you have come to hugely rely)

“For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.” Hebrews 7:1-3

You say that because Melchisedec was a type of Christ then Christ is exactly the same as Melchisedec (“Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days”), which to your way of thinking means that Christ is not begotten of God.

In a post from your Biblical Investigations Facebook page (this was after saying that the pioneers who believed the begotten concept were wrong) you wrote the following (all your emphasis etc)

“Here is what one Pioneer stated-NOTE the date of 1869;

“And as to the Son of God, he would be excluded also, for he had God for his Father, and did, SOME POINT at the eternity of the past, have beginning of days.

“So that if we use Paul's language in an absolute sense, it would be impossible to find but ONE BEING in the universe, and that is God the Father, who is without father, or mother, or descent, or beginning of days, or end of life.” — (J.N. Andrews, Review and Herald, September 7, 1869)

The point you are making is (once again criticising the early Seventh-day Adventists for their beliefs concerning Christ)

“The Pioneers COULD NOT SEE that they were directly contradicting Hebrews 7:3;”

You said of this

“And that my friends is a blatant flattened out contradiction of what the Apostle Paul wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit of God!

Your conclusion was

“It is obvious as as train wreck that the Adventist Pioneer J. N. Andrews willfully and blindly misapplied the inspired wording of Hebrews 7:3 to God the ETERNAL Father instead of to His ETERNAL SON Jesus Christ, WHO is "without beginning, having neither father nor mother, nor BEGINNING of DAYS nor END of LIFE!””

Richard: To say that J. N. Andrews “willfully and blindly misapplied” the inspired Word is a very

serious allegation. This is tantamount to saying that he was deliberately telling lies. This I believe is something that should not be heard coming from a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The above, along with a great deal more disparagement of those who believed that Christ really is the Son of God, can be found here from your Biblical Investigations Facebook page (August 30<sup>th</sup> 2016)

[https://www.facebook.com/PastorRichardPMendoza/posts/1744475962506779?from\\_close\\_friend=1](https://www.facebook.com/PastorRichardPMendoza/posts/1744475962506779?from_close_friend=1)

As you know Richard, in the past regarding these verses (Hebrews 7:1-3) I have answered you on a number of occasions. Each time it has been with the same answer. You will therefore not be surprised at what I am about to write here.

My main point has been that it is very important that you learn to interpret Scripture in its context. We all agree that Melchisedec was a type of Christ so this is not an issue. It is WHAT MAKES him a type that is crucial to understand. This is why the context is so crucial. The context determines what the writer of Hebrews meant by his words.

As we shall now see, the context of these verses has nothing to do with whether Christ was begotten or not – neither has it anything to do with Melchisedec's physical existence as a human being. It is all to do with the change in the order of priesthood and genealogies. If you miss this you will miss absolutely everything.

In this passage of Scripture, the writer is referring particularly to the law of the Levitical priesthood. This is the law that God instituted at Mount Sinai. This is when He instructed the Hebrew people to make him a sanctuary (Exodus 25:8). This law, as so readily realised by the Jews, specifically stated that only those who were direct descendants of Aaron (of the tribe of Levi) could be of the priesthood. This is why a potential priest's genealogy was so meticulously scrutinised. It needed to be proven, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the person nominated as a priest was a direct descendant of Aaron.

In these verses (Hebrews 7:1-3), the writer of Hebrews is pointing out that no such 'Aaronic' lineage could be found of Christ. This is no more than any such lineage could be found of Melchisedec. According to the law therefore, neither Melchisedec nor Christ (who was of the tribe of Judah – see Matthew 1:1-6, Luke 3:31-34, Hebrews 7:14) had the necessary qualifications to become a priest in the earthly sanctuary. This is why the same author wrote of Christ

**“For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:”** Hebrews 8:4

Earlier in his epistle he says

**“So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec....Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.”** Hebrews 5:5-6, 10

This is telling us that the person who said unto Christ “to day have I begotten thee” is the very same person who said to Him that He is “a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” This person of course is God the Father. Take particular note of the emphasis on Christ being a high priest “after the order of Melchisedec”. This really is very important.

This “another place” mentioned in this verse is Psalms 110. This is where it is written

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever **after the order of Melchizedek.**” Psalms 110:1-4

Now note the following verses from Hebrews. Try to grasp what the writer is saying.

“Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever **after the order of Melchisedec**”. Hebrews 6:20

“If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise **after the order of Melchisedec**, and not be called after the order of Aaron?” Hebrews 7:11

“For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever **after the order of Melchisedec.**” Hebrews 7:17

(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord swore and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever **after the order of Melchisedec:**) Hebrews 7:21

The writer is obviously attempting to make a point. How many times did he have to say this before we take notice of it? The operative words are “**after the order of Melchisedec**”. In other words, Christ’s priesthood is not equivalent to the earthly priesthood (as of the law) but was that of a ‘different’ calling.

The discussion in Hebrews 7 is **only** concerned with Christ being a priest. This is the context of the verses in question (1-3). As the same writer stated

“If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise **after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?** for the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.” Hebrews 7:11-12

This entire passage of Scripture has everything to do with **a change of the order of the priesthood and the law**. It has nothing to do with whether Christ was begotten or not.

If you insist Richard that this passage is referring to the physical existence of Christ and that of Melchisedec, you would end up with a very serious problem. It would make Melchisedec someone who is without a mother, without a father, and without a beginning of days (Hebrews 7:3) – which is what you actually said on Facebook. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016 you advised me (this was after saying that my beliefs concerning Christ were wrong)

“...you must first deal with Hebrews 7 verse 3 you must debunk what Hebrew 7:3 says namely that Melchizedek was made like unto the son of God having neither father nor mother which means no procreation no conception no birth and having neither beginning of days...”

<https://www.facebook.com/ricardomiguel.cordovabertini/posts/1061199663921410?>

Richard: No human being is without a beginning of days. Even Adam and Eve had a beginning of days. The same can be said of the highest of the angels. Everything and everyone created by God had a beginning of days.

By making this verse apply to the physical existence of both Christ and of Melchisedec (which is what you are attempting to have people believe), then Melchisedec must be God. Do you now see the end result of your reasoning? It does not really make sense – unless of course you are saying that Melchisedec is God. Perhaps this is what you are saying. One is left to wonder.

These verses (Hebrews 7:1-3) cannot be referring to the physical existence of Christ or Melchisedec. They are referring to the **order of the priesthood**. That's why I said to you that you must learn to study contextually (meaning interpret verses in accordance to their setting).

As I have explained to you previously, the Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary draws exactly the same conclusion that I have been sharing with you for months. In Volume 7 it says with respect to the words “without father, without mother” (my emphasis)

“These words have given rise to the speculation that Melchisedec was some supernatural being, as he must of necessity have been if he was actually without parents, without beginning of days and without end of life. **Such an assertion in its totality can be literally true of the persons of the Godhead only.** However, it is not necessary to take this view of the wording. The author may simply mean that there is no record of who Melchisedec's father and mother were” (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia volume 7 page 439-440*)

The commentary follows on by saying (this with respect to the words “without descent”)

“Gr. agenealogetos literally “without genealogy”. The Jews were very careful to record and preserve their genealogies. This was especially true concerning the priests (see Ezra 2:61-63). No one could serve as priest unless he belonged to the family of Aaron of the tribe of Levi, and this he must be able to prove without any doubt whatever. If there was a break in the line somewhere, he would be counted out and thus lose the privileges accorded the priests. For this reason every Jew, and particularly the priests, preserved carefully their genealogical records. Of Melchisedec no genealogy exists.” (*Ibid*)

Of the words “beginning of days” it says

“That is, there is no record of his birth, or of his death, as indicated by the phrase “nor end of life”. (*Ibid*)

This is exactly as I believe. I believe it was the writer's intention to show that Christ's priesthood was not according to the law (of Levitical descent from Aaron) but was of a different order. If you take it as the writer attempting to prove that Christ was not begotten then you end up with the conclusion that Melchisedec was not begotten (did not have a mother or father or a beginning of days), which, as I said, would automatically make him God. It would also mean he never died (“nor end of life”).

How accurately any verse of Scripture is interpreted will depend to a very great extent on the interpreter's integrity to accomplish the interpreting within the context in which the words are originally written. No Scripture should be interpreted divorced from its context. This much really

is certain. We need to take the advice that Paul gave to his young friend Timothy. This is when he wrote

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

### **The alpha of heresies and the omega**

In a letter dated October 1903 - which was also published in Special Testimonies Series B No. 2 ('The foundation of our faith'), also Series B No. 7 ('Decided action to be taken now') - Ellen White wrote a fearsome warning. Every Seventh-day Adventist should read it. She was prompted to write it because of John Harvey Kellogg's views concerning God. These were views which in the finality led him to accept a trinitarian view of the Godhead. Whilst this whole episode would be too much to explain in detail here, she did give these warnings

“The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that **this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith**, and engaging in a process of reorganization.” (*Ellen White, Letter 242, To physicians and ministers, October 1903*)

Note the highlighted words and ask yourself this question. What doctrine would constitute a 'pillar of faith' of any Christian denomination? Undoubtedly, the primary one would be what is believed concerning Christ. The entire concept of Christianity hangs upon this one belief.

So why would Satan suggest a reformation was needed in Seventh-day Adventism and why would he say the doctrines we held during the time of Ellen White ministry needed changing? Would it be because they were wrong? Of course not! If these beliefs had been wrong he would have been delighted. Certainly he would not have sought to change them. The only reason he would suggest they needed changing is because he knew they were the truth. Strangely though, our church today says that our beliefs concerning the Godhead, as held by us during the time of Ellen White's ministry, needed changing. This is because, so our church claims, they are false doctrine (not Biblical). We saw this on page 43 with William Johnsson's remarks.

Our Godhead beliefs are the only teachings that since the death of Ellen White have undergone change. All of our other teachings have remained the same. As I think you will agree, this belief that has been changed is the most important of all the teachings of Scripture. It would not be a surprise to learn that Satan would target (attack) this particular belief.

So what would happen if this satanic suggestion were to be heeded? The letter continued

“Were this reformation to take place, what would result? -- **The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement.**” (*Ibid*)

So have any of these things actually happened? Has our religion changed? Everyone who knows the truth about our denominational history has to say 'yes' to this particular question. Even our church leadership admits to this being true. Have the “The fundamental principles

held by us for 50 years prior to 1903 been “accounted as error”? As we have seen, this is a definite yes. Have “Books of a new order” been written? Of course they have. Once they were non-trinitarian. Now they are trinitarian. Has a “system of intellectual philosophy” been introduced? Again most definitely! This aptly describes the trinity doctrine. Even if it were correct it still could not be proven from Scripture therefore it can only be “intellectual philosophy”.

So what does all of this mean? It must mean that Satan has made his suggestions and our church has 'reformed' its beliefs. What else can be concluded? Ellen White also wrote in the same letter

“Who has authority to begin such a movement? We have our Bibles. We have our experience, attested to by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. **We have a truth that admits of no compromise.** Shall we not repudiate everything that is not in harmony with this truth?” (*Ibid*)

These are very strong words. It is quite apparent that Ellen White saw nothing wrong with the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. She had no doubt that what they were teaching (in 1903) is the truth. Her words are unmistakably clear. Read them again if you are not sure.

The following year came more warnings. We will note a little of them here. When warning Seventh-day Adventists of false sentiments concerning the presence and personality of God she wrote in 1904

““Living Temple” contains the alpha of these theories. **I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people.**” (*Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies Series B, No. 2 ‘The Foundation of our Faith’ Page 53 1904*)

This is about as serious as it gets. This “omega” that Ellen White saw coming made her tremble for Seventh-day Adventists. Note too she said it would appear within Seventh-day Adventism “in a little while”. She said this 112 years ago in 1904. We must ask therefore, has this “omega” already arrived within our denomination, with most Seventh-day Adventists not even realising it? She then gave this warning

“**I knew that I must warn our brethren and sisters not to enter into controversy over the presence and personality of God.** The statements made in “Living Temple” in regard to this point are incorrect. The Scripture used to substantiate the doctrine there set forth, is Scripture misapplied.” (*Ibid*)

To every Seventh-day Adventist today, particularly in the light of our present Godhead controversy, this testimony should be regarded as a matter of extreme importance. This is because as most will realise, the trinity doctrine concerns “**the presence and personality of God**”. Note too Ellen White said that regarding this matter the author of “Living Temple” was *misapplying Scripture*. It is therefore only reasonable to assume that this would also be happening with “**the omega**”. The misapplication of Scripture is very often the vanguard of false teachings.

In a letter addressed to our leading physicians Ellen White warned

“Be not deceived; many will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. We have now before us the alpha of this danger. The omega will be of a most startling nature.” (*Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies Series B, No. 2 page 16, ‘A Letter to Leading Physicians’, Letter 263, July 24th 1904, ‘Teach the Word’*)

In the above 'alpha and omega' testimony, Ellen White was warning Seventh-day Adventists not to depart from what was then, in 1904, our denominational 'faith'. If this is not what she was doing then the warning doesn't make sense. I say this because whatever it was that Seventh-day Adventists were then teaching in 1904, it is only reasonable to conclude that Ellen White did believe it to be the truth that God had given to His remnant people. She was warning not to depart from it. Notice here that Ellen White said that "many **will** depart from the **faith**". There was no maybe about it.

It should go without saying that Ellen White fully understood what constituted "the faith" of Seventh-day Adventists. It is also reasonable to conclude that she expected her readers to understand it. If they did not understand it they would not have had a clue as to what she meant by this warning – and that would not make sense either.

Even more reasonable to conclude is that if Ellen White had not believed that this 1904 faith was a correct faith - meaning a faith that had been given to them by God - she would not have been warning Seventh-day Adventists not to depart from it. I would like to think that most would agree with this reasoning. When all is said and done it is only common sense reasoning. Look at it this way: If it was not the 1904 faith that Ellen White was warning Seventh-day Adventists not to depart from then what was it?

I would ask you to note something very important here. This is that in the early 1900's, Ellen White referred to Kellogg's views of God as being the 'alpha of heresies'. So what does the word 'alpha' mean? It means the very first or beginning.

I am pointing this out because as we have seen above, all during the time of Ellen White's ministry, including during the time she was sending out these 'alpha and omega' warnings, our church was teaching that in eternity, Christ was begotten of God. Why therefore, if this is false doctrine (as we have seen on page 43 was stated in the Review by its editor William Johnsson) did she say Kellogg's view of God was the 'alpha' (the first or beginning) of the heresies? In other words, why didn't she say this begotten (Sonship) belief was the first of the heresies? As we have seen in this article, we had been teaching it since our very beginnings.

The answer is really very simple. As we have seen for ourselves, Ellen White did not believe that this begotten (Sonship) concept was false doctrine. She said that concerning Christ's pre-existence, the beliefs held by Seventh-day Adventists were the truth (see page 25 above). This is why she never condemned this Sonship belief. To those who are seeking the truth concerning this Godhead controversy, this should be of the utmost significance and importance. Remember, if she had thought that the begotten concept was wrong then she would not have been referring to Kellogg's views of God as the 'alpha of heresies' (the first or the beginning of heresies). That much again is reasonably obvious.

In the above warning, take particular note that Ellen White said that the "omega" (whatever it is) would be of "a **most startling nature**". This clearly reveals the seriousness of what this messenger of the Lord saw was coming upon Seventh-day Adventists. This reminds me of where William Johnsson (editor of the Review) said (when denying that Christ really is the Son of God)

*"Adventists beliefs have changed over the years under the impact of present truth. **Most startling** is the teaching regarding Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord."(William Johnsson, Adventist Review, January 6th 1994, Article 'Present Truth - Walking in God's Light')*

Should this be telling us something today? Ellen White did warn of this happening. She also warned in 1904

“In the book "Living Temple" there is presented the alpha of deadly heresies. The omega will follow, and will be received by those who are not willing to heed the warning God has given.” (Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies Series B No. 2, page 50, 'Beware', see also letter 277, July 31<sup>st</sup> 1904*)

From the above, it is reasonable to conclude that Ellen White saw something of a 'theological nature' coming upon Seventh-day Adventists that made her tremble with fear. This is why she gave these warnings with such clarity. We must ask therefore, can we, as God's remnant people, afford today to ignore them? Did you notice it says here that those who do not heed the warning will accept the omega?

In Kellogg's book were wrong views concerning the personality of God. This was the 'alpha'. Why should the 'omega' be any different? Satan's one objective is to misrepresent God.

In the same year as she gave the warning that Satan would suggest that our beliefs needed a reformation, Ellen White wrote about the instruction that God had given to her concerning the personality of God and His Son. Here is a portion of what she wrote

“The word of the Lord to me is that I am to repeat the instruction that God has given me, showing what He has revealed for the benefit of His people and the way in which He has presented His word to them. ... In *Patriarchs and Prophets* God has presented to His people the way in which they are to view the plan of salvation. The instruction contained in this book is not an idle tale. It is the presentation of truth in accordance with the Word of God.” (Ms 137 1903, Typed November 12<sup>th</sup> 1903, 'The Personality of God')

We noted previously that Ellen White said that 'Patriarchs and Prophets' is a book especially adapted so that newcomers should become established in the truth. We also noted it was made clear in this book that God was a person and that Christ was a person. In a testimony to a brother in 1906 she wrote

“Shall Christ be compelled to bear continually the shameful infirmities of His people, because they accept the false sentiments proceeding from the first traitor in the heavenly courts? If the angels were deceived by Lucifer's ingenious methods of misrepresenting God, if Adam and Eve were deceived by his declaration that God was withholding from them the higher education that would make them as gods, is there not danger that men today will be deceived? Please read the first chapters of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, and see if the precious truths contained in this book are not given by the Lord to protect His people from deceptions that are urged upon them just now.” (Ellen G. White, Letter 212 1906 to A. J. Read, July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1906)

Notice here what is says of Satan's methods to deceive. It is said they are “ingenious”. As we near the end of this article we shall see very clearly just what it was that he and his angels were doing in Heaven in an attempt to deceive the other angels. If you do not know it may surprise you. Ellen White continued the penultimate quote (as we already noted above)

“From my girlhood I have been given plain instruction that God is a person and that Christ is “the express image of His person.” God always has been. That which concerns us is not the how or the wherefore.” (op cit.)

Never did Ellen White say that God was anything but a person. Later, when speaking of the



false theories regarding God that at that time were pervading Adventism, she gave this warning

**“Many things of like character will in the future arise.** I entreat our medical missionary workers to be afraid to trust the suppositions and devising of any human being who entertains the thought that the path over which the people of God have been led for the last fifty years is a wrong path. Beware of those who, not having had any decided experience in the leading of the Lord’s Spirit, would suppose that this leading is all a fallacy; that we have not the truth; that we are not the people of the Lord, gathered by Him from all countries and nations. **Beware of those who would tear down the foundation, upon which we have been building for the last fifty years, to establish a new doctrine.** I know that these new theories are from the enemy.” *(Ibid)*

With one last appeal she wrote

**“Let those who would bring in fanciful ideas of God** awake to a sense of their danger. This is too solemn a subject to be trifled with.” *(Ibid)*

Could it have been that when writing **“fanciful ideas of God”** that Ellen White had in mind the trinity doctrine? It is quite possible.

I will share something interesting with you. At least I find it interesting.

One thing that to me stands out (concerning this ongoing Godhead controversy) is that during the early 1900's, Ellen White made quite a number of very clear, also very direct, statements to the effect that God was one person and that Christ was another person. Up to then it seems it was just taken for granted that this is what was believed. As she said in one place

**“And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” All through the Scriptures, the Father and the Son are spoken of as two distinct personages.** You will hear men endeavoring to make the Son of God a nonentity. **He and the Father are one, but they are two personages. Wrong sentiments regarding this are coming in, and we shall all have to meet them.”** *(Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1905, ‘Lessons from the First Epistle of John’)*

So what, in the early 1900's, brought about these 'separate person' statements?

They were made in the backdrop of John Harvey Kellogg's confession to A. G. Daniells (then General Conference President) that he had come to believe in the trinity doctrine. The latter teaching, Kellogg said, explained his 'God in nature' views. These were views that he had written in his book 'The Living Temple'. Kellogg is the first Seventh-day Adventist I have found to have openly made such a trinity confession. This was in 1903. Whilst it would be too much to go into in detail here, we will note that in a letter addressed to W. C. White, A. G. Daniells explained (referring to a conversation he had with Kellogg)

**“He [Kellogg] then stated that his former views regarding the trinity had stood in his way of making a clear and absolutely correct statement but that within a short time he had come to believe in the trinity and could now see pretty clearly where all the difficulty was and believed that he could clear up the matter satisfactorily.”** *(Letter, A. G. Daniells to W. C. White Oct 29th 1903)*

Kellogg, like the vast majority of Seventh-day Adventists up to that time, had once been a non-trinitarian. Now though, in 1903, he was making confession to Daniells that “within a short time

he had come to believe in the trinity". This was obviously something that he, along with Seventh-day Adventists in general, had not done previously. The general belief had been – as it was still then in 1903 – that the Holy Spirit was the omnipresence of both the Father and the Son. Kellogg, in order to prove his 'God in nature' idea, had to deny this belief. Daniells continued

“He [Kellogg] told me that he now believed in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost and his view was that it was God the Holy Ghost and not God the Father that filled all space and every living thing.” (*Ibid*)

Kellogg certainly disputed with the way that Seventh-day Adventists regarded the Holy Spirit. We know this because he had said in a letter to George Ide Butler (ex conference president)

“How the Holy Ghost can be the third person and not be a person at all is difficult for me to see.” (*Kellogg to G. I. Butler, Letter dated October 28th 1903*)

In order to deny that God the Father was in everything, Kellogg had to 'make' the Holy Spirit to be a person in the very same sense that God and Christ are persons. As I said, up to then, this was something not generally believed by Seventh-day Adventists. In 1905 Ellen White wrote concerning Kellogg

“I have seen that Satan's power over him has not been broken. Those who choose to sustain the man who so greatly dishonors God and has stood directly in the way of His work, will themselves become so deceived that their work will not be accepted by God. I have felt reluctant to say these things, but I know the Lord would not have souls endangered any longer by Dr. Kellogg. Tares have been sown in the minds of God's people, and as a result of this some have given up the truth, some have become infidels. The misrepresentations that Dr. Kellogg has made of the work God has given me to do, have made them infidels.” (*Ellen G. White, Letter 116, 1905, to J. H. Kellogg, April 22, 1905*)

Kellogg had been misrepresenting Ellen White, particularly in what she had written. We must be very careful that we do not do the same.

From what we have read in this article so far, we can clearly see that concerning God and Christ, Ellen White did not regard as wrong what then, in the early 1900's, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was teaching. Certainly she did not regard the begotten concept as being amongst “fanciful ideas of God”. In fact as we can see very clearly, she warned about those who would seek to change what the church was teaching. Today therefore, before it is too late, we need to heed the warning. It has been given very clearly.

### **For over 100 years**

For well over 100 years (71 of which was when we had God's messenger amongst us – namely Ellen White), the begotten concept was the denominational faith of Seventh-day Adventists. It was reasoned that because Christ is begotten of God that (a) He is truly God's Son and (b) He is God.

Richard: As I have shown you so many times previously (so I have no intention of wasting my time by giving the details again here), this begotten (Sonship) belief, by the General Conference in 1936, was declared to be the official faith of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is not surprising therefore that in our denominational publications during the decades that followed (1940's, 1950's), this very same faith was still promoted. It can only be concluded that

the reason why this faith continued for so long (prior to it eventually being discarded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church) was (a) because it was believed to be in agreement with Scripture and (b) because of the divine approval it had received through the spirit of prophecy.

For those who would like to see what the official 1936 beliefs actually stated, they can do so by taking a look here

#### The Official 1936 official beliefs of SDA's

On Facebook on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016 you said that, "the problem" with those such as myself who hold to such non-trinitarian theology (using your emphasis) "is that they THINK what they have is truth, when it is error". This remark, along with many other remarks concerning the non-trinitarians, can be found here

[https://www.facebook.com/PastorRichardPMendoza/posts/1741076426180066?comment\\_id=1748293008791741](https://www.facebook.com/PastorRichardPMendoza/posts/1741076426180066?comment_id=1748293008791741)

If what you say is true (that what I believe is error), then it can only be concluded that

- (a) What Seventh-day Adventists taught concerning Christ whilst Ellen White was alive is error
- (b) What was written by Ellen White is error
- (c) What we, as a denomination in 1936 declared to be the official faith of our church, is error
- (d) What was taught in our publications for decades to follow is error.

This is because these past beliefs are my present beliefs. This should give the reader of this document something to very seriously think about. It should also, if they have not done so previously, inspire them to find out who in this controversy is right and who is wrong. Obviously both camps cannot be correct. The two theologies are in direct contradiction to each other. This is why one is called trinitarianism and the other non-trinitarianism.

A little later on Facebook (19<sup>th</sup> September 2016) you made this remark (all your emphasis and grammar etc.)

"NOT only is the Anti-Trinitarian theology gone askew . . .they REJECT CHURCH ORGANIZATION, and that is another seriously problem. Scooter McPherson and Shelton Donald can attest to such a disrespect for the authority, highest authority on earth, under God. This shows that the "REAL" problem of people like Terry Hill, [other names removed]. . . and a whole slue of others is a REJECTION of the Spirit of Prophecy AS A WHOLE, her entire 100,000 plus pages. TAKE it ALL or nothing at all. This whole plauge of selectivity must be iliminated or you'll never come to a knowledge of the TRUTH."

[https://www.facebook.com/anthony.fructuozo.5/posts/1640944502883146?comment\\_id=1658465894464340](https://www.facebook.com/anthony.fructuozo.5/posts/1640944502883146?comment_id=1658465894464340)

Richard: In the life of the Christian, the authority that must be acknowledged as supreme is God Himself. Nothing, not even the church, must take God's place. This is especially as He speaks to us through His revealed word. If we conclude that what God has revealed through

His Word conflicts with what the church teaches then we must believe what God says (Acts 5:29, 2 Timothy 2:15-16). Whether we are ministry or laity, this is our bounden duty. The fact that someone is being paid a salary by the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not give that person licence to teach contrary to that which God has revealed. We all must give account to God for what we believe and for what we lead others to believe. We will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10). There are no exceptions. What then will be our answer for what we have said and done?

I am in full agreement with you where you say we must take into consideration ALL of what Ellen White wrote. We certainly must not be selective (cherry-pick). We must, as it seems you are trying to say, eliminate this plague of selectivity. This is why I have written this article. As I am sure you will agree, it gives a very broad spectrum of what Ellen White wrote. No one therefore can accuse me of cherry-picking.

I believe you will also agree that I have clearly shown that Ellen White consistently said that Christ was begotten of God therefore He is truly God's Son. The latter I believe is undeniable. Why would any Seventh-day Adventist even want to deny it?

I would also deny the allegation that I am rejecting the “[the Spirit of Prophecy AS A WHOLE, her entire 100,000 plus pages](#)”. I believe I am giving full and unbiased support to it. You will have to look elsewhere for those who do such a thing. Yet on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (this was after someone had quoted certain statements from the spirit of prophecy supposedly proving that Christ was “the God Almighty” therefore my views concerning Christ were wrong) you said Richard (all your emphasis etc.)

“All these EGW statements show that “The Prophet Still Speaks” website is preforming MAL-PRACTICE in failing to represent ALL that EGW has to say about GOD, Christ Almighty God, and the Almighty Holy Spirit. The PROPHET is NOT allow to STILL SPEAK except what is approved by Terry Hill.”

[https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10209132488404515?comment\\_id=10210269761795639&reply\\_comment\\_id=10210343777365982](https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10209132488404515?comment_id=10210269761795639&reply_comment_id=10210343777365982)

I believe the above to be a very unfair and unnecessary remark. My website, like this article, is replete with quotations from the spirit of prophecy that can only be said to display a detailed and balanced view of all that Ellen White has written concerning the Godhead. This I believe will be recognised by anyone who is honest in his or her critique of what I have written.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 you wrote on Facebook (again all your emphasis)

“The Anti-Trinitarianites have infected Facebook and the web with their dissemination of toxic chemicals theology. THEY are the ones who took thing whole mess public in 2008 with Terry Hill's the prophet still speaks web page and those of others. . . [names removed]”

[https://www.facebook.com/flordelis.calang.9/posts/312328755808769?comment\\_id=315074148867563](https://www.facebook.com/flordelis.calang.9/posts/312328755808769?comment_id=315074148867563)

If what I believe is “toxic chemicals theology” then so too were the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists during the time of Ellen White's ministry. This would also include the 1936 officially stated beliefs. This is quite a claim Richard – especially in the light of Ellen White herself saying (as we have seen above) that what Seventh-day Adventists taught concerning Christ's pre-existence is the truth. In fact your claim is only the same as saying that what Ellen White

wrote is “toxic chemicals theology”. We have clearly seen in this article that what she wrote is exactly the same as I believe. This is something else that cannot be denied.

Quite recently on Facebook, as you have done so for many months, you continued to ridicule and disparage the ‘begotten (Sonship) beliefs’ of the non-trinitarians. You did this by quoting from Ellet Waggoner's book ‘Christ and His Righteousness’, which as we noted above would have represented what he taught concerning Christ at the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session. As we also noted, Ellen White, by saying it was God's message to His people, upheld Waggoner's message. You though ridiculed Waggoner's words by saying (all your emphasis, grammar and spelling) (October 10<sup>th</sup> 2016)

“I got the IDEA of a PREGNANT Father God from READING what Anti-Trinitarians wrote "THE LITERAL Son of God BY BIRTH". . . here you go, I'll quote them so you will not have to take my word for this BAZAAR doctrine of the devil! From the FALSE PROPHET Terry Hill and his website [www.theprophetstillspeaks.uk](http://www.theprophetstillspeaks.uk)

Harsh words Richard. You continued

“We read the astonishing FABLOLIC FALSHOOD. . . In his book ‘Christ and His righteousness’, Ellet Waggoner had written The Word was “in the beginning”. The mind of man cannot grasp the ages that are spanned in this phrase.” (E. J. Waggoner, ‘Christ and His Righteousness’, page 9, ‘How shall we consider Christ?’ 1890) Then, with respect to ‘how and when’ the Son of God was begotten of His Father Waggoner said “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.” (Ibid) He added “We know that Christ “proceeded forth and come 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.” (Ibid) In these statements, Ellet Waggoner denies the trinity doctrine. This is no matter which version it may be.”

The above, also more from Waggoner's book quoted by you to disparage the begotten (Sonship) concept, can be found here

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=10209205246522163&id=1650826735&comment\\_id=10209217366825163](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10209205246522163&id=1650826735&comment_id=10209217366825163)

You are of course on one point quite correct. Ellet Waggoner did, as did Seventh-day Adventism at that time, reject the trinity doctrine yet as we have seen (see above), Ellen White saw no problem with this rejection. In fact she endorsed Waggoner's message at Minneapolis as coming from God. You referred to what Waggoner had written in his book as “astonishing FABLOLIC FALSHOOD”.

In another disparaging and sarcastic attack on the begotten (Sonship) theology held by those such as myself, you wrote in a post from your Biblical Investigations Facebook page on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016 (all your emphasis etc)

“It is of NOTE, that the Bible defines the "begetting" of a LITERAL son as an act of the father impregnating another being, a female, who then conceives in her literal womb a LITERAL son. It is the female/the mother who carries the child to term and "brings forth" from within herself, a son. It is the mother who gives birth to the son in "LITERAL BEGOTTEN SON.”

The father NEVER gives birth to a son in the process of a LITERAL BEGETTING of a

"LITERAL son." NEVER. It's a physiological impossibility. Mark this down well, nail the coffin shut on this point:

"NEVER does a father give birth to and brings forth a son in a LITERAL Begetting if a son."

TO insist upon a Literal Begotten Son of God, forces this upon us, IF LITERAL really means LITERAL."

Making the application you wrote

"There is no way that God the Father could have "LITERALLY BEGOTTEN a Son" because the word "beget" or "begotten" means primarily "to conceive," and while a father can conceive a son, he cannot possibly give BIRTH to a LITERAL Son, nor "bring forth" a son out of a LITERAL womb, because by virtue of the inherent nature of a "LITERAL FATHER" He has no "LITERAL WOMB" in which a LITERAL Son can be conceived! The reproductive system necessary for a literal begotten Son is missing from the Father.

To require a LITERAL Son of God "BY BIRTH" and a LITERAL Father, is to also require a LITERAL WOMB, and a LITERAL CONCEPTION, which in turn requires a LITERAL MATING of a Father and Mother, and a LITERAL CONCEPTION or IMPREGNATION of a LITERAL ovum, then a LITERAL embryonic development of a LITERAL FETUS in a LITERAL Womb! for a LITERAL 9 Months!

Thus the Anti-Trinitarians theology of Literalism of the ETERNAL FATHER and The ETERNAL SON, results in the bazaar Doctrine of a LITERAL divine Fetus that was the LITERAL Son of God, who was LITERALLY BEGOTTEN and BORN and Given BIRTH to, by a LITERAL Father, in eternity past, up in some kind of a heavenly maternity birthing room."

[https://www.facebook.com/PastorRichardPMendoza/posts/1744475962506779?from\\_close\\_friend=1](https://www.facebook.com/PastorRichardPMendoza/posts/1744475962506779?from_close_friend=1)

This Richard appears to be inane, infantile sarcasm. Quite unbecoming I believe of the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church but this perhaps is how the ministry is today. No one that I know of has ever said that this is what is meant by begotten.

Unfortunately for you, your reasoning falls over at the first hurdle. You are referring above to the limitations and necessities of humanity to acquire offspring but God is not human. We cannot place the same restrictions on Him as we do on humanity. With God all things are possible. As Jesus said

"... The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Luke 18:27

If you remember Richard, you said concerning the begotten concept "your Anti-Trinitarian Doctrine and the doctrine of BEGOTTENISM and the doctrine of FATHERISM .. are delusions" (see page 30). As we have seen from the above, our pioneers did not think so, neither did Ellen White.

More recently (on September 13<sup>th</sup> 2016) you made this comment (quoting Titus 1:5-14)

"Here is the work of the ordained church elders and pastors, join me in stopping the mouth of these "gainsayers" and "rebuking them sharply".

<https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?>

[comment\\_id=10210176153775497&reply\\_comment\\_id=10210207168710851&comment\\_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R9%22%7D](https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment_id=10210176153775497&reply_comment_id=10210207168710851&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R9%22%7D)

You added shortly afterwards

“I am an ordained elder and called to stop the mouths of the gainsayers. That's just part of the ministry of good shepherds. Somebody has got to drive off these wolves in sheep's clothing. Read Isaiah 56:10-12 where pastors are reprov'd for not barking at the approach of danger.

I believe that stopping the mouths of gainsayers means addressing them directly and not just ignoring them. Others are listening or reading whom need to be saved from Anti-Trinitarian delusional theology and that is done by exposing the works of darkness not keeping aloof from them.”

[https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment\\_id=10210176153775497&reply\\_comment\\_id=10210207786606298](https://www.facebook.com/terry.hill.754570/posts/10210105806416857?comment_id=10210176153775497&reply_comment_id=10210207786606298)

You need to remember Richard that those you call “gainsayers.” and “wolves in sheep's clothing” who are advocating what you describe as “Anti-Trinitarian delusional theology” would include those Seventh-day Adventists who lived during the time period of Ellen White's ministry, It would also include the church at large in 1936. This is because the beliefs the General Conference declared then, as our official beliefs, are exactly the same as I believe today. Had our church throughout this time period really been teaching “Anti-Trinitarian delusional theology”? Had their beliefs and teachings really been “works of darkness”? Obviously they did not think so: neither would Ellen White have said so. As we have seen, she agreed with these beliefs.

Repeatedly on your Facebook Biblical Investigations page, also on various Facebook group pages, you have levelled these infantile accusations against those who hold to the belief, as did Ellen White, that Christ is truly the Son of God. We have seen very clearly that she upheld this belief.

To put the above in a nutshell Richard (just in case you haven't quite grasped what I am saying)f, all of your disparaging attacks on my beliefs are only the same as disparaging the pioneers and their beliefs. It is also attacking what our church taught for something like 100 years – 71 of which was when we had God's messenger, namely Ellen White, amongst us. It is also disparaging what God's messenger said is the truth concerning Christ's pre-existence. You should think therefore about what you are actually saying. You are making some extremely serious accusations.

### **A word of advice**

Here Richard is where I would like to give you, also anyone else who reads this article, some very important advice. This is particularity in the light of what you have written about me recently on Facebook.

Please do not equate what other non-trinitarians believe with what I believe. If you wish to offer a critique of what I believe (where you think I am in error), then please quote me, also the reference to where it can be found. Do not quote what other non-trinitarians believe and then say; because Terry Hill is a non-trinitarian he believes exactly the same. Apart from the fact that I may not believe the same it would be quite unprofessional, as well as unethical, of you to do such a thing. It would only be the same as if I quoted what other trinitarians believe and

then say that because you are a trinitarian you must believe exactly the same. As you well know, there are many differing and contradictory views amongst trinitarians, I am sure you would not like me to tell others that you believe some of these things so please refrain from doing this sort of thing to me. This is in keeping with the 'golden rule' that Jesus said Christians should exercise (Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:31). God expects His people to live by this principle. I would have thought that you, as a minister, would already know these things.

One example of you completely misrepresenting me is on your Biblical Investigations Facebook page on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. This is where you wrote (all of your emphasis, grammar and spelling)

"Substance, NATURE, DNA of GOD. But as you know, the Father is NOT the SAME PERSON as the Son. This is where Anti-Trinitarians, like Terry Hill [other names removed], . . . Get tangled up. . . They THINK GOD is only ONE PERSON, a Roman Catholic Trinity doctrine. . . They cannot compute HOW the Son is GOD when the Father is GOD. GOD is ALWAYS and forever ONLY ONE PERSON".

[https://www.facebook.com/rpmbiblical.investigations/posts/1357828780924038?comment\\_id=1357990844241165](https://www.facebook.com/rpmbiblical.investigations/posts/1357828780924038?comment_id=1357990844241165)

I believe that anyone who is honest will freely admit that all these accusations against me are completely without foundation. First of all you are saying (by making this statement) that I do not believe that Christ is God. How could anyone, after studying what I believe, possibly draw that conclusion? It does not seem possible. Secondly, how can anyone arrive at the conclusion that my beliefs are the same as the Roman Catholic doctrine of the trinity? This is completely beyond me. Obviously you have led a lot of people to believe wrong things about what I believe. This is a very serious matter (Exodus 20:16, 23:1, Proverbs 12:17, Matthew 15:18-19).

I would also say that your idea of the Roman Catholic trinity doctrine is also askew but that's another story. I will return to this point later. It also astounds me that you lead your followers on Facebook to believe that I cannot understand or explain how Christ is God. I would say that after reading this article, anyone would admit that I can, and do, explain it quite adequately – at least to anyone who can reason things through intelligently.

It must also be remembered that my beliefs were those held by Seventh-day Adventists whilst Ellen White was alive. They are also the same beliefs as those declared by the General Conference in 1936 to be the official faith of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This would mean you are accusing these past Seventh-day Adventists as teaching the Roman Catholic doctrine of the trinity. This really is absurd – especially as these accusations are coming from a Seventh-day Adventist minister. Are you really aware of what you are saying?

### **Beware of the cherry-pickers (allow Ellen White to interpret her own words)**

I am sure there will be those who by quoting Ellen White will attempt to prove my reasoning found in this article to be wrong therefore allow me to make this very important observation.

If it is believed that Ellen White was an inspired writer, those who believe this should treat her writings with the same respect as they do the Scriptures. By this I mean that any statement made by her must be interpreted and understood in the light of all of the other statements she made on the same subject. This is how we should study Scripture. We must not cherry-pick. We must not quote (pick out) only the statements that suit our own particular brand of theology and ignore statements that are not in keeping with it. This would be a deceitful way to treat



inspired writings. By being selective (cherry-picking) we can make the Scriptures - also the writings of Ellen White - say whatever we want them to say. This though would not convey what God has actually revealed, neither would it be what He wants us to believe and teach. To cherry-pick, whether it be from Scripture or Ellen White's writings, is tantamount to lying. It is unethical, unprofessional and deceitful.

One more point before I move on.

Although Ellen White may be believed to be an inspired writer, she must not be regarded as infallible. In herself she was no more infallible than were the Bible writers in themselves. This is why the things we claim she taught must not hinge on any one particular statement or any one particular phrase used by her. This is also why we must not cherry-pick her writings. Her writings must be taken overall. In other words, what God has revealed through her must be determined on the weight of evidence rather than on one single turn of phrase or statement. If we adopt the weight of evidence method we shall then have a balanced view of what God has revealed through her.

We must remember too that some of her statements are ambiguous, meaning they can be taken different ways. This was the problem in the early 1900's when John Harvey Kellogg, in support of his 'God in nature' views, quoted her as supporting what he was teaching. She denied that what she had written was the same as what Kellogg interpreted her as saying. The details of this would be too much to recount here although they are widely known.

In a book I came across quite recently, I did find, concerning the way to approach Ellen White's writings, some very sound advice. Edited by Ross Cole and Paul Petersen, this book has the title "Hermeneutics, Intertextuality and the Contemporary Meaning of Scripture". I thought the advice so helpful, also so very applicable to what I am trying to say here, that I thought I would share it with you. On page 175 it says (after listing out various points)

"Off-hand comments in letters or stenographically reproduced from sermons may not reflect her settled opinion on timeless issues. Compilations of her writings by others need to be used even more cautiously, since the ordering of material can, in itself, make a theological statement. If something is found only in letters and manuscripts, particularly if it occurs only once, the interpreter needs to demonstrate that it is a true reflection of her considered and consistent intent." (Ross Cole and Paul Petersen, "Hermeneutics, Intertextuality and the Contemporary Meaning of Scripture", 2013, page 175)

On the next page it gives more excellent advice. Under the heading of 'How frequent?' it says (this is in answer to the question of how often did Ellen White utilise a scriptural passage in a particular way?)

"Generally speaking, the number of times a specific concept is repeated is in direct proportion to the writer's burden that that the concept be clearly understood by readers. It is not normally wise to base an interpretation on a single passage. An idea repeated in a variety of circumstances, and by a variety of expressions, is not easily misunderstood or misused." (Ibid page 176)

If we apply the foregoing advice to what we have read in this article, then the evidence that Ellen White believed and taught that the begotten (Sonship) concept is correct is totally overwhelming. As we have seen, she repeated this same concept so many times in so many different ways that it is impossible to refute it.

In summary it was said

“The main reason for suggesting these basic guidelines for determining her intent is the problem of ambiguity in Ellen White’s writings. Her statements are often susceptible to more than one interpretation. This is not due to confusion or lack of clarity on her part necessarily, it is due to the fact that she rarely addresses the questions that concern us most today in a direct way. An unbiased reader finds many statements that answer our concerns with less clarity than we would prefer. The biased reader, on the other hand, when confronted with an ambiguous statement, picks the option out of several which best fits his/her preconceived ideas and hammers it home to those who might not see it that way.” (*Ibid*)

This is very true. This is why I have said that what God has revealed through Ellen White can only be understood (determined) by a comparison of the things she wrote overall. Taking one statement and making a doctrine out of it is a very dangerous thing to do. As you said Richard, we need to take her writings as a whole, not be selective.

Allow me here to quote from an article written by a Presbyterian minister by the name of the Rev. Samuel Spear. In the early 1890's we used this article as a tract to show what we, as Seventh-day Adventists, believed concerning the Godhead. You will find the article at the following link. It is well worth reading. We re-named the tract 'The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity'.

### The Spear Article

In his article, Spear made a statement that regardless of what I might add or change, I would not consider it an improvement. He was here referring to Scripture but it is exactly the same principle that I am saying should govern our study of the spirit of prophecy writings. This is when he wrote

“All the statements of the Bible must be accepted as true, with whatever qualifications they mutually impose on one another. The whole truth lies in them all when taken collectively.” (*Rev. Samuel T. Spear D. D. as quoted in 'The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity' and included as No. 90 in 'The Bible Student's Library'*)

I totally agree with what Spear said here. I would also apply the latter to the spirit of prophecy. It is only when we study Ellen White's statements collectively, accepting “whatever qualifications they mutually impose on one another”, that we can gain a true knowledge of those things that God has revealed through her. This is the point I am making.

Spear’s article was 'Bible only' therefore it was strictly non-trinitarian. It avoided all the needless speculations of the trinity doctrine. This is why we used it for such a long period of time as a denominational tract. It more than adequately portrayed our non-trinitarian denominational faith.

Spear had given his article the title 'The Subordination of Christ' but when we used it as a tract we changed it to 'The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity'. This shows that even in the 1890's when we were still very much a non-trinitarian denomination, we were not, when it came to explaining our Godhead beliefs, averse to using the word 'trinity'. Other instances can be found. One is where F. M. Wilcox, when explaining in 1913 what was believed by Seventh-day Adventists, wrote that as a denomination we believed

“In the divine Trinity. This Trinity consists of the eternal Father, a personal, spiritual being, omnipotent, omniscient, infinite in power, wisdom, and love; of 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 one regenerating agency in the work of redemption.” (F. M. Wilcox, *Review and Herald*, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1913, ‘The message for Today’)

This is exactly what I believe as a non-trinitarian. Notice Wilcox refers to the Father as “a personal, spiritual being” whilst Christ he says is “the Son of the eternal Father”. Notice he does not use the word 'eternal' with respect to the Son. Nevertheless, it is as Ellen White wrote here

“There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptised, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.” (Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies Series B No. 7*, page 62 1906 ‘Come out and be Separate’)

The beliefs expressed by Wilcox are dealing with the same subject matter as are Fundamental beliefs No.'s 3, 4 and 5 of the present Seventh-day Adventist Church (as they are in their current church manual). These beliefs concern the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This though does not constitute a trinity doctrine. The belief that God is a trinity of divine beings, as depicted by the trinity doctrine, is expressed by Fundamental belief No. 2. In other words, a confession of belief concerning the Father, Son and Holy Spirit does not constitute a trinity doctrine. Wilcox made no such statement equivalent to our present No. 2 Fundamental belief (the trinity doctrine). In the next section we shall take a look at what it is that constitutes trinitarianism.

Wilcox worded his statement very carefully. He did not say that Seventh-day Adventists believed the trinity doctrine. In other words, he did not say, as do our present fundamental beliefs, that the 'one God' is a three-in-one composite trinitarian being. This would have been saying something entirely different. It would also have been saying something entirely different to what was said above by Ellen White. To say that by 1913 the Seventh-day Adventist Church had accepted the trinity doctrine would have been a very serious deception. As we know, it was not accepted until decades afterwards. This was long after Ellen White had died. The testimony of our denominational history shows this to be true. As Merlin Burt, Associate Professor of Church History at Andrews University concluded

“One of the remarkable aspects of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the development of the position of the trinity and the deity of Christ. These doctrines did not become normative in the church **until the middle of the twentieth century.**” (Merlin Burt, ‘Demise of Semi-Arianism and anti-trinitarianism in Adventist theology, 1888-1957 page iv ‘Preface’)

My personal studies conclude that it was considerably later than the 1950's when the trinity doctrine was generally accepted amongst Seventh-day Adventists but the point Burt is making is very clear. It was not until decades after the death of Ellen White that this teaching became acceptable to the majority. This is undeniable.

Whilst I am on this subject of cherry picking, allow me to give a classic example of it. I could quote many more but it would make this article far too long. In the book 'Desire of Ages', Ellen White wrote the following

“Still seeking to give a true direction to her [Martha's] faith, Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life." **In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.** "He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life.” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 530, ‘Lazarus, Come Forth’)

According to the present Seventh-day Adventist trinitarians, the highlighted words supposedly prove that Ellen White did not teach or believe that Christ was begotten (that Christ is not really the Son of God). Unfortunately those trinitarians who make such claims are guilty of cherry picking. This is because not only do they fail to consider these words in the light of the statements from the spirit of prophecy that we have just read in this article but they even fail to compare them with other statements she made in the very same book. Allow me to explain.

In the very first chapter ('God with us') of the *Desire of Ages*, Ellen White made abundantly clear so that no mistake could be made as to what she was saying (read it very carefully)

**“All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.”** (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, page 21, 'God with us' 1898*)

From what is said here, the reason why the life that is in Christ is “life, original, unborrowed, underived” is because it is the Father's life. As it says here, it is “the Father's life” that flows “through the beloved Son”. It says the Son had received this life from the Father. The concept is very simple to understand. The Father and the Son 'share' the same divine life. Notice that the Father is referred to as “the great Source of all”.

These words from the *Desire of Ages* do not deny the begotten concept. They confirm it. It is what I believe as a non-trinitarian. This is describing the *type* of life that is in Christ. This life is divine life (divinity). This life has its source in the Father. This is why it is “life, original, unborrowed, underived”. As is also said here, “All things Christ received from God”. Nothing is excepted. This is the begotten concept.

The vast majority of Seventh-day Adventists who were alive at that time would have regarded these words as being in harmony with what they already believed. As Ellen White so clearly says, the “great Source of all” is the Father. The Son is the intermediary of the Father's life. This again is the begotten concept.

The year previous to the publication of ‘The Desire of Ages’, Ellen White had written

**“God has sent his Son to communicate his own life to humanity. Christ declares, "I live by the Father," my life and his being one.”** (*Ellen G. White, Home Missionary, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1897, 'A call to the work'*)

This is no different than what we have just read in the *Desire of Ages*. Notice again she speaks of God as one person and the Son as another person. She also explained

**“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.”** (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald 7th January 1890, 'Christ revealed the Father'*)

Again this is the begotten concept. The year after the publication of the *Desire of Ages*, Ellen White made this very interesting observation

**“The righteous One must suffer the condemnation and wrath of God, not in vindictiveness; for the heart of God yearned with greatest sorrow when His Son, <the Guiltless,> was suffering the penalty of sin. This sundering of the divine powers will never again occur throughout the eternal ages.”** (*Ellen G. White, Manuscript 93, July 13<sup>th</sup> 1899*) \*The words “the Guiltless” were added by Ellen White in her own handwriting after

the manuscript was typed.

If Christ had sinned, which we know was possible because in condescending to take upon Himself our fallen human nature He had put Himself in our place completely (see Hebrews 2:16-18, 4:14-18, Philippians 2:5-8), this “sundering” would have been permanent. It would have meant the eternal separation of the Son from the Father. It would have meant Christ forfeiting all of His divine attributes. Such was the risk taken in making the decision for God’s only begotten Son to become incarnate. In trinitarianism, this risk belief is prohibited. This is because in trinitarianism it is impossible for the Father and the Son to become separated. This is regardless of the circumstances. We shall see why this is later.

The reality of the Father - Sonship relationship is borne out by the words written here by Ellen White

“Said the angel, “Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no.” It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His darling Son to die for them.” (*Early Writings, supplement, page 127, see also Volume 1 Spiritual Gifts page 26, Early Writings, spiritual gifts page 151 and Spirit of prophecy Volume 1 page 48*)

Here we catch a glimpse of the ‘struggle of love’ that took place prior to Christ coming to earth. God loved His Son so much – yet with equal depth of love He loved fallen humanity. There can be no doubt that Ellen White spoke of Christ as a son prior to the incarnation. Many such statements could be produced from her writings. In 1879 she again wrote

“The Father did not yield up his dearly beloved Son without a struggle, whether to let guilty man perish or to give his Son to die for the lost race.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1879, ‘The great controversy: The plan of salvation’*)

Once again this highlights the ‘struggle’ that the Father had in the giving of His Son. Here again we see the right of the Father to give – also the genuine emotions of a Father who must decide whether or not to sacrifice His one and only Son. There is no role-playing (pretending) here. This is the genuine struggle of love - the supreme unequalled love that God has for His Son, also the supreme unequalled love that God had (and still has) for fallen humanity. Whichever way God had chosen – whether it was to sacrifice His Son or let you and I die without even a hope - it would be heartbreaking for Him. It is no wonder Ellen White exclaimed

“O how wonderful, how almost incredible it is, that the infinite God would consent to the humiliation of his own dear Son!” (*Ellen G. White, Christian education, page 107 ‘The book of books’, 1893*)

Concerning the risk that was taken in the plan of redemption, if you would like to read what God has revealed through Ellen White you can read it here

### **Ellen White's comments on the incarnation of Christ and the risk taken concerning His existence**

All of these beliefs (that Christ really is the only begotten Son of God, also that God gave His Son to die as a sacrifice for sin, also that there was a risk involved in Christ becoming incarnate) are prohibited (lost) in Seventh-day Adventist trinitarianism. This is why this teaching seriously misrepresents God's character. Such is the deception of this three-in-one belief. It is just intellectual philosophy that has no root or foundation in Scripture. It is a philosophical idol.

## What is trinitarianism?

Put very simply, the trinity doctrine says that the 'One God' is one triune being that consists of three divine personalities. To put it another way, trinitarianism is the belief that the three persons of the Godhead exist inseparably in one indivisible and unchangeable trinitarian being. Those who do not believe these things are not trinitarians. Saying there are three persons of the Godhead does not constitute trinitarianism. I believe there are three persons of the Godhead but I am not a trinitarian.

Some like to make it appear that the Seventh-day Adventist version of the trinity doctrine is different than the Roman Catholic version but as regarding the tri-unity itself, this is not true. Allow me to explain.

The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church puts it this way (referring to the Athanasian Creed)

"Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, **without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance**; for the person of the Father is one, the Son's is another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal. Inseparable in what they are, the divine persons are also inseparable in what they do." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part one, The Profession of Faith, No.'s 266, 267*)

At the Eleventh Synod of Toledo in Spain (this was in 675 AD), the Catholic Church declared

"We confess and we believe that the holy and indescribable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one only God in His nature, a single substance, a single nature, a single majesty and power...We acknowledge Trinity in the distinction of persons; we profess Unity because of the nature or substance. The three are one, as a nature, that is, **not as person**. Nevertheless, these three persons **are not to be considered separable**, since we believe that no one of them existed or at any time effected anything before the other, after the other, or without the other." (*As quoted in Jesuit Fathers of St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, Kansas, 'The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church in English Translation'*)

Did you notice it is said that the "three are one, as a nature, that is, **not as person**"- also that the three persons "are not to be considered separable"?

Here now is the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the trinity. This is how it is expressed in their Fundamental Belief No. 2

"There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal 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." (*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, page 156, 2010*)

So what is the difference between the two?

As regarding the tri-unity, there is no difference. In this respect, both versions say exactly the same. This is why I am saying that without this triune confession (one trinitarian being) there is no such thing as the trinity doctrine. Having said that – and I will make no further comment on

this – the Seventh-day Adventist version of the trinity doctrine, when describing this one indivisible trinitarian being, uses the pronouns "He" and "His" which makes it appear (as opposed to the Catholic version) that this one trinitarian being is a person. This is even though the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are also said to be individual persons.

Please note here (very importantly) that this Seventh-day Adventist trinity belief (Fundamental Belief No. 2) is a separate belief from No.'s 3, 4 and 5. These latter beliefs concern what Seventh-day Adventists teach about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In other words, these latter three beliefs (No.'s 3, 4 and 5) do not constitute a trinity doctrine. To achieve a trinity doctrine, belief No. 2 is necessary.

So what constitutes this "unity"? What makes the three persons the "one God"?

It is the 'one substance' (one trinitarian being) concept. Without it we would only have beliefs concerning the individual persons of the Godhead. This is duly recognised by our own church theologians. These are such as Ekkehardt Mueller, Gerhard Pfandl and Fernando Canale. In support of the Seventh-day Adventist trinity doctrine (Fundamental Belief No. 2) they explained (please note my emphasis)

"The three persons share one indivisible nature. Each person of the Godhead is by nature and essence God, and the fullness of the deity dwells in each of them. On the other hand, **each person of the Godhead is inseparably connected to the other two.**" (*Ekkehardt Mueller, Biblical Research Institute newsletter Reflections, July 2008*)

"Trinitarianism is the orthodox belief that there is **but one living and true God.** Nevertheless this one God is a **unity of three persons**, who are of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." (*Gerhard Pfandl, Associate Director, Seventh-day Adventist Biblical Research Institute, 'The Doctrine of the Trinity among Adventists', 1999*)

"In Scripture God has revealed His transcendent nature as Trinity, namely three distinct divine Persons who act directly and historically in history and constituting **the one divine Trinitarian being.**" (*Dr. Fernando Canale, the Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia Volume 12, page 138*)

These theologians are all in agreement with each other. They all agree that the trinity doctrine says that the three persons exist inseparably in one indivisible substance (one triune or trinitarian being) as the one God. In fact one of these statements is from the Seventh-day Adventist Handbook of Theology (Volume 12 Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia). Where though in Scripture can be found such an idea? The answer is it cannot be found. This is because it isn't there. It is purely supposition (philosophical speculation). This is why the trinity doctrine is only an assumed doctrine. This is duly recognised in our own denominational Handbook of Theology. This is where it says

"The concept of the Trinity, namely the idea that the three are one, is not explicitly stated but only assumed." (*Fernando L. Canale, the Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia Volume 12, page 138, 'Doctrine of God'*)

This is very true. The trinity doctrine cannot be found in Scripture. At the very best it is only an assumed (speculative) teaching.

Earlier in his treatise, under a section called 'Oneness of God', Canale has this to say (here he

is referring to the one triune God)

“Since God is eternal and immutable, His trinitarian nature has never changed or come into being. ... The “oneness” of God refers to the singleness of His being. .... In other words, since the God of the Bible is one and not many, all the various revelations about Him presented throughout the Bible refer to the same, one divine reality and not to a plurality of divine beings.” (*Ibid*, pages 120-121)

We can see here that our Fundamental belief No. 2 says that the “One God” is “a unity” of three divine beings. Our theologians describe the three as existing in one trinitarian being. Without this “trinitarian being” belief there would be no such things as the trinity doctrine. All that we would have is three divine beings. This is why we have belief No 2 (as well as beliefs No.'s 3, 4 and 5. Yet you say Richard (Facebook 21<sup>st</sup> December 2016 – all your emphasis)

“The World Church has NEVER voted into doctrine a "ONE BEING God in THREE BEINGS."

"I believe in ONE GOD; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit a unity of THREE CO-ETERNAL PERSONS." Baptismal Vow No. 1

NOTE. . . Not ONE BEING of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”

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It is impossible to have a trinity doctrine without the three persons existing in one trinitarian being. This is what was voted in to the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists at the 1980 General Conference session held at Dallas. You are obviously in disagreement with Pfandl, Mueller and Canale. Perhaps you should all get together to decide what the church is supposed to be teaching. You appear to be teaching one thing whilst they are teaching something entirely different.

Did Ellen White ever make such a confession as the trinity doctrine? No she did not. What she did say though concerning this oneness is

“There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible.” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1906, ‘The Word made flesh)*

Ellen White agreed that prior to the foundation of our world there was a certain oneness between God the Father and Christ but she said that this truth, whilst explaining many other things, “is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible. In other words, even if God revealed it to us, it would still be beyond our comprehension to understand it. This is where we should leave it. We should not, in an effort to explain it, invent a teaching such as the trinity doctrine. This is only the same as saying we can explain something about God’s being that God has chosen to keep to Himself. Surely this is nothing less than an effrontery to our Creator.

The above was written by Ellen White 8 years after ‘*The Desire of Ages*’ was published. This concludes that in this book she could not have been promoting the trinity doctrine. Did you



notice in the above statement (concerning oneness) that Ellen White did not even mention the Holy Spirit? I find such statements very interesting. This was many years after she had first said that the Holy Spirit is a person.

So we can see that as far as the tri-unity of the Godhead is concerned, the Seventh-day Adventist version of the trinity doctrine is no different than the Roman Catholic version. Without this tri-unity there is no such thing as a trinity doctrine.

Much more could be said concerning this teaching, particularly how it destroys everything Christ achieved in becoming incarnate. For those who would like to read more, a document I sent the White Estate five months ago explains this in more detail. It is found here

#### [Document to the White Estate](#)

Before I leave this 'trinity' section. I would point out Richard a couple of things you said concerning the Roman Catholic trinity doctrine. On May 5<sup>th</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup> 2016 you wrote respectively (all your emphasis)

"The Catholic Trinity? This was the same TRINITY as it was in 1872 that taught that the Father and Son were the SAME PERSON, that God is "ONE PERSON in THREE PERSONS," that the Son was the Father, thus destroying the "DISTINCT PERSONALITY of the Father and the Son."

"That GOD is ONE PERSON is a Roman Catholic Trinity theological error that YOU are still propagandizing around by the misskewing of John 17:3 that there is "ONLY ONE TRUE GOD-the Father, when the Bible says that BOTH the Father and the Son are "The TRUE GOD."

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As we have seen above though, the Roman Catholic trinity confession is

"The three are one, as a nature, that is, **not as person**. (As quoted in *Jesuit Fathers of St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, Kansas, 'The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church in English Translation'*)

We also see here again your idea that the non-trinitarians are "misskewing" the words of Jesus in John 17:3. Jesus said plainly that His Father was "the only true God". You are saying "the Bible says that BOTH the Father and the Son are "The TRUE GOD." . One is left to wonder if you are saying that Jesus had it wrong.

Quite recently on September 29<sup>th</sup> 2016 you made this comment (all your emphasis etc.)

The DOCTRINE of the TRINITY is indeed found in the writings of EGW and the Holy Bible. You CAN SEE it IF you allow for the definition of "TRINITY" to be "ONE GODhead in THREE PERSONS." The moment you understand THIS definition which the Seventh-day Adventist Church hold, then the "TRINITY" pops up all over the place in EGW's writings. The same is true for the Bible, but only in EGW's writing is it MORE EXPLICIT.

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There are a number of things to address here.

You say one “definition of "TRINITY" is "ONE GODhead in THREE PERSONS” but there is not even the intimation of unity of persons in the word Godhead let alone a tri-unity (as in the trinity doctrine). A simple understanding of the word 'Godhead' means that which pertains to divinity. It is a derivative of the old English word 'Godhood', meaning that which comes under the umbrella of divinity.

On 6<sup>th</sup> November on Facebook you commented

“Terry says he believes in "The THIRD PERSON of the GODhead" and the moment he says that he concedes to the DIVINE TRINITY! Cause you can deny the TRINITY by believing there "THREE living PERSONS" in ONE GODhead!”

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I have maintained and will continue to maintain that saying there are three persons of the Godhead does not constitute a trinity doctrine. This is because in making such a statement, oneness of being is not mentioned. Without this oneness there can be no such thing as a trinity doctrine. Using the word 'trinity' without explaining what is meant by it is the cause of a great deal of confusion.

You appear here to be avoiding the fact that Fundamental belief No. 2 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church says “There is **one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons**”. It does not say one Godhead but says “one God”. Incidentally, just in case you do not realise it, nowhere in the spirit of prophecy does it say 'in the Godhead'. It is always “of the Godhead' (of divinity). This is just as it is in Colossians 2:9.

In November you would not accept my explanation of the word 'Godhead'. You wrote

“Terry plays the word game by saying Godhead does not equate to TRINITY, but it DOES!

For EGW says that "There are THREE living PERSONS in the Heavenly TRIO" and here surrounding context shows that all the FULLNESS of the Godhead dwells in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!”

It is not me Richard who is playing “the word game”. Regardless of what you attempt to have people believe, it is a fact that within the word 'Godhead' there is not even a suggestion of 'three': neither does it have any connotation of tri-unity. To say that the two words mean exactly the same would be a deception.

You concluded (after again misrepresenting my beliefs as a non-trinitarian)

“The mentality of their theology is totally bizarre”

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Nowhere in the spirit of prophecy can any statement be found that could be said to be equivalent to the trinity doctrine. As I said, the word 'Godhead' is not equivalent to the word 'trinity', especially when applied to God. This is why you are wrong in saying that "the TRINITY" pops up all over the place in EGW's writings". In reality it never pops up anywhere. You are also wrong about the Bible. Nowhere in the Scriptures does it say that God is a trinity of divine beings as expressed by the trinity doctrine.

Yet you say Richard, "ONE GODhead in THREE PERSONS" is the definition held by the Seventh-day Adventist Church". This is not totally true. Our church says explicitly that it is the "one God" that is made up of the three divine persons. Overall therefore, your statement is extremely misleading.

More recently (December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016) on Facebook you claimed (all your emphasis etc.)

"EGW defined GOD by stating "The ETERNAL GODhead Father and Son and Holy Ghost.

And there [name removed] your "group" of THREE! Who ARE "CO-ETERNAL" for that is exactly what "The ETERNAL GODhead" means. . . For ALL the FULLNESS of the "Eternal GODhead" was in each of the THREE living PERSONS of the heavenly TRIO!"

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This appears to be saying that the Godhead, made up of the three divine persons, is God. This is only the same as saying God is a trinity of divine beings. The only way I have seen Ellen White describe God is as a person (see above).

On December 12<sup>th</sup> 2016 you made this comment

"The Godhead is ONE, but not ONE PERSON, but 3 "FULNESSES of that ONE GODhead" That would mean that each of the THREE living PERSONS, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are TOGETHER and INDIVIDUALLY "The ONE TRUE GOD."

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So here you are saying the three persons of the Godhead are each individually "The ONE TRUE GOD.", also that the three together are ""The ONE TRUE GOD." This I suppose is yours, also the Seventh-day Adventist Church's, trinitarian view of God but it is not in keeping with what Jesus has told us. He said the only true God is the Father (John 17:3).

On June 23<sup>rd</sup> this year you made this comment in one of your 'Biblical Investigation" posts

"Anti-Trinitarian Theology warps and conjuvilates the DIVINE TRIO into Semi-God/god (Greater/lessor God) "heavenly DUO," much like saying that a 3 Wheel Tricycle is really a Bicycle, because they yank off the THIRD WHEEL. . . and eventually the SECOND WHEEL. . . And end up with a ONE PERSON God Unicycle. They essentially dismantled the TRICYCLE and erroneously purport and accuse Trinitarians of believing in 3 Gods. We believe in ONE Godhead in THREE Divine and Living PERSONS. The Anti-Trinitarianites irrationally argue that we believe in 3 TRICYCLES because we believe that

the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each FULLY GOD and yet just ONE GOD.

Anti-Trinitarians believe in a "1 WHEEL TRICYCLE" and then accuse Trinitarians of believing in a "3 TRICYCLE Tricycle."

We believe in ONE TRICYCLE with THREE WHEELS-ONE Godhead in THREE PERSONS."

<https://www.facebook.com/rpmbiblical.investigations/posts/1252409928132591>

This again is misrepresentation of my non-trinitarian beliefs. My theology does not make the "DIVINE TRIO into" a "Semi-God/god (Greater/lessor God) "heavenly DUO". Those who know what I believe will understand this for themselves without me explaining it. What I have written above is proof enough to know you are not telling the truth about my beliefs. Why you feel the need to misrepresent me (and others who believe the same as me) I do not know. There must be a reason for it. For reasons I will not disclose here I will avoid making any comments about your unicycle, bicycle and tricycle analogies. These I believe are best left without comment.

I will point out though that you do say that as a church, Seventh-day Adventists "believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each FULLY GOD and yet just ONE GOD". Your previous remarks therefore must mean that you believe that the word 'Godhead' is equivalent to meaning the "ONE GOD" as depicted by the trinity doctrine. This is something I cannot accept. I find no evidence in Scripture or the spirit of prophecy for such a belief. In fact all the evidence points to the contrary.

### **Pre-empting the objections**

Originally I did not intend to write this section but because I am sure that people will send to me certain spirit of prophecy quotes objecting to what I have written, I thought that rather than later I would deal with a couple of them now. No doubt there will be others. Normally, these 'objection quotes' are intended to make null and void the belief that Ellen White believed that Christ, in eternity, was begotten of God, which in turn of course would deny that our Saviour is truly the divine Son of God. Here is one of the most popular ones that the trinitarians use. It is a classic case of cherry-picking.

"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." (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 29<sup>th</sup> August 1900, 'Resistance to Light, No. 3'*)

Needless to say, the emphasis here is usually on the words "there never was a time", thus making it look as though Christ was not begotten (not brought forth) of God. If we do interpret these words this way (to make it look as though Ellen White denied the begotten concept) it also means that we will need to trash almost every one of her quotations that I have used in this article. This is because unquestionably and irrefutably, most of these quotations depict Christ as begotten of God. Are we therefore, in order to place that particular interpretation on her words (that Christ is not begotten), willing to do such a thing? In the name of common sense I would certainly hope not.

So how do we deal with this seeming 'problem'?

The first thing to remember (as previously noted) is that any statement made by Ellen White, or any particular phrase employed by her – especially if it is only used once - must be

interpreted in the light of all the other statements she made on the very same subject. If we fail to do this we will have to deny her inspired status.

The second thing to remember is that those Seventh-day Adventists who would have originally read these words (in the early 1900's) would have understood that Ellen White believed in the begotten concept (as we have seen in this article). They would therefore have interpreted them in that particular context. In other words, they would not have regarded these words as being contrary to the begotten concept but in full agreement with it. To look at another way, they would not have regarded Ellen White, in making this statement, as denying or contradicting what she had previously written.

The third thing to remember is the immediate context (the original setting) of the words. I will now quote that context. The words in question I have highlighted in red. As you will see, as to the way these words are understood, the context really does make a difference.

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

Through Solomon Christ declared: “The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth. . . . When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; 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.”

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.” (*Ibid*)

Do you see what has happened? By putting the words (in red) in their immediate setting (original context) they will now be understood in the begotten concept. This is because Ellen White is applying the words of Proverbs chapter 8 (verses 22-31) to Christ. She is describing Him as the wisdom “brought forth”. These verses show Christ to be begotten. He is the wisdom “brought forth” of God. Note again the upper case 'M' denoting a divine person.

When the highlighted words are read in their context (immediately following the verses from Proverbs chapter 8) - which would have happened when the article was first published in the Signs of the Times in 1900 - the reader of them would have understood Ellen White as saying that ever since Christ was brought forth of God (Proverbs chapter 8), “there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God”. After all, she does say that these verses of Scripture were Christ Himself “speaking of His pre-existence”.

Reading these words in their context also brings them into line (into harmony) with the quotations of Ellen White that we have seen in this article. In other words, instead of conflicting with the begotten concept, these words are now seen to be in accord with it. At the same time as this (by keeping the words in their context), Ellen White is not shown to contradict herself – which could have happened if these words were removed from their context.

Note also the final words in the paragraph (those immediately following the highlighted words). These are very often omitted. This is probably because they are referring the reader back to the verses in Proverbs chapter 8 (Christ the wisdom brought forth).

Here is a question for the reader of this article. Which way do you believe these highlighted words should be understood? Is it within their immediate context or removed from it? I believe the answer is so obvious it does not need stating. The only way we can honestly understand any statement, whether it be from Ellen White or anyone else, is to interpret it in its context. On the other hand, those who want to misrepresent what Ellen White said to make it look as though she was upholding the theology held by them (Christ not begotten) will probably continue to quote these words divorced from their context.

This is not the only place that Ellen White applied these verses in Proverbs 8 to Christ. There are other places. One of these is in Patriarchs and Prophets (see page 34). We noted this above. In 1906, in a letter addressed to the brethren in Australia, she quoted this passage from Patriarchs and Prophets advising them

*“Study carefully the first chapter in Patriarchs and Prophets” (Ellen White, Letter 256, 1906, ‘Ministering Brethren in Australia’, August 1<sup>st</sup> 1906)*

Perhaps this is something we would do well to do today. This particular chapter is called 'Why was sin permitted'. It is very enlightening.

Another place where she spoke of Christ being the Wisdom of God (in Proverbs 8) is where she wrote

*“He spoke with an authority which was exclusively his own. Every sentence he uttered came from God. He was the Word and the Wisdom of God, and he ever presented truth with the authority of God. “The words that I speak unto you,” he said, “they are spirit, and they are life.” (Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies on Education, Chapter 1, ‘True Education’ page 61, 1897)“*

Note the upper case (“Word and the Wisdom of God”).

The next year (this was the year 'Desire of Ages' was published), the same author penned these words

*“Who is this that was to come to our world and become incarnate? The only begotten Son of God. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of earth.” “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old,” Christ says. “When he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: Then was I by Him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.” But Christ humbled Himself to come to this earth. This was the hiding of His glory.” (Ellen G. White, Ms 37 1898, March 10<sup>th</sup> 1898, ‘And the grace of God was upon Him’)*

The following year Ellen White wrote (once again referring to Christ being the Wisdom of God brought forth)

*“The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old,” Christ*

says. "When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; 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. **"But the only-begotten Son of God humbled Himself to come to this earth."** (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 22nd February 1899, 'The measure of God's love')

So we can see that in no uncertain manner, Ellen White applied these verses in Proverbs chapter 8 to Christ.

Here is another quotation (partial quotation really) used by those who want to depict Ellen White as not believing the begotten concept. This was written in 1906 - 6 years after the previous quote we have just looked at. This time it was in the Review and Herald. Please note that the 2nd paragraph is incomplete. This is very significant.

**"The world was made by him, "and without him was not anything made that was made." If Christ made all things, he existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore.**

**The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father."** (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 5th April 1906, 'The Word made Flesh')

The words **"He was with God from all eternity"** also **"existed from eternity"** are often used to show that Christ was not begotten but again, in order to draw this conclusion, we would need to trash nearly all the statements we have previously read in this document. Again I can only ask, "Are we prepared to do such a thing". Remember, Ellen White was an inspired writer.

I am now going to quote the whole of that 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. The words in blue are often omitted by those who attempt to put across the idea that Ellen White denied the begotten concept.

**"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." (*Ibid*)

As we have seen previously, these verses from Proverbs chapter 8 support the begotten concept (Christ is the wisdom brought forth). This is why, by those attempting to show that Ellen White did not accept the begotten concept, they are often omitted. Need I say any more?

Notice too that Ellen White said that this exultation of Christ was **"no robbery of God"**. In other words, this exultation took nothing away from God – thus denoting again that Christ is not God in personality (that God and Christ are two separate persons). This of course is alluding to Philippians 2:5-8.

Seventh-day Adventists in 1906 when reading these words (in red) would have read them with

the understanding that Ellen White was saying these things in the context of the begotten concept. They would not therefore have seen a problem with them. These words would have been in keeping with their Sonship belief that they believed was supported by the spirit of prophecy. Later in the same article she wrote

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” Christ declares; “no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Christ is invested with power to give life to all creatures. “As the living Father hath sent me,” he says, “and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. . . . It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” Christ is not here referring to his doctrine, but to his person, the divinity of his character.” (*Ibid*)

Here again we return to the begotten belief – that Christ has been “invested with power”.

Some may say that this still does not answer where Ellen White says that Christ was “with God from all eternity”. This is very true. In itself it doesn’t answer it but what we do know is that she was still speaking of Christ as the wisdom of Proverbs 8 “brought forth” therefore whatever we conclude about the words “all eternity” it has to be in keeping with this begotten (brought forth) concept. In other words, an interpretation must not be drawn concerning the words “all eternity” that would invalidate this Sonship (begotten) concept. This would be forcing Ellen White (an inspired writer) to contradict herself.

We also noted above that we must not make a doctrine out of one turn of phrase or one particular statement made by Ellen White – especially if it makes null and void a concept (such as the begotten concept) that she repeatedly endorsed as being true. This would be just sheer folly. Certainly it would not be the way to understand and interpret her writings.

So what about eternity? Quite understandably, eternity is often viewed as one long continuing length of time (without a beginning or ending) but it can be regarded as separate from time. Ellen White made these interesting comments

“When the veil shall be removed which separates time from eternity, then will come to many minds the clear perception of the policy of human wisdom in comparison with the sure word of prophecy.” (*Ellen G. White, General Conference Daily Bulletin, February 18, 1897*)

“God has placed the promises in his word to lead us to have faith in him. In these promises he draws back the veil from eternity, giving us a glimpse of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which awaits the overcomer.” (*Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1902, ‘The flowers of promise’*)

“His [God’s] excellence is to be our study in time as well as in eternity. The word of God, spoken by Christ in the Old and New Testaments, is the bread from heaven; but much that is called science is as dishes of human invention, adulterated food; it is not the true manna.” (*Ellen G. White, Testimonies Volume 6, page 132, ‘Education’*)

Ellen White is here referring to eternity as something not seen or experienced by humanity (it is there but beyond human comprehension). She speaks of eternity as something different (separate) from time – even perhaps existing parallel to it. It seems that to her way of thinking, at least in these cases, eternity was something outside of the realm of time. Isaiah wrote

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to



revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Isaiah 57:15

God exists. He inhabits eternity. I believe we would all agree that God is outside of the realm of time – particularly time as we know it now. The very first paragraph in the Desire of Ages states (the chapter is called ‘God with us’)

“His name shall be called Immanuel, . . . God with us.” “The light of the knowledge of the glory of God” is seen “in the face of Jesus Christ.” **From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father**; He was “the image of God,” the image of His greatness and majesty, “the outshining of His glory.” It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world.” (*Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, page 19, ‘God with us’*)

In the next chapter it says this

“Out of Bethlehem, said the prophet, “shall He come forth . . . that is to be ruler in Israel; **whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.**” Micah 5:2, margin.” (*Ibid, page 47, ‘Unto you a Saviour’*)

Again on page 469 she wrote (referring to Jesus saying ‘Before Abraham I AM’)

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

When quoting Micah 5:2 in the Desire of Ages, Ellen White opted for the margin notes which says “**from the days of eternity**“. In this case she deliberately avoided using the word ‘everlasting’ (as in the KJV). She also did the same in Prophets and Kings when she wrote

“The Son of David must be born in David’s city. Out of Bethlehem, said the prophet, “shall He come forth ... that is to be ruler in Israel; **whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.**” Micah 5:2, margin.” (*Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, page 697, ‘The Coming of a Deliverer’*)

Micah 5:2 is a very interesting verse of Scripture. The KJV says

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; **whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.**”

In this verse, as in other places in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word that is translated ‘everlasting’ (‘owlam’ or ‘olam’) does not actually mean ‘forever’ (never having a beginning or an end). It actually means ‘time out of mind’ or ‘the vanishing point’ (i.e. that which is hidden from human understanding). It also has as its root a word that literally means ‘hidden’ or ‘concealed’.

This same Hebrew word ‘owlam’ suggests, as we would say today, ‘sometime so far back in time that it is beyond human understanding’. It is just like saying that which is ‘beyond the horizon’, ‘something that cannot be seen’ (yet it is there), ‘time out of mind’ or ‘beyond human comprehension’. As Fernando Canale explains (in the official Seventh-day Adventist declaration of their doctrine of God)

“When the idea of eternity is searched in the Biblical record, however, the first facet that comes into view is that the words usually translated “eternity” have a clear, temporal meaning. In the OT *’olam* and in the NT *aion* basically mean “a long time or duration” referring to a limited or unlimited period of time.” (Fernando Canale, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia, Volume 12, page 109, ‘The doctrine of God’*)

This is very interesting. It certainly gives a different impression from the KJV rendering of this word (everlasting). It also gives us a clearer meaning of the words “days of eternity”. If you go to the following link on my website (The Begotten Series), you will find in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter a detailed explanation of this verse

#### A Detailed History of the Trinity Doctrine

In 1896, a question was sent in to the Review and Herald. It concerned Christ and eternity. The answer to the question is really very interesting. It was asked

“PLEASE explain the following expressions in Micah 5:2, " Whose goings forth have been from old, from 'everlasting," and in Rev. 3:14, " The beginning of the creation of God." W. H. L.” (*Review and Herald, May 26<sup>th</sup> 1896, ‘To correspondents’*)

The answer was returned (concerning these verses of Scripture)

“They undoubtedly refer to Christ. The marginal reading of Micah 5:2 is, " from the days of eternity," which places the origin of Christ in the days of eternity. The following expression is used in the Bible more than once, "from everlasting to everlasting," or, from eternity to eternity. This, I understand, indicates the interval in the circle of eternity which we call time. Time is bound on both sides by eternity; in fact, it is a little piece in eternity. Christ's existence extends from eternity to eternity, and spans the whole course of time. We cannot say that the time was when Christ was not; for he has always existed in time.” (*Ibid*)

It can be seen here that time was seen as 'something different' than ‘eternity’. The answer went on to explain that the verses in question do not depict Christ as a created being. The point was then made (as was believed at that time by Seventh-day Adventists) that

“It is elsewhere stated in the Scripture that Christ was "begotten" of God, and as such, was not a created being” (*Ibid*)

So again we come back to the reasoning that in eternity (in the days of eternity) Christ was begotten of God. This, in 1896, was the denominational faith of Seventh-day Adventists.

As we noted earlier, Ellen White made this comment

“From eternity there was a complete unity between the Father and the Son. They were two, yet little short of being identical; two in individuality, yet one in spirit, and heart, and character.” (*Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor 16<sup>th</sup> December 1897 ‘The New Commandment part 1’*)

If “From eternity” means forever, then this must mean that there never was a time when God and Christ were identical. This is far from trinitarian theology.

As we have just noted, Ellen White said of Christ that He was with God “from all eternity”. She

also said He “existed from eternity”. These expressions therefore must be equivalent of “the days of eternity” (also 'dateless ages' see above) - which as we have seen is meant to convey the idea of a point beyond the horizon that is beyond the comprehension of humanity. This I believe is where we need to leave it. If we go beyond this we shall go beyond what God has revealed. We know that Christ is begotten of God therefore He is truly God's Son. We also know that this 'bringing forth' was in eternity (prior to time as we know it). To nail it down any further we would need to conjecture – which is something I am not prepared to do. With Ellen White I am compelled to say

“The Bible to me is the voice of God. I have the witness in myself that the word of God is true, and that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God. I am following no cunningly devised fable.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1894, 'Try the spirits'*)

I am sure there will be other 'objection quotes' but I will have to deal with them as and when they are sent to me. Here I have dealt with the basic principles. I hope they have helped.

### **A word of caution**

Some may like to express the view (insist even) that because Christ is begotten of God, then there must have been a time when He did not exist. It is here that I would like to offer a word of caution. Too much emphasis in this direction could give the impression that Christ is a lesser person than God (that He is not God).

I do not believe that what we have in Scripture is a complete revelation of God. I believe though that what God has revealed of Himself is enough to take us through the 6000 year 'emergency situation' that we find ourselves in today. Whilst I agree that the Bible is very clear, as is the spirit of prophecy, that Christ is God's only begotten Son, this is as far as we can go. In other words, how God had His existence prior to this we have not been told therefore we must not conjecture. Allow me to explain.

John opened his gospel with the words “In beginning was the Word, and the Word was with [the] God, and the Word was God (John 1:1) but to what beginning was John referring? It could not have been the beginning of God because God has no beginning. Is it possible that this 'beginning' spoken of by John was from the point **when** the revelation of God began? To put this in another way – could this be when God began expressing Himself? It is worth thinking about. As J. B. Phillips in his translation of the Scriptures phrased John 1:1

“At the beginning God expressed himself. That personal expression, that word, was with God and was God, and he existed with God from the beginning.” John 1:1 J. B. Phillips New Testament

Interesting is the thought rendered by C. S. Longacre. Referring to those who believe that Christ is truly the Son of God – meaning that in eternity He was brought forth of the Father (begotten of the Father) - he says (this was in a paper he submitted to what was then known as the 'Bible Research Fellowship')

“This group believe that the Son of God existed “in the bosom of the Father” from all eternity, just as Levi existed in the “loins of Abraham,” as the apostle Paul said; “And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.” Heb. 7:9, 10. As Paul says; “God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were,” Rom. 4:17; and God hath “chosen” things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence.” 1 Cor. 1:28, 29. Likewise the apostle

John averred; “No man hath seen God at any time; **the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.**” John 1:18.”(Charles Smull Longacre, paper titled ‘The Deity of Christ’ submitted to the Bible Research Fellowship, January 1947)

We must also remember that through the spirit of prophecy it has been said

“From my girlhood I have been given plain instruction that God is a person and that Christ is “the express image of His person.” **God always has been.** That which concerns us is not the how or the wherefore.” (Ms 137 1903, Typed November 12<sup>th</sup> 1903, ‘The Personality of God’)

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, **is truly God in infinity**, but not in personality.” (Ellen G. White, Ms 116, December 19<sup>th</sup> 1905, ‘An Entire Consecration’)

We are talking here about Christ Himself. He is the One who is said to be “truly God in infinity”. This should really give us something to ponder. Think it through. What Ellen White says here is really very important. Christ is God, in the person of the Son.

Just a few weeks previous, Ellen White wrote a letter to her granddaughter Mabel White. In this letter she wrote of the good health she was in for someone of her age.

“On the twenty-sixth of November I shall be seventy-eight years old. I am as active as ever, going up and down stairs to and from my office more than ten times each day. I praise the Lord for His lovingkindness to me.

I am now looking over my diaries and copies of letters written for several years back, commencing before I went to Europe, before you were born. I have the most precious matter to reproduce and place before the people in testimony form. While I am able to do this work, the people must have these things to revive past history, **that they may see that there is one straight chain of truth, without one heretical sentence, in that which I have written. This, I am instructed, is to be a living letter to all in regard to my faith.**” (Ellen G. White, Letter 329a 1905 to Mabel White, November 16<sup>th</sup> 1905)

### **A final word of warning**

In closing I would ask you to note the following. This is from a sermon preached at Minneapolis in 1888 by Ellen White.

“**It is true that God gave his only begotten Son to die for us**, to suffer the penalty of the [broken] law of God. We are to consider this and dwell upon it. And when our minds are constantly dwelling upon the matchless love of God to the fallen race, we begin to know God, to become acquainted with Him, to have a knowledge of God and how Jesus Christ, when He came to our world, laid aside His royal robes and His kingly crown and clothed His divinity with humanity. For our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. **The Father sent His Son here**, and right here on this little atom of a world were enacted the grandest scenes that were ever known to humanity.” (Ellen G. White, Sermon, Minneapolis, October 13<sup>th</sup> 1888, ‘Tell of God’s love and power’, Ms 7 1888)

On the other hand as Seventh-day Adventists we have been warned

“Satan is determined that men shall not see the love of God, **which led him to give his**

only begotten Son to save the lost race; for it is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance.” (Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, 20<sup>th</sup> March 1894, ‘Christ the center of the message’)

The fact that God really did sacrifice His Son is the very thing that brings about a person’s conversion. This is why Satan hates this truth with so much venom. It is why he is always trying to pervert it. It reveals so clearly the love that God has for fallen humanity. This is the goodness of God that leads to repentance (Romans 2:4). If this is obscured or perverted then the power is removed from the gospel. Ellen White put it this way

“The contemplation of the love of God, manifested in the gift of his Son for the salvation of fallen men, will stir the heart and arouse the powers of the soul as nothing else will.” (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, January 7<sup>th</sup> 1890, ‘Christ revealed the Father’)

The Scriptures tell of a war in Heaven (Revelation 12:7). With regards to this warfare, Ellen White was given a very precious insight. We should not overlook it. She wrote

“They [the unfallen angels] clearly set forth that Jesus was the Son of God, existing with him before the angels were created; and that he had ever stood at the right hand of God, and his mild, loving authority had not heretofore been questioned; and that he had given no commands but what it was joy for the heavenly host to execute.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 9<sup>th</sup> January 1879, ‘The fall of Satan’, see also *Spirit of Prophecy Volume 1 page 17, ‘The Fall of Satan’*)

So why did they find this necessary? When speaking of the fallen angels, also their expulsion from Heaven (because they would not work in harmony with God), the same writer explained

“This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ. One angel began the controversy and carried it on until there was rebellion in the heavenly courts among the angels.” (Ellen G. White, *Letter 42, 1910, to D. A. Parsons, April 29<sup>th</sup> 1910*)

We can see here what the controversy in Heaven was all about. It was about whether or not Christ was really the Son of God. We can also see here that this controversy was taking place prior to the creation of this world. The fallen angels were trying to persuade the unfallen angels to believe that Christ was not the only begotten Son of God. We should not be surprised therefore to find that here on earth today they are doing exactly the same work. They are still attempting to obscure the fact that Christ really is the only begotten Son of God – also that God really did give His Son as a sacrifice (John 3:16, Romans 8:3, 32). It would be very naïve of us to reason otherwise.

This was said by God’s servant in 1910. This is very significant. This is because it means that 12 years after the publication of 'The Desire of Ages', Ellen White was still maintaining, as she had always done, that Christ was begotten of God therefore He is truly God’s Son

A few months later in a sermon at Berkeley, California, it is recorded that Ellen White spoke the following words to the congregation

“Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and Lucifer, that glorious angel, got up a warfare over the matter, until he had to be thrust down to the earth.” (Ellen G. White, *Sermon, Berkeley California, August 21<sup>st</sup> 1910*)

This is so very easy to understand. A child could understand it. It is in harmony with the previous statements. It is reported she then went on to say

“He [Satan] knows what I am saying today. He knows whenever there is a company assembled together as you are here. He knows when we are making efforts in every way possible to reach out to win the minds of the people. He has his agencies appointed so that after this meeting will be over, circumstances will arise and the enemy will try to gain the victory.” (*Ibid*)

When Ellen White spoke these words (in 1910), it was still the denominational faith of Seventh-day Adventists that Christ was begotten of God and is therefore God’s true Son. The people who were listening knew exactly what she was saying. She was warning that Satan would continue his warfare against this begotten (Sonship) belief.

Satan is very active (Ephesians 6:11-12, 1 Peter 5:8, Revelation 12:12). He is also very clever. As Ellen White said (see above) “If the angels were deceived by Lucifer’s ingenious methods of misrepresenting God ....is there not danger that men today will be deceived?” Make sure that you, the reader of this article, do not become deceived by Satan's sophistries. Certainly make sure you do not allow yourself to become one of his agencies (avenues) for the promulgation of his deceptions. He knows exactly what you have just read in this article (he watched me write it) therefore as he did in Ellen White's time, he will now be creating circumstances to have you disbelieve it. In fact I would say that even now he has his agents on the ground to make attempts to obscure the fact Christ really is the only begotten Son of God. Beware of him.

God bless you as you consider these things

Terry Hill

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“When a man who is honestly mistaken hears the truth, he will either quit being mistaken or cease to be honest!” (Source unknown)

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