



REDISCOVERING THE PILLAR

A comprehensive study on **the Personality of God**
— in the context of the Trinity doctrine —

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MARJAN GERGURI

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FORTBIT D.O.O., SVETI MARTIN NA MURI, CROATIA, 2022

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PUBLISHING: **FORTBIT D.O.O.**

PUBLISHING YEAR AND PLACE: **2022, SVETI MARTIN NA MURI, CROATIA**

ISBN: **978-953-48643-6-4**

VERSION: **1.0.0** | RD: **20220107**

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THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

notes

Ellen White wrote to Dr. Kellogg:

*“You are not definitely clear on **the personality of God**, which is **everything to us as a people**.”* {EGW, Lt300-1903.7; 1903}

In 1903, Dr. Kellogg published his book “The Living Temple”, which instigated the biggest crisis of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the time of Sister White. After the publishing of the Living Temple, Sister White *“have been instructed by the heavenly messenger that some of the reasoning in the book, ‘Living Temple,’ is unsound and that this reasoning would lead astray the minds of those who are not thoroughly established on the foundation principles of present truth. It introduces that which is naught but speculation in regard to the personality of God and where His presence is”*¹. In the context of the chapter² from which this quotation is taken, we see that the foundation principles of the present truth was a reference to THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES³. THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES were the truths God gave to the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers in answer to their great disappointment after the passing of the time in 1844. These truths

¹ [EGW, SpTB02 51.3; 1904](#)

² Chapter 10: “The Foundation of our Faith”, Testimonies for the Church Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers Instruction to Seventh-Day Adventists

³ In the conclusion of the chapter “The Foundation of our Faith”, Sister White wrote “He [God] calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to **the fundamental principles** that are based upon unquestionable authority” {EGW, SpTB02 59.1; 1904}

were the result of their earnest Bible studies and were confirmed by the miraculous power of the Lord through the various visions of Ellen White. These truths constituted the foundation of Seventh-day Adventist faith, and these truths were the truths the Adventist pioneers proclaimed to the whole world after the Great Disappointment. After they organized themselves into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, they successively published a document “*A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by Seventh-day Adventists*” as a public synopsis of Seventh-day Adventist faith⁴. This declaration was a summary of the principal features of Seventh-day Adventist faith⁵. Dr. Kellogg’s book, “The Living Temple”, contains the reasoning as to what would lead astray the minds of those who are not thoroughly established on THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES—the principles of faith which were taught and practiced by Seventh-day Adventists from the beginning of our movement.⁶ More specifically, this reasoning introduces that which is naught but speculation in regard to **the personality of God and where His presence is**.

When we look into the declaration of THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES we find that the first point deals with THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and His presence. Seventh-day Adventists believed:

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

It might not be obvious at first glance but THE PERSONALITY OF GOD is expressed in the terms “*a personal, spiritual being*”. This God, a personal spiritual being, is referred to as “*one God*”, “*the creator of all things*”. This point is significant because the solemn purpose behind the Seventh-day Adventist movement was the proclama-

⁴ See the preamble of “[A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by Seventh-day Adventists](#)” from 1872

⁵ See the preamble of “[The Fundamental Principles](#)” from 1889.

⁶ The statements of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, in 1904, were preserved and unchanged from the initial statement made in 1872, except for three additional points on Christian lifestyle added by Uriah Smith in 1889.

⁷ [The Fundamental Principles, 1872, point no. 1](#), see also the Fundamental Principles from 1905, [the Yearbook 1905, pg. 188](#)

tion of the Three Angels' messages. The first message calls us to worship God the Creator who created heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters⁸. Our pioneers identified God the Creator of all things as "*one God*", "*a personal spiritual being*", and they identified Him as **the Father** because the second point refers to the Son of the Eternal Father **by** whom God the Creator, from the first point, created all things.

*"II – That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, ..."*⁹

According to THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES, one God, the Creator of all things, is the Father and He is a personal spiritual being. As such, according to the statement, God is not everywhere present by Himself, but rather He is "*everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit*". This is the statement from the document that officially represented "*the foundation principles of present truths*", dealing with "*the personality of God and where His presence is*"¹⁰. The heavenly messenger instructed Sister White that the reasoning in the Living Temple leads astray from this particular point. Since this point was foundational to the First Angel's message, it is no surprise that a clear and definite understanding of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD "*is everything to us as a people*"¹¹.

Unfortunately, today in our labours as Seventh-day Adventists, we are not united in the message of the first point of THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES. There are many different understandings of God as a personal, spiritual being. There are also some who completely deny that one God is only one being. Today, highly controversial would be the claim that the First Angel's message refers to the Father only. Is God everywhere present by Himself, or is He everywhere present by His representative the Holy Spirit? The variety of answers we receive on these questions is the sad testimony that we, as people, are not "*definitely clear on the personality of God*" and God's presence. However controversial this discussion may appear, we should not refrain from investigating these

⁸ Revelation 14:7

⁹ [The Fundamental Principles, 1872, point no. 2](#), see also the Fundamental Principles from 1905, the [Yearbook 1905, pg. 188](#)

¹⁰ [EGW, SpTB02 51.3; 1904](#)

¹¹ [EGW, Lt300-1903.7; 1903](#)

questions. Many would refrain from investigating these truths because the cry of heresy is raised against them, but we shall not consider ourselves subjects of the appellation because these truths were definite and clear doctrines taught by Seventh-day Adventists in the early era of our church. Data shows that THE PERSONALITY OF GOD was a pillar of our faith, in equal rank with the sanctuary message:

*“Those who seek to remove the **old landmarks** are not holding fast; they **are not remembering how they have received and heard**. Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary, or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men. They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God **adrift**, without an anchor.”* {EGW, Ms62-1905.14; 1905}

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of Christ, according to Sister White, is the pillar of our faith and a landmark. The pillars of our faith were clear and definite teachings. Thus, it is surprising that to-day, as Seventh-day Adventists, we are not united in this particular pillar. We should not have any uncertainties regarding it. We should have no ifs or ands about this matter.¹² The troubling and worrisome fact is that the uncertainties regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD started with Dr. Kellogg’s apostasy. We have been told that the sentiments presented in the Living Temple, which are leading astray from the foundation principles regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and where His presence is, are “*the most dangerous error*”, which “*originated by the great apostate*”, which he “*has prepared for the last days*”.

“The book Living Temple contains specious, deceptive sentiments regarding the personality of God and of Christ. The Lord opened before me the true meaning of these sentiments, showing me that unless they were steadfastly repudiated, they would deceive the very elect. Precious truth and beautiful sentiments were woven in with false, misleading theories. Thus truth was used to substantiate the most dangerous errors. The precious representations of God are so misconstrued as to appear to uphold falsehoods

¹² See Sister White’s warning to Dr. Kellogg on the principles of our faith in [EGW, Lt300-1903.4; 1903](#)

originated by the great apostate. Sentiments that belong to the revealings of God are mingled with specious, deceptive theories of satanic agencies.” {EGW, Lt146-1905.2; 1905}

“Be careful how you sustain the sentiments of this book regarding the personality of God. As the Lord presents matters to me, these sentiments do not bear the endorsement of God. They are a snare that the enemy has prepared for these last days.” {EGW, Lt211-1903.1; 1903}

The uncertainties we are having today regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD should encourage us to put this message in the spotlight. Ellen White received God-given light, that in the end time there would be a revival of the messages that have been given in the past.

“I know from the light that God has given me that there should be a revival of the messages that have been given in the past, because men will seek to bring in new theories, and will try to prove that these theories are scriptural, whereas they are error, which, if allowed a place, will undermine faith in the truth. We are not to accept these suppositions and pass them along as truth. No, no; we must not move from the platform of truth on which we have been established.” {EGW, Ms125-1907.17; 1907}

In the context of this revival, we invite you to join us in our comprehensive study of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and God’s presence. In order to harmonize all prominent Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, some of the popular ideas regarding God, His personality, and His presence, will be challenged. This study is only our proposal for the revival of this old pillar and we hope that it will be of benefit to you. Please approach this subject with solemn concerns and prayers, for God to lead you in this controversial study.

chapter 1

THE CALL FOR A RENEWAL OF THE OLD PILLARS

We believe that today, God is in the business of renewing the messages born in the years past. We have the promise that the old pillars of our faith will be preserved because God calls us to renew these pillars. This includes the pillar on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of Christ. Here are several prophecies foretold specifically for the Seventh-day Adventist church, that God will revive all of the pillars of our faith.

“The Lord has declared that the history of the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every truth that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened. We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established... There is need now to rehearse the experience of the men who acted a part in the establishment of our work at the beginning.” [\[EGW, Ms129-1905.6; 1905\]](#)

The reason we need to revive the old pillars of our faith is that we have forgotten them in the first place! And because we have forgotten the reasons and the evidence for our faith, we have ac-

notes

cepted new theories that uprooted the first experiences and truth received in the beginning.

*“Our people need to understand the reasons of our faith and our past experiences. How sad it is that so many of them apparently place unlimited confidence in men who present theories tending to uproot our past experiences and to remove the old landmarks! Those who can so easily be led by a false spirit show that they have been following the wrong captain for some time--so long that they do not discern that they are departing from the faith, or that **they are not building upon the true foundation.** We need to urge all to put on their spiritual eyeglasses, to have their eyes anointed that they may see clearly and **discern the true pillars of the faith.** Then they will know that ‘the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his’ (2 Tim. 2:19). **We need to revive the old evidences of the faith once delivered to the saints.**”* {EGW, Lt283-1903.5; 1903}

This is the purpose of this study, particularly THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, which was a pillar of our faith. We want to revive this pillar. We want to dive into the reasons and evidence of our faith regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD as we have recognized the need *“to rehearse the experience of the men who acted a part in the establishment of our work at the beginning”*. In doing so we claim the highest reward promised by God.

“The Lord calls for a renewal of the straight testimony borne in years past. He calls for a renewal of spiritual life. The spiritual energies of His people have long been torpid, but there is to be a resurrection from apparent death.” {EGW, 8T 297.5; 1904}

*“By prayer and confession of sin we must clear the King’s highway. As we do this, the power of the Spirit will come to us. We need the Pentecostal energy. **This will come, for the Lord has promised to send His Spirit as the all-conquering power.**”* {EGW, 8T 297.6; 1904}

*“Perilous times are before us. Everyone who has a knowledge of the truth should awake and place himself, body, soul, and spirit, **under the discipline of God.** The enemy is on our track. We must be wide awake, on our guard against him. We must put on the whole armor of God. **We must follow the directions given through***

the spirit of prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His word. He has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy. The warnings that have been given, line upon line, precept upon precept, should be heeded. If we disregard them, what excuse can we offer?” {EGW, 8T 298.1; 1904}

“I beseech those who are laboring for God not to accept the spurious for the genuine. Let not human reason be placed where divine, sanctifying truth should be. Christ is waiting to kindle faith and love in the hearts of His people. Let not erroneous theories receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing firm on the platform of eternal truth. God calls upon us to hold firmly to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.” {EGW, 8T 298.2; 1904}

Renewal of the straight testimony borne in years past will cause a renewal of the spiritual life. The power of the Spirit will come to us for the Lord has promised. The promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is conditional: we must “*hold firmly to the **fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority***”. These messages will be met with fierce opposition; we will pass through severe trials and our faith will be tested. Thus, we need to study the old waymarks carefully. “*These **foundation principles are to be held fast unto the end***”.

“I have been deeply impressed by the Spirit of God that we are to pass through severe trials. Everyone’s faith will be tested. We must study carefully the old waymarks. These experiences in the past are to be revived. Daniel is to stand out conspicuously with the Revelation given to John on the Isle of Patmos.” {EGW, Ms223-1902.11; 1902}

“In our experience in these last days we shall meet every conceivable thing that Satan can invent to make of none effect the established points of our faith that have been, in the providence of God, so greatly blessed. These foundation principles are to be held fast unto the end. Read the Word of God.” {EGW, Ms223-1902.13; 1902}

The old waymark we want to study is THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. We have seen that knowledge of this truth has ceased with time. Satan is working “*to make of none effect the established points of our faith*”. Since the beginning, Satan has worked against this truth and he will certainly work against it now.

“We are God’s commandment-keeping people. For the past fifty years every phase of heresy has been brought to bear upon us, to becloud our minds regarding the teaching of the word,—especially concerning the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and the message of heaven for these last days, as given by the angels of the fourteenth chapter of Revelation. Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study, and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But the way-marks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His word and the testimony of His Spirit. He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.” [{EGW, SpTB02 59.1; 1904}](#)

We hope and pray that by the end of this study you will recognize THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES to be based upon unquestionable authority. We will carefully study the first two points of THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES.

“We are living in a time when every wind of doctrine is blowing and when those who think they stand are liable to fall. We are living in a time when Satan is striving to implant seeds of skepticism and infidelity in every mind. We are living in a time when error is taught so insidiously that the faith of many is being rapidly undermined.” [{EGW, Ms143-1907.17; 1907}](#)

“Oh, how much we lose by neglecting the privilege of partaking freely of the bread of life! Shall we not resolutely refuse to be ensnared by the enemy of our souls? Shall we not place beyond our reach everything that turns the mind away from the truths that God desires us to learn? Let us seek to become familiar with the books that clearly outline the truths for this time. Let us make a careful study of the fundamental principles of the message that is being

proclaimed by God's children throughout the world. Let us keep informed regarding the progress of this message. A most solemn work is now in progress—the work of warning an impenitent world of the judgment day and of the soon coming of our Saviour in the clouds of heaven. God desires that every child of His shall have a part to act in this great work. Let us come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” [{EGW, Ms143-1907.18; 1907}](#)

Time and time again, Sister White prophesied a revival of the messages we have borne in years past, and the call has repeatedly been raised to hold firmly to THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES that are based upon unquestionable authority. The revival is only necessary if we have forgotten these principles. Regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and His presence, we definitely see that Seventh-day Adventists are currently not united on this point. Therefore, careful study of the old waymarks is necessary. There is now a need to rehearse the experience of the men who acted a part in the establishment of our work in the beginning. History shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every pillar that the Lord has established is to be strengthened.

chapter 2

THE VISION ON THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

notes

In a letter to Dr. Kellogg, Sister White reminded him of how God established the foundation of our faith in the beginning of our work.

“My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder Edson, and many others who were keen, noble, and true were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for truth. At our important meetings, these men would meet together and search for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly; for we felt that we must learn God’s truth. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. As we fasted and prayed, great power came upon us. But I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend what we were studying. Then the Spirit of God would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me with instruction as to the position we were to take regarding truth and duty. Again and again this happened. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God was plainly marked

out before me, and I gave my brethren and sisters the instruction that the Lord had given me. They knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given me. Thus the leading points of our faith as we hold them today were firmly established. Point after point was clearly defined, and all the brethren came into harmony.” {EGW, Lt253-1903.4; 1903}

Adventist pioneers searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. After the passing of time in 1844, they were greatly disappointed that Jesus did not come. They could either join the scoffers and leave the movement, denying God, or humble themselves and desperately search for God’s comfort and understanding of the Scriptures. These people were keen, noble and true, and they decided to search the Scriptures for answers. The answer to their great disappointment was the Truth they received in these studies. These truths constituted the foundation of Seventh-day Adventist faith. A line of truth extending from their time until when we shall enter the city of God was received. They called these points THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES and all brethren were in harmony regarding them.

It is important to emphasize that these truths were derived from the Bible and were supported by the Spirit of God through the visions of Ellen White. The purpose of Sister White’s visions was to establish brethren in the Scriptures. Among these visions was the vision on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and we will now focus our attention on this particular vision. In the same letter to Dr. Kellogg, Sister White recalled this vision after she reminded him of how the foundation of our faith was established.

“Just such theories as you have presented in Living Temple were presented then. These subtle, deceiving sophistries have again and again sought to find place amongst us. But I have ever had the same testimony to bear which I now bear regarding the personality of God.” {EGW, Lt253-1903.9; 1903}

“In (Early Writings, 60, 66, 67), are the following statements:” {EGW, Lt253-1903.10; 1903}

“May 14, 1851, I saw the beauty and loveliness of Jesus. As I beheld His glory, the thought did not occur to me that I should ever be separated from His presence. I saw a light coming from the glory that encircled the Father, and as it approached near to me, my body shook and trembled like a leaf. I thought that if it should come near me, I would be struck out of existence; but the light passed me. Then could I have some sense of the great and terrible God with whom we have to do.” {EGW, Lt253-1903.11; 1903}

“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 the express image of My Father’s person!’ [Hebrews 1:3.]” {EGW, Lt253-1903.12; 1903}

“I have often seen that the spiritual view took away all the glory of heaven, and that in many minds the throne of David and the lovely person of Jesus have been burned up in the fire of spiritualism. I have seen that some who have been deceived and led into this error, will be brought out into the light of truth, but it will be almost impossible for them to get entirely rid of the deceptive power of spiritualism. Such should make thorough work in confessing their errors, and leaving them forever.” {EGW, Lt253-1903.13; 1903}

We find the truth on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD in the presence of God. Sister White was taken to heaven, into the presence of God; she saw the lovely person of Jesus but the Father’s person she could not see because He was encircled in the light of His glory. There are several key points to derive from this vision.

In her remarks on how the Father passed by her, encircled in the light of His glory, we see that the term “God” addressed the Father. She said, *“Then could I have some sense of the great and terrible God with whom we have to do”*, and it was the Father who had passed by her. Therefore, we know that when Sister White and our pioneers were talking about THE PERSONALITY OF GOD they were talking about the personality of the Father. This is why Sister White asked Jesus *“if His Father was a person, and had a form like Himself”*; she saw Christ to be a person because He had the form of a person, but she could not see the Father for He was encircled in the light of His glory.

We see another important remark in the characteristics by which Sister White determined God to be a person: *the outward, visible form*. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary provides several definitions of the word ‘personality’. Today’s primary definition of the term ‘personality’ is defined as “*the quality or state of being a person*”¹³. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary marks this definition to be in use from the 15th century.¹⁴ The 1828 edition of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary has a primary definition of the ‘personality’ as “*that which constitutes an individual a distinct person*”¹⁵. The edition from 1886 defines it as “*that which constitutes, or pertains to, a person*”¹⁶. In Hunter Robert’s “*The American encyclopaedic dictionary*”, which was the dictionary in possession of Sister White¹⁷, we initially find the definition of the word ‘personality’ pointed out by Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “*the quality or state of being personal*”¹⁸ ¹⁹. In applying these definitions to THE PERSONALITY OF GOD we have a question: *what is the quality or state of God being a person? Or what is that which constitutes God to be a distinct person?* Those are actually the same question and the vision of Ellen White answers it plainly. It is the *form*—an outward form! For Sister White, the form is the quality or state of God being a person. Or, in other words, the form is that which constitutes God as a distinct person. And speaking of God, we are speaking of the Father. Jesus testified that His Father has a form because He is the express image of His Father’s person. Obviously, the term ‘image’ is applied in the literal or obvious sense that the word ‘image’ implies because it is an answer to the question, “*does God have a form?*”

13 [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#), latest edition - ‘personality’ - “*the quality or state of being a person*”

14 [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#) - “*First Known Use of personality: 15th century, in the meaning defined at sense 1a - ‘the quality or state of being a person’*”

15 [Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1828 edition](#) - ‘personality’ - “*that which constitutes an individual a distinct person*”

16 [Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1886 edition](#) - ‘personality’ - “*that which constitutes, or pertains to, a person*”

17 Check [EGW Private and Office Libraries](#) for Hunter Robert, [The American encyclopaedic dictionary](#)

18 [Hunter Robert, The American encyclopaedic dictionary](#), - ‘personality’ - “*the quality or state of being personal*”

19 In further studies we will use “*the quality or state of being a person*” as the definition of the word ‘personality’ because that was the definition from the dictionary that Ellen White possessed and it is the oldest definition proposed by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary

In conclusion, THE PERSONALITY OF GOD answers the question: *what is the quality or state of God being a person?* That is to say, the quality by which we know God is a person is His physical, outward form. This was the real controversy with Dr. Kellogg and his sentiments expressed in his book, *“The Living Temple”*. Dr. Kellogg also claimed that the quality or state of God being a person is the physical form, but he speculated on this question. *“The fact that God is so great that we cannot form a clear mental picture of his physical appearance need not lessen in our minds the reality of His personality...”*²⁰ According to this data, we can also recognize the application of the word ‘personality’ defined as *“the quality or state of being a person”*. The quality or state of God to be a person is Him having a physical appearance. Our Adventist pioneers also pinpointed the physical appearance as a quality that defines God to be a person. James White wrote, *“Those who deny the personality of God, say that ‘image’ here does not mean physical form, but moral image...”*²¹. J. B. Frisbie wrote, *“Some seem to suppose it argues against the personality of God, because he is a Spirit, and say that he is without body, or parts...”*²². In the book *“The Biblical Institute”*, James White and Uriah Smith, commenting on *Genesis 1:26* that man was made *“in the image of God”*, used this reference to point out that God is a person. In speaking of the image: *“It had reference only to outward shape and form; for God is a person and has a form. Phil. 2:6; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 5:1; Dan. 7:9; Ex. 24:10; 33: 20- 23. Where the word image is used in a figurative sense, it is applied to something which we do not possess by nature, but which we must put on. Col. 3:10, explained by Eph. 4:23, 24.”*²³

The conclusion is very simple and straightforward. God is a person in the simple and most obvious way. He looks like a person; He has a form, a physical body. This conclusion would be drawn from a simple understanding of the vision on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD given to Ellen White yet, there are many other ideas regarding God’s person, tending to override this simple and obvious understanding. Sister White called such views the *“spiritual*

20 [John H. Kellogg, The Living Temple, p. 31](#)

21 [James S. White, PERGO 1.1; 1861](#)

22 [Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald, March 7, 1854](#), J. B. Frisbie, “The Seventh-Day Sabbath Not Abolished”, p. 50

23 James White & Uriah Smith, *The Biblical Institute* (Kindle Locations 1715-1718). Kindle Edition.

view". She had often seen that "*the spiritual view took away all the glory of heaven, and that in many minds the throne of David and the lovely person of Jesus have been burned up in the fire of spiritualism*"²⁴. The spiritual view is the view that denies the obvious understanding of God's person. In other words, the spiritual meaning speculates the form of God or His physical reality. Right after warning us about the spiritual view, Ellen White prophesied that a strain of spiritualism would come among us and would undermine our faith.

"There is a strain of spiritualism coming in among our people, and it will undermine the faith of those who give place to it, leading them to give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Errors will be presented in a pleasing and flattering manner. The enemy desires to divert the minds of our brethren and sisters from the work of preparing a people to stand in these last days." [\[EGW, Lt253-1903.14; 1903\]](#)

Do we have a definite and clear understanding of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD? This might be a strange question to ask in the first place since the conclusion of Sister White's vision is very simple and straightforward. Is there something more to it? It turns out that there is not much to the extent of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD in itself. THE PERSONALITY OF GOD is a very simple truth that opposes the "*spiritual view*". Consequently, promoters of the "*spiritual view*" are raising many more questions in application of this simple truth. For example, if God has a body, a physical form, then He is inevitably constrained by space. How can God be everywhere present while He has a body? Had not Jesus testified that God is a spirit (John 4:24), and that spirit does not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:39)? If the Father has a body, and Christ is the express image of His Father's person, does that also mean that the Holy Spirit has a body just as the Father and the Son have? Aren't the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost three co-equal persons? In other words, is the quality or state of the Holy Spirit being a person the same as the quality or state of the Father or the Son being distinct persons? After all, God is only one and He is a person, yet isn't He a unity of three co-equal persons?

²⁴ [EGW, Lt253-1903.13; 1903](#)

All of these questions are legitimate and they put the obvious understanding of God's person, presented in the vision of Ellen White, into consideration. Interestingly, today we answer these questions differently than our pioneers would have. In the time of Ellen White, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, by great unanimity,²⁵ held views on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD which would have answered these questions differently than we answer them today. Until 1931²⁶, the Seventh-day Adventists officially believed:

*"I – That there is **one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things**, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and **everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit**. Ps. 139:7."*²⁷

Today, Seventh-day Adventists believe:

*"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. God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; John 3:16 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2.)"*²⁸

The fact that there is a difference in our official statement of belief regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and His presence should prompt us to study these particular subjects. We should inquire into what the Bible says. The Bible has not changed over the course of our history—our understanding has. Therefore, we should not refrain from questioning any statement of our beliefs. The truth is never afraid of questions.

In the following, we propose a study on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and His presence in the context of the aforementioned proposed questions and present-day controversy. We will first take a look into the Bible, then confirm the interpretation with the Spirit of

²⁵ See preamble of the Fundamental Principles 1872, which states that this declaration of the fundamental principles is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by Seventh-day Adventists.

²⁶ [In 1931, came new Fundamental Principles](#)

²⁷ [The Fundamental Principles 1889, point no. 1.](#)

²⁸ [28 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, point no. 2.](#)

Prophecy. This is how God established the foundation of our Faith in the beginning of our movement.

notes

chapter 3

PRINCIPLES IN STUDYING THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

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“The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each.” [\[EGW, 8T 268.1; 1904\]](#)

The Scriptures clearly bring to view THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of Christ. Nevertheless, with the simplicity of the Bible, there are many speculations regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. In order to clearly see the teachings of the Scriptures regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, Sister White pointed out a number of principles in studying this topic. We want to adhere to these principles in our study.

In her letter to Brother Irwin, Sister White laid down two principles. The first is to be focused on the Truth and not to bother with spiritualistic theories. The second principle is to avoid using any explanation other than what the Bible has given. We are to use the clear and plain Word of God.

“Keep your eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and by beholding Him you will be changed into His likeness. Talk not of these spiritualistic theories. Let them find no place in your mind. Let

our papers be kept free from everything of the kind. Publish the truth; do not publish error. Do not try to explain in regard to the personality of God. You cannot give any further explanation than the Bible has given. Human theories regarding Him are good for nothing. Do not soil your minds by studying the misleading theories of the enemy. Labor to draw minds away from everything of this character. It will be better to keep these subjects out of our papers. Let the doctrines of present truth be put into our papers, but give no room to a repeating of erroneous theories.” {EGW, Lt179-1904.4; 1904}

Let us focus on the truth and not on error. As we proactively study the truth on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, we must constrain ourselves to Scripture. We cannot give any further explanation than what the Bible has given.

The third principle is to hold onto the things which are revealed to us in the Bible. The secret things do not belong to us. This especially applies to the nature of God. “*Here silence is eloquence.*”

“‘The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.’ Deuteronomy 29:29. The revelation of Himself that God has given in His word is for our study. This we may seek to understand. But beyond this we are not to penetrate. The highest intellect may tax itself until it is wearied out in conjectures regarding the nature of God, but the effort will be fruitless. This problem has not been given us to solve. No human mind can comprehend God. None are to indulge in speculation regarding His nature. Here silence is eloquence. The Omniscient One is above discussion.” {EGW, MH 429.3; 1905}

In our study we must be careful not to pry into the nature of God. THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and the nature of God are not the same thing. Yet, while studying THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, one may easily start to inquire into things that are not revealed and thus, easily speculate on the nature of God. We should be careful in rightly discerning the things that are revealed unto us.

Another principle is that in regarding mysteries expressed in the Word of God, we are to accept His word—as it reads, regardless of

the fact that we cannot understand and comprehend it with our finite minds.

*“The entrance of sin into the world, the incarnation of Christ, regeneration, the resurrection, and many other subjects presented in the Bible, are **mysteries too deep for the human mind to explain or even to fully comprehend.** But God has given us in the Scriptures **sufficient evidence** of their divine character, **and we are not to doubt His word because we cannot understand** all the mysteries of His providence.” {EGW, 5T 699.3; 1889}*

*“The portions of Holy Writ presenting these great themes are not to be passed by as of no use to man. **All that God has seen fit to make known we are to accept upon the authority of His word. Only a bare statement of facts may be given, with no explanation as to why or how;** but though we cannot comprehend it we should rest content that it is true, because God has said it. All the difficulty lies in the weakness and narrowness of the human mind.” {EGW, 5T 699.4; 1889}*

Combining these several principles we see that the things that are not revealed to us, we should not ponder. Only those things that are revealed in the Bible belong unto us and we are to accept them as they are, in the language and explanation the Bible has given. There may be given but a bare statement of facts, with no explanation as to why or how, yet we are to accept it because God has said it.

Many things in the Bible are mysterious to us. But where should we draw the line on which things we should ponder and which we should avoid?

*“Human talent and human conjecture have tried by searching to find out God. Many have trodden this pathway. The highest intellect may tax itself until it is wearied out in conjectures regarding God; but the effort will be fruitless, and the fact will remain that man by searching cannot find out God. This problem has not been given us to solve. **All that man needs to know and can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son, the great Teacher.** As we learn more and more of what man is, of what*

we ourselves are, in God's sight, we shall fear and tremble before Him." {EGW, Lt240-1903.16; 1903}

"All that man needs to know and can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son." The line we draw between unrevealed mysteries and the things that are revealed unto us is drawn where our Lord drew it. Specifically regarding the truth of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, God has revealed Himself in the person of His Son.

"Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. Yet not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it was revealed in Christ." {EGW, MH 419.3; 1905}

"God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God." {EGW, MH 419.4; 1905}

Finally, we see the culmination of all of these principles in the teaching of our Lord.

"Christ spoke with authority. Every truth essential for the people to know, He proclaimed with the unfaltering assurance of certain knowledge. He uttered nothing fanciful or sentimental. He presented no sophistries, no human opinions. No idle tales, no false theories clothed in beautiful language came from His lips. The statements that He made were truths established by personal knowledge. He foresaw the delusive doctrines that would fill the world, but He did not unfold them. In His teaching He dwelt upon the unchangeable principles of God's Word. He magnified the simple, practical truths that the common people could understand and bring into the daily experience." {EGW, Lt254-1903.2; 1903}

The biggest revelation of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD is found in Jesus Himself and in His teachings. His teachings only contain pure Truth—the Truth that He received from the Father. Thus, we are

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to take all His words because doctrines taught of Christ are the things which are revealed unto us, and they belong unto us. Even when His teaching was sometimes with no explanation as to why or how, we are to accept it because He had said so. Let His word be the unquestionable authority.

chapter 4

HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES

Unfortunately, it's often the case today that when some controversial theological subject is being agitated, theologians will tend to bring forth their theological authority when interpreting the Scriptures. It is good practice to remind theologians of their own maxims, that there are certain principles to interpreting the Scriptures that everybody should abide by. These principles are called hermeneutical principles. In this study, we are going to stick strictly to the five basic hermeneutical principles that have been defined through the history of the Reformation. The principles are the following:

1. **Sola Scriptura:** *Scripture Only*. God has revealed Himself through the Bible and the Bible is the source of truth.
2. **Tota Scriptura:** *Complete Scripture*. Every verse in the Bible has its context within the 66 books therein. The whole Bible is to be considered—not taken partially—nor should anything be taken out of context.
3. **Sacra Scriptura sui ipsius interpres:** *Scripture is its own interpreter*.
4. **Spiritualia spiritualiter examinatur:** “...comparing spiritual things with spiritual”, 1 Cor 2:13. God gave the Spirit

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of Prophecy as the Testimony of Jesus to His church. Conclusions will not be drawn from the Spirit of Prophecy but from the Bible alone (see point no. 1). The Spirit of Prophecy will be used to confirm if the conclusions are correct.

5. **Sitz im Leben:** it means that, because historical events have their historical background, they must “sit in” their appropriate context.

The Spirit of Prophecy also gives us one important principle, explained below. This principle is in harmony with the five aforementioned principles of interpretation and will accompany us throughout the whole study.

*“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. **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.**” {EGW, GC 599; 1911}*

When we are dealing with the topic of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, the main differences that prompt the controversy root back to the interpretation of the Bible. The issue lies in the interpretation of some terms (i.e. ‘person’, ‘Father’, ‘Son’, ‘Spirit’, etc.) as being symbolic or literal. Hence, the additional principle: the terms in the Bible “*should be explained according to its obvious meaning*”, with one exception— “*unless a symbol or figure is employed*”. To determine if a term is symbolic or not, refer to principle no. 3 (“*The Scripture is its own interpreter*”). The Bible has to explain itself. Therefore, it has to explain its own symbols. Otherwise, if

the interpretation is not found in the Bible, then the Bible would not be the only source of truth (see principle no. 1).

These principles will accompany us throughout this important Bible study. This is a test we need to pass in our attempt to revive the old and forgotten pillar on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. The judge, the one who determines the validity of this study, is the one who studies it. It's you. If anything in this study is not in accordance with these principles, we'd like to know (please share your reasoning with us!) so that we can test and assuredly validate our study. Also, if you don't agree with the principles of interpretation stated above and think there are better ones, please bring them to our attention. We will gladly consider them and their application to this important study of reviving the forgotten pillar of our faith.

Now, as we have laid down the principles to interpretation, let's dive together into this important subject.

chapter 5

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

notes

Is God a person? What does the Bible say regarding His personality? The term ‘*personality*’, which we mentioned before in the context of the Spirit of Prophecy, denotes the “*quality or state of being a person*”²⁹. So the true question is, if the Bible speaks of God being a person, by which characteristics do we know that God is a person, or what is the quality or state of Him being a person?

Why is this question so important for us as Seventh-day Adventists? The truth of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD is the foundation for all prominent Adventist doctrines to which we adhere. For instance, we believe that the two thousand and three hundred days of Dan. 8:14 terminated in 1844, and brought us to an event known as the cleansing of the sanctuary. We believe that this event took place in heaven in a definite time and space. We believe that in heaven above there is a real sanctuary, pitched by the hand of God (Hebrews 8:2; 9:11). This sanctuary, being pitched by the hand of God, is a real place in heaven, where “*we have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*” (Hebrew 8:1). As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe in heaven as a *real* place, in the *real* sanctuary in heaven, and the *real* throne in the sanctuary where God sits. And right there on

29 [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#) - ‘*personality*’

the *real* throne, in the *real* sanctuary, in heaven as a *real* place, is the answer to the question, *Is God a person?* God sits on the heavenly throne. There, we see a person and Jesus Christ on His right hand. The Bible says:

*“Who [God’s Son] being the brightness of **His** glory, and the express image of **His** person, and upholding all things by the word of his power; when **He** had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;” Hebrews 1:3*

God, who sits upon the throne, is a person because His Son, who is at His right hand, is an express image of **His** [Father’s] **person**. The Bible clearly states that God is a person, yet the understanding of the term ‘*person*’ varies. More precisely, the quality or state of God being a person varies. How do we know that Jesus is a person? We know this because He looks like a person. He has the physical body of a person. The physical body or form is the quality or state of Jesus to be a person. The question is, *is the physical body also a quality or state of the Father to be a person?* In other words, does the Father also have a physical body? The Bible clearly points out that Jesus is the express **image** of God’s person. God is a person, and Christ, having the appearance of a person, is an express image of God’s person. Christ physically ascended to heaven and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high—*physically*.

Many object to the simple conclusion that God possesses a physical body and form. The most notable objection is that God is a spirit (John 4:24) and therefore, does not have a body. If God does not have a physical body, how can we claim that Jesus is physically at His right hand interceding for us? If God does not have a physical body, we inquire, is the throne of God a physical place? The understanding of God’s person strictly as a spirit, having no body nor parts, leads to the conclusion that the heavenly throne, where God sits, and His Son on His right hand, has a spiritual meaning and no basis in reality. Consequently, if we want to be consistent, then the throne of God is not a real place nor object, because no one is *physically* sitting on it. If the throne of God is not physical, being consistent, the Sanctuary in Heaven, where

the throne of God is, is also not a physical place. Neither is Heaven a real place but a mere metaphorical concept. If so, we inquire, what happened to Christ's physical body when He ascended up into a metaphorical place called heaven, to metaphorically sit at the right hand of God?

Although the spiritual understanding of heaven finds wide acceptance in Christendom, to deny Heaven as a real place is contrary to the testimony of Christ's disciples, who saw Jesus ascending to Heaven in His human flesh and "*He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God*" (Mark 16:19). To deny Heaven as a real place would be equal to denying the ascension of Jesus to Heaven in His body.

Let's be clear: the Father is a spirit, though there's objection to the claim that God the Father is *exclusively* a spirit and cannot be seen at all, because He has no form or body. The Bible verses supporting this belief are found in Jesus' remark on worshiping God in spirit and truth given to the woman at the well:

*"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, **worship the Father**. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for **salvation is of the Jews**. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the **Father seeketh such to worship Him**. God is a Spirit: and **they that worship him must worship Him in spirit and in truth**."* John 4:21-24

The reasoning for the claim that the Father is a spirit that cannot be seen, because He has no flesh, is taken from Christ's remarks. Jesus said that "*a spirit hath not flesh and bones*" (Luke 24:39) and that we cannot see the Spirit (John 3:8), therefore the Father cannot possibly be seen. These claims are supported by Paul when he wrote of the Father: "*Now unto the King eternal, immortal, **invisible**, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*" (1 Timothy 1:17) and He said of Jesus that He "*is **the image of the invisible God**...*" (Colossians 1:15).

We should be honest and admit that all of these verses are true. Yes, God is a spirit and He is invisible, but the Bible gives more context to these conclusions that must be considered. It is crucial that we draw conclusions based on the complete testimony of the Scripture.

Now, we would like to mention that in dealing with this subject we should be sensitive and cautious. The Bible sets the principle for us:

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” Deuteronomy 29:29

Many raise a cry of heresy to refrain from complete investigation of this subject but the Bible certainly contains testimony upon this point. Those things which are revealed belong unto us.

Jesus, Himself, stated that His Father has shape, voice, and a face, and that He could be seen by angels.

“And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.” John 5:37 (other translations say “His form”).

“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.” Matthew 18:10

God is called invisible (see Colossians 1:15), but He is only invisible to us fallen human beings:

“Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” 1 Timothy 6:16

God said to Moses:

“Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.” Exodus 33:20

Most obviously, God does have a face. The problem is that a mortal man cannot see His face and live. But when a sinner is restored to communion with God he shall see God face to face.

*“And there shall be no more curse: **but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve Him: And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.**”*
Revelation 22:3-4

Considering the entire Biblical account, it is clear that God is truly invisible to us mortal beings. In this state, we cannot see the Father's face and live. Yet, when sin is destroyed, all saved people will come into direct communion with the Father and shall see Him face to face.

Paul's testimony of Jesus being “*the image of the invisible God...*” (Colossians 1:15) was not an oxymoron. Image is a projection of visible things. God is invisible to our mortal sight, but He could be seen, and He will be seen by saints face to face. God does have a face, just as He testified to Moses.

On Mount Sinai, when God in His person was passing by Moses, He did not allow him to see His face, but allowed him to see His form:

*“And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, **and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.**”* Exodus 33:22-23

Moses saw God's back parts. He saw the Father. Obviously, he saw something. God does have back parts. We do not speculate on the anatomy of God's divine being but a simple conclusion can be made: He is a divine Being because the Bible has revealed to us that He has back parts, a real face, a real arm, etc. Moses was granted a rare opportunity to see God in person.

It wasn't only Moses who saw the figure of the Father. Many other prophets in visions of the heavenly throne have seen Him. This leads us to conclude that the throne of God is a real throne and that a real Person sits upon it. Let us look at a few of their testimonies:

*“And above the firmament that was over their heads was **the likeness of a throne**, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and **upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man** above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of His loins even upward, and **from the appearance of His loins even downward**, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was **the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD**. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.” Ezekiel 1:26-28*

Ezekiel saw the throne and Someone who sits on it was in “*the likeness as the appearance of a man*”. The Father has the appearance of a man because He formed man in His image (Genesis 1:27). He has loins. Again, we do not pry into the mysteries of God’s divine being, but we firmly hold onto the things that are revealed. God is truly a person and He has a body similar to man who was created in His image. It is important to emphasize that the body of God is not the body of a man even if it resembles the appearance of a man because “*there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body*.” 1 Corinthians 15:44

Other visions of the Father on the throne can be found in *Daniel 7:9,10; Revelation 4:2,3; and 1 Kings 22:19-22*. All of these testify of some appearance and that Somebody actually sits on the throne. Ezekiel saw an appearance like a man, proving that man was created in His image, even physically.

“Created to be ‘the image and glory of God’ (1 Corinthians 11:7), Adam and Eve had received endowments not unworthy of their high destiny. Graceful and symmetrical in form, regular and beautiful in feature, their countenances glowing with the tint of health and the light of joy and hope, they bore in outward resemblance the likeness of their Maker. Nor was this likeness manifest in the physical nature only. Every faculty of mind and soul reflected the Creator’s glory.” {EGW, Ed 20.2; 1903}

“When Adam came from the Creator’s hand, he bore, in His physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker.” {EGW, Ed 15.1; 1903}

God created man in His image. This includes His physical nature and image. Man has a face, arms, loins, back parts, etc. We read the same of God. These descriptions should be accepted plainly because in creating a man in His own *physical* image, God has given a specimen of Himself.

“From the first dawn of reason the human mind should become intelligent in regard to the physical structure of the body. Here Jehovah has given a specimen of himself; for man was made in the image of God.—Unpublished Testimonies, January 11, 1897.” {EGW, HL 9.2; 1897}³⁰

What semantic value can be gained by spiritualizing God’s personal interaction with Moses on Mount Sinai? What meaning can be derived from God who put His ‘*metaphorical*’ hand on Moses when He was ‘*metaphorically*’ passing him by, preventing him from seeing His ‘*metaphorical*’ face, yet letting him behold His ‘*metaphorical*’ back parts? God was not deceiving His servant Moses by revealing Himself physically to Him. The Father is a physical and tangible, personal God.

*“He [Jesus] taught that God was a rewarder of the righteous, and a punisher of the transgressor. **He was not an intangible spirit, but a living ruler of the universe. This gracious Father** was constantly working for the good of man, and mindful of all that concerns him...” {EGW, 3SP 47.1; 1878}*

*“Through Jesus Christ, **God—not a perfume, not something intangible, but a personal God**—created man and endowed him with intelligence and power.” {EGW, Ms117-1898.10; 1898}*

While there is no semantic value from spiritualizing God’s person, the same people will cry out “heresy” against those who read the Bible as it is written. God does have body parts. He has back parts, real arms, a real face, He has loins, He has “*the likeness as*

³⁰ The same quote published at General Conference Daily Bulletin: “From the first dawn of reason, the human mind should become intelligent **in regard to the physical structure. Here Jehovah has given a specimen of himself**; for man was made in the image of God...” {EGW, GCDB March 2, 1897, par. 30; 1897}

the appearance of a man". All of this is revealed in God's word and we don't step further to where revelation shines not.

Yet in the light that's presented to us, how can we understand that God is a spirit (John 4:24)? This question leads us to the question of God's omnipresence.

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chapter 6

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

notes

If we believe heaven is a real place, and the sanctuary in heaven is a real place, and the throne of God in the sanctuary is a real place, and Jesus in person really “*sat on the right hand of God*”, then the presence of God is constrained to only one location: in heaven, in the heavenly sanctuary, where He is sitting, in person, on the throne. *But isn't God present everywhere?* If He is only present in one place, on the throne in heaven, how can He be present everywhere?

*“If I ascend up into heaven, **thou art there**: if I make my bed in hell, behold, **thou art there**. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; **Even there** shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” Psalm 139:8-10*

Yes, God is present everywhere, by the virtue of His Spirit, as David said in verse 7:

“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” Psalm 139:7

Also, David teaches us that God is present everywhere by virtue of His omniscience:

*“O LORD, thou hast searched me, and **known me**. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, **thou understandest** my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art **acquainted** with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, **thou knowest it altogether**. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. **Such knowledge** is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. **Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?**” Psalm 139:1-7*

Similarly, David also expressed:

*“Cast me not away from **thy presence**; and take not **thy holy spirit** from me.” Psalm 51:11*

God is present everywhere by virtue of His Spirit.

We have been taught by our Lord that God is in heaven **“Our Father which art in heaven...”** Matthew 6:9. (Psalm 14:2)

The Bible teaches us that God is in the Sanctuary in Heaven.

*“For he hath looked **down from the height of his sanctuary**; from **heaven did the LORD** behold the earth.” Psalm 102:19*

Simply, we conclude that God is personally in Heaven, in His Sanctuary, ruling upon His throne, and is simultaneously everywhere present by His representative the Holy Spirit.

This is what Jesus referred to when he said to the Samaritan woman that God is a spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. His point was that worship of God is not constrained to exact locality, as in Jerusalem or on Mount Gerizim.

*“The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. **Our fathers worshipped in this mountain**; and ye say, **that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship**. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall **neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father**. ... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the **true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth**: for the Father seeketh such*

to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:19-24

When Jesus said that God is a Spirit He pointed to God’s omnipresence. Jesus’ answer solved the generation-long dispute over the locality of worship held between Jews and Samaritans.

The Bible also teaches us that God in person and the Spirit of God are two distinct entities.

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Romans 8:11

Here is a clear distinction made between the Spirit and God that raises the dead by that Spirit.

It is very tempting to delve into the nature of the Holy Spirit but we restrain from any further conclusions than those of which the Bible testifies. We see that the Holy Spirit and God are two distinct entities and we see that the Holy Spirit is the means by which God is everywhere present. Therefore, it is not a surprise that “*a spirit hath not flesh and bones*” (Luke 24:39). Thus, we conclude that the Holy Spirit is the representative of God by which God is everywhere present.

“The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. ‘The Lord’s throne is in heaven’ (Psalm 11:4); yet by His Spirit He is everywhere present. He has an intimate knowledge of, and a personal interest in, all the works of His hand.” {EGW, Ed 132.2; 1903}

*“The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. **Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present.** Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men.” {EGW, MH 417.2; 1905}*

A further, detailed investigation of God's omnipresence and Jesus' omnipresence will be studied in the section on the Holy Spirit.

The Bible clearly teaches us about THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. We see the teaching on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD in all visions of the heavenly throne. In the presence of God we have an understanding of His personality. All records of God's presence testify that He is a person. Thus, the teaching on the presence of God goes hand in hand with His personality. God is a personal being and He is personally present at His throne in Heaven, yet He is everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit. If we deny that God is everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit, we are either denying God's omnipresence, or we are denying His personality.

Our Adventist pioneers understood this well. In the first point of THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES they testified that they believe in one God, a personal, spiritual being, who is everywhere present by His representative the Holy Spirit³¹. Such an understanding is contrary to the popular view that one God is a unity of three co-equal persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is startling to know how far as a church we have distanced ourselves from the early position of our church. But God promised the revival. The fulfilment of this promise will be done in searching the Bible for the answer—just as our pioneers did in their early experiences.

“The Lord has declared that the history of the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every truth that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened. We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. ... There is need now to rehearse the experience of the men who acted a part in the establishment of our work at the beginning.”
[{EGW, Ms129-1905.6,7; 1905}](#)

God wants to revive every pillar of our faith—today. This revival includes the revival of the old pillar, THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. Distracted by various theories, we have forgotten about this pillar.

31 The first point of the Fundamental Principles (from 1872 until 1931)

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The most prominent theory is that God is a person, yet the unity of three persons. In such a view, the understanding of the quality or state of God being a person, or rather three persons, is not clear. The purpose of pillars is to uphold the structure. By examining the pillar we examine the structure. In other words, there are other burning questions to be examined in connection to the structure. For example, who is the God of the Bible? If one God is only the Father, is Jesus divine, and if so, in what way? Is the Holy Spirit a person in the same way as the Father and the Son? THE PERSONALITY OF GOD is a very simple doctrine, teaching us that the Father is a person because He has a physical form. How does that fit the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist foundation? We have to examine all burning questions in connection to our foundation. In doing so, we hope and believe we are fulfilling the will of God in strengthening the pillar we once held, with great unanimity, as Seventh-day Adventists.

GOD THE FATHER

Who is the God of the Bible? This is the foundational question to the purpose and cause of the Seventh-day Adventist movement. God raised the Seventh-day Adventists in order to proclaim the Three Angels' messages. The first message hangs on the question, "*Who is the God we ought to worship?*" A correct understanding of who the God of the Bible is, is a safeguard against worshiping a false God, and consequently breaking the first commandment of the Decalogue.

chapter 7

THE FIRST ANGEL'S MESSAGE

notes

*“Saying with a loud voice, **Fear God, and give glory to Him**; for the hour of **His judgment is come**: and worship **Him** that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”*
Revelation 14:7

Who is the God to whom we are to give glory? Who is the God whose judgment has come? This message is dealing with the end-time problem—the issue of worship. Who is the God we ought to worship? The answer is the God “*that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters*”.

It is God the Creator. Who is He, and how can we identify Him? The book of Revelation, and the rest of the Bible, explain who that God is. Let us look at several characteristics of the God who created heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters:

[the angel with an open book] *“And sware by **Him** that liveth for ever and ever, **who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer**.”*
Revelation 10:6

Here we read that the God of the Bible, the Creator of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters, **He** also **liveth for**

ever and ever. Looking again in Revelation we identify God where the 24 elders give Him glory, as was stated in the first angel's message.

*“The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, **Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**” Revelation 4:10,11*

This God whom these 24 elders worship and give glory, honor, and power to is **God the Creator, God who liveth for ever and ever.** Another characteristic of God is that **He sits on the throne.** These characteristics help us to identify Him to whom the book of Revelation speaks. Revelation explains itself even further:

“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, [all created beings, created by God the Creator] heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever.” Revelation 5:13,14

This verse identifies the God whom we are to worship in the solemn appeal of the first angel. Every creature that is created gives glory, honor, power unto Him that **sitteth upon the throne** (God of the Bible) **and** unto the Lamb—Jesus Christ (John 1:29, 36). It is important to bear in mind that by stating that the Father is addressed as God in the book of Revelation, we are not saying that Jesus Christ is not divine. Jesus Christ is fully divine and we will address all appropriate reasons for His divinity later. So, with our focus on the God of the Bible, as described in Revelation, God is our heavenly Father. In the fifth chapter of Revelation we see **God Who sits upon the throne, Who liveth forever and ever, Who created heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters,** and is approached by Christ. Let's look briefly:

*“And I saw in the right hand of **Him that sat on the throne** a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.” Revelation 5:1*

And nobody was able to open the seals, except Jesus.

*“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, **stood a Lamb as it had been slain**, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.*

*And He came and took the book **out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.**” Revelation 5:6,7*

In the following verses we see who receives worship and whom we ought to worship:

*“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders **fell down before the Lamb**, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.*

*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou **wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God** by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*

*And hast **made us** unto **our God** kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

*Saying with a loud voice, **Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.***

*And **every creature** which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, **Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.***

And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell

down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever.” Revelation 5:8-13

The God of the Bible is our heavenly Father and He is the one who created all. We are to worship Him “*that made the heaven and earth and sea*”, and the Lamb that is His Son, Jesus Christ. According to the record, we are to worship and give glory to these two individuals.

This conclusion, drawn from the book of Revelation, is in harmony with other places in the Bible that identify God. The Bible gives us a precise answer to the question “*who is the God of the Bible?*” Elsewhere in the Bible, the God who made the world is referred to as the Lord of heaven and earth:

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;” Acts 17:24.

Jesus also confirmed this fact:

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” Matthew 11:25

The God of the Bible is our heavenly Father; He is the Creator of heaven and earth; He is the Lord of heaven and earth. This is how the Jews have identified Him as their God:

“And when they [Jews] heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.

For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast

anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,” Acts 4:24-27

The Jews recognized that God the Creator was the Father. The Bible gives us more details of how the Father created all things. God created everything through or by His Son Jesus Christ.

*“...which from the beginning of the world hath been hid **in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ**” Ephesians 3:8.*

In Hebrews 1:2, Paul speaks of God the Father who “...*hath in these last days spoken unto us **by His Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, **by whom also he made the worlds**;*”.

In Greek, the original word ‘by’ is the word ‘*dia*’, which means “*A primary preposition denoting the channel of an act; through (in very wide applications, local, causal or occasional).*”³² The Bible teaches that Jesus performed the act of creation, but the creation is attributed to the Father because He created all things by/through His Son Jesus Christ (more verses: *Colossians 1:12-17*; God created the world by His Word—His Son: *John 1:3*; compare *Jeremiah 10:12* with *1 Corinthians 1:30*). The God of the Bible is our heavenly Father, God of Creation.

“We rejoiced that the God of creation is the God of the Bible, and that we can claim this infinite Being as our Father. We talked of the glories of his power and wisdom, and adored the matchless love which has made it possible, through Jesus Christ, for fallen man to become a son and heir of the Maker and Sovereign of the universe.” {EGW, RHF November 1, 1881, par. 4; 1881}

32 Strong Concordance, G1223 - ‘*διά*’, ‘*dia*’

chapter 8

ONE GOD

The Bible teaches that there is only one God and that there is none other. He is our heavenly Father.

*“Hear, O Israel: **The LORD our God is one LORD:***

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deuteronomy 6:4,5

Jesus confirmed that the Lord our God is one Lord and that there is “none other but He”. And He is His Father.

“And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

*And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; **The Lord our God is one Lord:***

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment...

*And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master; **thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He:***

And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his

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neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

*And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, **Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.***” Mark 12:28-34

Jesus is the highest Authority in the revelation of God. Thus, the only correct way to know who God is, is to hold fast to the testimony of the Person that is the only One who can reveal Him.

*“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

Jesus came from the bosom of the Father to declare the fact that the Lord our God is one Lord, and that there is none other than Him. He revealed Him in His identity, in character and in personality.

*“It is our privilege to know God experimentally, and in true knowledge of God is life eternal. **The only begotten Son of God was God’s gift to the world**, in whose character was revealed the character of him who gave the law to men and angels. **He came to proclaim the fact, ‘The Lord our God is one Lord,’ and Him only shalt thou serve.** He came to make it manifest that, ‘Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and **cometh down from the Father of lights**, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.’”* {EGW, RH March 9, 1897, par. 9; 1897}

*“In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All creation testifies of His power, His wisdom, His love. **Yet not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God. This Christ came to reveal.**”* {EGW, Lt250-1903.6; 1903}

When the Spirit of Prophecy is talking about THE PERSONALITY OF GOD it is always talking about the personality of the Father.

Jesus is the only Person that can bear witness and testimony of who God is and He declared that it is His Father. He testified that **His Father is the only true God**, and there is none other than He. Jesus said:

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

Jesus taught that there is only one God, one true God, and it was His Father. In other places in the Bible He repeated the same:

*“I am come in my **Father’s name**, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*

*How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the **glory that cometh from the only God** ye seek not?” John 5:43-44 (ASV)*

The God of the Bible is a monotheistic God. He is only one God, one person. Jesus, the highest Authority, testifies that the only true God is the Father, none other than He.

Throughout the Bible, it is written that the one true God is the Father only:

*“...we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and **that there is none other God but one**...*

***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 8:4,6*

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

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

Similar Bible verses about “one God” can be found in Galatians 3:20 and James 2:19 in the New Testament; the Old Testament testifies of the same truth.

*“Have we not all **one Father**? hath not **one God** created us?” Malachi 2:10*

When the Bible speaks of “one God”, it speaks of our heavenly Father. The Jews understood it well. They had the right understanding of who God is. In the following section, some of their testimonies in Scripture will be presented.

chapter 9

GOD OF THE JEWS

notes

The God of the Jews is God of their fathers: God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob.

*“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified **His Son Jesus**; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, ...” Acts 3:13*

The God of the Jews, God of their fathers, has a Son whom He glorified. The God of the Jews is God the Father.

*“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to **obey God** rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up **Jesus**, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. **Him hath God** exalted with his right hand **to be a Prince and a Saviour**, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:29-31*

Paul preached the God of his fathers and that was our heavenly Father.

*“And he said, **The God of our fathers** hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know **His will**, and see **that Just One**, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.” Acts 22:14*

The God of our fathers had chosen Paul to know His will, and to see and hear the voice of the Just One. The Just One whom Paul

saw and heard was Christ Jesus. Our heavenly Father was the God of Paul, the God of his fathers.

*“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, **so worship I the God of my fathers**, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:” Acts 24:14*

*“Whom **God hath set forth** to be a propitiation through **faith in His blood**, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*

*To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: **that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus...***

*...Is **He the God of the Jews only?** is **He not also of the Gentiles?** Yes, of the Gentiles also:*

*Seeing it is **one God**, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith” Romans 3:25,26,29,30*

The God of the Jews is our heavenly Father who “*hath set forth*” His Son Jesus to be a propitiation. There is only one God of the Jews and that is the Father. This is testified by Jesus. Speaking to the Jews:

*“Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: **it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:**” John 8:54*

*“Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; **we have one Father, even God.** Jesus said unto them, **If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me.**” John 8:41-42*

There are other occasions when Jesus claimed that His Father was the God of the Jews.

*“Ye worship ye know not what: **we know what we worship:** for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the **true worshippers shall worship the Father** in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” John 4:22,23*

The Jews knew whom they worship. It is the Father, the God of the Jews. Do we know whom we worship?

The Spirit of Prophecy confirms that the Jews had correct knowledge of the one true God:

*“The people of Israel had been taken out of idolatry, to become the depositaries of sacred, ever-living truth. The knowledge of the one true God was given to them. They were greatly blessed with divine revelations, enshrouded in symbols and ceremonies, until type met antitype in the death of Christ. Everything in both their private and their public life was connected with a revealed religion. **The law of God was given by Christ**, and specified so plainly the duties of private, social, and public life, that none needed to err. **One God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth**, was brought to view in the fourth commandment, and his will was to be their will. **Those who worshiped the one true God were strengthened in moral power, and developed strong and symmetrical characters**, while those who worshiped other gods grew more and more debased, because they exalted human passions and sanctioned vice in their religious services.”* {[EGW, ST August 12, 1889, par. 1; 1889](#)}

chapter 10

THE LIVING GOD

In contrast to the gentiles, who were worshiping idols or dead gods, the Jews worshipped **the living God**. This title, “*the living God*”, the Bible refers to the Father only:

*“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the **Christ, the Son of the living God**.” Matthew 16:16*

*“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that **Christ, the Son of the living God**.” John 6:68-69*

*“But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee **by the living God**, that thou tell us whether thou be **the Christ, the Son of God**.” Matthew 26:63*

*“For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your **faith to God**-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how **ye turned to God** from idols to serve **the living and true God**; And to wait for **His Son from heaven**, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10*

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Compare this verse with *2 Kings 19:15,16,19*. From all of these verses it is clear that the Bible only attributes the term “*the living God*” to the Father.

Jesus also affirmed that the only true God is the Father and that He is the living Father:

*“As the **living Father** hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” John 6:57*

More verses about the living God can be found in *2 Corinthians 3:2; 2:16-18* and *Hebrews 10:29-31*.

Here is another interesting verse about who the living God is:

*“... But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto **the city of the living God**, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to **God the Judge of all**, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, **And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant**, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Hebrews 12:21-24*

Our heavenly Father is our God. He is the living God, the only true God, God of the Jews and Gentiles, God who sits upon the throne and liveth for ever and ever. The Third Angel’s Message speaks of the seal of the living God, which will be sealed on the forehead:

*“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having **the seal of the living God**: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed **the servants of our God in their foreheads**.” Revelation 7:2-3*

Seen below, Revelation explains itself: the seal of the living God on their foreheads is no other name than the name of the living God—the Father’s name.

*“And I looked, and, lo, **a Lamb stood on the mount Sion**, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having **His Father’s name written in their foreheads**.” Revelation 14:1*

The same is affirmed in Revelation 22:3-5.

*“There is no place for gods in the heaven above. God is the only true God. He fills all heaven. Those who now submit to **His** will shall see **His** face; and **His** name will be in the foreheads of all who are pure and holy.”* [{EGW, Lt5-1896.14; 1896}](#)

notes

chapter 11

GOD OF HEAVEN

notes

When we look to the reality of heaven we see only one God—the God of heaven. He is the God of all created beings. Angels, other species, and the saved human race, everybody in heaven refers to our heavenly Father as *their* God. Once the plan of salvation is complete, all saved people will call our heavenly Father “*our God*”.

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10

“And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.” Revelation 7:10-12

*“And **they** [twenty four elders] sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and **hast redeemed us to God** by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast **made us***

*unto **our God** kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”*
Revelation 5:9-10

*“And the seventh **angel** sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of **our Lord, and of his Christ**; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”* Revelation 11:15

*“And I saw another **angel** ascending from the east, having the **seal of the living God**: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed **the servants of our God in their foreheads**.”* Revelation 7:2-3

*“And after these things I heard a great voice of **much people in heaven**, saying, Alleluia; **Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God**: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore... And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And **the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne**, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, **Praise our God**, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.”* Revelation 19:1-5

Angels in heaven call the heavenly Father “*our God*”. Once the plan of salvation is complete, the Bible testifies that the God of the saved will be the Father.

*“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down **from God out of heaven**, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of **God is with men**, and he will dwell with them, and **they shall be His people**, and **God himself shall be with them, and be their God**. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And **He that sat upon the throne said**, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst*

*of the fountain of the water of life freely. **He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.***”
Revelation 21:2-7

When everything is finished, our heavenly Father shall be our God, God who sits upon the throne; and we shall be His people, His children, because He adopted us by His only begotten Son.

Moreover, Revelation testifies that the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in heaven.

*“And there shall be no more curse: but **the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it**; and his servants shall serve him.”* Revelation 22:3

In Ezekiel, God testified the same thing: The Father shall be our God, and His Son shall be the Ruler. In Revelation, the Father is our God and He rules with His Son: *“the throne of God and of the Lamb”*.

*“And **I will set up one shepherd over them**, and he shall feed them, even **my servant David**; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And **I the LORD will be their God**, and **my servant David a prince among them**; I the LORD have spoken it.”* Ezekiel 34:23-24

*“And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and **one king shall be king to them all**: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all... but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: **so shall they be my people**, and **I will be their God**. And **David my servant shall be king over them**; and they all shall have **one shepherd**: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and **my servant David shall be their prince for ever**. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will **set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore**. **My tabernacle also shall be with them**: yea, **I will be***

their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.” Ezekiel 37:22-28

In Heaven and the renewed Earth, the Father will be our God and Christ will be our Ruler.

Our Father is God of heaven, God of all saved, God of all angels, and of all hosts of heaven. The Bible also calls Him the most high God.

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chapter 12

THE MOST HIGH GOD

notes

In the Bible, both terms, “*the most high God*” and “*the Highest*” are strictly attributed to the Father.

*“He shall be great, and **shall be called the Son of the Highest**: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David... And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and **the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee**: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Luke 1:32,35*

Jesus is called the Son of the Highest and the Holy Ghost is called the power of the Highest. The Highest is the Father our God.

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

Fallen angels knew Jesus and they knew Who was the most high God. Our Father is the most high God, and there is none other than He. Here are some other examples:

*“When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with **Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high**? I beseech thee, torment me not.” Luke 8:28*

Jesus is the Son of the most high God, the Son of the Father.

“Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.” 2 John 1:3

There is none so high as our Father and Satan wanted to be as high as He was:

“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” Isaiah 14:14

“Satan’s dissatisfaction first commenced in heaven because he could not be first and highest in command — equal with God, exalted above Christ.” {EGW, 1T 293.3; 1868}

This doesn’t mean that Jesus is not equal to the Father (Jesus’ equality with the Father will be our subject of study in the next section).

Throughout the Bible we are taught that the Highest is our heavenly Father. Let’s compare the following two parallel verses in the Gospels.

“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” Luke 6:35

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:45

Jesus said that the Highest is His Father. Nobody else in the Bible has been called “Highest”, or “most High”, except our heavenly Father.

There are other verses like *Genesis 14:18-20,22* compared with *Hebrews 7:1* and the Psalm that Satan tempted Jesus with, *Psalms 91:9,10*. Nebuchadnezzar told the following:

“This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it

notes

*to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it **the basest of men.***”
Daniel 4:17

Jesus was the basest of men and the most High, His Father, gave Him the Kingdom (*Acts 2:36; Ephesians 1:20-22*). So far we have seen that the Bible uses exclusive attributes for God that are only given to the Father. The Father is the only true God, the living God, the God of heaven, and the most High.

chapter 13

GOD OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus testified of His Father to be His God. Here are some instances while He was on Earth:

*“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, **My God, my God**, why hast thou forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46*

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

After the resurrection, God anoints His Son, yet His Father is His God.

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

Paul is quoting *Psalms 45:6,7* and in the sixth verse Jesus is called God. This is important, and will be addressed in the following studies, but here the point is that Jesus' God is the Father. This is the God that Jesus came to reveal to us.

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Decades after He was glorified, Jesus still calls the Father His God. Here, Jesus is speaking:

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

Additionally, Paul and Peter say that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Father; please see *Ephesians 1:3* and *1 Peter 1:3*.

chapter 14

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

All the attributes that the Bible ascribes to God address the sovereignty of the Father. The sovereignty of God is a really important matter. The Father's will and authority are supreme. They always were and always will be. This can be seen throughout the Bible. A vivid example is found in the first chapter of Ephesians. Let us pay attention to the details describing the Father's ultimate will and His sovereignty.

*“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ **by the will of God**, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, **from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ**. Blessed be the **God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as **He hath chosen us in Him** before the **foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children **by Jesus Christ to Himself**, according to the good pleasure of **His will**, To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein he hath made us accepted **in the Beloved**. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, **according to the riches of His grace**; Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us **the mystery of His will**, according to **His good pleasure** which He hath pur-*

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posed in Himself: *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will:* *That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:* *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:1-23*

Whenever the Bible speaks of the will of God, it speaks of the will of the Father. Such verses, that speak of the sovereignty of God, can be found from start to finish. Here are a few of them in the epistle to Timothy:

“That thou keep this commandment without spot, unbreakable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” 1 Timothy 6:14-16

*“Now unto the **King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.**” 1 Timothy 1:17*

God the Father was always sovereign. This holds true before Christ’s incarnation, during His incarnation, and after His glorification.

Looking at prior to the incarnation, from the Spirit of Prophecy we read about a particular event that took place in heaven. This event is mentioned by Paul in the first chapter of Ephesians, where we read moments ago, and chapters’ 2 and 3 where Paul talks about the grace that was given him to *“**preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ**”* Ephesians 3:8-9:

*“The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that **it was ordained by himself that Christ, his Son, should be equal with himself**; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. **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.**” {EGW, 1SP 17.2; 1870}*

Here is another case of the sovereignty of the Father before Christ’s incarnation that can also be found in the Bible:

“I saw that Moses passed through death, but Michael came down and gave him life before he saw corruption. Satan claimed the body as his, but Michael resurrected Moses, and took him to heaven. The Devil tried to hold his body, and railed out bitterly against God, denounced him as unjust, in taking from him his prey. But Michael

*did not rebuke the Devil, although it was through his temptation and power that God's servant had fallen. **Christ meekly referred him to his Father, saying, The Lord rebuke thee.***" {EGW, 1SG 43.1; 1858}

Here it is shown that Christ didn't rebuke Satan Himself. Rather, He meekly referred him to His Father; He showed the supreme authority of His Father.

During Christ's mission on Earth, Jesus clearly taught the supreme authority and sovereignty of His Father.

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

*"**My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all;** and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* John 10:29

After Christ's ascension the Father remains the sovereign God.

*"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

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

In *Revelation* 3:20,21, Jesus says that He sits on His Father's throne. He doesn't call it His own throne but His Father's throne, because the Father is the One that rules all the universe. And after the completion of the plan of salvation God the Father will be God all in all.

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

Once the plan of salvation is finished, God the Father will be God all in all. If this is the case after the plan of salvation, could it be that it was also the case before?

We have previously read, in Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:22-28, that our heavenly Father will be our God, He will be God all in all, but He will give His kingdom to His Servant David–Christ. In the book of Daniel we read that Christ will give the rulership to us.

“But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever...

*And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, **shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High**, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” Daniel 7:18,27*

God the Father is the sovereign God. When the Bible speaks of the will of God, it speaks of the will of the Father. His obedient Son is also subject to His sovereign will and it was in His will to give His obedient Son for the disobedient world.

chapter 15

THE LAW OF GOD—THE FATHER’S LAW

notes

The Father is the supreme Ruler and He is the source of all laws. He is the great Lawgiver. The law of God is the Father’s law. The law of God is a transcript of His character. When the Scripture says that God cannot lie (Numbers 23:11, Hebrews 6:18), it states that He cannot act against His own character. But Christ could act against the will of His Father. There was the risk of an eternal loss involved in saving humanity because there was the possibility for Christ to break the will of God. The crucial point here is that the Law of God is the Father’s law.

*“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; **even as I have kept my Father’s commandments**, and abide in his love.”*
John 15:10

*“And, behold, **I come quickly**; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. **Blessed are they that do His commandments**, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”* Revelation 22:12-14

When Jesus was saying “*Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life*”, He was referring to the commandments of His Father.

“God is a moral governor as well as a Father. He is the Lawgiver.” {EGW, Ms5-1876.13; 1876}

“Those who trample upon God’s authority, and show open contempt to the law given in such grandeur at Sinai, virtually despise the Lawgiver, the great Jehovah.” {EGW, 3SG 294.2; 1864}

“The Son of God was next in authority to the great Lawgiver. He knew that his life alone could be sufficient to ransom fallen man.” {EGW, RH December 17, 1872, par. 1; 1872}

“God, as the supreme ruler of the universe has ever required prompt and unquestioning obedience. Even Christ, in the days of his flesh, was obedient to the law of the Father.” {EGW, ST July 22, 1886, par. 2; 1886}

“...Christ came to die because not a precept of His Father’s law could be altered to excuse man in his fallen condition.” {EGW, Ms69-1912.45; 1912}

“Through his mediatorial work, Christ will fully vindicate the holiness and immutability of his Father’s law.” {EGW, RH April 29, 1875, par. 3; 1875}

“Sin drove man from paradise; and sin was the cause of the removal of paradise from the earth. In consequence of transgression of God’s law, Adam lost paradise. In obedience to the Father’s law, and through faith in the atoning blood of His Son, paradise may be regained. ‘Repentance toward God,’ because His law has been transgressed, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, as man’s only Redeemer, will be acceptable with God. Notwithstanding man’s sinfulness, the merits of God’s dear Son in his behalf will avail with the Father.” {EGW, 2Red 12.2; 1874}

The law of God is the Father’s law, and that leads us to the next important point.

chapter 16

“THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME”—THE FATHER, THE GREAT JUDGE

notes

“Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” Revelation 14:7

We’ve seen how the Bible itself explains who God is in the solemn call of the first angel. He is the Father, and the hour of the Father’s judgment has come. His law was transgressed and the Bible precisely describes His judgement. God had given the judgment to His Son, yet He is about to preside over the judgment. God will judge **by** His Son Jesus Christ. It is the same concept as we saw and studied in the creation. God created everything **by** His Son Jesus Christ, but the merits of creation the Bible attributes to the Father. The same thing is with the judgment:

*“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and **the Ancient of days did sit**, ... A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood **before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened**.” Daniel 7:9-10*

“The Ancient of days is God the Father. Says the psalmist, ‘Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.’ [PS. 90:2.] It is He, the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the Judgment.” {EGW, GC88 479.2; 1888}

“The hour of His judgment”, from the first Angel’s message, was the fulfilment of the 2300 days prophecy of *Daniel 8:14*. This event testifies that the God of the first Angel’s message is the Ancient of days. This is our Heavenly Father. The Father presides in the Judgment.

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:” 1 Peter 1:17

“Who [Jesus], when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” 1 Peter 2:23

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” Romans 2:16

The Father will preside over the Judgment and He will judge righteously, yet He gave the judgment to His Son, for He judges by His Son, Jesus Christ.

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

“For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.” John 5:26-27

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10

notes

For more Bible verses on God's judgment, read *John 8:50*; *Romans 8:3; 14:10*; concerning Christ's judgement of the living and dead, read *2 Timothy 4:1*; *Hebrews 10:30-31*.

chapter 17

FEAR GOD

In contrast to the other two angels' messages, the first angel calls us to action. It calls us to fear God, give Him glory and worship Him. What does the Bible teach us regarding "*fearing God*;" what does it mean?

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding." Proverbs 9:10

"Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God." Proverbs 2:5

Thus, "*the fear of the LORD*" = "*the knowledge of God*".

Elsewhere in the Bible we are taught that the fear of the LORD implies keeping His commandments—"for the hour of His judgment has come".

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth for ever." Psalms 111:10

*“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God, and keep his commandments**: for this is the whole duty of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13*

*“**The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.**” Proverbs 8:13*

To give glory to God is to reveal His character to the world. That is the result of keeping His commandments.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

“To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own and thus make Him known. And in what ever way we make known the Father and the Son, we glorify God.” {EGW, Ms16-1890, par. 93; 1890}

The essence of the first angel’s message is the knowledge of God that leads to the manifestation of His character. Jesus has said that this knowledge constitutes eternal life.

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

The message of the first angel is also given in the Old Testament, which unites everything we’ve studied so far:

*“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD’S Thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and **He chose** their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. **For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment** of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye*

therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Thou shalt fear the LORD Thy God; Him shalt thou serve, and to Him shalt thou cleave, and swear by His name. He is thy praise, and he is Thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen. Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD Thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.” Deuteronomy 10:12-22

notes

THE SON OF GOD

In the previous section we have seen that the Bible gives unequivocal testimony of one God, and that this is our heavenly Father. With such a conclusion, one might further deduce that Jesus is not God and must, therefore, be at the level of a creature and not Creator. Yet, this is not what the Bible teaches. When someone doubts the plainest and most sure testimony of the Bible, it is very hard to prove the obvious. Every doubt, one at a time, must be put aside in order to accept the simplest and most direct testimony that we have recorded in Scripture.

chapter 18

THE SIMPLEST POSSIBLE ANSWER

notes

All supposed problems regarding Christ fall apart with the plain and simple understanding of the fact that *Jesus is the Son of God*.

If we simply accept, without a doubt, that Jesus is the Son of God then we know who God is, and that this God has a Son, which is Christ Jesus. With doubtless acceptance of this unequivocal testimony in Scripture, the case stands clear for Christ's complete and absolute divinity. The Son of God is God. This reasoning is deducted from the obvious. The Son of man is man. *The son of a duck is a duck. It looks like a duck, walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, and it raises the dead like a duck.*³³

Children inherit the nature of their parents. The son of a man is begotten of a man; he possesses the complete and absolute nature of a man. Likewise, the Son of God is begotten of God; He possesses the complete and absolute nature of God. This explains the complete and absolute divinity of Christ. Jesus is the begotten Son of God. If this is accepted, without any doubt in its obvious meaning, then the Sonship of Christ will answer all other supposed issues.

³³ The adaptation of the "duck test" - a form of abductive reasoning. "If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duck_test.

In the fact that Jesus is the Son of God lies the answer to His personality. “Personality”, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is defined as the “*quality or state of being a person*”. If Christ is truly the begotten Son of God, then He inherited the very same quality or state of being a person as His Father. The Bible clearly proves this when it says that Jesus is “*the express image of His* [the Father’s] *person*” (Hebrews 1:3).

How does one prove that which is obvious? The reason one rejects the obvious is because of doubt; we hope to cast away all possible doubts with the simplest and most explicit testimony that the Bible can give: Jesus is the Son of God in the obvious meaning of these words.

chapter 19

THE TRUE FATHERHOOD OF THE FATHER

notes

If “*the Father*”, or “*the Son*”, are symbols or metaphors then the Bible should explain their true meaning. Yet, that isn’t the case here. The Bible never explains the symbol “the Father” but, to the contrary, gives us evidence that these words should be accepted in their obvious meaning.

The Bible teaches us that God the Father is truly the father of our Lord Jesus Christ:

*“For this cause I bow my knees unto **the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,**” Ephesians 3:14-15*

The word “*family*” in Greek is the word ‘*patria*’, which is derived from the word ‘*pater*’, which means ‘*father*’. Some translations even render this verse with “*Of whom all **paternity** in heaven and earth is named*” (DRB), which is a more literal translation. It speaks of fatherhood and emphasizes the point that Paul is conveying. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is truly His father because our paternity on Earth is named according to paternity in heaven, where God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our

earthly paternity mirrors true Reality: the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If our earthly fatherhood is literal, and it is an image of Reality, how can Reality be merely symbolic or metaphorical? The Father is truly the father of our Lord Jesus Christ and Jesus is truly the Son of God. In the Bible, these words are applied in their apparent meaning. This understanding not only helps us to comprehend God's goodness in giving His Son, but also teaches us about one God who has only begotten Son. Knowing God as the true Father to our Lord Jesus Christ casts away all doubt in His unspeakable Gift.

The Father is truly the Father; the Son is truly the Son of the Father. Many object here and cry "heresy" for comparing man with God. But those things that have been revealed belong to us—and we believe those things. Man is only an image of God, not an exact copy of the Reality. God and His nature are beyond our scope of understanding, but we can know of God as much as He has revealed. Just as He has revealed Himself in the creation of man, having created man in His image, He has created fatherhood on Earth, and named it according to His Fatherhood to His Son.

chapter 20

FROM EVERLASTING

notes

In the following, we will examine the testimony of Scriptures that assures our faith in Christ as begotten of the Father, but also as His being from everlasting. These two ideas are logically in collision, yet as we will see, the Bible gives us clear testimony of both.

*“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.**” Micah 5:2*

In this verse, the prophet Micah mentions ‘going forth’ twice. The first time refers to Bethlehem where Jesus will be born of a woman and become a Son of man; this is described by the Hebrew word ‘yâtsâ’. The second time, the prophet Micah uses the word ‘môtsâ’âh’, which in original Hebrew means “*family descent*”³⁴ ³⁵. His family descent is from His Father therefore, He is the Father’s Son—the only begotten Son of God. In the same way as He is the Son of man, He is the Son of God—through birth. Interestingly, ‘môtsâ’âh’ is “*from of old, from everlasting*”. Christ is begotten of the Father, yet He is from everlasting. That is a logical contra-

³⁴ Strong’s Concordance - H4163 מוֹצֵא, môtsâ’âh, mo-tsaw-aw’

³⁵ The word ‘môtsâ’âh’ is used in plural form to denote *excellence* of this one single event, rather than multiple events. As *John Gill’s exposition of entire Bible comments*: “...as the former part of the text sets forth his human birth, this his divine generation; which, cause of the excellency and ineffableness of it, is expressed in the plural number, ‘goings forth’...”

diction, but we should not dispel any side of the equation. In an attempt to logically explain this phenomenon people often opt to deny Christ being begotten of the Father, in order to ‘preserve’ Christ’s divinity, yet Christ’s divinity is based on His Sonship with God. As Jesus became the Son of man, born of man, inherited man’s nature, so was He Son of God, begotten in the express image of the Father’s person.

“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.” {EGW, ST May 30, 1895, par. 3; 1895}

This truly gives the right perspective on John 3:16. God has given His only begotten Son. God truly has a Son—begotten in the express image of His own person.

“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.” {EGW, RH July 9, 1895, par. 13; 1895}

How was Christ “*made in the express image of his [Father’s] person?*” He was made because he was “*begotten in the express image of the Father’s person*”.

“In order that man might be placed on vantage ground with God, Christ, the only begotten Son of God, made in His express image, came to this world and in the likeness of humanity lived a perfect life....” {EGW, Ms127-1905.14; 1905}

Before Jesus came in the likeness of humanity, He was made in the express image of His Father’s person, because he was made in the likeness of God first.

“Christ was the Lord of heaven and earth, yet for our sake He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. He was made in the likeness of God, yet He humbled Himself and

took upon Him the form of a servant, that He might save us.”
[{EGW, Lt133-1905.6; 1905}](#)

Jesus was made in the likeness of God before He came in the likeness of humanity. He was begotten in the express image of the Father’s person.

“Before Christ came in the likeness of men, he existed in the express image of his Father.” [{EGW, YI December 20, 1900, par. 4; 1900}](#)

*“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. From everlasting he was the Mediator of the covenant, the one in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted him, were to be blessed. ‘The Word was with God, and the Word was God.’ Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God.**”* [{EGW, RH April 5, 1906, par. 5; 1906}](#)

Today, modern Christian theology puts forth strong effort to eradicate Christ as the begotten, in the express image of His Father’s person. There is a denial of Christ to be the only begotten Son of God before His incarnation, as *Micha 5:2* states. One of the arguments asserts that Christ became the Son of God at His birth in Bethlehem. To prove this, *Luke 1:32,35* is referenced, when the angel said to Mary:

*“He shall be great, and shall **be called the Son of the Highest:** and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:”*
Luke 1:32

*“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which **shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.**”* *Luke 1:35*

What does it mean that the baby that is about to be born shall be called the Son of God? Does it mean that the One whose “goings forth”—from everlasting—was not the Son of God before Bethlehem?

*“In His incarnation **He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God.** Said the angel to Mary, ‘The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God’ (Luke 1:35) While the Son of a human being, **He became the Son of God in a new sense.** Thus He stood in our world--**the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race.**” {EGW, Ms22-1905.5; 1905}*

Jesus was the Son of God before the incarnation. The reason “*that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*” is because Jesus “***became the Son of God in a new sense***”; while He veiled His divinity with humanity, He was still “***the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race***”.

*“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.**” {EGW, Lt77-1894.9; 1894}*

*“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.**” {EGW, Lt303-1903.14; 1903}*

chapter 21

“THE BEGINNING” PROBLEM

notes

If Christ is the begotten of the Father, made in the express image of His Father's person, then logically He must have a beginning. If Christ has a beginning, how can He be eternal? Now, let's reverse the logic: if Christ is eternal, then how can He have a beginning? If He does not have a beginning then He is not the begotten of the Father. This logic presents a challenge to many minds in accepting that Christ is truly begotten in the express image of the Father's person. Let us have a look at what Scripture teaches us regarding Christ as the begotten, having a beginning, and His everlasting existence.

In *Proverbs* 8, Jesus personifies wisdom (see *1 Corinthians* 1:24,30 and *Colossians* 2:3):

“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: 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: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the

*fountains of the deep: 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; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.” Proverbs 8:22-31*

The text clearly expresses that the wisdom of God was brought forth before any works of old, in the beginning of God’s ways. Since modern theology denies that Christ was brought forth from the Father, it denies that in Proverbs 8 Christ personifies wisdom. But we should hold onto the principles of interpretation. The Bible is its own interpreter.

The Bible previously told us that God created everything **by His Son** (*Ephesians 3:8; Hebrew 1:2; Colossians 1:16*). *Proverbs 8* expounds how wisdom was with God in creating the world. The Bible is clear that God created everything **by wisdom** (*Proverbs 3:19; Psalm 104:24*). This leads us to infer that wisdom is represented by God’s Son. The confirmation of this inference is in *1 Corinthians 1:24,30* and *Colossians 2:3*, where Christ “*who of God is made unto us wisdom*”, because in Him “*are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*”—“*Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God*”. Comparing Spiritual with Spiritual, the inspired writings testify that wisdom speaking in *Proverbs 8* is the Son of God Himself:

“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.” [\[EGW, PP 34.1; 1890\]](#)

We would like to bring your attention to the word ‘possessed’ in *Proverbs 8:22*. In Hebrew, this is the word ‘qânâh’, which means ‘to get’, ‘acquire’ or ‘possess’³⁶. The Lord Jehovah acquired wisdom; in other words, He acquired His Son. According to the text in *Proverbs 8*, when did Jehovah acquire His Son? It was in *the*

36 Strong Concordance H7069; qânâh

beginning of His way, before His works of old, when there were no fountains, before the mountains were settled, before the hills He was brought forth. With an objective examination of the text, we do not see an exclusive relationship between Christ being from everlasting, yet have a beginning. Concerning Jesus, the text says that He “*was set up from everlasting, from the beginning*”. *Everlasting* and *beginning* are two logically *exclusive* terms but the Bible applies them equality to Christ, right next to each other. Jesus existed from eternity and yet He was acquired from the beginning, and He was brought forth before anything was created.

“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.’”
[{EGW, RH April 5, 1906, par. 7; 1906}](#)

“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.”
[{EGW, RH April 5, 1906, par. 8; 1906}](#)

What truth is infinitely mysterious and incomprehensible? It is the truth of the divine Son of God’s eternal oneness with the Father. “*Eternal sonship*” is an oxymoron. If Christ is eternal, how can He be a Son? The answer “*is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible*”.

Without any explanation, Jesus testifies of Himself that He is from everlasting, yet has a beginning. His Testimony is: “*I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.*” Though this statement may seem contradictory to a skeptic, we accept it because we believe Jesus’ testimony. Christ was set up from everlasting, from the beginning. “*This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light unapproachable and incomprehensible.*”

The word “set up” is another interesting word. In the original, it is the word ‘nâsak’, which means “to pour out” in “analogy to anoint a king”³⁷. In *Proverbs 8*, Jesus testifies of an event when He was brought forth from His Father, when He acquired him, and when He anointed Him as King.

The Psalmist recalls this event in *Psalms 2*:

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” Psalms 2:1-7

When God said, “*I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion*”, the same word ‘nâsak’ is used. God anointed His Son upon His holy hill of Zion. This is the same motive as in *Proverbs 8*, when Jesus testified that He was brought forth and “*set up from everlasting, from the beginning*”. The interesting part is that this decree is also a testament to Christ’s resurrection:

“God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” Acts 13:33

37 Strong Concordance H5258; nâsak

This was a declaration of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was *“declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, **by the resurrection from the dead.**”* Romans 1:4

Skeptics point out that the resurrection was the symbolic birth of Christ, and that he became the Son of God in the resurrection. Thus, God’s decree *“**Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee**”*, is exclusively attributed to Christ’s resurrection. It is true that Christ’s resurrection is prophesied in *Psalm 2*, but denial of this verse, as Christ being begotten in the express image of His Father’s person, before the world was, is contrary to Christ’s own testimony. We see this in connection to Christ’s intercessory prayer in *John 17*, and His glorification in *Hebrews 1*, which took place after His resurrection. Let us first read *Hebrews 1*.

*“**God**, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days **spoken unto us by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; **Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person**, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, **sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high**; 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?”* *Hebrews 1:1-5*

This event took place when Jesus was resurrected and glorified, seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Jesus testified that the glory He will receive at His resurrection is the same glory He received from the Father *before the world was*. Jesus prayed to His Father:

*“**And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.**”* *John 17:5*

In Jesus’ prayer to receive the glory from His Father that He *had* with His Father before the world was, we see why *Psalm 2:7* has

dual interpretation. This glory was revealed in the resurrection and it was present from the beginning, from everlasting—before the world was.

The answer to Jesus’ prayer came when God glorified His Son by raising Him from the dead.

*“Who by him do believe in God, **that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.**” 1 Peter 1:21*

In *Hebrews 1*, we read about the glorification of Christ that happened after the resurrection when Christ was seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, when the Father gave a decree “***Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee***”. This glory was the same glory Christ received from the Father before the world was.

*“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may **behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.**” John 17:24*

Jesus clearly testified that in His resurrection He would receive the same glory that the Father had given Him before the foundation of the world. His words are clear. There was an event, before the foundation of the world, when Jesus received glory from the Father. In the resurrection Jesus received that glory again. In the resurrection, the same decree that was declared in the beginning was repeated: “***Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee***” (*Hebrews 1:5; Psalm 2:7*). God set up His King on His holy hill, Zion. As in the resurrection, so was it “***from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was***” (*Proverbs 8:23*). It was the day when God the Father acquired (*qânâh*) His Son. “*Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was*” the Son was “*brought forth.*” The Father glorified His Son with the glory of His “***own self***” (*John 17:5*). Then Christ received the brightness of the Father’s glory because He was *made* in “*the express image of His person*”. In Christ we behold the glory that the Father had given Him before the foundation of the world, “*the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*” (*John 1:14*).

*“When [God] established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: 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 [His only begotten Son] was by him, as **one brought up** with him: and [His Son] was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him”* (Proverbs 8:28-30). The same was testified in *Hebrews 1*. The same Son of God *“by whom also [God] made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person”*, was by His Father in the creation of the world.

*“Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? **who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is His name, and what is His Son’s name**, if thou canst tell?”* Proverbs 30:4

God created everything by His Son. In creation, He had a Son.

*“**In the beginning** was the Word, and the Word was with [the] God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with [the] God. **All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.**”* John 1:1-3 (added articles are from the original manuscript)

In the face of all testimonies presented, we see that the Bible teaches us that there was a beginning. Before the foundation of the world, God gave the glory to His Son (**John 17:5,24**). Christ was *“brought forth”* in *“the brightness of His [God’s] glory, and the express image of His person”*. The same glory Christ received when God *“hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee”*. He was anointed, or set up (*nâsak*) again, as He *“was set up from everlasting, from the beginning”*.

The Bible inclusively uses the terms *“from everlasting”* and *“the beginning”*; one does not negate the other. Can we fully understand this? Obviously not, but we can accept this testimony upon the authority of His word.

*“The entrance of sin into the world, the incarnation of Christ, regeneration, **the resurrection, and many other subjects presented***

in the Bible, are mysteries too deep for the human mind to explain or even to fully comprehend. But God has given us in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine character, and we are not to doubt His word because we cannot understand all the mysteries of His providence.” {EGW, 5T 699.3; 1889}

“The portions of Holy Writ presenting these great themes are not to be passed by as of no use to man. All that God has seen fit to make known we are to accept upon the authority of His word. Only a bare statement of facts may be given, with no explanation as to why or how; but though we cannot comprehend it we should rest content that it is true, because God has said it. All the difficulty lies in the weakness and narrowness of the human mind.” {EGW, 5T 699.4; 1889}

There are questions that cannot be answered due to our finite minds but we can accept them by faith, upon the authority of God’s word. The Bible teaches us that *there was a beginning*, when Jesus was begotten of the Father, yet *He is from everlasting*. Only a bare statement of facts was given to this testimony, “with no explanation as to why or how; but though we cannot comprehend it we should rest content that it is true, because God has said it. All the difficulty lies in the weakness and narrowness of the human mind”. Let us be humble in admitting our weakness in reckoning the eternal existence of the only begotten Son of God.

“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.” {EGW, ST May 3, 1899, par. 4; 1899}

“Angels of God looked with amazement upon Christ, who took upon Himself the form of man and humbly united His divinity with humanity in order that He might minister to fallen man. It is a marvel among the heavenly angels. God has told us that He did do it, and we are to accept the Word of God just as it reads. And although we may try to reason in regard to our Creator, how long He has had existence, where evil first entered into our world, and all these things, we may reason about them until we fall down faint and exhausted with the research when there is yet an infinity beyond.” {EGW, 7BC 919.5}

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Christ being begotten of the Father is the fact unequivocally pressed by Scripture; so is the testimony of His everlasting existence. We are to accept this by faith and not doubt any of the testimonies. The secret things belong unto the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us; and that which has been revealed to us is that Jesus Christ is the true Son of God—begotten in the express image of the Father's person. This is the believer's assurance of Christ's full divinity.

chapter 22

THE ORIGINAL, UNBORROWED AND UNDERIVED LIFE OF THE BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD

Jesus, being begotten of God, had received the very same life that God possesses. This is an obvious fact. Children inherit the very same life of their parents. So it is with the Son of God. The Spirit of Prophecy teaches us that the life that the Son of God inherited from the Father is the type of life that God exclusively possesses—the life original, unborrowed, and underived.

*“**In him** [Christ] **was life**; and the life was the light of men.’ It is not physical life that is here specified, **but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life.** Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. **But the life of Christ was unborrowed.** No one can take this life from Him. ‘I lay it down of myself,’ He said. **In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as his personal Saviour.**”*

[{ST April 8, 1897, par. 2}](#)

notes

Through Christ man can possess the original, unborrowed and underived life, which is the exclusive property of God. The original, unborrowed, underived life, will be given to man who believes in Christ as his personal Saviour. Christ can give us this life because He possesses this life and Christ possesses this life because God has given it to Him.

*“For as the **Father hath life in himself**, even so **gave He to the Son also to have life in himself**:” John 5:26*

How did the Father give this life to His only begotten Son? It was inherited. This life was not human life, but the life that God has in Himself. The Son of God inherited the original, unborrowed and underived life from his Father, and man can also possess this life. *“This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ”.*

*“All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: **through the beloved Son, the Father’s life flows out to all; through the Son it returns**, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to **the great Source of all**. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, **the law of life**.” {EGW, DA 21.2; 1898}*

How high a gift has our Father bestowed upon us! If finite, mortal human beings can receive this original, unborrowed, underived life through adoption, then how much more so did the Son, who received it by inheritance?

chapter 23

THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

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

Modern Christian theology advocates that the term “*only begotten*” is an incorrect translation. Numerous modern translations of the Bible omit the word “*begotten*”. Instead, the translations read, “*one and only Son*”. We will let the Bible be its own interpreter, its own dictionary. The Greek word for “*only begotten*” is the word ‘*monogenes*’. This word is only used nine times in the Greek New Testament; referring five times to Jesus as “*only begotten*” of the Father and four times to other people. Every time the word “*monogenes*” doesn’t refer to Jesus, it is used in its obvious meaning: as one true and literal begotten child.

*“Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, **the only son of his mother** (monogenes), **and she was a widow**: ...” Luke 7:12*

The text emphasizes the socioeconomic circumstances of this unfortunate widow. Men were those who provided for the family. This woman was without her husband and now without her son—

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her only begotten son. There is no doubt that this child was her only begotten son.

*“And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus’ feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: For he **had one only daughter** (monogenes), about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying...”
Luke 8:41-42*

Jairus’ daughter was truly his begotten and only daughter. There is no doubt.

*“And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is **mine only child** (monogenes).” Luke 9:38*

The son of this man was his true son and child. The Bible uses the word ‘monogenes’ in its obvious meaning. In all of the examples given, we are left with no doubt that these children were only begotten children of their parents. The fourth example, below, is perhaps the most important one because it is a picture of Christ.

*“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up **his only begotten** (monogenes) **son**,” Hebrews 11:17*

We know from the Old Testament that Issac was not the only child of Abraham because he had Ishmael. But when God called Abraham to sacrifice Issac, He said, in *Genesis 22:2*, “only” child - *yâchîyd*, which literally means only (check *Proverbs 4:3* or *Zechariah 12:10*).

*“**God had promised Abraham that in his old age he should have a son, and this promise had been fulfilled. But now God says: ‘Take now thy son, . . . and offer him there for a burnt-offering. ‘God left Ishmael out of the question saying, ‘Thine only son Isaac’.**”*
[*{EGW, YI June 6, 1901, par. 3; 1901}*](#)

Isaac was a promised child. He was literally and truly Abraham’s son; meanwhile, Ishmael was out of the question. At this time, for God, Isaac was Abraham’s only child. When God asked Abraham to give his only son Isaac, it was the lesson for us that God will pro-

vide the way of redemption through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. If the image was a literal son, why wouldn't the Reality also be accepted literally? Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of our God.

As the Bible is its own interpreter and its own dictionary, Christ referenced as *monogenes* testifies of the true Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ and puts the highest emphasis on the sacrifice that the Father has made.

Nowadays, theologians deny that Jesus is truly begotten of the Father. Yet, the Spirit of Prophecy clarifies, in many different ways, that Jesus is truly begotten of the Father and that God gave us His own begotten Son.

*“Christ impresses upon the mind of believers the fact that they are to have the glory which the Father has given Him, in order that all who love and serve him may be one with God. [quoted John 17:8,22,23] What a request! He asked not that which was impossible for the members of the human race who believe on Him to receive. He asks that the Father shall love those who believe in Him, who love and serve Him as He loves His Son. Is this not sufficient to fill our minds with profoundest awe and love? Where is our faith? O, let it be strengthened in contemplation of the thought of the possibility of God loving finite men, **even as He loves His own begotten Son**. Let our faith be strengthened in contemplating the thought that as followers of Christ we may be complete in Him. O how far short is our faith! Let us talk faith, live faith, and give to the world an example of the faith which works by love and purifieth the soul.”* {EGW, Lt13-1894.18; 1894}

God has a Son. God has a begotten Son. Jesus is God's own begotten Son.

chapter 24

TESTIMONIES TO THE SON OF GOD

SON OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

notes

The Bible, in various ways, claims that the Son of God and His activities were known in the Old Testament. This is a vast and interesting subject, and much could be said about it. We will expound but a few explicit verses where we can clearly see that the Jews knew that God has a Son.

“Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in his garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is His son’s name, if thou knowest?” Proverbs 30:4

The Jews knew that God has a Son. They knew Him as the “*Angel of the Lord*”³⁸. The Jews knew that God has a Son and they taught that.

*“He answered and said, Lo, I see **four men** loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and **the aspect of the fourth is like a Son of the God**...*

*Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, Blessed be **the God of Shadrach**,*

38 Christ the Angel of the Lord—Exodus 23:20-23; 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent His Angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and have yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God." Daniel 3:25,28

[Daniel 3:24, 25 quoted] ***"How did Nebuchadnezzar know that the form of the fourth was like the Son of God? He had heard of the Son of God from the Hebrew captives that were in his kingdom. They had brought the knowledge of the living God who ruleth all things."*** {EGW, RH May 3, 1892, par. 10; 1892}

Here are more examples:

"Two of the heavenly messengers departed, leaving Abraham alone with Him whom he now knew to be the Son of God." {EGW, PP 139.2; 1890}

"Of Enoch it is written that he lived sixty-five years, and begat a son. After that he walked with God three hundred years. During these earlier years Enoch had loved and feared God and had kept His commandments. He was one of the holy line, the preservers of the true faith, the progenitors of the promised seed. From the lips of Adam he had learned the dark story of the Fall, and the cheering one of God's grace as seen in the promise; and he relied upon the Redeemer to come. But after the birth of his first son, Enoch reached a higher experience; he was drawn into a closer relationship with God. He realized more fully his own obligations and responsibility as a son of God. And as he saw the child's love for its father, its simple trust in his protection; as he felt the deep, yearning tenderness of his own heart for that first-born son, he learned a precious lesson of the wonderful love of God to men in the gift of His Son, and the confidence which the children of God may repose in their heavenly Father. The infinite, unfathomable love of God through Christ became the subject of his meditations day and night; and with all the fervor of his soul he sought to reveal that love to the people among whom he dwelt." {EGW, PP 84.3; 1890}

The fact that God has a Son, and that He will give His Son for fallen man, was known to Old Testament figures. Enoch reached a higher experience and was drawn into a closer relationship with God after the birth of his first son. This fact—that Christ is the

only begotten Son of God—was known to angels before the world was even created, and it was the argument against Satan’s rebellion in heaven. The fact that Christ was the only begotten Son of God, Satan and his angels were most determined to obscure.

*“Angels were expelled from heaven because they would not work in harmony with God. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus. **This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ. One angel began the controversy and carried it on until there was rebellion in the heavenly courts, among the angels.**”* {EGW, Lt42-1910.3; 1910}

The fact that Christ was the only begotten Son of God was the point of disputation in the controversy between Christ and Satan. The argument on the Sonship of Christ was the argument to settle the controversy. Christ was the only begotten Son of God even before the world was created.

*“[Satan] His beauty was so highly exalted that he thought he should be as God, and Christ must be second to him; **but the Lord informed Satan this could not be possible. Christ was His only begotten Son.**”* {EGW, Lt157-1910.7; 1910}

Ideas that deny the true Sonship of Christ originate with the father of lies and stand at the root of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Today, Satan continues to conceal the reality that Christ is the only begotten Son of God. Today, Satan continues to sow the seed of doubt in that God has a Son because that seed grows unbelief in the saving Gospel—that God has given His only begotten Son for our rebellion against Him.

But in the face of skeptics who advocate that Jesus became the Son of God in the resurrection or in the incarnation, the Bible clearly attests that God has sent His Son to the world. Before Christ’s incarnation, God had a Son whom He sent to the world.

GOD SENT HIS SON.

*“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, **God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:**” Romans 8:3*

The incarnation happened when Christ took on the likeness of sinful flesh. The Son took on the likeness of sinful flesh because God had sent Him to do it. The verse clearly indicates that God had the Son before the incarnation. The New Testament is abundant in this salvational testimony.

*“For God so loved the world, that **He gave his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. **For God sent not His Son into the world** to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” John 3:16-17*

*“In this was manifested **the love of God toward us**, because that **God sent His only begotten Son into the world**, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, **but that He loved us, and sent His Son** to be the propitiation for our sins.” 1 John 4:9-10*

*“But when the fulness of the time was come, **God sent forth His Son**, made of a woman, made under the law,” Galatians 4:4*

God had a Son to send into the world, to save us.

Martha knew that the coming Messiah that should come into the world is the Son of God.

*“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: **I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.**” John 11:25-27*

How did Martha know that the Christ that should come into the world is the Son of God? She knew it because she knew that God has a Son and “*In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen*” (Genesis 22:14). God had a Son before the incarnation, and for our redemption the Son of God came and was manifested.

*“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose **the Son of God was manifested**, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8*

*“And we know that **the Son of God is come**, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” 1 John 5:20*

*“Satan well knew the position that Christ had held in heaven as the Beloved of the Father. That the **Son of God should come to this earth as a man** filled him with amazement and with apprehension. He could not fathom the mystery of this great sacrifice. His selfish soul could not understand such love for the deceived race.” {EGW, DA 115.2; 1898}*

Throughout the Gospels, Christ, the Son of God, testifies that the Father has sent Him. Here are a few of those instances:

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

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

*“For **I came down from heaven**, not to do mine own will, but the will of **Him that sent me**.” John 6:38*

*“Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on **Him that sent me**. And he that seeth me seeth **Him that sent me**... For I have not spoken of myself; but **the Father which sent me**, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.” John 12:44,45,49*

*“He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but **the Father’s which sent me**.” John 14:24*

*“That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not **the Father which hath sent Him**.” John 5:23*

Before Bethlehem, God had a Son whom He sent to the world. Many testimonies were given of Him being the Son of the one true God.

TESTIMONIES OF FALLEN ANGELS

Reading the above quotation from Sister White, we saw that fallen angels knew that Jesus was the Son of God. They testified of this while being on the earth.

*“And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, **Jesus, thou Son of God?** art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” Matthew 8:29*

*“But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, **Jesus, thou Son of the most high God**? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.” Mark 5:6-7*

*“And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, **Thou art the Son of God**. And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.” Mark 3:11-12*

*“When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, **Jesus, thou Son of God most high**? I beseech thee, torment me not.” Luke 8:28*

*“And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, **Thou art Christ the Son of God**. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: **for they knew that he was Christ**.” Luke 4:41*

Jesus, Himself, has also proclaimed that He is the Son of God.

TESTIMONY OF JESUS

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

*“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, **Dost thou believe on the Son of God?** He answered and said, **Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?***

*And Jesus said unto him, **Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.** And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.” John 9:35-38*

*“But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, **I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.** Jesus saith unto him, **Thou hast said:** nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have **heard his blasphemy.**” Matthew 26:63-65*

There are many other occasions when Jesus claimed that He is the Son of God. Most notable are those at the end of His life; these cost Him His life. You may read these in *Mark 16:61-64; Luke 22:69,70; John 19:7,8; and Matthew 27:39-43.*

TESTIMONY OF JESUS' DISCIPLES AND BELIEVERS

His disciples believed His testimony, that He is the Son of God.

*“Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, **Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.** Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, **believest thou?** thou shalt see greater things than these.” John 1:48-50*

*“And Simon **Peter** answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.** And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for **flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.**” Matthew 16:16-17*

Faith in the Son of God doesn't come from men, from flesh and blood. It can only be revealed by our Father that is in heaven.

*“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And **we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.**” John 6:68-69*

All of Jesus’ disciples acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God.

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

Martha, the centurion, Philip, Paul, and others, testified that Jesus is the Son of God.

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

*“And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, **Truly this man was the Son of God.**” Mark 15:39*

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

*“And straightway he (Paul after conversion) **preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.**” Acts 9:20*

TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

*“And **John bare record**, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, **and bare record that this is the Son of God.**” John 1:32-34*

This testimony was very significant for the Jews because it was the actual sign of Him being the Messiah. They knew that the Messiah is the Son of God. The testimony that the Spirit of God was resting upon Jesus in dove-like form was the fulfillment of *Isaiah 61:1* and Jesus, speaking with the Jews, referred to John’s testimony:

“If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.” John 5:31-33

But then He said something even more important:

“But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. And ye have not His word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not.” John 5:36-38

Testimony of the works that the Father gave to Jesus is a greater witness of His Sonship than that of John the Baptist. This can be seen throughout the Gospel of John. Structurally, the Gospel of John consistently testifies of Christ being the Son of God. Specifically, John uses the word ‘signs’ instead of ‘miracles’ and this is for a reason. When Christ performed a sign, He did it to signify something. From chapter one to chapter twelve, Christ performs sign after sign. Each sign is followed by an explanation of the sign and every explanation testifies that Christ is the Son of God. At the end of this Gospel, John states why he wrote them:

*“And many other **signs** truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But **these are written**, that ye might **believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**; and that believing ye might have life through His name.” John 20:30,31*

The signs and works that Jesus did were given from the Father. Also, Christ said, “And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me”. The question is, do we have the Father’s witness? The greatest testimony of Jesus’ Sonship is from the Father Himself.

TESTIMONY OF THE FATHER

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the

*Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.***” *Matthew 3:16-17*

This is the greatest testimony of Christ being God’s true Son. It is also written in *Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; and Luke 3:21-22; 9:35.*

*“Of the vast throng at the Jordan, few except John discerned the heavenly vision. Yet the solemnity of the divine Presence rested upon the assembly. The people stood silently gazing upon Christ. His form was bathed in the light that ever surrounds the throne of God. His upturned face was glorified as they had never before seen the face of man. **From the open heavens a voice was heard saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’**”* [{EGW, DA 112.2; 1898}](#)

*“These words of confirmation were given to inspire faith in those who witnessed the scene, and to strengthen the Saviour for His mission. Notwithstanding that the sins of a guilty world were laid upon Christ, notwithstanding the humiliation of taking upon Himself our fallen nature, **the voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of the Eternal.**”* [{EGW, DA 112.3; 1898}](#)

*“At the Saviour’s baptism, Satan was among the witnesses. He saw **the Father’s glory overshadowing His Son. He heard the voice of Jehovah testifying to the divinity of Jesus.**”* [{EGW, DA 116.2; 1898}](#)

*“Never before had angels listened to such a prayer as Christ offered at his baptism, and they were solicitous to be the bearers of the message from the Father to his Son. But, no! **direct from the Father issues the light of his glory.** The heavens were opened, and beams of glory rested upon the Son of God and assumed the form of a dove, in appearance like burnished gold. The dove-like form was emblematical of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. While the people stood spell-bound with amazement, their eyes fastened upon Christ, from the opening heavens came these words: ‘**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**’ The words of confirmation that Christ is the Son of God were given to inspire faith in those who witnessed the scene, and to sustain the Son of God in his arduous work. Notwithstanding the Son of God was clothed with humanity, yet Jehovah, with his own voice, **assures him of his sonship with the Eternal.** In this manifestation*

to his Son, God accepts humanity as exalted through the excellence of his beloved Son.” {EGW, RH January 21, 1873, par. 5; 1873}

The divinity of Jesus is based on the reality that He is truly the Son of the Eternal.

In their epistles, Peter and John testify that God gave clear testimony of His Son Jesus while they were on the mount of transfiguration.

*“For we have **not followed cunningly devised fables**, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **were eyewitnesses of His majesty**. For **He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”* 2 Peter 1:16-18

*“If we receive the witness of men, **the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son**. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that **believeth not God hath made Him a liar**; because he **believeth not the record that God gave of his Son**. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and **this life is in His Son**. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that **believe on the name of the Son of God**; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on **the name of the Son of God**.”* 1 John 5:9-13

Do we believe that Jesus is truly the Son of God? When modern theology claims that the Son of God is a role received in heaven, isn't doubt cast on the clear testimony of the Father? This is a serious problem because, as apostle John said, upon this belief hangs our eternal life. God gave us the record that He truly has a Son and that He gave His Son. Sister White puts it plainly and assuredly:

“God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with

the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” [{EGW, 8T 268.3; 1904}](#)

notes

chapter 25

THE FOUNDATION OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY

notes

Jesus' divinity is essential to the believers faith. As stated before, Christ's Sonship is the true foundation of His divinity. Christ is fully divine because He is begotten of God. As the true Son of God, He fully bears the divine nature of His Father; as the Son of man, born of a woman, He bears the complete nature of man. The true foundation of Christ's divinity is His true Sonship with the Father.

Let's examine evidence of Jesus' divinity in the Bible. We will see that the Bible always testifies of Jesus' true Sonship to the Father.

*"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also **that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.**" John 5:17-18*

In the biblical sense, the Son is not lower than the Father. Here, the Spirit of Prophecy comments on this verse:

*"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." {EGW, DA 207.3; 1898}

"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." {EGW, DA 207.4; 1898}

Jesus was the Son of God in the highest sense. If Christ addressed God as "my Father", and claimed this relationship in the highest sense, then this father-son relationship is not metaphorical, nor in the sense that we call God our Father. It means that the Father is truly the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "*in the highest sense*". The Bible claims Jesus' equality with the Father even before the incarnation.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:4-11

The Son is not lower than the Father. The reason why it is not robbery for the Son to be equal with the Father is the fact that He is equal. If the Son were not to be equal with the Father then it would be robbery for Him to rank Himself equal with the Father.

"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." {EGW, 1SP 17.2; 1870}

The purpose of God in assembling the host of heaven was to clear false insinuations of Satan that, instead of Christ, Satan should be equal with God. This was not possible because Christ was the Son of God, one equal with the Father.

"The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. [Hebrews 1:1-5 quoted]. God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son." {EGW, 8T 268.3; 1904}

Christ is equal with the Father because He is His true Son. It was the Father's will to exalt Him above all.

The Bible puts a parallel between the Father and Son, and husband and wife. Although God is "*the head of Christ*", Christ is equal with the Father; the head of the woman is the man, yet they are equal.

"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

IN JESUS DWELLETH ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD

As a true Son, in Jesus dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead.

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Colossians 2:9

In the original Greek text, "Godhead" is the word '*theotēs*' and simply means '*divinity*'³⁹, as the nature of God or His essence.

39 Strong's dictionary G2320 - θεότης, from G2316; divinity

All the fullness of His Father's divinity dwells in Jesus because it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.

"For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell;"
Colossians 1:19

God the Father gave His full, divine nature to dwell in His Son. How did God do this? The answer is self-explanatory and self-evident. It is by virtue of Him being the begotten Son of his Father. Christ's full divinity is based on His true Sonship.

"In Christ is gathered all the glory of the Father. In Him is all the fulness of the Godhead. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. The glory of the attributes of God are expressed in His character." [\[EGW, COL 115.1; 1900\]](#)

"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."
Matthew 11:27

By what right do all things belong to the Son?

"By right of inheritance the universe belonged to Christ, but for this world he battled and fought; and by a terrible struggle he obtained the territory. When he yielded up his life on Calvary, he drew back into favor with God this world, which was lost." [\[EGW, YI January 11, 1900, par. 2; 1900\]](#)

"When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his own purpose of deception. Satan's dominion was that wrested from Adam, but Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God's, and He has committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King. Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, 'The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.' Daniel 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits." [\[EGW, DA 129.4; 1898\]](#)

Jesus' equality with the Father is based on His true Sonship with the Father.

CHRIST – GOD – SON

In *John 5:17-18*, we read Jesus' claim that God is His Father, and that the Jews understood Him in the highest sense. We also read how, several times, they deemed Him blasphemous as He called Himself God. As His true Son, Christ **is** God.

*“My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, **that the Father is in Me, and I in Him**. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.” John 10:29-42*

How can we understand that Jesus is God when there is only one true God—the Father? The following profound quotation explains itself.

*“The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is **truly God in infinity, but not in personality**.” {EGW, Ms116-1905.19; 1905}*

In one sense, Jesus is God, and in another sense, Jesus is not God. Jesus is not God in personality. God the Father is God in personality. Christ in His personality is *the only begotten Son of the Father*. As the true Son of God He is God in infinity, having the complete and true, divine and infinite, nature of His Father. There is only one God and that is the Father; He has a divine Son. Wherever Sister White talks about THE PERSONALITY OF GOD she is referring to the personality of the Father. Christ is truly God in infinity, but not in personality. This we recognize in *John 1:1*:

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

When we look at the original Greek text we see the usage of the article ‘*the*’. Our English translation of *John 1:1* does not accurately render a definite article ‘*the*’⁴⁰. If we apply the definite articles in our English translation we get the following:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with (the) God, and the Word was (without the) God.” John 1:1

Again, this is from the original Greek manuscript. It demonstrates a complete, biblical understanding of who **the** God is. God the Father is **the** God; He is God in personality. His Son is truly God in infinity, but not in personality. He is not the one true God of the Bible, but is His only begotten Son. When John 1:1 says that Jesus is God, he says that He is truly divine—God in infinity. Let us state this another way. If we substitute the words “*the Word*” with “*the woman*”, and “*God*” with “*man*”, we get the following reasonable sentence:

“In the beginning was the woman, and the woman was with the man, and the woman was man.”

Specifically, “*the man*” refers to Adam and “*the woman*” refers to Eve. Eve was with Adam and the woman (Eve) was man—it refers to her nature. In the same way, *John 1:1* tells us that Jesus was God in His nature. Jesus Christ is truly God in infinity, in His divine and infinite nature, because He is the begotten Son of the infinite God.

40 Greek definite articles ‘ὁ’ - masculine, ‘ἡ’ - feminine, ‘τό’ - neuter form

Here is another Biblical example where Jesus is called God, testifying that He is the divine Son of God:

*“And Thomas answered and said unto him, **My Lord and my God.** Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, **thou hast believed:** blessed are they that have not seen, **and yet have believed.** And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye **might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;** and that **believing ye might have life through His name.**” John 20:28-31*

After Thomas saw Jesus and touched Him, he confessed his belief in Jesus being God. We, who have not seen nor touched Jesus in person, but believe the record of John the Apostle, should come to the same conclusion: Jesus is Christ the Son of God. John compared the faith of the doubting disciple who had to touch and see Christ resurrected in order to believe, with the faith of his readers, who have not seen Jesus nor touched Him. We did not see Jesus nor touch Him but John wrote his entire Gospel so that we might come to the same belief as Thomas: Christ is the Lord and God, which means the Son of God.

Whenever the Bible talks about Christ being God it always testifies of the fact that Jesus is fully divine because He is the Son of God.

*“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*

And there are some other interesting gems in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy:

*“And he said unto him, **Why callest thou me good? there is none good but One, that is, God;** but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Matthew 19:17*

*“‘Why callest thou Me good?’ said Christ, ‘there is none good but One, that is, God.’ Jesus desired to test the ruler’s sincerity, and to draw from him **the way in which he regarded Him as good. Did***

he realize that the One to whom he was speaking was the Son of God? What was the true sentiment of his heart?" {EGW, DA 518.3: 1898}

SON HOLDS FATHER'S NAME JEHOVAH

The Bible clearly says that the Lord Jehovah, our God, is only one—not two, nor three. This is the Father. This can be clearly seen in all of the Old Testament verses where the Father and Son are mentioned *together*. Always, without exception, the Father is called Lord Jehovah. For instance:

"The LORD (Jehovah) said unto my Lord (Adonai), Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Psalms 110:1

This is a prophecy and we know that Jesus is David's Lord who sits on the right hand of His Father. The Father is Jehovah, one God, God of the Jews, God of the Bible. Using the same principle, one can verify other verses in the Old Testament where the Father and the Son are mentioned *together*. To reiterate: only in the Old Testament is the word "*Jehovah*" used, and always when the Father and the Son are mentioned *together*; the Father—only the Father—is called Jehovah. We will not delve into this study now but we encourage you to look into all instances in the Old Testament where the Father and the Son are *together*, and check who is called by the name "*Jehovah*".

There are several instances in the Old Testament where Jesus is mentioned *alone* and referred to as Lord Jehovah. This is because He represents the Father. He, alone, bears the Father's name. In what follows, we will investigate Scripture that testifies of Christ receiving and possessing the Father's name Jehovah.

The name '*Jehovah*' attributed to Christ is also strong evidence of Jesus' true Sonship and divinity. God has given His name to His Son. We read this in the Bible:

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things,

*by whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory, and **the express image of His person**, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, **sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high**; Being made so much better than the angels, as **He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.**” Hebrews 1:1-4*

As a true Son of God, by inheritance, He has the name of His Father. As the Father is the true Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He gave an excellent name to His Inheritor. A name in the Bible means different things and has profound and significant meaning. Here is scriptural evidence that the Father gave His name to His Son:

*“Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: **for My name is in Him.**” Exodus 23:21*

In *Exodus 23:21*, God talks about His Angel—the Angel of the Lord, by whose hand He led Israel out of Egypt (*Numbers 20:14-16*). In this Angel is His name, God said. This description suits no one other than Christ—the Son of God, by whom God led Israel out of Egypt (*1 Corinthians 10:4*).

“Jehovah is the name given to Christ.” {EGW, ST May 3, 1899, par. 18; 1899}

The name of Jehovah was given to Christ and it was given to Him *by inheritance*. Whenever the Bible refers to Christ as Jehovah it is always testifying that Jesus is truly the Son of God. Here are some examples:

*“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if **ye believe not that I am**, ye shall die in your sins. Then said they unto him, **Who art thou?** And Jesus saith unto them, **Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.** I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him... Then said Jesus unto them, **When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.**” John 8:24-26,28*

*“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, **Father**, into thy hands **I commend my spirit**: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.” Luke 23:46*

*“And when the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, **Truly this man was the Son of God.**” Mark 15:39*

When Jesus was lifted up on the cross, and when people saw how Jesus gave up the ghost, His words were fulfilled. They realized what He meant when He said that they will know Him, that He is “I AM”. Many came to the realization that He was the Son of God.

Here are other examples that testify that Jesus bears the name of Jehovah, and testify of His true Sonship to God.

*“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: **and he saw it, and was glad.** Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? **Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.** Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” John 8:56-59*

*“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.**” {EGW, DA 469.5; 1898}*

*“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.**” {EGW, DA 470.1; 1898}*

Sister White understood that when Jesus claimed Jehovah's name, He claimed to be His true Son. Here are some other biblical examples:

*“But He held His peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, **Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?** And Jesus said, **I am**: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have **heard the blasphemy**: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be **guilty of death**.” Mark 14:61-64*

*“Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, **Art thou then the Son of God?** And he said unto them, **Ye say that I am**. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of His own mouth.” Luke 22:69-71*

JESUS' NAME—NAME OF THE SON OF GOD

The name of the Son of God is of vital importance to our salvation and it testifies that Jesus is the true Son of our God. We ought to have no doubt because this is the very essence of our salvation.

*“But these are written, that ye might **believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**; and that believing ye **might have life through His name**.” John 20:31*

*“And **this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son**. He that **hath the Son hath life**; and he that **hath not the Son of God hath not life**. These things have **I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God**; that ye **may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God**.” 1 John 5:11-13*

*“He that **believeth on Him is not condemned**: but he that believeth not is condemned already, **because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God**.” John 3:18*

*“Who is he that **overcometh the world**, but he that **believeth that Jesus is the Son of God**?” 1 John 5:5*

*“That which was **from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life**; (For the life was mani-*

fested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John 1:1-3

Belief in the name of the only begotten Son of God is our assurance of eternal life. Satan introduces his cunningly devised fables when he plants the seed of skepticism in this name. The final result is a weak Christian life, and finally the loss of eternal life.

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chapter 26

THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST: THE BURDEN OF PROOF FOR THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

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THE PERSONALITY OF GOD can be understood in Christ Jesus, His Son. Christ, as begotten in the express image of His Father, bears the same personality as His Father. The quality or state of a parent being a person is the same quality or state of a child being a person. Children bear the image of their parents, just as Christ bears the express image of His Father.

“As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son. The outshining of the Father’s glory, ‘and the express image of His person,’ Jesus, as a personal Saviour, came to the world. As a personal Saviour He ascended on high. As a personal Saviour He intercedes in the heavenly courts. Before the throne of God in our behalf ministers ‘One like unto the Son of man.’ Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 1:13.” [\[EGW, MH 418.4; 1905\]](#)

“Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. Since sin brought separation between man and his Maker, no

man has seen God at any time, except as He is manifested through Christ. ” {EGW, MH 419.1; 1905}

“‘I and My Father are one,’ Christ declared. ‘No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.’ John 10:30; Matthew 11:27.” {EGW, MH 419.2; 1905}

*“Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. **Yet not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it was revealed in Christ.**”* {EGW, MH 419.3; 1905}

“God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God.” {EGW, MH 419.4; 1905}

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD could not be seen in God’s handiwork. God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. For this reason He sent His only begotten Son who is, in His personality, the express image of the Father’s person. These facts can be seen when the disciples asked Christ to show them the Father’s person; Jesus answered:

*“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

This verse does not imply that the Father and the Son are one and the same person or Being. Jesus repeatedly said and explained:

*“Jesus cried and said, **He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.**”* John 12:44-45

“He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me”, and “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father”. Jesus did not send Himself, nor is He the Father. He is “the brightness of His glory, and the express image of

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His person” (Hebrews 1:3); therefore, “*he that hath seen me hath seen the Father*”.

“Christ emphatically impressed on the disciples the fact that they could see the Father by faith only. God cannot be seen in external form by any human being. Christ alone can represent the Father to humanity; and this representation the disciples had been privileged to behold for over three years.” {EGW, RH October 19, 1897, par. 9; 1897}

We know Jesus as a person, as a personal Being; and He being begotten in the express image of the Father’s person, we can thus know God as a person, as a personal Being.

*“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.”* {EGW, YI December 16, 1897, par. 5; 1897}

chapter 27

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have seen that the simplest and doubt-free understanding of Christ as the only begotten Son of God is proof of the one and only true God of the Bible, THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and Christ's complete divinity. We have seen that there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom He created all things, and by whom they do consist.

By doubting in Christ as begotten in the express image of the Father's person, we doubt in God's love toward us, "*because that God sent **his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him***", "*For God so loved the world, that he gave **his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but **have everlasting life***" (1 John 4:9, John 3:16). Let us not doubt God's Gift for us. That Gift is of the highest value God had in possession to give.

*"Thanks be unto God for **His unspeakable Gift.**" 2 Corinthians 9:15.*

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THE HOLY SPIRIT

So far, we have reviewed the evidence of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of His Son. We have seen that there is only one God, a personal, spiritual Being, and that this God has a Son, which is our Lord Christ Jesus. Jesus, being the only begotten Son of God, is also a personal spiritual Being like His Father because He is “*begotten in the express image of the Father’s person*”⁴¹. All of these conclusions come from taking the Word of God just as it reads, understanding the language of the Bible according to its obvious meaning. And it is very hard to “*prove*” the obvious meaning. When it comes to the “*obvious*”, one either accepts or rejects it because of doubt. Hence, we were determined to remove all doubt by presenting the truth in the plainest and most affirming Bible verses. This was our previous study. In the following section, we will examine the personality of the Holy Spirit in the same fashion.

41 [EGW, ST May 30, 1895, par. 3; 1895](#)

chapter 28

IS THE HOLY SPIRIT A PERSON?

When we are examining the personality of the Holy Spirit we are examining the quality or state of the Holy Spirit being a person. To reiterate, the word ‘*personality*’ is defined as “*the quality or state of being a person*”⁴² by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. In other words, by what defining qualities or characteristics do we recognize someone to be a person? Regarding the Holy Spirit, we ask ourselves by what defining characteristics we recognize the Holy Spirit to be a person. The answer to this question can easily be found in the Scriptures. Here are several *qualities* that makes the Holy Spirit a person: The Holy Spirit speaks (*Acts 13:2*), teaches (*John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:13*), makes decisions (*Acts 15:28*), can be grieved (*Ephesians 4:30*), can be lied to (*Acts 5:3,4*), can forbid or prevent human speech and plans (*Acts 16:6-7*), searches everything and comprehends God’s thoughts (*1 Corinthians 2:10-11*), and bears witness (*Romans 8:16; John 15:26*), among others. These qualities are the qualities that define the Holy Spirit to be a person. This is the reason why the Holy Spirit is a person.

Studying THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and His Son, we have seen that the quality of the Father and the Son being persons is Their *phys-*

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42 [The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, primary definition](#)

ical form. This quality is *not* a quality that defines the Holy Spirit to be a person. Jesus taught that a spirit has no physical form.

*“And as they [disciples] thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had **seen a spirit**. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? **Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.** And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.” Luke 24:36-40*

The record of John testifies of the same event in the following words:

*“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, **he shewed unto them his hands and his side.** Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 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 20:19-22*

The conclusion on the personality of the Holy Spirit is very simple, yet often overlooked. **The Holy Spirit is a spirit.** Jesus did not breathe unto His disciples someone who possesses a physical body, as He and His Father have. By this simple conclusion we know that although the Holy Spirit is a person, He is a person in a different way than the Father and the Son. THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, and of His Son, is different to the personality of the Holy Spirit. The quality or state of the Father and of the Son being persons is not equal with the quality or state of the Holy Spirit being a person. This conclusion is contrary to the popular belief that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three co-equal persons. Obviously, they are not equal. The Father and the Son hold different qualities of being persons compared to the Holy Spirit.

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” Deuteronomy 29:29

Everything that Scripture brings forth to us in its revelation about the Holy Spirit belongs to us. We are to ponder upon it. But things which are not revealed should not be speculated upon because they solely belong unto the Lord our God. Scripture reveals that the Holy Ghost is a spirit, having no physical body. We do not understand the nature of the Spirit, but the things concerning the personality of the Holy Spirit, as revealed in Scripture, belong to us.

*“It is not essential for you to know and be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and the Comforter is the Holy Ghost, ‘the Spirit of truth, which the Father shall send in My name.’ ‘I will pray the Father, and He shall give you **another Comforter**, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you’ (John 14:16, 17). This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.” {EGW, Lt7-1891.14; 1891}*

The Holy Spirit, or the Comforter, is the omnipresence of Christ’s Spirit. Yet, here we have boundaries—it is not essential for us to define what the Holy Spirit is—so we do not pry into Its nature. This is not revealed unto us. That which is revealed unto us is the identity of the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ. Sister White commented on John 14:16,17, that it refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter. It is Christ present with us and in us here on Earth while He is personally present in the Most Holy place. This fact alone testifies that the quality or state of the Holy Spirit being a person is markedly different from the one that the Father and the Son have. Jesus, because He has a physical body, is cumbered by the personality of humanity; yet, by His Spirit, the Comforter, Christ can be omnipresent. The same holds true for the Father. God is everywhere present by His Spirit:

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*“Cast me not away **from thy presence**; and take not **thy holy spirit** from me.” Psalms 51:11*

*“Whither shall I go **from thy spirit**? or whither shall I flee **from thy presence**?” Psalms 139:7*

The connection between THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and His omnipresence through His spirit is plainly laid out in Christ’s teachings on the “*Another Comforter*”. Christ, who is cumbered in His personality, having a physical body, cannot be in every place personally. But through the Holy Spirit, Christ has promised His presence with us here on Earth. This lesson will teach us the difference between the personality of the Holy Spirit with respect to the Father and the Son, about Christ’s presence, and the identity of the Holy Spirit.

chapter 29

ANOTHER COMFORTER

The conversations we have with our loved ones, when they are passing through the last moments of their lives, are usually one of the most important conversations we have in our experiences with them. In the case of Jesus, before His crucifixion, He chose to spend these important moments teaching His disciples the precious truths about the Holy Spirit. Examining the context we see that Jesus was speaking of His physical departure yet promising comfort to His grieving disciples. He was conveying to them the precious truths about His presence but they could not fully comprehend them. The true question of Jesus' teaching in John 14 was not the question of **who** would come, because He plainly said that He would come, but rather **how Jesus would come** and abide with them, while He was going away.

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye

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in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." John 14:15-28

Let us examine how Jesus talks about Himself in a peculiar way.

Another Comforter	Jesus
<i>"whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him"; "but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you," – v. 17</i>	<i>"and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" – v. 21</i>
<i>"and shall be in you" – v. 17</i>	<i>and I in you" – v. 20</i>
<i>"he shall give you another Comforter" – v. 16</i>	<i>"I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." – v.18</i>
<i>"that he may abide with you for ever;" – v. 16</i>	<i>"lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." - Matthew 28:20</i>
<i>"I go away, and come again unto you." – v. 28</i>	

The disciples understood that He was going away and they were sad for that reason. But Jesus was comforting them with the promise that He will come back to them again, and manifest Himself to them. How was this even possible? This is why Judas asked Him:

“Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” John 14:22

“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.” {EGW, SW September 13, 1898, par. 2; 1898}

The Comforter is the Spirit of Christ, which is a literal Spirit. We cannot define the nature of the Spirit but we can understand Its identity. It is the omnipresence of Jesus.

“The Lord encourages all who seek Him with the whole heart. He gives them His Holy Spirit, the manifestation of His presence and favor.” {EGW, 9T 230.3; 1909}

The discussion in John 14 is about Jesus which *is seen* and Jesus that *cannot be seen*. Obviously, one Comforter is Jesus in the flesh, departing to the Father, and another Comforter is Jesus in Spirit.

“Hereafter they would read the Old Testament Scriptures, not as the doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees, not as the utterances of wise men who were dead, but as a new revelation from God. They beheld Him (talking of Jesus) ‘whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.’ (quoting the scripture on the Holy Spirit) John 14:17.” {EGW, DA 494.3; 1898}

One Comforter is Jesus in the flesh and He goes to the Father; another Comforter is Jesus who is coming back to them in the Spirit. There are two separate personalities, yet one and the same identity—Christ.

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

*“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you **that I go away**: for if I go not away, **the Comforter will not come unto you**; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” John 16:7*

The Spirit of Prophecy gives us a clear perspective on this:

*“**Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally**; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His Father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. **The Holy Spirit is Himself, divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof**. He would represent **Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent**. “ [{EGW, Lt119-1895.18; 1895}](#)*

*“Cumbered with humanity”, Christ’s presence was limited to where He was. In His “**personality of humanity**”, He went up to the Father and sat at His right hand. But by His Holy Spirit, Christ is “**divested of the personality of humanity**”, He is not cumbered by it, so He could “**be in every place personally**”. He is “**present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent**”. It has been revealed to us that **the Holy Spirit is Christ Himself divested of the personality of humanity**.*

If we desire the comfort Christ promised to His disciples, then it is really important to know and believe that Jesus is our Comforter. This is preached throughout the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

*“**Christ comes as a Comforter to all who believe**. He invites your confidence.” [{EGW, Lt103-1898.14; 1898}](#)*

Do you believe that Jesus is your Comforter?

*“Let them study the seventeenth of John, and learn how to pray and how to live the prayer of Christ. **He is the Comforter**. He will abide in their hearts, making their joy full.” [{EGW, RH January 27, 1903, Art. A, par. 13; 1903}](#)*

*“Christ is everything to those who receive Him. **He is their Comforter, their safety, their healthfulness.** Apart from Christ there is no light at all.” {EGW, Lt153a-1897.23; 1897}*

*“As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love **in giving Jesus the Comforter.**” {EGW, Ms34-1892.44; 1892}*

*“The nights are long and painful, **but Jesus is my Comforter and my Hope.**” {EGW, Ms20-1892.16; 1892}*

“We need a Physician and Restorer; and when we come unto Christ petitioning for his grace, the Comforter will breathe into our souls his words, ‘My peace give I unto you.’” {EGW, BEcho June 1, 1892, par. 21 1892}

Do we know our Lord by this blessed Name, “Comforter”?

*“**Christ is to be known by the blessed name of Comforter.** ‘The Comforter,’ said Christ to His disciples, ‘which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid’” {EGW, Ms7-1902.10; 1902}*

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

The other name that the Holy Spirit is referred to as is “Spirit of truth”, and that is Christ Himself.

“Jesus comes to you as the Spirit of truth; study the mind of the Spirit, consult your Lord, follow His way.” {EGW, Ms8c-1891.14; 1891}

*“Oh, what privileges are ours to be collaborators with **Jesus Christ!** He comes to you as the Spirit of truth. Study the mind of the Spirit. Consult His dictates as your sure and unerring Counsellor.” {EGW, Lt144-1896.9; 1896}*

Christ is our wonderful Counselor; He counsels us with His mind.

*“Our duty is to speak the truth plainly; live the truth; maintain the truth; and leave the comfort to follow. **The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and through the truth, dwells in the heart as a Comforter. ‘I will not leave you comfortless.’ I will not leave you orphans, but ‘I will come unto you.’ ...**”* [{EGW, Lt10-1896.7; 1986}](#)

The Spirit of Prophecy decisively teaches that “*another Comforter*” is none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

*“**The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be.**”* [{EGW, Ms20-1892.6; 1892}](#)

Unfortunately, this simple fact is being rejected by many who bear the Seventh-day Adventist name. The identity of the Comforter is addressed to someone other than to Him who is an express image of the Father’s person.

*“Every loyal child of God will seek to know the truth. **John stated the truth so plainly that a child may understand it, ‘If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him.’ Do we choose to be numbered with those who cannot discern the truth, who are so blinded by the deceptive power of the enemy that they see not Him who is the express image of the Father’s person?**”* [{EGW, Lt31-1898.30; 1898}](#)

Do we see the One who is the express image of the Father’s person as our Comforter? We should, because John stated this truth so plainly that a child may understand it. But unfortunately many choose to be numbered with those who cannot discern the truth, who are so blinded by the deceptive power of the enemy that they see not the Son of God as their Comforter. This decision leads to dreadful consequences.

chapter 30

PRACTICAL LESSON

The question of the Comforter is really important for our practical life. Every day we face troubles and temptations and only through the eyes of faith can we be comforted as we listen and look at the right Channel. In numerous ways, the Bible tells us that this channel is Jesus—no one other than Jesus. The word ‘Comforter’, in Greek, is originally the word ‘paraklētōs’, and only John the Apostle uses it. He mentions it five times: twice in John 14, and once in chapter 15, 16 and 1 John 2:1, when he says:

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

Our Comforter, paraklētōs, is Jesus Christ the Righteous. Only Jesus can hold this position because He was tempted in all points, just as we are. Right now, He is at the right hand of the Most High. He is there in His flesh advocating for us, and simultaneously with His Spirit in His church. **Only by Christ in us can we overcome sin!**

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the

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feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:14-16

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power; when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;” Hebrews 1:3

The One who is next to God is our Comforter—paraklētos. The One that is next to God is also our High Priest. It is one and the same identity—Jesus Christ. In this light, let us read Hebrews 4:14-16 and understand the practical lesson of Christ being our Comforter.

*“Seeing then that we have a **Comforter**, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. **For we have not a Comforter which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**”*

Only by Christ abiding in us can we live a victorious life. It is Christ who is unseen by the eyes, yet present in His Spirit, who comforts us at the right time.

*“Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. ‘I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore.’ Revelation 1:18. I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, **look unto Me, and live**. ‘The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the cov-*

enant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.’ Isaiah 54:10” {EGW, DA 483.1; 1898}

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

“‘But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.’ O how precious are these words to every bereaved soul! Christ is our Guide and Comforter, who comforts us in all our tribulations.” {EGW, Lt65a-1894.5; 1894}

Overcoming sin is a practical thing. The main problem of our weakness is found in our faith. Why are our churches weak and sickly and ready to die?

“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’” {EGW, RH August 26, 1890, par. 10; 1890}

Overcoming sin in our practical, everyday life is accomplished by beholding the One that the world sees not. And the enemy keeps us weak and sickly and ready to die by shutting Jesus from our view as the Comforter.

Unfortunately, many in these last days are opposing the great Truth, that our Comforter is Jesus Himself. The most prominent idea is that someone third, who is not the Father nor Christ, but co-equal with Them, is the one that comforts us, and that Jesus is comforting us through His mediation. This belief comes from wrong perceptions on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of Christ, where Their personality is made equal to the personality of the Holy Spirit. *This clearly opposes the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.*

The Bible teaches that God the Father is comforting us through Christ. This is because He, the source of all, gave His Son for us.

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

There is no third one in the comfort. Why would Jesus need a mediator, as He who has received all from the Father, being glorified and having infinite power? The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and, although we cannot understand the nature of the Spirit of God, we can understand the identity of Him.

“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.” {EGW, Lt66-1894.18; 1894}

It has been most clearly revealed to us that the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ.

“I am praying that the Lord will reveal Himself to you as a personal Comforter. The eyes of the soul must be kept open, in order to recognize the great mercies of our heavenly Father. Jesus is a bright and shining light. Let Him reflect His bright beams into the heart and mind.” {EGW, Lt322-1906.3; 1906}

“The Lord Jesus loves His people, and when they put their trust in Him, depending wholly upon Him, He strengthens them. He will live through them, giving them the inspiration of His sanctifying Spirit, imparting to the soul a vital transfusion of Himself.” {EGW, Lt13-1894.16; 1894}

A vital transfusion of Himself—not of someone else.

“May the Lord work by His own power and by His own Spirit upon the minds of these inquiring young men.” {EGW, Ms3-1894.7; 1894}

“By imbuing them with His own Spirit, Christ the great Teacher is fitting them to do a good and important work.” {EGW, Lt122-1899.10; 1899}

“All who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to God’s service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind.” {EGW, 6T 306.2; 1901}

chapter 31

ONE AND ANOTHER COMFORTER

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When Jesus was promising another Comforter, He was speaking of Himself; the controversy was not about *who* is going to comfort them, rather *how* will Jesus comfort them, since He is going away. One Comforter is Jesus being with them, in flesh, whom everybody could see; another Comforter is, again, Jesus being with them, albeit in Spirit, whom the world cannot see, yet His disciples by faith can behold and be comforted. This simple truth is spread throughout the New Testament. Here is one vivid example:

*“But when the fulness of the time was come, **God sent forth his Son**, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, **God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son** into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Galatians 4:4-6*

In these verses, do we see that “*God sent forth his Son*” is mentioned twice? The first time is in flesh, incarnated, made of a woman, under the law, tempted in all points like us. And when glorified as victorious, the Father, again, sends the Comforter—God sends forth **the Spirit** of His Son. One Comforter is in flesh and another Comforter is in Spirit. Both are indeed Jesus Christ the Son of God.

*“Christ saw that it was not possible for man to overcome in his own strength; therefore He **came in person** from the throne of glory, and bore the test that Adam failed to bear. In man’s behalf He resisted the temptations of the enemy, and made it possible for man, by faith in Him, to overcome in his own behalf.” {EGW, ST October 29, 1902, par. 1; 1902}*

One Comforter—Christ—came in person from heaven, and bore the test that we failed. This Comforter was made of a woman, invested with the personality of humanity and dependent of it thereof. Another Comforter, again Christ, was divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. It is Christ’s Holy Spirit.

*“Although our Lord ascended from earth to heaven, the Holy Spirit was appointed as His representative among men. ‘If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall **give you another Comforter**, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not,, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless.’ 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. Christ would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit,—as the Omnipresent. ‘But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall [although unseen by you] teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. . . . Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you **that I go away**, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.’” {EGW, PrT May 30, 1895, par. 7; 1895} (parentheses added by Ellen G. White)*

One Comforter is Christ in His physical body [seen] and another Comforter is Christ in Spirit [unseen].

“While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above (one Comforter—Jesus in physical body), He is still by His Spirit the minister of

the church on earth (another Comforter—Jesus in His Spirit). *He is withdrawn from the eye of sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ Matthew 28:20. While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church.”* {EGW, DA 166.3; 1898}

By Christ’s energizing presence we overcome sin. Christ is the source of our victory! Jesus is truly our Comforter. Here is one more “another Comforter” example in the Bible:

“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 death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham (one Comforter: Jesus in the personality of humanity). *Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted* (another Comforter: Jesus in His Spirit).” *Hebrews 2:14-18*

Oh, what a Comforter we have! The One who was tempted in all points, and having suffered, is now able to succor us in our daily challenges, temptations and experiences! Such a Comforter we need. Sister White puts it very clearly and powerfully:

“There is no comforter like Christ, so tender and so true. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. His Spirit speaks to the heart.... The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul.” {EGW, RH October 26, 1897, par. 15; 1897}

Victorious life is a life we receive when Christ abides in us through His Spirit. This is good news, full of comfort and hope. Christ in us—the hope of glory.

chapter 32

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US

CHRIST IN US—THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

When the Bible is speaking of the Holy Spirit it is speaking of a literal Spirit, and it is sometimes referring to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of Both. In the New Testament, it most often reads as the “*Spirit of Christ*” because Jesus went through our human experience and victoriously conquered sin and death. Thus, He is now our Comforter and He abides in us. When Christ dwells in us it is the Holy Spirit that dwells in us. Let’s allow the Bible to speak for itself:

*“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory:**”*
Colossians 1:26-27

*“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is **He that is in you**, than he that is in the world.”* 1 John 4:4

*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**: ...”* Galatians 2:20

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“... That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,” Ephesians 3:17-20

*“Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, **but is mighty in you**.” 2 Corinthians 13:3*

Christ in us is mighty, and He “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the (His) power that worketh in us”, in our hearts. When Jesus dwells in us, He is greater than the one that is in the world. Only in Him can we conquer sin and death—our hope of glory. He abides in us through His Spirit.

*“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and **the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ**,” Philippians 1:19*

*“But ye are not in the flesh, **but in the Spirit**, if so be that **the Spirit of God dwell in you**. Now if any man have not **the Spirit of Christ**, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but **the Spirit is life because of righteousness**.” Romans 8:9-10*

*“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. **Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you**, except ye be reprobates?” 2 Corinthians 13:5*

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” Colossians 2:6-7

*“And **they that are Christ’s** have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live **in the Spirit**, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Galatians 5:24-25*

*“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: **but Christ is all, and in all**.” Colossians 3:11*

Christ dwells in us through the Holy Spirit. He is that Spirit.

*“Now **the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as **by the Spirit of the Lord.**” 2 Corinthians 3:17-18***

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit... The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.” 1 Corinthians 15:45,47

Lord Jesus was made the “*quickenings spirit*” when He was glorified. The Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. If we walk in that Spirit, we have crucified the flesh; we walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him.

The following quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy affirm that Christ in us is the Holy Spirit—Christ’s Spirit.

*“I wish to impress upon you the fact that **those who have Jesus abiding in the heart by faith, have actually received the Holy Spirit**. Every individual who receives Jesus as his personal Saviour, just as surely receives the Holy Spirit to be his Counselor, Sanctifier, Guide, and Witness.” {EGW, Ms1-1894.4; 1894}*

*“When Christ ascended to heaven, **the sense of His presence was still with His followers. It was a personal presence, full of love and light....**” {EGW, SC 73.2; 1892}*

*“Henceforth through the Spirit, Christ was to abide continually in the hearts of the children. Their union with Him was closer than when He was personally with them. The light, and love, and power of the indwelling Christ shone out through them, so that men, beholding, ‘ marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.’ Acts 4:13. **All that Christ was to the disciples, He desires to be to His children today.**” {EGW, SC 74.1; 1892}*

*“We may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **Receiving Christ, we are clothed with power. An indwelling Saviour makes His power our property.... Christ’s presence in the heart is a vitalizing power, strengthening the entire being.**” {EGW, Ms45-1902.4; 1902}*

“Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you.” {EGW, MH 85.2; 1905}

*“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.” {EGW, Lt66-1894.18; 1894}*

“Christ is formed within, and by His Spirit He fulfils the promise, ‘I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.’” {EGW, Lt66-1894.18; 1894}

“The Lord encourages all who seek Him with the whole heart. He gives them His Holy Spirit, the manifestation of His presence and favor.” {EGW, 9T 230.3; 1909}

*“While He extends to all the world His invitation to come to Him and be saved, He commissions His angels to render divine help to every soul that cometh to Him in repentance and contrition, **and He comes personally by His Holy Spirit into the midst of His church**.” {EGW, Lt2d-1892.7; 1892}*

*“The Lord co-operates with the self-denying human workers. **His own mind, His own spirit, is communicated to them**.” {EGW, Lt122-1899.16; 1899}*

FATHER IN US—THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Bible also teaches us that the Father dwells in us through the Holy Spirit. Jesus prayed to His Father that He might be in us, and He in the Father, and through Christ, or by Christ, the Father dwells in us. Here are some Biblical examples:

*“For it is not ye that speak, but **the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you**.” Matthew 10:20*

*“But if **the Spirit of Him** that raised up Jesus from the dead **dwell in you**, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by **His Spirit that dwelleth in you**.” Romans 8:11*

*“He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, **but God**, who hath also given unto us **His holy Spirit**.” 1 Thessalonians 4:8*

*“Know ye not that ye are **the temple of God**, and that **the Spirit of God dwelleth in you**? If any man defile the temple of God, Him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, **which temple ye are**.” 1 Corinthians 3:16-17*

*“And what agreement hath **the temple of God** with idols? for **ye are the temple of the living God**; as God hath said, **I will dwell in them, and walk in them**; and **I will be their God**, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And **will be a Father unto you**, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:16-18*

*“What? know ye not that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you**, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore **glorify God in your body, and in your spirit**, which are God’s.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

*“**In whom** (Christ) ye also are builded together for **an habitation of God through the Spirit**.” Ephesians 2:22*

*“And he that keepeth His commandments **dwelleth in Him, and he in Him**. And hereby we know that **He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us**.” 1 John 3:24*

*“Hereby know we that we **dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit**. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. **Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God**. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and **God in him**.” 1 John 4:13-16*

The Spirit of Prophecy also testifies that the Holy Spirit is God’s Spirit in the literal sense.

*“In giving us **His Spirit, God gives us Himself**, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.”*
[{EGW, 7T 273.1; 1902}](#)

*“**The divine Spirit that the world’s Redeemer promised to send, is the presence and power of God**.”* [{EGW, ST November 23, 1891, par. 1; 1891}](#)

*“The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. ‘The Lord’s throne is in heaven’ (Psalm 11:4); yet **by His Spirit He is everywhere present**. He has an intimate knowledge of, and a personal interest in, all the works of His hand.” {EGW, Ed 132.2; 1903}*

*“It is a miserable delusion to have a name, and yet be **without a connection with God**, without spiritual life, without Christ, without a **sense of God’s presence in the soul**. ‘Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.’” {EGW, SpTA12 7.4; 1905}*

*“... As a present help in every time of need, **God’s presence** is revealed. As you call upon His name for help, **He says, ‘Here I am,’ close beside you**, ready to help you if you are ready to be helped.” {EGW, ST March 17, 1898, par. 6; 1898}*

FATHER AND SON IN US—THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

As Jesus prayed, we are to be one with Them; the Father and Son abide in us. This is also referred to as having the Holy Spirit. We have read this before.

*“But ye are not in the flesh, **but in the Spirit**, if so be that **the Spirit of God dwell in you**. Now if any man have not **the Spirit of Christ**, he is none of His. And if **Christ be in you**, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if **the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you**, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies **by His Spirit that dwelleth in you**.” Romans 8:9-11*

Paul, in his letter to Romans, interchanges the Spirit of Christ with the Spirit of the Father. Paul is speaking of one and the same Spirit—the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Both.

*“At that day ye shall know that **I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you**.” John 14:20*

*“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and **we will come unto him, and make our abode with him**.” John 14:23*

*“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, **he hath both the Father and the Son.**” 2 John 1:9*

*“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly **our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**” 1 John 1:3*

*“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they **all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in Us:** that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” John 17:20-21*

*“Let that **therefore abide in you,** which ye have **heard from the beginning.** If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.” 1 John 2:24*

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

*“The sinner then stands before God as a just person; he is taken into favor with Heaven, **and through the Spirit has fellowship with the Father and the Son.**” {EGW, ST November 3, 1890, par. 1; 1890}*

So far we've seen that Christ dwells in the believer by the Holy Spirit. We've also seen that God, the Father, also dwells in the believer by the Holy Spirit. The Bible also confirms that Both the Father and the Son, at the same time, dwell in the believer by the Holy Spirit. This is possible because the Father and the Son are two distinct beings, while the Holy Spirit is a spirit, and the Father and the Son are perfectly united in that spirit.

*“The burden of that prayer was that His disciples might be **one as He was one with the Father;** the oneness so close that, **although two distinct beings,** there was **perfect unity of spirit, purpose, and action.** The mind of the Father was the mind of the Son.” {EGW, Lt1-1882.1; 1882}*

Here, the doctrine of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD is clearly expressed. God is a personal being. Christ is a distinct being from God, yet They are perfectly united in the spirit, purpose and actions. The Bible gives us unequivocal testimony that the Father and the Son

notes

are one in the Spirit, and in the same way we are to be one with Them.

chapter 33

UNITY BETWEEN FATHER AND SON

Correct perception of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of His Son helps us to understand the unity that exists between them. We are to have such unity with the Father, the Son, and among each other. This unity is unity in Spirit.

The Bible tells us that Jesus and His Father are one. Some say that it is inappropriate to ask *how* the Father and Son are one because it is a mystery. So, let us look into the things that our Lord has revealed to us.

In John 10:25, Jesus says:

*“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: **the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.**” John 10:25*

And in the thirtieth verse He says:

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

And in verses’ 37 and 38, He explains how:

*“If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, **believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.**” John 10:37-38*

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Jesus says the same thing in John 17:

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as We are.” John 17:11

Jesus says that we, His church, should be one as His Father and He are one. Thus, it is important to understand *how* the Father and the Son are one. If we don’t, we will miss out on the great lesson about the unity of the church. Jesus, furthermore, explains how:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John 17:20-23

We ought to be one with the Father and Son in the same way that the Father and Son are one. Therefore, unity between the Father and the Son cannot be a matter of personality. The Father and the Son are not one in person nor being. They are two distinct beings, just as every individual member of His Church is a distinct being. The Father and the Son are one because God is in Christ and Christ is in God; so are we to be in Christ and Christ in us. The Bible further explains how we ought to be one with the Father and the Son. The Apostle John writes:

“And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” 1 John 3:24

“Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and he in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.” 1 John 4:13

The Father dwells in the Son and the Son is in the Father; the Son dwells in us and we in Christ. How? “*By the Spirit which He hath given us*”. Therefore, the Father and Son are one in Spirit. This is

the Holy Spirit. This Spirit is not a metaphorical spirit, nor is it symbolic; we accept it in the obvious meaning of the word ‘*Spirit*’. When the Bible speaks about the Spirit it does so literally. Paul clearly emphasizes this point:

“What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” 1 Corinthians 6:16-17

Being “*joined to an harlot*” refers to a literal joining of bodies, which makes “*one body*”. The term “*one body*” is a literal term. In the same manner, the term “*one spirit*” is meant in a literal sense. Paul was not metaphorical here; he meant ‘*spirit*’ and ‘*body*’ literally. Being “*one spirit*” with the Lord is to have the Lord in us. The literal sense of Christ dwelling in us is to have His Spirit in us. “*Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and he in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit*.” 1 John 4:13. In the same manner, Christ and God are one—one in spirit, and heart, and character.

“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.” {EGW, YI December 16, 1897, par. 5; 1897}

Ellen White, when explaining the oneness of the Father and Son, excluded the idea that the Father and the Son make one person, or being, or one God. This would jeopardize THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. The oneness of the Father and the Son is in their purpose, mind, character, and spirit.

“The personality of the Father and the Son, also the unity that exists between Them, are presented in the seventeenth chapter of John, in the prayer of Christ for His disciples: ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.’ John 17:20, 21. 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.” {EGW, MH, 421 422; 1905}

Obviously, as Sister White says, God the Father and His Son don't make one God. They are not one person. If they were, their personalities would be destroyed. *The oneness of the Father and the Son is oneness in Spirit, not in person.*

*“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.”*

[{EGW, RH June 1, 1905, par. 14; 1905}](#)

*“Christ the Word, the Only Begotten of God, was **one with the eternal Father,--one in nature, in character, and in purpose,--the only being in all the universe** that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.”* [{EGW, GC 493.1; 1911}](#)

The Bible and Spirit of Prophecy are very clear regarding the unity between the Father and the Son, and through this unity we can see and understand a great light regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of His Son. The Father and the Son are two distinct beings and they are one in Spirit. Obviously, the Holy Spirit is not a being as the Father and the Son are, but a Spirit—in the obvious meaning of the word ‘spirit’.

The issue regarding the Holy Spirit is not exactly what the Holy Spirit is, because it is tightly connected with the nature of God, but what we should understand is its identity.

The Bible does not teach us that the Father and the Son—especially not somebody besides Them—make one person or being. It is imperative that we know with Whom we are having fellowship. Christ prayed for unity and fellowship with Him and the Father.

*“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that **ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**” 1 John 1:3*

Being one with the Father and the Son in the Spirit we have fellowship (communion) with the Father and Son. This communion

is only possible through the Holy Spirit and the Bible calls this communion the “*communion of the Holy Spirit*”.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” 2 Corinthians 13:14

Scripture doesn’t say “*communion with*”—but “*communion of*”—which means that we are having communion with the Father and Son by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not one to have communion with, but a medium of communion; in other words, not a subject of communion but rather a means of communion with the Father and Son. That’s what Jesus said when He promised a Comforter in John, chapter 14.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.” John 14:23

How will the Father and the Son abide with you?

“By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you.” {EGW, BEcho January 15, 1893, par. 81 1893}

“The sinner then stands before God as a just person; he is taken into favor with Heaven, and through the Spirit has fellowship with the Father and the Son.” {EGW, ST November 3, 1890, par. 1; 1890}

Conclusion: We have fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Spirit.

In the Holy Spirit we recognize the presence of the Father and the Son—we recognize that the Holy Spirit is Their *representative*. We do not understand the nature of the Spirit, but we can recognize the identity of it—the identity of the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is a spirit in the literal sense. The Bible does not explain the nature of the Spirit, but it strongly emphasizes that the Spirit dwells in our body or flesh, and consistently emphasizes that it is Christ who dwells in us; that is, the Father in Christ, and Christ in the Father, Christ in us, and we in Christ.

chapter 34

CHRIST IS COMING IN OUR FLESH

notes

Christ in us, the hope of glory, is our assurance of overcoming the world. Yet there is also another spirit that is in the children of this world. But how can we test the spirits whether they are of God? In the following, we will scrutinize one controversial Bible verse that deals with that matter.

*“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God**: And every spirit that confesseth not that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God**: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”*
1 John 4:1-3

The parallel text is found in 2 John 1:7.

*“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh**. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”* 2 John 1:7

Some people interpret these verses as the spirit of antichrist confessing that Jesus, at His first coming, had not been in flesh but a mere spiritual manifestation, and that the same will be true at

His second coming. But if we look closely at the original, the word “to come” is the Greek word ‘*erchomai*’, which is in the incomplete mediopassive verb form. We see that the word ‘*erchomai*’ annotates the process in present tense. It is the process of Jesus coming in the flesh in the present tense. This changes the emphasis of the text. Thus, the controversy is not about Jesus coming in His flesh. Rather, it is about which spirit (or who) is coming into *our* flesh. Is it Christ or somebody else? John writes about our flesh, about Christ dwelling in us. This is clearly seen if we read the surrounding context of the verse.

*“And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that **He abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (erchomai in flesh) is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (erchomai in flesh) is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (erchomai in the world). Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He (that is Jesus Christ) that is in you, than he that is in the world.”*** 1 John 3:24; 4:1-4

Some spirit comes (erchomai) into the children of the world, and some spirit comes (erchomai) into us—the children of God. Greater is He that is in us, then he that is in the world. By what criteria do we try the spirits, whether they are of God? Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (erchomai in the flesh) is of God. That incomplete, present process of coming into the flesh, denoted by the verb ‘*erchomai*’, expresses that the spirit comes to our own flesh rather than Christ’s. The stress of the sentence is not on the flesh, because our flesh is implied, but on Christ. The main question is: who is come in the flesh? Is it Jesus Christ or somebody else? The spirit who comes to our flesh, which is not the Spirit of Christ, is actually the spirit of antichrist. The spirit that dwells in us determines whose children we are. Are we children of the world or are we children of God, who adopted us

by His Son, Whose spirit cries in us “*Abba Father*”⁴³, by Whom we overcome the world?

The Spirit of Prophecy confirms that the aforementioned verse talks about Christ dwelling in us:

*“We are certainly living amidst the perils of the last days. We need now that grace which God shall give to the ones striving lawfully for every victory possible. If we rescue souls that have been helping Dr. Kellogg to stand where he now stands, we will need the power of a living Christ to go with us in our work. One must say with John, ‘Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God**; and every spirit that **confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh** is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.’ What definite light God has given us in this chapter. It becomes every soul to be sure that Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. ...”* {EGW, Lt335-1905.8-9; 1905}

Whenever Sister White quotes a Bible verse she also adds the interpretation. The Spirit that confesses that “*Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*” is a sure confession to us that it is Christ formed within us, the hope of glory. We are to confess that Jesus is coming into our flesh.

“Where are you standing, brethren and sisters? Do you take hold of the death of Christ by faith and make it your salvation? Then we have made a new beginning and all our past life is as though it had not been. It is God’s life we are to live. God wants us to keep walking right along with Him. When we receive Him we are made free and sin no more. Why do we sin? We do not understand God’s sufficiency. He will reveal Himself in our hearts. We have had in our Sabbath school lessons that when we confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, we are to confess that He has come in our flesh. We have laid aside our own sins and we are living to the glory of God.” {EGW, Ms15-1894.23; 1894}

43 Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:15-19

Christ formed within is the only way to lay aside our own sins and live to the glory of God. This glory is what Jesus prayed to His Father to give us and it is His own Spirit.

*“They (unconverted people) may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. **There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ.** His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.”* {EGW, SC 18.1; 1892}

Unfortunately, because of various doctrines, pulpits are silent of this truth. Churches are weak and ready to die. We have divested Jesus from the Holy Spirit, preaching that the Holy Spirit is not Jesus Himself but someone third, co-equal in the personality with the Father and the Son.

This is very important to understand. We are living in the last days when the antichrist is working with his highest powers to deceive many. We must have assurance that the spirit we accept, that abides in us, is none other than Jesus. As sister White said:

“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.” {EGW, Lt66-1894.18; 1894}

chapter 35

THE ONLY BEING

notes

Though we've just seen but a few instances, there are many times that the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy exclude the Holy Spirit as a Being, unlike the Father and the Son.

*“**The only being who was one with God** lived the law in humanity, descended to the lowly life of a common laborer, and toiled at the carpenter’s bench with his earthly parent. He lived the life which he requires of all who claim to be his children.”* [\[EGW, ST October 14, 1897, par. 3; 1897\]](#)

The only Being who was one with God was the Son of God. There is no other being that was one with God. One may think that the Holy Spirit is excluded as a person, but when the doctrine of the presence and THE PERSONALITY OF GOD is rightly understood, we see that the Holy Spirit is merely excluded to be a distinct *being*, as the Father and the Son are. The Father and the Son are one *in spirit*, nature, character, mind and purposes.

*“**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. ' {EGW, PP 34.1; 1890}

*"The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. **This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known.** Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, 'with healing in His wings. 'Malachi 4:2. ' {EGW, DA 22.1; 1898}*

There is no other being, save God's only begotten Son, who was one with God, who could enter into all His counsels and purposes, and could reveal God's perfect character.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

The great Plan of Salvation was devised in the counsels of God, where only one being could enter in—Christ the Son of God.

*"In the plan to save a lost world, the counsel was between **them both**; the covenant of peace was between the Father and the Son. ' {EGW, ST December 23, 1897, par. 2; 1897}*

In devising the plan of salvation, the Holy Spirit is an active participant but the revelation excludes it as a distinct, divine Being, as the Father and the Son are.

*"No man, nor even the highest angel, can estimate the great cost; it is known **only to the Father and the Son.** ' {EGW, BEcho October 28, 1895, par. 4; 1895}*

*“We are altogether too indifferent to God’s blessings. We share his loving care through Jesus Christ, and then forget **how much it has cost the Father and the Son** to make us fallen mortals sharers of his paternal sympathies.”* {EGW, ST December 7, 1891, par. 6; 1891}

*“The great gift of salvation has been placed within our reach at **an infinite cost to the Father and the Son**. ”⁴⁴* {EGW, RH March 10, 1891, par. 2; 1891}

*“But in the transgression of man **both the Father and the Son were dishonored**. ”* {EGW, ST December 12, 1895, par. 7; 1895}

*“The human family **cost God and his Son Jesus Christ an infinite price**. ”* {EGW, SpTA07 24.1; 1897}

*“**Father and Son are pledged** to fulfill the terms of the everlasting covenant. ”* {EGW, YI June 14, 1900, par. 5; 1900}

*“Angels and archangels wonder at this great plan of redemption; **they admire and love the Father and the Son** as they behold the mercy and love of God; there is no feeling of jealousy as this new temple, renewed in the image of Christ, is presented in its loveliness to stand around the throne of God. ”* {EGW, Lt31-1892.31; 1892}

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

There is an abundance of similar quotations in the Spirit of Prophecy where Sister White solely talks about the Father and the Son. We can see them mostly in the themes of the plan of salvation and the great controversy among others.

There are many themes in the Bible that expel the Holy Spirit as a third divine Being, next to the Father and Son. There are also some explicit Bible verses that exclude someone Third besides the Father and the Son. Here are two examples:

*“All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and **no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him**. ”* Matthew 11:27

⁴⁴ More similar quotations: {EGW, Ms42-1890.32; 1890}, {EGW, YI June 15, 1893, par. 1; 1893}

“Not that anyone has seen the Father except the One who comes from God. This one has seen the Father.” John 6:46

Although it seems that these verses exclude the Holy Spirit, in correct understanding of the presence and personality of God, they aren't. They only exclude the Holy Spirit to be a personal being, co-equal in the personality with the Father and the Son. This case can be seen in other themes and expressions in the Bible, and we can see a few of them here. The Bible testifies:

- We have fellowship with the Father and His Son (i.e. *1 John 1:3*); nowhere is it mentioned that we have fellowship with the Holy Spirit.
- The Gospel—we have the Gospel of God (i.e. *Romans 1:1, 15:16; 2 Corinthians 11:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:2, 8, 9; 1 Timothy 1:11; 1 Peter 4:17*), and the Gospel of Christ (i.e. *Romans 1:9,16; 15:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 9:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:8*); nowhere is the Gospel of the Holy Spirit mentioned.
- We have service to God (i.e. *2 Corinthians 9:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Romans 12:1*), and service to Christ (i.e. *Romans 12:11; Colossians 3:24*); never do we have service to the Holy Spirit.
- The term ‘Lord’ is applied to God (i.e. *Matthew 11:25; 21:40; Luke 2:29*) and Jesus Christ (i.e. *Psalms 110:1; Matthew 13:27; Acts 10:36; Romans 14:9*); it is never applied to the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost.
- The term ‘rock’ refers to the Father and to the Son (i.e. *Deuteronomy 32; Psalms 18:31; Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 10:4; Romans 9:33*); never is the Holy Spirit referred to as the rock of our Salvation.
- The terms ‘Savior’ and ‘salvation’ only ascribe to the Father (i.e. *Luke 1:47; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10*) and to our Lord Jesus Christ (i.e. *Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31*); the Holy Spirit is never called our Savior nor is salvation ever ascribed to it.
- The Holy Spirit never pardons our sins, like the Father and Son (i.e. *Matthew 6:12; 9:6; Mark 11:25*).

- There is the glory of God (i.e. *Romans 16:27; Philippians 4:20*) and the glory of Christ (i.e. *John 8:54; 2 Peter 3:18*), but there is no glory of the Holy Spirit.
- There is the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Christ (i.e. *Ephesians 5:5, Revelations 11:15; 12:10*), but the Kingdom of the Holy Spirit is never mentioned.
- There is the throne of God and of the Lamb (i.e. *Revelation 22:1,3; Hebrew 1:8; 8:1; 12:2*), but the Holy Spirit never sits on the throne, nor does it have one.
- There is the wrath of God (i.e. *John 3:36; Colossians 3:6; Revelations 14:10,19; 19:15*) and the wrath of the Lamb (i.e. *Revelation 6:16*); there is no wrath of the Holy Spirit.
- The Father is called a King (i.e. *Psalms 10:16; 47:2; 95:3; Matthew 5:35; 22:2*) and Jesus is called a King (i.e. *Ezekiel 34:24; 37:25; Luke 19:38; John 12:13*); the Holy Spirit is never called a King.
- There are the Commandments of God and of Christ (i.e. *Matthew 15:3; John 14:15; Revelation 12:17; 14:12*); there are no Commandments of the Holy Spirit.
- The Judgment involves God and His Son, but not the Holy Spirit; even the angels will be present. Furthermore, God is called 'Judge' and the Son will judge, but the Holy Spirit will not judge on the Judgment (i.e. *Daniel 7; Acts 10:42; Romans 2:3; 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 1:17*).
- There is repentance related to God and to Christ but there is no repentance to the Holy Spirit (i.e. *Luke 24:47; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 20:21*).
- There is the righteousness of God and the righteousness of Christ; the righteousness of the Holy Spirit is never mentioned in the Bible (i.e. *Romans 3:22; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9; 2 Peter 1:1*).
- We are to pray, be thankful, and worship God and His Son; we are never to worship and pray to the Holy Spirit (i.e. *Matthew 6:9*;

Acts 7:59; Romans 1:8; 7:25; Luke 17:16; 1 Timothy 1:12; Matthew 4:10; Ephesians 3:14; Matthew 8:2; Revelations 5:8).

- The Father is called ‘*Shepherd*’, as well as Christ, but the Holy Spirit is never called Shepherd’ (i.e. *Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:12,23; Jeremiah 31:10; John 10*).

- There is a covenant with the Father and Son, where both the Father and Son are in the Covenant; the Holy Spirit is not in this covenant, nor is there a covenant of the Holy Spirit (i.e. *Zechariah 6:13; Psalm 89:3,28*).

- Both God and the Son have made an oath but the Holy Spirit has never made an oath to anyone (i.e. *Psalm 110:4; 132:1,2,11,12*).

- There is the secret of God and the secret of Christ, yet the secret of the Holy Spirit is never mentioned (i.e. *Colossians 2:2; 4:3; Ephesians 3:4; Revelations 10:7*).

- We ought to be followers of God and followers of Christ, but not followers of the Holy Spirit (i.e. *Ephesians 5:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6*).

- We ought to be witnesses of God, and Christ; we are never called to be witnesses of the Holy Spirit (i.e. *Isaiah 43:10,12; 44:8; John 1:7,8, 15, 34; 5:37; Acts 1:8; 5:32; 10:42,43; 22:18; 1 Corinthians 15:15; 1 John 4:14*).

- It is said that we belong to God and to Christ, yet there is no word that we belong to the Holy Spirit (i.e. *Acts 27:23; Mark 9:41; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:23; Galatians 3:29*).

- There is the Day of the Lord, and the Day of Christ, but there is no day of the Holy Spirit (i.e. *2 Peter 3:12; Revelations 16:14; 2 Philippians 1:6,10; 2:16; 2.Thessalonians 2:2*).

- There is the fear of God and of the Lord, but there is no fear of the Holy Spirit (i.e. *Romans 3:18; Ephesians 5:21; 2 Corinthians 5:11; Acts 9:31*).

- There is the mercy (grace) of God and the mercy of Christ, but there is no mention of the mercy of the Holy Spirit, nor that the

Holy Spirit is merciful to us (i.e. *1.Timothy 1:2, 2. John 1:3, Romans 1;7, Galatians 1:6, Luke 6:36, Hebrews 2:17*).

- Biblically, there is a church and children of God and Christ, but not of the Holy Spirit (i.e. *1.Thessalonians 1:1, 2.Thessalonians 1:1, Colossians 1:24, 1.Timothy 3:15, 1. Corinthians 1:2, Mark 10:24, Luke 7:35, John 1:12, Romans 8:21, Hebrews 2:13-14, 1. John 3:1*).

- There are enemies of God and of Christ; there are no enemies of the Holy Spirit (i.e. *Matthew 13:25, 22:44, Romans 5:10, 8:7, James 4:4. Colossians 1:21*).

- There is hatred toward God and Christ; but no hatred toward the Holy Spirit is mentioned (i.e. *Luke 19:14, John 7:7, 15:18.23-25*).

- The first and last, Alpha and Omega—God and Christ are called in this manner, but never the Holy Spirit (i.e. *Revelation 1:8.11.17, 2:8, 21:6, 22:13*).

- There is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ; there is no Spirit of the Holy Spirit (i.e. *Matthew 10:20, Romans 8:9-11.14, 1. Corinthians 6:11, Philippians 1:19, 1. Peter 1:11, Galatians 4:6*).

The Bible does not attribute certain themes to the Holy Spirit as it does to the Father and the Son. In correct understanding of the presence and THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, the Holy Spirit is not excluded from presented themes. The Spirit is a part of who the Father and the Son are, and through the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is included. The Father and the Son are one in the spirit.

*“‘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.”* [\[EGW, RH July 13, 1905, par. 3; 1905\]](#)

chapter 36

THE THIRD PERSON OF THE GODHEAD

The term “*the Third Person of the Godhead*” is not found in the Bible but Sister White used this term three distinct times in her writings. Many argue that this is proof that Sister White believed, supported, and taught, that the Holy Spirit is co-equal in personality with the Father and the Son. Such a conclusion would be in disharmony with numerous quotations we have seen before in respect to the presence and THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. In this chapter we want to examine her statements in their context and in the light of the presence and THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. In context, we will again see how she explains that it is Christ’s Spirit divested of His human personality and independent thereof. Let’s probe these in their respective contexts and see whether they are in harmony with all that we have studied so far.

*“In describing to His disciples **the office work of the Holy Spirit**, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. **The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and***

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without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church." {EGW, DA 671.2; 1898}

Usually, when this quotation is used for the purpose of proving that the Holy Spirit is co-equal in personality with the Father and the Son, merely a notable part—"Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead"—is quoted, and the explanation that "Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil" is left out. The third person of the Godhead is the Spirit of Christ. The Sin could be overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead; explained later, this is because Christ has given *His Spirit* as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil. Yet even when the quotation is taken out of its context it does not talk about any quality or state of the Holy Spirit being a person. This quotation is from the book "*Desire of Ages*", chapter 73, where Sister White comments on the Gospel of John, chapters' 14 to 17. This chapter is very important because she testifies of the Holy Spirit as Jesus being our Comforter and the power to overcome sin. Let us examine more quotations from this chapter in connection with overcoming sin and the quality or state of the Holy Spirit being a person.

"The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation." {EGW, DA 676.1; 1898}

"'Abide in Me, and I in you.' Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His ser-

vice. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character.” {EGW, DA 676.2; 1898}

In the context of chapter 73 of the Desire of Ages, just before Sister White mentions the Third Person of the Godhead, she speaks of the personality of the Holy Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.” {EGW, DA 669.2; 1898}

Here, the context of “the third person of the Godhead” reveals the differences in the personality of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. Christ in His personality is cumbered and cannot be in every place personally. Many assume that the term “the third person of the Godhead” requires the Holy Spirit to have the same type of personality as Christ and the Father. This assumption is based on the popular, but erroneous, view of one God made of three equal persons. Many minds are puzzled by such an expression. In the following sections we will give several reasons, supported by the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, to call the Holy Spirit the third person of the Godhead.

WHY IS IT THIRD?

The reason why the Holy Spirit is called the third person is because the Bible differentiates the Holy Spirit from God and Christ.

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken

*your mortal bodies **by his Spirit** that dwelleth in you.” Romans 8:11*

Paul is making a plain distinction between the Spirit and God that raises the dead *by* that Spirit. He is also preserving the identity of the Spirit of God by explicitly using a possessive adjective, “*His Spirit*”. The identity is preserved, yet the entity is distinct.

Sister White does the same thing. She differentiates the personality of the Holy Spirit from the personality of Christ, yet preserves the identity of the Holy Spirit as Christ.

*“The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, in Christ’s name. **He personifies Christ, yet is a distinct personality.** We may have the Holy Spirit if we ask for **it** and make **it** [a] habit to turn to and trust in God rather than in any finite human agent who may make mistakes.”* {EGW, Ms93-1893.8; 1893}

*“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.”* {EGW, Lt66-1894.18; 1894}

These two quotations do not contradict each other. The Holy Spirit is a representative of Christ. He personifies Christ, yet is a distinct personality from Him. The quality or state of Christ to be a person is distinct from the quality or state of the Holy Spirit to be a person. This distinction in personality is the reason why Christ’s Spirit is the third person. This distinction is clearly seen in His omnipresence.

GODHEAD—THE WORD STUDY?

Many assume that when the Bible says ‘*Godhead*’ it actually means the unity of three divine persons. ‘*Godhead*’ is a Biblical word and the Bible gives its own interpretation of this word.

The word ‘*Godhead*’ is mentioned three times in the English Bible. The first instance is in *Acts 17:29*:

*“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that **the Godhead** (‘theios’) is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.” Acts 17:29*

In this context, “Godhead” is the word ‘theios’ in the original Greek text. It simply means “the divine nature”⁴⁵. This word, ‘theios’, is used two more times and it is always translated into “divine nature” or “divine power”.

*“According as his **divine** (‘theios’) **power** hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be **partakers of the divine** (‘theios’) **nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:3-4*

Thus, it is evident that ‘Godhead’ has nothing to do with any number, nor any kind of unity, but rather the divine nature.

The second instance in the Bible that the word ‘Godhead’ is used is in *Romans 1:20*.

*“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal **power and Godhead** (‘theiotēs’); so that they are without excuse.” Romans 1:20*

The word ‘theiotēs’ means divine essence or nature. Here is how the SDA Bible Commentary renders the explanation:

*“The apostle here **speaks of the divine essence and the manifestation of the divine attributes, not of the Trinity as such**”.*⁴⁶

The third and last instance of the word ‘Godhead’ is in *Colossians 2:9*.

*“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of **the Godhead bodily**.” Colossians 2:9*

This “fulness of the Godhead” that dwells in Christ bodily is because the Father gave His Son this fullness.

45 Strong G2304 - θεῖος - “From G2316; godlike (neuter as noun, divinity): - divine, godhead.”
46 [SDA Bible Commentary on Romans 1:20](#)

*“For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell;”
Colossians 1:19*

Again, this word is referring to the divinity of Christ, and not to any number of persons, let alone three. Christ is fully divine because the Father’s fullness dwells in Him—the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

When Sister White used ‘Godhead’ in her writings she applied the same meaning of that word as the Bible. She is talking about divine nature. Here are some interesting examples that will lead us to the next point:

“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,...” {EGW, Lt8a-1890.9; 1890}

“When Christ gave Himself, He opened up a spiritual fountain of divine influence, that by faith in Him, man might partake of the divine nature. In Christ is gathered all the glory of the Father. In Him is all the fulness of the Godhead. He is the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person. The glory of the attributes of God are expressed in His character.” {EGW, ST November 24, 1898, par. 1; 1989}

How can a man partake of the divine nature?

“So with the followers of Christ. We can receive of heaven’s light only as we are willing to be emptied of self. We cannot discern the character of God, or accept Christ by faith, unless we consent to the bringing into captivity of every thought to the obedience of Christ. To all who do this the Holy Spirit is given without measure. In Christ ‘dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him ye are made full.’ Colossians 2:9, 10, R. V.” {EGW, DA 181.1; 1898}

When we willingly empty ourselves and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit and

Christ dwells in us; and in Him, in who dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead, we are made full.

In the following quotation, Sister White makes one controversial statement about the Godhead:

*“‘It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore **that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me**’—not through confessionals or priests or popes, but through Me, your Saviour. ‘**Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.’ **This is the absolute Godhead.** The mightiest created intellect cannot comprehend Him; words from the most eloquent tongue fail to describe Him. Silence is eloquence.”* {EGW, Ms128-1897.13; 1897}

Here, she is talking exclusively about the Father and the Son, and she confirms that they two are the absolute Godhead. But how? The Spirit of Prophecy explains itself in detail:

*“**The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily**, and is invisible to mortal sight. **The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested.** The word of God declares Him to be ‘the express image of His person.’ ... The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is **the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead**, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour.”* {EGW, BTS March 1, 1906, par. 1; 1906}

Do you see the difference? The Father **is** all the fullness, the Son **is** all the fullness, but the Holy Spirit is **in** all the fullness of the Godhead. The Father and Son are the fullness of the Godhead—bodily; they are the absolute Godhead, while the Holy Spirit is *in* all the fullness of the Godhead. Obviously then, the Holy Spirit is a spirit, not a divine being possessing a body as the Father and the Son do. The Father and the Son are two distinct beings.

*“The burden of that prayer was that His disciples might be one as He was one with the Father; the oneness so close that, **although two distinct beings**, there was **perfect unity of spirit, purpose, and***

action. The mind of the Father was the mind of the Son.” {EGW, Lt1-1882.1; 1882}

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, is not a being. Through the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, Christ abides in us and we become partakers of the divine nature, Christ’s fullness of the Godhead.

“What a wonderful statement! The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. In mind, in purpose, in character, they are one, but not in person. By partaking of the Spirit of God, conforming to the law of God, man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ brings His disciples into a living union with Himself and with the Father. Through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, man is made complete in Christ Jesus. Unity with Christ establishes a bond of unity with one another. This unity is the most convincing proof to the world of the majesty and virtue of Christ and of His power to take away sin.” {EGW, Ms111-1903.9; 1903}

The unity between us, the Father, and the Son, is the most convincing proof of the majesty and virtue of Christ, and of His power to take away sin. Previously we saw that this unity is the unity in spirit. Without our unity with the Father and the Son we cannot overcome sin.

POWER TO TAKE AWAY SIN—THE THIRD PERSON OF THE GODHEAD

“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.” {EGW, DA 671.2; 1898}

Previously we have seen that through the Holy Spirit we are becoming partakers of the divine nature and then we receive the power to overcome sin. That power is Christ. According to the preceding quotation, it is Christ that has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome sin. This has been shown numerous times throughout the Spirit of Prophecy.

“Christ declared that after his ascension, he would send to his church, as his crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take his place. This Comforter is the Holy Spirit,—the soul of his life, the efficacy of his church, the light and life of the world. With His Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin.” {EGW, RH May 19, 1904, par. 1; 1898}

“There is no power in you apart from Christ, but it is your privilege to have Christ abiding in your heart by faith, and He can overcome sin in you, when you cooperate with His efforts.” {EGW, YI June 29, 1893, par. 8; 1893}

“There is only one power that can turn the sinner from sin to holiness,—the power of Christ. Our Redeemer is the only one who can take away sin. He alone can forgive sin. He alone can make men steadfast, and keep them so.” {EGW, RH June 2, 1903, Art. A, par. 3; 1903}

“While Christ was on earth, He showed by His miracles that He had power to save unto the uttermost. By curing the diseases of the body, He showed that He was able to take away sin from the heart.” {EGW, SJ 77.9; 1900}

“There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.” {EGW, SC 18.1; 1892}

“Christ is the ‘Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world’ (verse 9). As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart. But against these principles there is struggling an antagonistic power. The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in ev-

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ery man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ. Cooperation with that power is man's greatest need." {EGW, Ed 29.1; 1903}

In order to have the power to overcome sin, we are to have Christ in our heart, and that power is Christ **in** the person of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit of Christ, man becomes partaker of the divine nature.

chapter 37

ANGELS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is a famous verse in the Bible regarding our mission work in connection with the work of the Holy Spirit.

*“...This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, **Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit**, saith the LORD of hosts.”
Zechariah 4:6*

How can we learn not to rely on our own power nor might, but on the work of the Holy Spirit? This vision of Zechariah gives us insight into the mechanics of how Heaven is cooperating with human agencies in the purposes of God’s work. This insight also teaches us a valuable lesson regarding the personality of the Holy Spirit. Many refrain from investigating the mechanics of how the Holy Spirit works, thinking that this point is not revealed. But again, we recall our safeguard principle:

*“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: **but those things which are revealed** belong unto us and to our children for ever...” Deuteronomy 29:29*

The things which are revealed belong unto us. Certainly, the Bible is giving us insight into how Heaven cooperates with human agencies in the purposes of God’s work. Let us read Zechariah’s vision.

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*“And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, **I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.** So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, **What are these, my lord?** Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, **This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts...** Then answered I, and said unto him, **What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?** And I answered again, and said unto him, **What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?** And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, **These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.**”*
Zechariah 4:1-6,11-14

Zechariah saw the golden candlestick with seven lamps thereon; as a Sanctuary item, this indicates that he was in the Sanctuary. He also saw a bowl upon a golden candlestick and two olive trees by it, upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. And out of these two olive branches, through two golden pipes, emptied the golden oil. What is the meaning of this vision? The answer was “*not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts*”. Where do we recognize the Holy Spirit in this vision? It is represented by the golden oil that was fueling the candlestick to shine light. The church is represented by a golden candlestick. The light which God’s church emanates is not a product of might nor power of the human agencies, but the result of the spirit of the Lord. The golden oil, the Holy Spirit, which nourishes the candlestick to burn and emanate light, is given through the two olive branches that were on each side of the candlestick, emptying “*the golden oil out of themselves*”. In this vision we see the mechanism by which God imparts His

Spirit to His Church. This *mechanism* is illustrated by how the golden candlestick was supplied with the golden oil. Zachariah asked specifically about this mechanism: “*What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?*”, “*What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?*” Let the Bible be its own interpreter and let the Bible build our conceptions of Heavenly Realities. The two olive branches which were emptying the golden oil out of themselves are “*the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth*”. Who are these two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth? Those two anointed ones are the two angels. These two anointed covering cherubs are the highest ranked angels among the Heavenly host and it is through them that the work of imparting the Holy Spirit is delegated to lower ranks of angels. Through the work of the angles, the candlestick is supplied with the golden oil. The heavenly intelligences are emptying the golden oil out of themselves. In other words, the Holy Spirit is supplied to God’s church through the ministry of the angels. The angels are pouring out the Holy Spirit, out of themselves, and they take the supply of the oil from the Lord of the whole earth. This is a hard saying but it is clearly laid down in the vision of Zechariah 4. Let us look to its confirmation in the Spirit of Prophecy.

*“Read and study the fourth chapter of Zechariah. The two olive trees empty the golden oil out of themselves through the golden pipes into the golden bowl, from which the lamps of the sanctuary are fed. The golden oil represents the Holy Spirit. With this oil God’s ministers are to be constantly supplied, that they, in turn, may impart it to the church. ‘Not by might, nor by power, **but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.**’ God’s servants can obtain victories only by inward purity, by cleanness of heart, by holiness.”* {EGW, RH December 22, 1904, par. 7; 1904}

“These heavenly messengers empty the golden oil out of themselves, that the light may be given to the earnest searcher for truth...” {EGW, RH April 20, 1897, par. 2; 1897}

*“...The shepherds of the flock of God, who read and study the one trustworthy book, and pray for information from it, **will find the***

heavenly messengers right at hand, ready to empty from themselves the golden oil. ” {EGW, RH April 20, 1897, par. 4; 1897}

“From the two olive-trees, the golden oil was emptied through golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick, and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God’s presence, his Spirit is imparted to human instrumentalities that are consecrated to his service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate light and power to God’s people. It is to receive blessing for us that they stand in God’s presence. As the olive-trees empty themselves into the golden pipes, so the heavenly messengers seek to communicate all that they receive from God. The whole heavenly treasure awaits our demand and reception; and as we receive the blessing, we in our turn are to impart it. Thus it is that the holy lamps are fed, and the church becomes a light-bearer in the world.” {EGW, RH March 2, 1897, par. 9; 1897}

“The golden oil is not manufactured by any human skill. It is the unseen power of the heavenly messengers who wait before the throne of God to communicate to all who are in darkness, that they may diffuse heaven’s light. Into the hearts of those united to God by faith, his golden oil of love flows freely, to flow forth again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God. These souls become a blessing to their fellow men, and thus are enabled to shine.” {RH September 21, 1897, par. 6}

The work of the Holy Spirit is enabled through the ministry of the angels.

*“A measure of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent, and draw him to Christ who has paid the ransom money for his soul, that the sinner may be rescued from the slavery of sin and Satan. **But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent.** The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that the human agent may co-operate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. Christ is ready to impart all heavenly influences...”* {EGW, Lt71-1893.10; 1893}

We are to cooperate with the Divine. “*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts*”. This cooperation is done through the ministry of angels. This is God’s appointed work.

“Hear the words of the Saviour, ‘I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the church, I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.’ What a wonderful declaration is this. Christ Himself united the wide extremes of divinity and humanity. ‘All power is vested in me, both in heaven and earth,’ He declares. ‘I have made in it my plan that angels as well as men should act a part in My service. Therefore I have sent mine angel to communicate these things to all the world; and lo, I am with you to the end of the world. The Holy Spirit and the church, angels and men, are to combine in the great, grand work of pointing to the living fountain of life, opened to the whole world if they believe on Me. This is My final will. All may partake of the waters of life freely.’” {EGW, Lt29-1898.10; 1898}

In the aforementioned quotation we see the parallelism that Jesus used: “*The Holy Spirit and the church, angels and men, are to combine in the great, grand work...*”. This being said, it is important to emphasize that the Holy Spirit and the angels are not one and the same thing; and in the same manner, the golden oil and the golden pipes which are emptying the golden oil out of themselves are not one and the same thing. But the Bible often uses the word ‘*Spirit*’ when referring to an angel. Such instances are often seen in the testimonies of cooperation between angels and human agencies. Let us take a detailed look into several examples when this was the case.

PHILIP AND ETHIOPIAN

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.” Acts 8:26

“Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” Acts 8:29

“And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the

Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.” Acts 8:39

In this account we see the cooperation of Divine with the human. In verse 26, the account says that it was the angel of the Lord who spoke unto Philip, yet in verse 29, it says that “*the Spirit said unto Philip*”. This is not a contradiction when we know that the Spirit is given through the angels. Further, when the Spirit caught Philip away, we know it was the angel with whom Philip was cooperating to bring the good tidings to the Ethiopian eunuch.

PETER AND CORNELIUS

The next example that illustrates the work of angels as the work of the Holy Spirit is the instance with Peter and Cornelius, in Acts chapter 10.

Peter received the vision of the unclean food and was perplexed. Then the account renders the following:

*“While Peter thought on the vision, **the Spirit said unto him**, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: **for I have sent them.**” Acts 10:19-20*

Who sent the three men from Cornelius to Peter? The text clearly says the Spirit. Yet, the previous account renders that these three men sent from Cornelius to Peter were sent by a holy angel. Speaking of Cornelius, the account renders it so:

*“He [Cornelius] saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day **an angel of God coming in to him**, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.” Acts 10:3-4*

“And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews,

was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.” Acts 10:22

Who sent these three men? Verse 22 clearly says that they were sent by a holy angel. But in verse 20, the Spirit informed Peter that he had sent them to him. This is not a contradiction when we know that the golden oil is imparted to God’s church through the ministry of the angels. It was the angel who coordinated the events, and Peter met Cornelius, and broke the barriers of Jewish exclusivity toward gentiles.

JEWISH UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPIRIT

The New Testament is full of instances where the term ‘Spirit’ and ‘angels’ are interchanged. In Acts 23, we see Paul taking advantage of a long discussed topic on the spirit and angels among Pharisees and Sadducees in order to get himself released.

*“For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, **neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.** And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees’ part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: **but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him,** let us not fight against God.” Acts 23:8-9*

This is one of many pieces of evidence testifying that the Jews, particularly the Pharisees, understood that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is done through the angels. It was a known fact that the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures and they knew that the inspiration was delivered by angels. We see this in the 7th chapter of Acts, in Stephen’s testimony to the Jews.

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye... Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.” Acts 7:51,53

The Bible teaches us the mechanism of how inspiration is given to us. It is given by God through His Son; then Christ gives it to His angels, and they give it to us. This principle of revelation is

clearly revealed in John's opening statement in his book, Revelation:

"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

This chain of Revelation is signified in Jacob's dream where he saw "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it..." (Genesis 28:12,13). The LORD who stood above the ladder is the Father, the Son is represented by the ladder (John 1:51), and the angels are ministering through the mediatorial work of Christ. This concept is present throughout the Bible.

THE HEAVENLY REALITY

If we are mindful of the fact that the angels are the means by which the Holy Spirit is imparted to man, many difficult passages become easy to understand, especially those that illustrate the scenes of the throne of God. For instance, the seven spirits of God before the throne represent seven angels standing before the throne.

*"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**;"*
Revelation 1:4.

*"The mystery of **the seven stars** which thou sawest in my right hand, and **the seven golden candlesticks**. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."* Revelation 1:20

*"And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: **and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God**."* Revelation 4:5

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been

slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” Revelation 5:6

These seven stars before the golden candlestick, the seven eyes, and the seven Spirits of God that are before God’s throne, which are sent forth into all the earth, represent the seven angels that are ministering to seven churches. It is the principle of the revelation of God. It is through the ministering angels that the Word comes to the Church from God’s throne. This is the standard operation of Heaven we repeatedly see in the Bible. Here is another vivid example from 1 Kings, chapter 22:

*“...I saw **the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.” 1 Kings 22:19-22***

This scene took place in the heavenly headquarters where the entire host of God’s angels stood before Jehovah and the question was posed as to who should persuade Ahab to go and fall at Ramoth Gilead. According to the record, one spirit stood before Jehovah and said he will go forth and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all Ahab’s prophets. Obviously it was an angel, one individual among all the hosts of heaven. He was the one who inspired false prophets to encourage Ahab to go into battle at Ramoth Gilead.

Throughout the Bible we see that the work of the Holy Spirit is done through the work of the heavenly angels. In all inspirations and visions inspired by the Holy Spirit there is the involvement of an angel, be it conveying the truths or as a guide through the visions. We see this case with all the prophets of God and Ellen White is no exception. She understood the mechanism of how the Holy Spirit is imparted to us through the ministry of the heavenly

messengers. We are to work efficiently. We are to work in cooperation with the heavenly angels.

*“...We are constantly to **work in harmony with the messengers of heaven.** ‘Not by might, nor by power, but **by My Spirit**, saith the Lord.’ [Zechariah 4:6.]” {EGW, Lt44-1910.13; 1910}*

*“Our only safety is to realize **the necessity of receiving the Holy Spirit**, without whose influence we are powerless. **Heavenly intelligences stand ready to unite with human agencies...**” {EGW, Lt44-1910.22; 1910}*

*“Agents must be selected, chosen of God for spheres of labor appointed them; and the working of agencies must be sustained by the prayers and the contributions of means from the disciples who may remain in their business stations, and thus earn the means necessary to sustain those laboring to work out God’s appointed plan. **This is why the work of a united, converted church, with prayer and fasting for the Holy Spirit of God to be revealed, will bring the angelic agencies very near.** As the disciples ‘ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.’ [Acts 13:2.]” {EGW, Lt218-1901.3; 1901}*

Angelic agencies are pouring the golden oil out of themselves. The Holy Spirit of God is imparted through the angels. Such conclusions are in huge discrepancy with the popular notion that the Holy Spirit of God is co-equal in personality with the Father and the Son. Obviously the work of the Holy Spirit is intertwined with the work of heavenly angels. Each angel is a separate individual and the same holds for the Father and the Son. The angels pour the Holy Spirit out of themselves. Jesus breathed unto his disciples the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). “*Pouring out*” or “*breathing unto*” is not a quality that defines someone to be a person. Yet how can we understand and harmonize the scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy in that the Holy Spirit *is* a person? And even more specifically, that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead? In the following studies, let us closely examine the third person of the Godhead and see how the entire revelation can be perfectly harmonized.

chapter 38

SATAN HELD IN CHECK—THE THIRD PERSON OF THE GODHEAD

In the Bible, as well as in the Spirit of Prophecy, we see the qualities of the Holy Spirit to be a person, yet simultaneously we see other qualities of the Holy Spirit which are not pertaining to any person. On one hand, we see that the Holy Spirit speaks, commands and can be grieved; on the other hand, we see that the Holy Spirit is “*poured out*” or “*breathed unto*”. It’s important that we take what is revealed to us as is and, instead of favoring one view over the other, seek to harmonize the entire revelation.

We believe that the Spirit of Prophecy can greatly help us with that. The Spirit of Prophecy will always be a stumbling block for those who do not harmonize the entire revelation, favoring one view over another. Knowing this, Sister White penned instructions on how to read her writings:

“The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as Scripture is explained by Scripture” [{EGW, Lt73-1903.7; 1903}](#)

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We are harmonizing seemingly opposing views by comparing the spiritual with spiritual. One testimony will explain the other, just as Scripture is explained by Scripture.

The Spirit of Prophecy is very clear that the Holy Spirit is a person. More precisely, as we have already seen, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. Here is another quotation:

“The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.” {EGW, SpTA10 37.1; 1897}

If the Testimonies themselves are the key to explaining the message given, let us look unto other testimonies for the explanation of the message from the aforementioned quotation. How can the prince of the power of evil be held in check? The revelation clearly states that only by the power of God *in the third person of the Godhead*, the Holy Spirit. When the word ‘only’ is used, it indicates the exclusivity of the statement. Are there other testimonies that testify exclusiveness in our defense against the power of evil? Those testimonies will be the key to explaining the messages given. Here is one such quotation in Desires of Ages:

“The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness.” {EGW, DA 324.1; 1898}

We see the same message as we have seen before. The third person of the Godhead is the spirit of Christ—indwelling Christ. This is not a contradiction, rather the explanation of the message. The only defense against the power of evil is the indwelling of Christ, or power of God, in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. That is one and the same thing—Christ divested from the personality of humanity and independent thereof. Again, we see Christ’s identity in the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Godhead. The person who holds the powers of evil in check is Christ.

*“At the time of Christ’s first advent, the world was in a terrible condition. Men were being controlled by satanic agencies. **The Majesty of heaven** looked in pity on the human race. He saw that Satan was gaining the control of the bodies and minds of men and knew that **He alone** could break his power. It was because of this*

*that **He** laid off His kingly crown and royal robe, and clothing His divinity with humanity, **came to our world to meet the powers of darkness and to hold in check the forces of Satan.** This was His work. **A counterworking influence, coming from the highest authority, was to hold the enemy in check and resist his power.**” {EGW, Ms95-1908.9; 1908}*

In the Old Testament we also see Christ holding the powers of evil in check.

*“**Heavenly agencies have to contend with hindrances before the purpose of God is fulfilled in its time. The king of Persia was controlled by the highest of all evil angels. He refused, as did Pharaoh, to obey the word of the Lord. Gabriel declared, He [Satan] withstood me twenty-one days by his representations against the Jews. But Michael came to his help, and then he remained with the kings of Persia, holding the powers in check, giving right counsel against evil counsel.**”* {EGW, Lt201-1899.6; 1899}

We read that the powers of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. Then we read that the only defense against the powers of evil is the indwelling of Christ. We also read that Christ is holding Satan in check. But we also read that the power of God will be manifested to hold the power of the enemy in check when we cooperate with heavenly angels.

*“**God will not leave His people to wrestle with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places, without the co-operation of heavenly angels. The power of God will be manifested to hold in check the power of the enemy. God will give victory to the truth.**”* {EGW, Lt27-1894.40; 1894}

In our cooperation with the heavenly angels, *the power of God* will be manifested to hold in check the power of the enemy. As we initially read, that power of God is the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. Sister White gives us insight into this battle and how we are to cooperate with the heavenly agencies.

*“I saw evil angels contending for souls, and angels of God resisting them. The conflict was severe. Evil angels were crowding about them, corrupting the atmosphere with their poisonous influence, and stupefying their sensibilities. **Holy angels were anxiously watching these souls, and were waiting to drive back Satan’s host.** But it is not the work of good angels to control minds against the will of the individuals. **If they yield to the enemy, and make no effort to resist him, then the angels of God can do but little more than hold in check the host of Satan, that they should not destroy, until further light be given to those in peril, to move them to arouse and look to heaven for help. Jesus will not commission holy angels to extricate those who make no effort to help themselves.**”*

[*{EGW, 1T 345.2, 1868}*](#)

In our battles, “*we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*” (Ephesians 6:12). The only One able to hold in check the principalities and rulers of the darkness of this world is Christ. If we want to be victorious, the eye of faith has to be focused on Christ and not somebody else. There is a mighty argument we possess in our battle against sin: “*It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*” (Romans 8:34). God is in heaven and Christ is interceding for us at His right hand. Here on Earth, in the battle with evil angels, the heavenly angels are battling with the arguments by which Christ is interceding on our behalf before God. Thus, the heavenly angels are invested with the power of God to overcome Satan’s influence. Yet, it is up to us whether we are going to cooperate by setting our eyes upon Christ and His merits. This is why “*the only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness*”. If we take our eyes away from Christ we will certainly fail.

If we believe that the Holy Spirit is co-equal in personality with the Father and the Son, we will certainly move our eyes of faith from Christ unto someone else. The phrase “*the third person of the Godhead*”, used by Sister White, does not indicate co-equality in the personality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It

merely indicates the distinctiveness of the personality of Christ in His flesh from His omnipresence here on earth by His Spirit. We do not understand the nature of the Holy Spirit but we know that we receive the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the heavenly angels. In terms of personality, the Holy Spirit is a spirit in the full sense of the word—“*for a spirit hath not flesh and bones*” (Luke 24:39). Jesus has a body, without a doubt. Angels have bodies, and the Father has a body, as the doctrine on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD teaches us.

One testimony is never to stand on its own. We are to compare the spiritual with the spiritual. As Scripture is explained by Scripture, so the testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given. That which seems contradictory is actually an explanation of the message. Here is another testimony of the same message—holding Satan in check.

“Ministers and people, wake up! Be quick to recognize and seize every opportunity and advantage offered in the turning of the wheel of providence. God and Christ and the heavenly angels are working with intense activity to hold in check the fierceness of Satan’s wrath, that God’s plans may not be thwarted. God lives and reigns.” {EGW, 7T 14.1; 1902}

The message is that Satan is held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead. Another testimony says that God and Christ, and the heavenly angels, are holding Satan in check. The explanation of the message is that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is when the Father, the Son, and the holy angels are present with us, and will hold the fierceness of Satan’s wrath in check.

“If there are only a few assembled, there are enough to claim the precious promises of God. The Father, the Son, and the holy angels will be present with you to behold your faith, your steadfast principle, and there you will have of the outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit.” {EGW, ST February 15, 1905, par. 2; 1905}

*“The Bible shows us **God in His high and holy place**, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of **holy beings**, all waiting to do His will. **Through these messengers***

He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men.

[{EGW, MH 417.2; 1905}](#)

All of these testimonies are true and they are not contradictory. Satan is held in check by the Holy Spirit. How can the Father and the Son be present with us if they are in Heaven? They are present with us by Their representative, the Holy Spirit. The angels are pouring the Holy Spirit out of themselves. From God through Christ, they receive the power to hold Satan in check. Having a steadfast principle, and faith in Christ and in His righteousness, we are to cooperate with the heavenly intelligences and, consequently, receive the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit.

chapter 39

IT—THE THIRD PERSON OF THE GODHEAD, THE HOLY SPIRIT

Of the comprehensive oeuvre of Sister White, we find only three distinct quotations on the third person of the Godhead. Other instances are reprints or a compilation of her writings using one of these three distinct quotations. Those who promote the idea that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are co-equal in their personalities often argue that Sister White supported that idea by quoting the “*third person of the Godhead*” quotations. But we see that within her quotations she always points to the Spirit of Christ as being the third person of the Godhead. Even often within the same quotation she attributes qualities to the Holy Spirit that are not qualities of someone to be a person. For many who favor the idea that the Holy Spirit is co-equal in personality with the Father and the Son, these quotations are troublesome and unfairly assessed. In our Adventist history we find one example from brother Lacey who wrote to brother LeRoy E. Froom, in 1945, regarding his experience with old Adventist practices and Testimonies of Ellen White.

“As I already stated, I was really a Trinitarian at heart. And I went through Healdsburg College, and Battle Creek College, with

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a dim sort of a feeling that there was something wrong about our teaching on the Ministry and Personality of the Holy Ghost. (Of course, that term was never used, except in reading from the Bible,—it was always ‘Holy Spirit’ and referred to as ‘it.’) And then in the Testimonies I noticed that, practically everywhere, the same language was used,— ‘Holy Spirit’ ‘it’ ‘its’ etc., as though the ‘Spirit of God’ were an influence, instead of a Person, the Third Person of the Godhead....” (Letter by Herbert Camden Lacey to Leroy Froom on August 30, 1945)

Indeed, the testimonies are full of references to the Holy Spirit as ‘it’—even in the quotation of the Holy Spirit to be a third person of the Godhead. Let us look at the final, third, distinct quotation on the third person of the Godhead. We see extensive references to the Holy Spirit as ‘it’ and we, again, see that Sister White identifies the third person of the Godhead as the Spirit of Christ.

*“As Christ ascended, His hands were outstretched in blessing upon His disciples. While they stood gazing upward to catch the last glimpse of **their ascending Lord**, He was received by the heavenly throng into the rejoicing ranks of cherubs and seraphs. And as they escorted Him to His heavenly home, they sang in triumph, ‘Sing unto the Lord, ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises upon the Lord, that rideth upon the heaven of heavens.’” {EGW, Ms44-1898.10; 1898}*

*“Christ determined to bestow **a gift** on those who had been with Him and on those who should believe on Him, because this was the occasion of His ascension and inauguration, a jubilee in heaven. What **gift** could Christ bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? **It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. Christ gave His representative, the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. This gift** could not be excelled. **The divine Spirit, converting, enlightening, sanctifying, would be His donation, because He would give all gifts in one.**” {EGW, Ms44-1898.11; 1898}*

*“On the Day of Pentecost Christ gave His disciples the Holy Spirit as their Comforter. **It** was ever to abide with His church. During the whole Jewish economy the influence of this Spirit has often been revealed in a marked manner, **but not in full.** The Spirit*

had been waiting for the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. For ages prayers had been offered for the fulfillment of the promise, for **the impartation of the Spirit**; and not one of these earnest supplications had been forgotten. Now for ten days the disciples sent up their petitions, and Christ in heaven added His intercession. He claimed the gift of the Spirit, that He might pour it out upon His people. He ascended on high, leading captivity captive, **and gave gifts unto men**. Having reached His throne, the Spirit was given as He had promised, and like a rushing, mighty wind, **it fell** upon those assembled, filling the whole house. **It came with a fullness and power, as if for ages it had been restrained**, but was now poured forth up on the church, to be communicated to the world.” {EGW, Ms44-1898.12; 1898}

“‘The whole multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one mind.’ [Acts 4:32] **The Spirit of Christ animated the whole congregation they had found the pearl of great price**. Every individual’s spiritual pulse beat in healthful concert.” {EGW, Ms44-1898.14; 1898}

“The value of a gift is proportionate to its adaptability to the needs of perishing souls. When Christ gave Himself, the One precious pearl of great price, He opened up a spiritual fountain of divine influence, that fallen man through faith might be a partaker of the divine nature. Standing near His trial, rejection, condemnation, and crucifixion, He said, ‘Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you, and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.’ This is a wonderful announcement.” {EGW, Ms44-1898.15; 1898}

“**Christ longed to be in a position where He could accomplish the most important work by few and simple means**. The plan of redemption is comprehensive. Its parts are few, and each part depends on each other, while all work together with the utmost simplicity and in entire harmony. **Christ is represented by the Holy Spirit, and when the Holy Spirit is appreciated and accepted, when those controlled by the Spirit communicate to others the energy with which they are imbued, an invisible chord will be touched,**

and will electrify the whole. Would that we could all understand how boundless are the divine resources.” [\[EGW, Ms44-1898.16; 1898\]](#)

May we receive and possess this gift. It is a gift worthy of Christ's greatness and royalty. This gift is Christ's representative, the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. The third person of the Godhead is the Spirit of Christ because when the disciples received this gift, “*the Spirit of Christ animated the whole congregation they had found the pearl of great price*”. It is Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit divested from the personality of humanity and independent thereof. As in such a state of omnipresence, the Holy Spirit is Christ in the third person of the Godhead.

chapter 40

THE CONCLUSION ON THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Throughout the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy we see some qualities that define the Holy Spirit to be a person. Simultaneously, however, we find some qualities attributed to the Holy Spirit which cannot be attributed to any person. According to the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, it is true that the Holy Spirit is a person. It is taught in the most affirmative way, yet the other side of the coin should not be ignored. The real issue appears when the assumption is made that the Holy Spirit is a person in the same way as the Father and the Son are persons. If that assumption is entertained, and we acknowledge the other side of the coin—that there are some qualities attributed to the Holy Spirit that cannot be attributed to a person—we will consequently degrade, or at least speculate over, THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of Christ, because we would equalize the personalities of the Holy Spirit with the personality of the Father and the Son.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of Christ is a simple truth taught in Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. Because of that truth, we cannot entertain the idea that the Holy Spirit is a person in the same way as are the Father and Son. There is a marked distinc-

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tion between the quality or state of the Father and of the Son to be persons in comparison with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has no flesh nor bones, as Jesus has taught. If the Holy Spirit would have a material body it would not be a spirit and neither would God and Christ be able to be omnipresent. The Bible teaches us that the Father and the Son are two distinct beings, everywhere present by Their *representative* the Holy Spirit. By entertaining the idea that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three co-equal in personality, we would consequently either compromise the truth on the personality of the Father, and of the Son, or would compromise the truth on God's presence. Therefore, the popular idea that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are co-equal in Their personalities is flawed and unbiblical. Thus, we should look at the qualities that define the Holy Spirit to be a person from a different perspective.

In Christ's teachings on the Holy Spirit we find the reasons why the Holy Spirit is a person:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." John 16:12-15

In these verses we see the Holy Spirit to be a representative. The Holy Spirit does not work nor speak of his own—it is Christ who is speaking. It is Christ who had so many things to say unto His disciples but they could not bear them at that time. Christ was about to be crucified, laid in the grave, resurrected, ascend into Heaven to His Father, and be glorified. The disciples were sad to hear that Christ is leaving them, yet they had so many things to learn from Him. But Christ promised them that they would indeed learn all things from Him. The things that the Holy Spirit was showing unto the disciples were not the things of the Holy Spirit, but of Christ. When we read in *John 14:26* that the Holy

Spirit *teaches*, it is Christ who teaches us through the Spirit. *Acts 15:28* states that the Holy Spirit *made* a decision; the individual who made that decision was Christ Himself. When in *Acts 13:2*, the Holy Ghost *spoke* to the disciples to separate unto Him Barnabas and Saul, the individual Who made that decision was Christ, for the Holy Spirit “*shall not speak of himself*”. The Holy Spirit is *a representative* of Christ and all qualities in which we see and recognize the Holy Spirit as a person, we recognize *the person of Christ*. In *Acts 16:6,7* we read how the Spirit forbade the disciples to preach the word in Asia; the individual who forbade that was Christ. For the Holy Spirit “*shall receive of Christ, and shall shew it unto you*”—shew unto the disciples. When Ananias and Sapphira lied unto the Holy Spirit, the individual they lied unto was God because the Holy Spirit is a representative of God. Jesus said: “*All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you*”. Everything that the Holy Spirit ‘showed’, ‘taught’, ‘spoke’, or ‘bared witness’ to the disciples, was taken from Christ, and Christ received that from the Father. The qualities such as teaching, showing, speaking, bearing witness, and making decisions, are exercised by Christ, through His representative, the Holy Spirit, and that is why the Holy Spirit has the qualities of a person. Although the Holy Spirit is an invisible power working in us; it is a person—the Holy Spirit represents the person of Christ.

*“When God’s people search the Scriptures with a desire to know what is truth, **Jesus is present in the person of His representative, the Holy Spirit**, reviving the heart of the humble and contrite ones...”* {EGW, Ms158-1898.4; 1898}

The most important thing to recognize is the identity of Christ in the Holy Spirit. Christ, as a person, and the Holy Spirit are two distinct entities. We have an advantage in having Christ with us through the Holy Spirit in comparison to having Him physically present with us. Jesus said, “*It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*” John 16:7. The advantage is twofold. If Jesus remained on earth, He would not be at the Fa-

ther's right hand interceding for us. Secondly, none would have the disadvantage of Him being confined to one location at any given time.

“The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.” {EGW, DA 669.2; 1898}

The Holy Spirit is Christ divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. As such, Christ is the third person of the Godhead but not in His flesh, but in Spirit, because in His personality of humanity He is right next to the Most High. Conversely, in the person of the Holy Spirit, He can be omnipresent and can give everyone comfort, make us a partaker of the divine nature, and give us the power to overcome sin.

“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.” {EGW, SW September 13, 1898, par. 2; 1898}

“The work of the ministry is no common work. Christ is withdrawn only from the eye of sense, but he is as truly present by his Spirit as when he was visibly present on earth. The time that has elapsed since his ascension has brought no interruption in the fulfillment of his parting promise,—‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’” {EGW, ST April 7, 1890, par. 6; 1890}

“During His humiliation upon this earth, the Spirit had not descended with all its efficacy; and Christ declared that if He went not away, it would not come, but that if He went away, He would

*send it. **It was a representation of Himself, and after He was glorified it was manifest.*** ” {EGW, ST, May 17, 1899; 1899}

At Pentecost, the disciples were “*endued with power from on high*” (Luke 24:49); in the same way they received the Holy Spirit, we are to receive it. In the upper room, the disciples gathered praying, confessing their sins, and thinking of Jesus. Imagine Peter, once bold, self-dependent, now confessing that he caused the biggest pain to Christ when in His presence he denied Him three times. You can hear John and James interrupting Peter, confessing how they selfishly sought the highest honors for themselves by taking the seat next to Christ on His right and His left. Everywhere the voices of repentance could be heard. Every disciple cried over how each esteemed himself more, undervaluing the words of Christ. Christ was on their lips. Christ was on their minds. Christ was their highest desire. They missed Him. All of their thoughts were on Christ. They were recalling the experiences with their Master. They were recalling His words and the lessons He taught them. All of their hearts were longing for Jesus and when they missed Him the most, their hearts were comforted. “*Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting*” (Acts 2:2). It was Christ who came—the Comforter. In heaven, in the highest splendor and possible glory, the Father laid the crown of crowns on the head of His Son, Christ received *all power and authority in heaven and on earth*. Now Christ was accessible to all. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts (Galatians 4:6). Christ was manifested in the upper room; He wants to be manifested to you, today.

*“The Lord encourages all who seek Him with the whole heart. **He gives them His Holy Spirit, the manifestation of His presence and favor.*** ” {EGW, 9T 230.3; 1909}

In conclusion, the Holy Spirit is a person because he represents a person—Christ. When we talk about the Holy Spirit, we should talk about Christ. When we pray for the Holy Spirit, we should pray for Christ’s personal presence and favor. In the person of the Holy Spirit we should lift up the person of Christ.

*“We must have **the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit**, with all its quickening, transforming, life-giving power, in order to penetrate the palsied soul. Work we must in spiritual lines. **Lift up Christ in His power in the person of the Holy Spirit**. He is waiting for them to open the door and admit Him. **His presence** will thrill every nerve and muscle. Every organ will begin to perform its functions, and the whole man will be restored to spiritual soundness **as he sees Christ by faith.**”* [{EGW, Lt59-1899.11; 1899}](#)

In this study we followed the testimony of this quotation. We lifted up Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit. We lifted up Christ as our Comforter, as the One by whom we overcome sin, as the wonderful Counselor, as a shield against evil. Let us recognize Christ and His power in the person of the Holy Spirit.

*“**He** [Christ] **is coming to us by His Holy Spirit today. Let us recognize Him now**; then we shall recognize Him when He comes in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.”* [{EGW, RH April 30, 1901, Art. D, par. 8; 1901}](#)

ANTI-SPIRITUALISM

chapter 41

THE HISTORICAL VIEW

notes

The significance of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD as a pillar of our faith is recognized in view of heaven's reality. This doctrine teaches us that there is one God, the Father, a personal spiritual being, who is everywhere present by His representative the Holy Spirit. The quality or state of God to be a person is that He has a form, a physical body—this is the meaning of the term “*a personal spiritual being*”. The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. God has a body⁴⁷. The opposing view is that God is immaterial. Let's assume for a moment that God does not have a body so that we can better understand the consequences of such a view. If God is immaterial then the throne on which He supposedly sits and rules is not real. The Bible teaches us that Christ went to Heaven and sat on the right hand of God where He is interceding for us. If God is immaterial then Christ being at His right hand is simply not real. Further, we must deny that Christ went to Heaven, in His physical resurrected body, because there is nothing real to stand at God's right hand. Consequently, Heaven is not a real place. If God is immaterial, then the throne of God is immaterial, the Most Holy place being the site of God's throne is also not a real place, neither is the Heavenly Sanctuary, nor is Heaven a real place. Conclusively, the entire Heavenly reality isn't real but

⁴⁷ [EGW, BTS March 1, 1906, par. 1; 1906](#)

merely has a spiritual meaning. Sister White calls such views a spiritual view or spiritualism.

In February 1845, in the very beginning of development of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, Ellen White received the following vision:

“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’” {EGW, EW 54.1; 1882}

God had multiple purposes to fulfill with this vision. It was a vision of the Midnight Cry, the explanation of the 1844 disappointment, and an explanation of future development of the work; it was also a testimony of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.

In “*Ellen G. White: The early years*”, Arthur Lacey White, her grandson, wrote about the historical background and meaning behind this particular vision. Let us read this historical remark from a chapter called, “*Wrestling with the Views of the Spiritualizers*”.

WRESTLING WITH THE VIEWS OF THE SPIRITUALIZERS

“In eastern Maine Ellen was traveling and working in the atmosphere of the spiritualizers who had allegorized away heaven, God, Jesus, and the Advent hope. In the vision at Exeter in mid-February she seemed to be in the presence of Jesus, and she was eager to procure answers to some vital questions.” {ALW, 1BIO 79.4; 1985}

“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.’—Early Writings, 54.” {ALW, 1BIO 79.5; 1985}

“This was not the only occasion Ellen was to converse with Jesus and the angel about the person of Jesus and concerning God

being a personal being. The answers satisfied her fully that the spiritualizers were in gross error.” {ALW, 1BIO 80.1; 1985}

“But because the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church held that prophecy was fulfilled on October 22, 1844, and that an important work began in heaven in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary at that time, and because the Adventists who had become **spiritualizers** took the position that Christ had come into their hearts on October 22, 1844, and that His kingdom was in their hearts, the founders of the church, and notably Ellen White, were classed by the world generally, and also by those that SDAs have termed first-day Adventists, as one and the same group. Here again the great enemy cast aspersion upon the true, paralleling it with a false, spurious experience.” {ALW, 1BIO 80.2; 1985}

“Ellen White was to speak of this matter again, particularly in the closing paragraphs of her first little book, *Experience and Views*, published in 1851. As one reads this he will note the use of **the term spiritualism**, which must be taken in the light of the work of the spiritualizers and not in the light of what today is understood to be spiritualism or spiritism, although both emanate from the same source.” {ALW, 1BIO 80.3; 1985}

“We turn now to the statement written and published in 1851 as found in *Ibid.*, 77, 78:” {ALW, 1BIO 80.4; 1985}

“I have frequently been falsely charged with teaching views peculiar to Spiritualism. But before the editor of The Day-Star ran into that delusion, the Lord gave me a view of the sad and desolating effects that would be produced upon the flock by him and others in teaching the spiritual views.” {ALW, 1BIO 80.5; 1985}

“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.’” {ALW, 1BIO 80.6; 1985}

“I have often seen that the spiritual view took away all the glory of heaven, and that in many minds the throne of David and the lovely person of Jesus have been burned up in the fire of Spiritualism. I have seen that some who have been deceived and led into this error will be brought out into the light of truth, but it will be almost impossible for them to get entirely rid of the deceptive pow-

er of Spiritualism. Such should make thorough work in confessing their errors and leaving them forever.” {ALW, 1BIO 80.7; 1985}

“The spiritualization of heaven, God, Christ, and the coming of Christ lay at the foundation of much of the fanatical teachings that 17-year-old Ellen Harmon was called upon by God to meet in those formative days. The visions firmly established the personality of God and Christ, the reality of heaven and the reward to the faithful, and the resurrection. This sound guidance saved the emerging church.” {ALW, 1BIO 81.1; 1985}

Can the same guidance, councils, and visions, save our church today? The idea that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three co-equal in Their personality speculates over the clear revelations regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of Christ. The quality or state of God to be a person is having a form. Christ is the express image of the Father’s person—He also has a form. Contrary to the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit has no flesh nor bones (Luke 24:39). Any effort to equalize the personalities of all Three will inevitably either divest the Father and the Son of their bodies or designate the Holy Spirit a separate, individual being having flesh and bones. The first consequence will result in spiritualizing the Heavenly reality and the second will result in jeopardizing God’s omnipresence. But in an attempt to harmonize the omnipresence of God with the idea that the Holy Spirit is a separate third being, possessing a body like the Father and the Son, will again result in divesting Them of Their bodies. Both cases ultimately burn up the throne of David and the lovely person of Jesus in the fire of Spiritualism.

chapter 42

FURTHER OBJECTIONS TO SPIRITUALISM

notes

There is one straw of the argument on THE PERSONALITY OF GOD that spiritualists rely on to prove that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three co-equal persons. God is a personal *spiritual* being. The term '*spiritual*' is attributed to some immaterial substance. It is argued that God does have a body but it is immaterial. We consider this an oxymoron. The argument is nothing else than speculation over the divine nature and essence of God. Secret things belong unto God, but the things which are revealed belong to us (Deuteronomy 29:29). The Bible teaches us about a material Heaven, a material Sanctuary in Heaven, a material throne with all its splendor and glory, and that God, His Son, and the holy angels dwell there.

The holy angels are *spiritual* beings, yet they are *material*; they dwell in Heaven and they are ministering to us on earth. The objection is raised: how can angels be material beings since we cannot see them? There are several cases in the Bible that give us precise answers to this question. The case of Balaam is a vivid case. The account from Numbers 22:22-31 says, "*the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against*" Balaam. The

donkey that Balaam was riding on saw the angel of the Lord but Balaam did not, and the account renders how Balaam finally saw the angel. *“Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand”*. The angel did not materialize or create his body in order to be seen by Balaam. The angel was the same as he was before. The change took place with Balaam, not the angel. His eyes were open. It was the same with the servant of Elisha when he and his master were brought into a straight place surrounded by the army of the king of Syria. *“And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”* 2 Kings 6:17.

Sometimes the Lord grants us to see the physical presence of His angels. When we see them we know they are material, created from a different substance than we are. They are spiritual beings. The Bible teaches us that *“there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body”* (1 Corinthians 15:44). It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body (Ibid.). In the resurrection we will have a new spiritual body. It is of a different substance. In the resurrection we shall be equal unto the angels, Luke 20:36. Then we will have bodies like unto Christ’s glorified body at His resurrection. Christ sowed His natural body and He was raised in a spiritual body. After His resurrection He appeared to His disciples saying, *“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”* (Luke 24:39). Christ was showing the glorified body He received in His resurrection. It was a tangible, material body, yet spiritual. The promise of the resurrection is that we are going to be raised in the same glorified body as Christ has. It is a spiritual body, equally material to Christ’s material body, just as the new Earth and the glory of New Jerusalem will be material. This gives us perspective on the Heavenly reality. As angels are personal spiritual beings, as Jesus is a personal spiritual being, and just as the resurrected will become personal spiritual beings, so is God a

personal spiritual being. We are all made in His image and Christ is begotten in the express image of His person.

The term “*spiritual being*” does not indicate a being without a body; it just indicates the substance of that body. This we learn from 1 Corinthians 15:44: “*It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*” Jesus rose up in a spiritual body and we know for certain that He rose as someone who can be seen and handled—contrary to a spirit. There is a difference between a spirit and a spiritual being. Sister White made a clear distinction:

*“The mighty power that works through all nature and sustains all things is not, as some men of science represent, merely an all-pervading principle, an actuating energy. **God is a spirit; yet He is a personal being, for man was made in His image.**”* {EGW, 8T 263.1; 1904}

By stating ‘yet’, Sister White differentiated the term ‘being’ from the term ‘spirit’. The Bible teaches us the difference. The difference is a physical body. God is not purely a spirit, an all-pervading principle, or an actuating energy. He is a personal being, possessing a body and form, for man was made in His image. God has an image of a person and Christ is an express image of His person.

*“The Son of God was next in authority to the great Lawgiver. He knew that his life alone could be sufficient to ransom fallen man. He was of as much more value than man as his noble, spotless character, and exalted office as commander of all the heavenly host, were above the work of man. **He was in the express image of his Father, not in features alone, but in perfection of character.**”* {EGW, RH December 17, 1872, par. 1; 1872}

The Father has a body but is invisible to mortal sight.

“The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight.” {EGW, BTS March 1, 1906, par. 1; 1906}

This simple truth is testified in all visions of the heavenly throne. All of the prophets have seen somebody sitting on the throne and have given a description of His person. They have all seen His body but they have never seen His face. God is now invisible to us

as mortal beings but when we receive immortality we shall see the Father, as it is written: we “*shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.*” Revelation 22:3-4

“Moses could not behold the revelation of the glory of the face of God, and live; but there is a promise given to us, ‘They shall see his face.’” {EGW, YI August 20, 1896, par. 2; 1896}

What a beautiful promise and the prospect of hope. We shall see the Father face to face. We find nothing attractive in spiritualizing heaven and God’s person. Our prospect of hope is that we will see God face to face and dwell in the full glory of His presence.

chapter 43

THE ROOT PROBLEM

notes

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD deals with the question: *is God a person?* There probably isn't a single Christian who would deny that God is a person, and yet THE PERSONALITY OF GOD is the greatest controversy existing among Christians—especially among Seventh-day Adventists—lately. The key issue lies in understanding the term '*person*'. The problem arises when we reject its obvious meaning and apply some spiritual meaning. The controversy roots back to the interpretation of the Bible, and it can be presented in two distinct, mutually exclusive understandings of God.

One, more popular, view is that God presented Himself in a language that is familiar to us in order to explain merely the concepts of Salvation. So, God presented Himself in words such as '*father*', '*son*', '*spirit*', to describe the relationship between the concepts—but none of these words denote their obvious meaning. The principle behind this reasoning is: **God adjusted Himself to man.**

The other, opposing view is that **God adjusted man to Himself; He created man in His own image.** Therefore, words like '*person*', '*father*', '*son*', and '*spirit*', as they are addressed to God, imply their obvious meaning. This is the fundamental difference.

When we come to understand Biblical terms like ‘*person*’, ‘*father*’, ‘*son*’ and ‘*spirit*’, we must choose which view we support and apply accordingly. Either these terms are understood in their obvious meaning or they are symbolic or metaphorical. Reiterating, this is the root problem regarding the controversy over THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. The following quotation should settle any difficulties.

“The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed.” {EGW, GC 599; 1911}

We believe that it is impossible for the Bible to be its own interpreter and not explain its own symbols. If the Bible never explains the *true meaning* of the symbol ‘*person*’, as it is addressed to God, then it cannot be a symbol. The true meaning of the word ‘*person*’ stands in its obvious meaning; it is found in the understanding of man, who was created in the image of God. God created Adam as a personal being, possessing body and spirit. The same applies to the words ‘*father*’, ‘*son*’, and ‘*spirit*’. Adam became a father; he begat a son in his own likeness, after his image (Genesis 5:3). His begotten son, Seth, is a personal being, in the image and likeness of his father. God created man in His own image; He adjusted man’s experience to His own.

The former view, that God adjusted Himself to man, is held by the majority of Christianity today, as well as by the official Seventh-day Adventist church as of late.

“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.”⁴⁸

The aforementioned quotation is issued by the Biblical Research Institute, the official institution of the General Conference, which defends the teachings and doctrines of the SDA church. The Father is not really “*the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*”⁴⁹, but a metaphorical term, just like the ‘*Son*’. If that were to be true, we’d have quite the predicament because we fall short of finding the

⁴⁸ Adventist Biblical Research Institute; also published in the official ‘Adventist World’ magazine

⁴⁹ Ephesians 3:14

true meaning and explanation of these terms in the Bible. If the Bible does not explain their meaning, where can we find them? They would be found outside of Scripture.

“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. The remaining divine Being, the Holy Spirit, was also to participate in effecting the plan of salvation... By accepting the roles that the plan entailed, the divine Beings lost none of the powers of Deity.”⁵⁰

This statement has no grounds in Scripture. It is a purely preconceived idea that casts doubt on the clear meaning found in Scripture. The clearest and most affirmative statements of the Bible to the Sonship of Christ are veiled by doubt because of these preconceived ideas. We see this in the official SDA literature containing SDA doctrine.

*“Within the Godhead **an economy of function exists**. God does not unnecessarily duplicate work. Order is the first law of heaven, and God works in orderly ways. This orderliness issues from and preserves the union within the Godhead. The **Father seems to act as source**, the **Son as mediator**, and the **Spirit as actualizer or applier**.”⁵¹*

In the Bible we see that the Father **is** the source of all things. This is stated most plainly and affirmatively. The Father is the source of all and He acts accordingly, not because He pretends to be, but because He truly is the great Source. We shall have no doubt in the most plain and positive testimony of the Bible.

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

It should not seem like the Father is acting as source—He *is* the Source—of all; of Him “**are all things**”. Likewise, it should not seem like the Son acts as mediator—He *is* the Mediator.

50 The Week of Prayer issue by the Adventist Review, October 31, 1996

51 Seventh-day Adventists Believe, page 30, 2005, ‘The Godhead’

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

These are just a few examples of how the plainest and most positive testimonies of the Scriptures are veiled by doubt—because of preconceived ideas that are not based on a solemn *“Thus says the LORD”*. This is officially accepted and admitted by SDA officials:

*“While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, it is assumed as a fact by Bible writers and mentioned several times. Only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity.”*⁵²

On the official website of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the doctrinal section, is the following statement: *“The Bible’s clear **allusions** to the Trinity are enough for Adventists”*⁵³.

When it comes to THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, the Seventh-day Adventist church, along with broad Christendom, adheres to the understanding of God as a Triune God, or *three persons in one*. Here, God is considered a person yet not a person in the obvious meaning of the word.

*“The word **persons** used in the title of today’s lesson must be understood in a theological sense. If we equate **human personality** with God, we would say that **three persons means three individuals**. But then we would have three Gods, or tritheism. But **historic Christianity** has given to the word person, when used of God, a **special meaning**: a personal self-distinction, which gives distinctiveness in the Persons of the Godhead without destroying the concept of oneness. This idea is not easy to grasp or to explain! It is part of the mystery of the Godhead.*⁵⁴

*“These texts and others lead us to believe that **our wonderful God is three Persons in one**, a mind-boggling mystery but a truth we accept by faith because Scripture reveals it.”*⁵⁵

⁵² Adventist Review, Vol. 158, No. 31, p. 4; 1980

⁵³ <https://www.adventist.org/articles/the-trinity/> accessed: June 9, 2020., currently removed, but visible in archives: <https://web.archive.org/web/20210116032310/https://www.adventist.org/articles/the-trinity/>

⁵⁴ Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly, 4th Quarter 1998, Lesson 3, October 12th ‘Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’, <http://www.ssnet.org/qtrly/eng/98d/less03.html> accessed: June 9, 2020

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Historic Christianity gave a special meaning to the word ‘*person*’. It was defined through a series of ecumenical councils starting in Nicea (325) until the Council of Constantinople (381)⁵⁶; it was finalized by Athanasius in the last decades of his life. THE PERSONALITY OF GOD was defined as *homoousios* and three *hypostases*⁵⁷, considered a mind boggling mystery, an idea not easily grasped or explained.

If you are a believer in the doctrine that God is one person yet three you’ve probably been strongly discouraged from studying THE PERSONALITY OF GOD because it is an ‘*a priori*’ mystery. Yes, it is true that “*the secret things belong unto the LORD our God*”, but the verse continues to say “*but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*” (Deuteronomy 29:29). THE PERSONALITY OF GOD has been revealed in Scripture. It is not a mystery that there is only one true God, the Father of whom are all things, the personal spiritual Being, and the Creator of all things. This belongs unto us and to our children forever.

We firmly believe that terms like “*the Father*”, “*the Son*”, “*the Spirit*” and ‘*person*’ should not be vaguely, symbolically, or metaphorically, understood. Rather, they should be accepted in the simplicity of their obvious meaning.

⁵⁶ Socrates, Book 2, Chapter 41

⁵⁷ “Some theologians preferred the use of the term ὁμοιούσιος (*homoiousios* or alternative uncontracted form ὁμοιοούσιος *homoiouosios*; from ὅμοιος, *hómoios*, ‘similar’, rather than ὁμός, *homós*, ‘same, common’) in order to emphasize distinctions among the three persons in the Godhead, but the term *homoousion* became a consistent mark of Nicene orthodoxy in both East and West. According to this doctrine, Jesus Christ is the physical manifestation of Logos (or the Word), and consequently possesses all of the inherent, ineffable perfections which religion and philosophy attribute to the Supreme Being. In the language that became universally accepted after the First Council of Constantinople in AD 381, three distinct and infinite hypostases, or divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, fully possess the very same divine ousia.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homoousion>, accessed June 9, 2020

chapter 44

SPIRITUALISM DENYING THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST

When the spiritual view of God's person is advocated, the Sonship of Christ to His Father is accordingly spiritualized. The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy teach us that Christ is begotten in the express image of the Father's person⁵⁸. The Gospels are full of most positive and affirmative testimonies to Christ's Sonship to the Father. To deny these simple and positive testimonies in favor of some spiritual view is to deny the Lord Himself, and to deny the great sacrifice by which He bought us. Peter warns us of the class of people advocating such false teachings—damnable heresies.

*“But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers among you**, who privily shall bring in **damnable heresies**, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And **many** shall follow **their pernicious ways**; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” 2 Peter 2:1-2*

Apostle John spoke about this class of people that deny the Father and the Son.

58 [EGW, ST May 30, 1895, par. 3; 1895](#)

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.” 1 John 2:22-24

Denying the Father and the Son is achieved by denying THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of His Son.

“He who denies the personality of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, is denying God and Christ. ‘If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.’ If you continue to believe and obey the truths you first embraced regarding the personality of the Father and the Son, you will be joined together with him in love. There will be seen that union for which Christ prayed just before his trial and crucifixion.” {EGW, RH March 8, 1906, par. 19; 1906}

Sister White referred to the class denying THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of His Son as ‘spiritualists’. Speaking of them, Sister White commented:

“... Peter, describing the dangers to which the church was to be exposed in the last days, says that as there were false prophets who led Israel into sin, so there will be false teachers, ‘who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.... And many shall follow their pernicious ways.’ 2 Peter 2:1, 2. Here the apostle has pointed out one of the marked characteristics of spiritualist teachers. They refuse to acknowledge Christ as the Son of God. Concerning such teachers the beloved John declares: ‘Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.’ 1 John 2:22, 23. Spiritualism, by denying Christ, denies both the Father and the Son, and the Bible pronounces it the manifestation of antichrist.” {EGW, PP 686.1; 1890}

Again speaking of spiritualists, she marked out the proof of that class’s teachings:

“Here God has worked out for us the proof of the class mentioned. They have refused to acknowledge Christ as the Son of God, and they have no more reverence for the eternal Father than for his Son, Jesus Christ. They have neither the Son nor the Father. And like their great leader, the rebel chief, they are in rebellion against the law of God, and they despise the blood of Christ.” {EGW, RH April 15, 1875, par. 12; 1875}

Apostles’ Peter and John warned the church in the last days of the danger of spiritualizing THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, which would be marked by denying the Sonship of Christ. In such a way the Father and the Son would be denied. If God is a triune God, then such a God does not have a Son, and neither is the Father truly the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such beliefs are not supported by the plain teachings of the Word of God, but are a result of spiritualizing the obvious meaning of statements in Scripture.

“The existence of a personal God, the unity of Christ with His Father, lies at the foundation of all true science...” {EGW, Ms30-1904.9; 1904}

“In these days many deceptions are being taught as truth. Some of our brethren have taught views which we cannot endorse. Fanciful ideas, strained and peculiar interpretations of the Scripture are coming in. Some of these teachings may seem to be but jots and tittles now, but they will grow and become snares to the inexperienced.” {EGW, Ms30-1904.18; 1904}

“We need to search the Scriptures daily, that we may know the way of the Lord, and that we be not deceived by religious fallacies. The world is full of false theories and seductive spiritualistic ideas, which tend to destroy clear spiritual perception and to lead away from truth and holiness. Especially at this time do we need to heed the warning, ‘Let no man deceive you with vain words.’ [Ephesians 5:6.]” {EGW, Ms30-1904.24; 1904}

“We must be careful lest we misinterpret the Scriptures. The plain teachings of the Word of God are not to be so spiritualized that the reality is lost sight of. Do not overstrain the meaning of sentences in the Bible in an effort to bring forth something odd in order to please the fancy. Take the Scriptures as they read. Avoid

idle speculation concerning what will be in the kingdom of heaven.” {EGW, Ms30-1904.25; 1904}

Sister White gave this warning to us—the Seventh-day Adventists. We are in danger of spiritualizing Scripture by overstraining the meaning of sentences in the Bible concerning THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and Christ’s Sonship. We should take the Scriptures as they read. Unfortunately, this is not the case with us today. Through the writings of Ellen White, God warned us about the false sentiments regarding the personality of the Father and the Son.

“‘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.” {EGW, RH July 13, 1905, par. 31 1905}

The wrong sentiments regarding THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of His Son are in our church and we all need to meet them.

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

To clarify, “*The platform of eternal truth*” is a term used by Ellen White interchangeably with “*pillars of our faith*”; THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of Christ was one of those pillars.

“Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary, or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men. They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift, without an anchor.” {EGW, Ms62-1905.14; 1905}

We put ourselves in danger by refusing such firm and strong testimonies. The Bible is equally firm on the same points.

*“For **there are certain men crept in unawares**, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, **and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**” Jude 1:4*

Let us not deny the simple teachings of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. This teaching was simply taught by Jesus. Let us form our conception of God from His doctrine.

*“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not **in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.** He that abideth **in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.**” 2 John 1:9*

*“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from **the simplicity that is in Christ.** For if he that cometh **preacheth another Jesus**, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive **another spirit**, which ye have not received, or **another gospel**, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.” 2 Corinthians 11:3-4*

*“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another gospel**: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and **would pervert the gospel of Christ.** But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach **any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.** As we said before, so say I now again, **If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.**” Galatians 1:6-9*

The Gospel is good news: “God so loved the world, that **He gave his only begotten Son**, that whosoever **believeth in Him** should not perish, but **have everlasting life.**” (John 3:16). There was no other way for God to save fallen man. However hard it may be for us to accept God giving His own begotten child for us, this was the only way. It is sin that is abhorrent, not God who gave His only begotten Son for us. If we do not believe in the Son we do not have everlasting life.

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

Let every mouth say with Paul: *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”* (2 Corinthians 9:15)

chapter 45

CONCLUSION

In conclusion to our study, we see clear testimony of Scripture that there is one God, the Father—a *personal spiritual Being*, the Creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal and everywhere present by His representative the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, the One by Whom God created all things.

“There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son. [Hebrews 1:1, 2: Psalm 19:1-3 quoted.] ...” {EGW, Ms86-1898.11; 1898}

The truth that God is a literal person stands at the foundation of the great system of truths laid in the Bible. The God we worship, the reality of Heaven, the heavenly Sanctuary service, and the mortality of the soul, are just a few doctrines in connection with THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. The most notable truth in connection with THE PERSONALITY OF GOD is the plan of salvation. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only*

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begotten Son of God” (John 3:16-18). The plan of salvation was devised between the Father and the Son. It was the love of God toward us that He gave His only begotten Son to become a man, to live a perfect life in harmony with His law, and to uplift fallen humanity to His right hand through His Son. Speaking of the Son of God, the prophet Zechariah said:

“Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” Zechariah 6:13

*“In the plan to save a lost world, the counsel was between them both; **the covenant of peace was between the Father and the Son.**”*
[{EGW, ST December 23, 1897, par. 2; 1897}](#)

Christ came to this sin-polluted Earth to present God in His true light. Satan has always been determined to destroy the clear perceptions of God, of who He is, and of His Character. The only way to escape the delusions of Satan is to harken unto the simple truths Jesus taught about God. In this truth we see and recognize God’s love toward us in giving His Son for us.

“Satan is determined that men shall not see the love of God which led Him to give His only-begotten Son to save a lost race; for it is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance.” [{EGW, Ms84-1894.6; 1894}](#)

“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.”
[{EGW, Ms40-1891.78; 1891}](#)

Thus, let us believe and preach the truth Christ has taught in its simplicity.

*“In the golden censer of truth, as presented in Christ’s teachings, we have that which will convict and convert souls. **Proclaim, in the simplicity of Christ**, the truths that He came to this world to*

*proclaim, and the power of your message will make itself felt. **Do not advocate theories or tests that Christ has never mentioned, and that have no foundation in the Bible. We have grand, solemn truths for the people. 'It is written' is the test that must be brought home to every soul.*** ” [\[EGW, GW 309.3; 1915\]](#)

We pray and believe that God will create a revival in our days, that our churches will be filled with the simple truth of God’s love in giving His only begotten Son.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ We invite you to take our next study on the grand plan of salvation that was devised between the Father and the Son. We recommend our next study—“*The Covenant of Peace—the covenant between the Father and the Son*”

APPENDIX

THE COMPLETE VISION

notes

Prior to October 22, 1844, there was a great awakening around the world regarding Christ's soon returning. This movement was based on the prophecy in Daniel 8:14 because the fulfilment of the 2300 days prophecy reckons to 1844. The general view was that the cleansing of the sanctuary, commencing at the fulfilment of that prophetic period, would mean the cleansing of the world by fire; in other words, Christ would return. There was a great number of Adventists waiting for Christ's second advent. Although the understanding of the cleansing of the sanctuary was incorrect, God's providence was in this movement. People were moved by the Holy Spirit, repenting from their sins, and there was a great number of converts. October 22nd was the anticipated date for Christ to come. As October 22nd passed and Christ did not come the great majority left the movement, scorning it. But there was a small group of people who were sure that God's

providence was in this movement and they could not deny the word of God. This small group of people turned to the Bible and continued to study the prophecies for more light concerning the surrounding events. It was a time of great trial and disappointment. In December 1844, God gave Ellen Harmon her first vision. In this vision, the Lord portrayed the travels of the Advent people to New Jerusalem. While this vision did not explain the reason for the Disappointment, it gave them assurance that God was leading this small group and would continue to lead them as they journeyed toward the heavenly city.

This small group of people, around fifty in number, continued to study the Scriptures as God was leading them. They received the explanation of their Disappointment in examining the sanctuary message. Careful Bible study by Hiram Edson, F. B. Hahn, and O. R. L. Crozier soon revealed that the sanctuary cleansing at the end of the 2300 years was not the earth but the tabernacle in heaven, with Christ ministering on our behalf in the most holy place. This mediatorial work of Christ answered to the “*hour of God’s judgment*” call sounded in the message of the first angel (Revelation 14:6, 7)⁶⁰. While this study was in progress, far to the east in the state of Maine, a vision was given to Ellen Harmon in which she was shown the transfer of the ministry of Christ from the holy place to the most holy place at the end of the 2300 days. This vision confirmed the Bible study and explained the Disappointment. This vision was one of the most crucial visions in Seventh-day Adventist history.

Before the explanation of the Disappointment God revealed the truth of His personality to His humble servant, Ellen. The first thing Sister White saw was the throne and on it sat the Father and the Son. It was important to know who God is, that He is a person, having a form, just as Jesus has. This truth was foundational in understanding that Heaven, the Sanctuary, the thrones, the celestial beings, are part of a real and material reality—just as our God and His Son are material. THE PERSONALITY OF GOD was a pillar of our faith and it was a crucial pillar in upholding the entire foundation of our faith.

60 EGW, EW xviii.3; 1882

We usually read this vision from Early Writings. To the surprise of many, the account written in Early Writings is only a partial account of this vision. Although this vision is well known, the entire vision is not well known. We read the complete vision from the article *“To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad”* - Broadside1 April 6, 1846. In it, we read an extra sentence that has a profound meaning for our time.

In the vision are several groups of people: the world, the Adventists who were anticipating Christ’s return in 1844, and a small distinct group within the Adventists who would later be known as Seventh-day Adventists. The lesser known part of the vision is that at its end there is a fourth group of people. All of these groups have certain characteristics; we will especially focus on the characteristics of the forth group as it holds special significance for us. But first, let us carefully examine the complete vision.

*“In February, 1845, I had a vision of events **commencing with the Midnight Cry. 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. Before the throne I saw the Advent people, the church, and the world. I saw a company, bowed down before the throne, deeply interested, while the most of them stood up disinterested and careless. Those who were bowed before the throne would offer up their prayers and look to Jesus; then he would look to his Father, and appeared to be pleading with Him. A light would come from the Father to the Son, and from the Son to the praying company. Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from the Father to the Son, and from the Son it waved over the people before the throne. But few would receive this great light; many came out from under it and immediately resisted it; others were careless and did not cherish the light, and it moved off from them; some cherished it, and went and bowed down with the little praying company. This company all received the light, and rejoiced in it, as their coun-***

tenances shone with its glory. And I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming Chariot go into the Holy of Holies, within the veil, and did sit. There I saw thrones that I had never seen before. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him; and I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after he arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who rose up when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him as He left the throne and led them out a little way.—Then He raised His right arm and we heard his lovely voice saying, ‘Wait here—I am going to my Father to receive the Kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to myself.’ And I saw a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, and Angels were all around it as it came where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the Holiest where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, as He was standing before the Father, a great High Priest. On the hem of His garment was a bell and pomegranate. Then Jesus shew me the difference between faith and feeling. And I saw those who rose up with Jesus send up their faith to Him in the Holiest, and pray—my Father give us thy Spirit. Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In the breath was light, power, and much love, joy and peace. Then I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it.—Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God; I saw them look up to the throne and pray, my Father give us thy Spirit; then Satan would breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy and peace. Satan’s object was to keep them deceived, and to draw back and deceive God’s children. I saw one after another leave the company who were praying to Jesus in the Holiest, and go and join those before the throne, and they at once received the unholy influence of Satan.” {EGW, Broadside1 April 6, 1846, par. 7; 1846}

The first group was the world. Among them were Adventists who were waiting for Christ’s return. Some of them were deeply interested and bowed down before the throne while most of them were careless. The Adventists that were deeply interested had their eyes constantly fixed on Jesus. They received the light from God

reflecting from the Son while the rest of the majority were careless to the light given. Then the Sanctuary service moved from the Holy Place to the Holiest. The small group of faithful followers followed Jesus, while the other Adventists remained at the throne in the Holy Place not knowing that Jesus had left. Both of the groups prayed the same prayer: “*Father give us thy spirit*”. But to the company that remained in the Holy Place Satan appeared, trying to carry on the work of God. Unto the faithful group who had their eyes fixed on Jesus, Christ breathed the Holy Ghost. To the company at the Holy Place, who were left in perfect darkness, Satan came and breathed the unholy influence upon them. In both instances there was light and power, but in Satan’s influence there was no sweet love, joy and peace received as was by the faithful group. As we know from Seventh-day Adventist history, the small group who received the Holy Spirit grew in light and in number, and later distinguished themselves as ‘*Seventh-day Adventists*’.

The startling revelation of this vision is the people of the fourth group. They are Seventh-day Adventists that have turned their gaze from Jesus; they have rejected the light they initially received and have joined the popular religion of the majority. Yet, they are still Seventh-day Adventists. They originate from the small faithful group whose eyes were constantly fixed on Jesus. They also pray for the Holy Spirit and have light and power but they do not have sweet love, joy and peace. They are apostatized Seventh-day Adventists. Their apostasy lies in rejecting the light given in past experiences.

In which group do you fit? The answer to this question lies in how you regard the light that God has given us in our early days. It is certain that God led His people. Among the very first truths that God approved through visions of His prophet was the truth of THE PERSONALITY OF GOD and of His Son. The reason it was among the first established truths is because it was a foundational truth to all other truths we have received. We encourage you to hold tightly to these truths in order to be in the small group of people whose eyes are fixed on Jesus, who are following the Lamb

whithersoever He goeth, who are confident in Christ's leadership in the past, at present, and in the future. We invite you to be the Seventh-day Adventist '*peculiar people*' who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.

notes

*“The Lord has declared that **the history of the past shall be rehearsed** as we enter upon the closing work. **Every truth** that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. **Every pillar** that He has established **is to be strengthened**. We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established... **There is need now to rehearse the experience of the men** who acted a part in the establishment of our work **at the beginning**.”* {EGW, Ms129-1905.6; 1905}

The prophecy of the rehearsal of our history and Seventh-day Adventist doctrine were given during the greatest controversy that the Seventh-day Adventist church had in the time of Ellen White. This was the controversy over Dr. Kellogg's book, the *Living Temple*. Instructed by a heavenly messenger, Ellen White pinpointed the main issue with Dr. Kellogg's book:

*“I have been instructed by the heavenly messenger that some of the reasoning in the book, ‘Living Temple,’ is unsound and that **this reasoning would lead astray** the minds of those who are not thoroughly established on **the foundation principles** of present truth. It introduces that which is naught but speculation **in regard to the personality of God and where His presence is**.”* {EGW, SpTB02 51.3; 1904}

After twelve decades of SDA doctrine development, we recognize that the main difference in belief between us today, and the men who acted a part in the establishment of our work at the beginning, is the doctrine on the presence and the personality of God. Coincidence, or was it prophesied? We are living in a time when the history of the past shall be repeated.

Rediscover the forgotten Pillar, taught and practiced by early Seventh-day Adventists, suited in the relevant context of our modern time. As we are living in the time of the closing work, proclaiming and strengthening the truth on the personality of God that we held in the beginning, we shall hasten the Lord's coming.

