We Have Nothing to Fear for the Future, Except…

A Response to Dr. Jerry Moon’s

Overview of The Trinity Debates

BY

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"We Have Nothing to Fear for the Future, Except…"

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Part One: Getting the Facts Straight

There is one thing that should be understood before reading this book. The reason for this book is not to build a case against a doctrine based only on the writings of Ellen White or the pioneers, but to clarify history in order that we may be able to approach doctrinal issues from the Bible. Let me explain.

In the past, when I have opened a dialogue with my Adventist brothers and sisters regarding the biblical veracity of the trinity doctrine, I have inevitably been stopped in the middle of the study by references to Ellen White and her supposed “growth” to trinitarianism. I am then pointed to certain authors within the church who claim that it was the prophetic gift of Ellen G. White that brought the church to adopt the doctrine. The person who I am studying with then shuts out the Bible from the conversation, wishing instead to look only to the writings of Ellen White…as interpreted by certain men in academia. The Bible is set aside in favor of the explanations and opinions of these men.

To that end, this book is not a book of biblical theology, or a case against the trinity from the Bible. That is not its intent. The purpose of this book is to clear the way for personal and unbiased study of the issue from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

This book is also not an attack on the Seventh-day Adventist Church, nor a call to leave the church. The only purpose of this writing is to point God’s people back to the Bible, the whole of the Spirit of Prophecy, to the original foundation the church was built upon…. and away from the fables that mislead honest truth seekers.

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and his teaching in our past history.” Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, October 12, 1905
Chapter 1 : The Great Advent
Movement and Church

Back in the 1800s, there was a new and dynamic religious movement that carried a special message of hope, faith and salvation. Their message was centered on the soon return of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, and that message was spreading throughout the world. It was given in earnest by self-sacrificing, honest, Bible students and scholars who gave what they had to reach a dying world with a gospel of hope, and a word of warning.

The movement became an organized church and this "Church Militant" studied diligently for Bible truth as if for digging for buried treasure. The aim was to restore first century Bible Christianity; to finish the reform begun by Luther, Tyndale, Huss and Jerome in order to prepare God's people for the second coming of our Lord and Savior. Theological differences were eventually settled by careful study and by the confirmation of God's Spirit of Prophecy as manifested in the words, counsels and warnings of Ellen G. White.

In 1872, the "Little Flock" had a published "Principles of Faith" which were considered "unanimous" among the believers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church pressed together on these fundamental beliefs, and concentrated on applying their principles and then teaching these principles to others. The church grew exponentially with this "present truth" and its urgent presentation by men who taught their doctrines with authority, scholarship and faith.

By 1888, the theology and work had come to a head. Two young and zealous "pioneers" gave what was to be the final message of reformation to the world, a teaching of "righteousness by faith" based on what the apostle Paul referred to as "Christ in you, the hope of glory". The message of 1888 was so powerful that Satan enlisted every available power and being at his disposal to ward off what was sure to be his death knell, the Church Triumphant ushering in the second-coming of Christ.
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Shortly thereafter, men within the movement began to question the inspiration of its prophet, its founders and the platform of truth the movement was founded on.

As the founding pioneers began to die off, both new and old false theories sprung up like tares within the wheat. Ellen White's writings were being manipulated to appear like they taught "new theology". Dr. John Harvey Kellogg published a new book, *The Living Temple*, that claimed Spirit of Prophecy support for a new view of the personality of God and His Holy Spirit.

Ellen White had made many warnings to the church of that time, including the urgent message not to abandon the platform of truth, the Principles of Faith, that had been established between 1853 and 1903. Ellen White warned that men would come into the church with new theories, and that these theories must be rejected in favor of the foundation which was formed in the first fifty years of the church. We were told, “*We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and his teaching in our past history.*” It was a pivotal time for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and our prophet was trying her best to hold back the tide of what appeared to be an unstoppable negative force moving into the church. The answer, according to Ellen G. White, was to seek the old paths:

8 Testimonies for the Church, p 297 (1904)
"Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith—*the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work by prayerful study of the word and by revelation. Upon these foundations we have been building for the last fifty years.* Men may suppose that they have found a new way and that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid. But this is a great deception. Other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid.

Special Testimonies, Series B, no. 7, p57.
(4 December, 1905, Sanitarium California).
"One thing it is certain is soon to be realized, the great apostasy, which is developing and increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout. **We are to hold fast the first principles of our denominated faith** and go forward from strength to increased faith."
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MS 135, (1903).
Ellen G. White, The Early Years Vol 1 - 1827-1862, p 145

“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. The whole company of believers were united in the truth. There were those who came in with strange doctrines, but we were never afraid to meet them. Our experience was wonderfully established by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.”

In 1915, the year Ellen G. White died, the “Principles of Faith” were not published. New ideas were being introduced by ecumenical-minded leaders. The church would be without a system of fundamental beliefs until 1931, when a new version which partially reflected these new ideas would be published. The baptism requirements took on a new flavor. A church manual, the idea of which the founding pioneers rejected in the strongest possible terms, was published and enforced. The beliefs of the church had been changed, books of a new order were beginning to be written.

By the 1940s, the church began to "revise" the writings of Ellen White and its founders to reflect the church's "new theological direction". The 1888 message of final reformation was lost in a sea of "new theology" and self-based legalism. Eventually the opposite extreme of liberalism would challenge the works-based view and divide the church.

The 1950s saw the rise of ecumenism to heights that had not previously been seen in Adventism. The organization changed its theology once again on several points in a series of meetings with Evangelical "heretic hunters" Martin and Barnhouse.

The great train called the Advent Movement had been derailed. Its mission and message has been lost sight of in a quagmire of compromise and well-intentioned, but poor, decisions. What began as the final reformation for the world, the calling out of God's people from Babylon, became a comfortable, mainstream, Evangelical church. Where the power used to be in the word of God, it is now absent amidst the jokes, drums and dramas of mainstream Adventism.

Whenever an issue of theology is controverted, the first thing that should be addressed is, "Is it important enough to take a stand for?" Another question might be, "Is it a 'salvation issue'?"

I think we can agree that in the study of the Holy Bible, that there is no
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major theological doctrine that is not possibly a salvation issue, especially when it comes to knowing who God is, and who Jesus Christ is.

This is the ultimate in foundational doctrines, and how one believes in this regard will determine his entire system of faith. As such, this certainly must be considered the central of all salvation issues, although like other important doctrines God reads the heart and the motivation as well as the light received or offered by Him. God will excuse ignorance, but he will not excuse willful ignorance. God wishes the best and greatest blessings for His children, as well as a closer walk with Christ. Thus, it is imperative that those who understand the answers to those important questions share them with those who lack knowledge, or have been misled.

How Many Pillars?

Some have tried to say that among Seventh day Adventist doctrines that there are only five "pillar", or foundational, doctrines. These include:
1- The Seventh-day Sabbath.
2- The 1884 cleansing of the heavenly Sanctuary.
3- The non-immortality of the soul.
4- The literal Second Coming of Christ.
5- The gift of prophecy as manifested in the writings of Ellen G. White.

To some, these are the only "pillars of our faith", and there is nothing else that can be considered "foundational". And if one were to look only at Ellen White's comments on the "old landmarks" made in the 1880s, it is assumed evidence that she limited the "pillars" to these five. However, by 1905, after several attacks on the Adventist doctrine regarding the personality of God and the Sanctuary, Ellen White had more than the "top five" in mind when she spoke of the "old landmarks and pillars" of our church doctrines.

“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.” Ellen White, MS 760, p 9,10 -
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Regardless of the situation at the time of that writing, Ellen White, speaking with the pen of inspiration, clearly stated that the "personality of God or of Christ", and what the church believed regarding it, is a "pillar" of the Seventh-day Adventist faith; a "foundational" and "landmark" doctrine of God's remnant church.

This comes as a surprise to many when they hear it for the first time. What has come as an even bigger surprise is that our doctrine concerning the personality of God and of Christ came under heavy assault shortly after Ellen White's death, and was changed unofficially in 1931, then officially in 1946 and reaffirmed and expanded in 1980; each time claiming the support of the writings of Ellen White and the Spirit of Prophecy.

More surprisingly, many are just finding out in the 21st century that Ellen White's and other Adventist authors writings were altered to substantiate this change of doctrine. This was admitted by Leroy Edwin Froom, in his book "Movement of Destiny".

"The next logical and inevitable step in the implementing of our unified 'Fundamental Beliefs' involved revision of certain standard works so as to eliminate statements that taught and thus perpetuated, erroneous views on the Godhead. Such sentiments were now sharply at variance with the accepted 'Fundamental Beliefs' set forth in the ChurchManual, and with the uniform 'Baptismal Covenant' and 'Vow' based thereon, which in certificate form, was now used for all candidates seeking admission to membership in the church." LeRoy Froom-Movement of Destiny (1971) p. 422

What the nature of these changes were and which documents it included will be discussed later as the story unfolds. But for now, we can be certain that there was a major change in a "pillar" doctrine of the church, that the change involved the personality of God and of Christ, and that “certain standard works” were altered to support the change in theology.

I believe you will agree that this bears careful examination, and is too important to simply dismiss as "Not worth the trouble".
Chapter 2: The Adventist Trinity Story(s)

There is a story that accompanied this change in doctrine, and most who have heard the story do not doubt it, as it comes directly from the church organization itself.

As Seventh day Adventists, we are fiercely loyal to our church, believing it to be the remnant church of Bible prophecy, and rightly so. What other church believes in the importance of "the commandments of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ"? However, in recent times it has become apparent that somewhere along the 150 year way, a mindset of "the ends justifies the means" has arisen. Today, many Adventists do not recognize the church they grew up in, or joined many years ago. Ecumenism has risen among the North American, Australian and European churches. Clowns, rock music, comedy and celebration worship have come unashamedly onto the Adventist scene and pulpit.

What many do not realize is that this "ends justifies the means" mentality came in long ago, around the beginning on the 20th century. Many know what the church believes now, but have little knowledge of the foundation that the church was founded upon, the "pillars" of the church.

I, for one, am not into "conspiracy theories". But what do we do when you must choose between two theories about an event in history; between two versions of a story? It seems then no matter which story we believe, we are buying into a "conspiracy theory" of one kind or another. That is the situation with how the Seventh-day Adventist church came to accept the "trinity" doctrine. There are two sides to this story.
Chapter 3: Story One

Story One begins with the pioneer Adventists and their history of Arian, or semi-Arian beliefs. Among those in the know and educated on Seventh-day Adventist history, there is no disagreement on this. The founders of the church were fiercely anti-trinitarian, and believed that Christ had a beginning: Arians (not to be confused with "Arian Nations" or white supremacists) believed that Jesus was a created being, a man who was the Son of God by His Holy Spirit, but whose life began in Bethlehem. Semi-Arians, which eventually made up nearly all of pioneer Adventists, believed that Jesus was the literal Son of God, and was "brought forth" from the bosom of the Father in the dateless past, before the creation of the world. According to Story One, the reason for the Arian and semi-Arian bent of the founders was due to the previous religious system they came out of, which were largely anti-trinitarian churches such as the Christian Connexion.

Now, according to Story One, Ellen White was given new light on the nature of the Godhead sometime in the 1880s. This "new light" was that Jesus was not a created being, was fully divine, and that the Holy Spirit was an actual being, and not merely a "power" or "essence" as some of the pioneers previously believed. This version of the story contends that there was no actual foundational belief in the church that included a "semi-Arian" view, that the issue of the godhead was "open". As such, Ellen White's new light did not contradict "old light", as there was no old light, or established truth, that was consensus among the church.

The story goes that James White, the husband of Ellen White, was following this new light, and was growing out of his belief that Jesus was a created being and was not fully divine and "therefore was ‘inferior’ to the Father“. He began to accept the trinitarian beliefs of his prophetess wife before he died. Ellen White, for her part, was bearing patiently with the rest of the church, waiting for them to "catch up" with the new light she was given. Men like the Arian Uriah Smith, however, were stubbornly digging in their heels, militantly resisting the growing knowledge.
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According to some church historians, there was a breakthrough in 1898 when Ellen White published *The Desire of Ages*. In this book, according to Story One, she made it perfectly clear that the Trinity doctrine was the truth, and that the church's semi-Arian beliefs were very much in error.

Acting on this new information, by their devotion to the Spirit of Prophecy, the church leaders adopted the doctrine of the Trinity, and over the next thirty years, the rest of the church grew to accept it as well. The new "Principles of Faith" were published, a church manual was written and the requirements of baptism were changed to reflect this growth in knowledge. In 1946 and again in 1980, at the Dallas General Conference Session, the Trinity doctrine was adopted as a fundamental belief of the church, a test of fellowship.

It could now be written, as in the words of Professor and author George Knight:

"*Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today* if they had to subscribe to the denomination’s Fundamental Beliefs. More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the trinity." - Ministry, October 1993, p. 10.
Chapter 4: Story Two

Now, the other version of the trinitarian story begins the same, with the church being comprised primarily of semi-Arian, and a few Arian, believers. But that is where the similarity stops.

According to Story Two, while James White and Joseph Bates did indeed come out of the “semi-Arian” Christian Connexion Church, the church’s “semi-Arian” views were confirmed by intense Bible study and prayer, as well as by the visions of Ellen White, though the term “semi-Arian” was not used by the church to describe its doctrine. There actually was no name for the beliefs of the historic church regarding the Godhead, since man-made pigeon-hole terms like “bitinarian”, “Di theist”, and “Unitarian” all fell short of the biblical truth.

The story goes that the Arian side of the equation, represented by Uriah Smith, eventually gave way to a unified belief in the actual Sonship and deity of Christ. This belief was then included as part of the "Principles of Faith" from 1872 to 1914. However, the Principles of Faith were not voted on as an official GC in session document because of the anti-creed stance of the church, some of whom, including James White and J.N. Loughborough, believed that a creed would be the first step toward apostasy.

Eventually, new converts began to introduce new theories regarding the Godhead. The primary mover in this was J.H. Kellogg, who had married a trinitarian Seventh-day Baptist wife and visited frequently with a trinitarian Seventh-day Baptist minister. He then wrote a controversial book titled The Living Temple, which claimed Ellen White's writings to support his new theology. This book was condemned by Ellen White as teaching pantheism, the view that "all is God" and that "God is in everything". She went on to say that her writings, which were used in support of his theories, were taken out of context and misapplied, and that Satan, not God, was the inspiration of Kellogg's theology.

As part of this experience, Ellen White was shown that other dangerous heresies would come into the church, all claiming to have the support of her writings and the Bible. Mrs. White dubbed The Living Temple the "alpha of deadly heresies" and "the alpha of apostasy". The
Lord then showed her that the "omega of deadly heresies" was coming
soon, on the heels of the alpha. In connection with this crisis, Mrs. White
then warned the church repeatedly in the following years that men would
come in and attempt to change the theology of the church on the issue of
the Godhead, or as she put it, "the personality of God and of Christ".
Kellogg adopted and began to teach the trinity, saying that it was the basis
of his book, and that from a trinitarian viewpoint, his writings made sense.

The Story goes on to claim that a small group of ecumenical-
minded men in the publishing work led by Edson Rogers, F.M. Wilcox
and eventually Leroy Froom, brought the trinity doctrine into the church
after Ellen White's death in 1915. Supposedly the men, Froom in
particular, claimed that they were following "new light" as revealed by
Ellen White in *The Desire of Ages*. They later re-wrote history to show
that James White eventually accepted the trinity, when in fact he did not.
Froom also changed history in crediting the 1872-1914 Principles of Faith
to the pen of Uriah Smith, when James White was really the primary
contributor. It is further asserted that a conference appointed committee
and the Ellen G. White Estate altered the writings of Ellen White and
Uriah Smith, among others, to support the trinity doctrine.

The two stories then come back into agreement on the basic fact
that 1931 saw a new, semi- trinitarian, Principles of Faith and a church
manual. However, another difference is that Story One claims that the
trinity doctrine was brought into the church officially in 1946, but Story
Two maintains that the "trinity" doctrine which was voted into the church
in 1946 was still not a fully developed trinity doctrine and was little
different from the semi-trinitarian article published in 1931.

The authors of Story One claim to be stating true history and
believe Story Two is re-writing history. The other side, Story Two, claims
that they are stating fact and that Story One falsely re-writes history. Who
is right? Let us examine the facts.
Chapter 5: Contrasting the Two Stories

Perhaps the best way to confront this issue is in the format of a point-by-point "Comment and Response". Gerhard Pfandl, of the General Conference's Biblical Research Institute, published an essay in 1999 that described the move of the Seventh-day Adventist Church toward the acceptance of the trinity doctrine.

Dr. Jerry Moon of Andrews University more recently published an essay through Samuele Bacchiocchi’s ministry website as part of Bacchiocchi’s “Endtime Newsletters”. I have prepared a response to both Pfandl and to Moon, but since Dr. Moon’s essay is better written, less offensive and represents Story One the best between the two, I will print my response to Moon’s essay here. There are also a bevy of books on the market from various trinitarian authors, ranging from the subtle to the ridiculous, from the scholarly and pseudo-scholarly work of Dr. Moon and Leroy Froom to the shrill fear-mongering of Vance Ferrell; from the honestly mistaken to the blatantly unethical, and from the “brief overviews” to the boastful claims of “over 500 Bible verses and over 120 Ellen White quotes!”

I will not take the time to respond to “over 500 Bible verses and over 120 Ellen White quotes!” one by one, since it has been admitted by scholarly trinitarians for centuries that there is no explicit Bible evidence for the trinity, and by honest Adventist apologists that Ellen White’s “clear trinitarian quotes” amount to less than a dozen in 100,000 pages of written material.

While Dr. Moon presents this essay as a “brief overview”, this in reality represents the “nuts and bolts” of “Story One” regardless of how much exhaustive detail has been left out. I have found in my research that these “brief overviews” are very revealing in the sense that the author’s very best evidence is put forth, and that the rest is superfluous material that is merely “icing on the cake“. In other words, you can get more “bang for your buck” from an overview essay than from a 500 page book in some cases. In other cases, an essay is all some authors really have, and while
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implying there is more, they really have put forth the only real evidences they have. At the very least, we can safely say that if the “brief overview” is based on false presuppositions, then the expanded story will be more of the same.

What is interesting is that while Dr. Moon labels this essay as “a Brief Overview of the Debate”, he does not include the other side of the story or their evidences whatsoever. So it should not be approached as a report on the debate, as Moon would imply, but rather one side’s story. I will label Dr. Moon’s comments as **Moon** and my response, which represents Story Two, as **Response**.
Chapter 6: An Overview of the Overview

We will now get started by allowing Dr. Jerry Moon of Andrews University the chance to give an introductory overview and thesis to his essay. Here, he reviews the substance of other author’s theses and how each has built on the theories of their predecessors. As we follow this, it will become apparent that each has not thoroughly or critically investigated church history for themselves, and that each author has points that are unsubstantiated and based on assumptions and presuppositions.

Moon—In 1963 Erwin R. Gane broke new ground with his M. A. thesis arguing that most of the leaders among early Seventh-day Adventists held an antitrinitarian view of the Godhead, but that Ellen G. White was an exception. In Gane’s words, she was “a Trinitarian monotheist.” Gane did not attempt to trace the history of the change from rejection to acceptance of trinitarianism, nor did he address in detail the role of Ellen White’s role in that change, but he set the stage for other investigators to further his work.

Response- It is clear to many honest scholars that Ellen White was at no time in her Adventist life a trinitarian of any kind. Evangelical “heretic hunter” Walter Martin, in his QOD meetings with Froom, Unruh and other conference leaders, provided a briefcase stacked high with Ellen White’s clearly non-trinitarian statements. There is also no evidence of correction or reproval for the anti-trinitarianism of the historic Adventist church from the pen of Ellen White. Every “trinitarian” statement made by Ellen White can be harmonized by her own writings as not being trinitarian. Also, the use of “Most of the leaders held an antitrinitarian view” is misleading in that in reality NONE of the early church leaders were proven to be trinitarian. What the author has not yet pointed out is that the church had a “Principles of Faith” which were clearly non-trinitarian, and that these foundational beliefs were endorsed and agreed to by every Adventist, including Ellen G. White.
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Moon- Several others have since taken up aspects of those two major issues. Russell Holt in 1969 added further evidence regarding James White, J. N. Andrews, A. C. Bourdeau, D. T. Bourdeau, R. F. Cottrell, A. T. Jones, W. W. Prescott, J. Edson White, and M. L. Andreasen. Holt concluded that until 1890, the “field was dominated by” antitrinitarians; from 1890 to 1900, “the course of the denomination was decided by statements from Ellen G. White,” and during the period from 1900 to 1930, most of the leading antitrinitarians died, so that by 1931 trinitarianism “had triumphed and become the standard denominational position.” Thus Holt approximated the general outline of the present research, though the size of his paper did not permit in-depth treatment.

Response- Holt was right in saying that “the field was dominated by antitrinitarians.” So much so, in fact, that there was still not a single trinitarian in the leadership of the church. Of course this makes sense, since the foundational Principles of Faith did not include trinitarianism, but a decided statement that was counter to it. The interesting part of this paragraph is the reference to 1890 to 1900, the time which Ellen White supposedly turned the church around on the doctrine of God and Christ. *The Desire of Ages*, the book which supposedly “turned the tide” was not published until 1898. That would mean that it was not a ten year period from 1890 to 1900, but rather was 1898 to 1900, just two short years.

One thing that is also very revealing is that the change of Adventist doctrine, according to Moon and many others, is attributed to “the course of the denomination was decided by statements from Ellen G. White”. It is taught by many of these same scholars that the Seventh day Adventist Church does not accept or change doctrine solely on the writings of Ellen White. But Ellen White never actually taught the trinity, nor did she ever use the commonly used word “trinity” at all to describe her beliefs. Holt was right to attribute the acceptance of the trinity doctrine to the death of the pioneers. For there was no acceptance made by GC in session, nor by a decisive Bible study. There was one study of the “godhead” conducted in 1919, but the trinity doctrine was not accepted as a result of this study and the position as outlined in the Principles of Faith was retained.
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Moon--In 1971, two years after Holt’s paper, L. E. Froom in *Movement of Destiny* tried to prove that E. J. Waggoner had become essentially trinitarian, or at least “anti-Arian,” as early as 1888, but only by “special pleading” could he sustain that hypothesis. Nevertheless, *Movement of Destiny* offers a more detailed examination of the primary sources on trinitarianism and antitrinitarianism in Adventism than could previously be found in any one place. For sheer bulk, his work makes a major contribution to the history of the Adventist theology of the Godhead.

Response--- The author’s willingness to view Froom’s work as a mere “special pleading” with little or no evidence is to be commended. It must be understood, however, that the word “Arian” is very liberally defined by trinitarians. One can say that Waggoner was “anti-Arian”, which in many minds he was, depending on one’s own view of what constitutes actual Arianism. But Waggoner held no view outside the orthodoxy of Adventism at any time in regard to the Godhead, and was in lockstep with the other pioneers, all of whom rejected the notion that Christ was a created being or was not divine. One of the common strawmen used by Adventist trinitarian apologists is to pit the pioneers against themselves, or to “show growth in understanding” that would, on the surface, appear to support the changing of their views. This is a fallacy in most cases, which will be proven later.

It must also be pointed out that Leroy Froom was one of the leading members of the QOD meetings with Martin and Barnhouse, and was himself a prime mover in the ramrodding of the trinity doctrine in the late 1920s. Of course his book *Movement of Destiny* is going to support his own view, even to the extent of rewriting history.

Moon-- Merlin Burt, in 1996, contributed much-needed depth and detail to the history of the development of the Trinity doctrine among Adventists in the first half of the twentieth century. Woodrow Whidden broadened the systematic theological discussion by linking the advances in soteriology and the new openness to trinitarianism during the decade of 1888-1898. *Not until the publication of The Trinity: Understanding God’s Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships, by Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John Reeve (Review and Herald, 2002), did a single*
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*volume combine the biblical and historical evidence for an Adventist view of the Trinity.* That book has also been published in Portuguese by the Brazil Publishing House. (emphasis mine)

**Response**— Moon here betrays Story One by stating that there was no systematic Bible study or theology put out by the church for an Adventist Trinity until 2002! In other words, the trinity was an accepted “doctrine” in the church for 71 years (if you count from 1931) before anyone ever put out a book of “biblical and historical evidence” on the topic!

**Moon**— All these contributions have basically supported Gane’s original thesis. As a result, his contention that most of the leading SDA pioneers were antitrinitarian in their theology has become accepted Adventist history.

**Response**— Again, there was not even one leader in the denomination that was trinitarian. The first was John Harvey Kellogg in 1902, who used trinitarianism as the foundation of his pantheistic book *The Living Temple*, which was condemned by Ellen White and most of the church. At the time of Kellogg’s acceptance of the trinity, Ellen White declared that he was being “led by Satan”. Also, notice that Moon did not say that Gane’s thesis was supported in terms of Ellen White ever being a trinitarian. But his words “supported Gane’s original thesis” implies such.

**Moon**— However, the meaning of that history for belief and practice is still hotly debated. On one hand, some Adventists explain the historical process of change as the product of an ecumenical conspiracy theory, claiming that Adventist leaders sold out the original “truth” for the sake of public relations, as a means of shedding the denomination’s sectarian image. On the other hand, the question of whether belief in God as a Trinity is really biblical receives additional force from the fact that some contemporary theologians in the wider Christian community are taking up anew the historic questioning of traditional trinitarianism.
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Response-- The author’s use of the words “ecumenical conspiracy theory” smacks of propaganda, and is a common strawman. The question is not whether there was a “conspiracy theory”, but if there were men in the church pushing the acceptance of the trinity who were also very concerned with shedding the church’s sectarian image. History shows that in the early 20th century Leroy Froom, F.M. Wilcox and W.W. Prescott were pre-occupied with erasing the “cult status” of the Seventh day Adventist Church, making it more of a mainstream Evangelical denomination.

The same types of movements continue today for the same reason, but would we say that there is an “ecumenical conspiracy theory” to accept the pagan Easter Sunrise Services in our churches? No, but rather, it was a movement started by small groups of leaders to influence the majority into their way of thinking and to, according to one Adventist pastor, “Show people that we are just like the rest of the churches”. Nobody is suggesting that there were “dark, smoke-filled rooms” of General Conference leaders discussing how they would change the theology of the church. Yet, this is the image that Moon is attempting to pin on historic Adventists.

The fact that Holt even wrote that the trinity doctrine did not gain ground until the pioneers all died shows that it was not brought in by acceptable means, but rather, by attrition.

It must also be noted that the non-trinitarian Principles of Faith, which sustained the church for years, were published from 1874 until the presses were mysteriously stopped in 1915, the year Ellen White died. The new (semi-trinitarian) Principles of Faith were brought in 1931, just after the death of the last pioneers. Were those mere coincidences?

But ask yourself, would this author, Jerry Moon, admit if the trinity doctrine was brought in by a small group of ecumenical-minded leaders? Not likely.

Moon-----Objectives and Outline of this Study

The purpose of this essay is to examine the process of change in the Adventist view of the Trinity in order to discover what motivated the changes, and whether they resulted from a growing biblical understanding or were driven by a desire to be seen as orthodox by the wider Christian community.
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Response--- Ellen White wrote on several occasions that the foundational and principle doctrines of the Seventh day Adventist Church were arrived at by intense study, and verified by God’s Spirit. Please note the dates on the following statements-

Testimonies for the Church, p 297 (1904)
"Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith--the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work by prayerful study of the word and by revelation. Upon these foundations we have been building for the last fifty years. Men may suppose that they have found a new way and that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid. But this is a great deception. Other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid. “

Special Testimonies, Series B, no. 7, p57. (4 December, 1905, Sanitarium California).
"One thing it is certain is soon to be realized, the great apostasy, which is developing and increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout. We are to hold fast the first principles of our denominated faith and go forward from strength to increased faith. Ever are we to keep the faith that has been substantiated by the Holy Spirit of God from the earlier events of our experience until the present time. We need now larger breadth, and deeper more earnest, unwavering faith in the leadings of the Holy Spirit. If we needed the manifest proof of the Holy Spirit’s power to confirm truth in the beginning, after the passing of the time, we need today all the evidence in the confirmation of the truth, when souls are departing from the faith and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. There must not be any languishing of soul now."

“The past fifty years have not dimmed one jot or principle of our faith as we received the great and wonderful evidences that were made certain to us in 1844, after the passing of the time. The languishing souls are to be confirmed and quickened according to his word. And many of the ministers of the gospel and the Lord's physicians will have their languishing souls quickened according to the word. Not a word is changed or denied. That which the Holy Spirit testified to as truth after the passing of the time, in our great disappointment, is the solid foundation of truth. Pillars of truth were revealed, and we accepted the foundation principles that have made us what we are -- Seventh-day Adventists, keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus.
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To believe that the church “grew” from an anti-trinitarian view to a trinitarian one, would necessitate that the church was built on a foundation of false doctrine and false worship, and that it was not even a Christian church until its “growth in understanding” culminating in 1980’s final acceptance of the trinity as a fundamental belief.

It is said that the doctrine of God was not a foundational doctrine, or a “pillar” or “landmark”, and as such was open to revision. But I would ask that the sincere truth seeker ask him or herself, “Is it possible that God could say through Ellen White that every doctrine of the historic Adventist church was established by Himself and yet the church be completely wrong about the very identity of God, holding a deadly heresy that undermines the very gospel of Christ?”

But also, please read the following quotations from God’s messenger to His church:

MS 135, 1903 (note the date)
Ellen G. White, The Early Years Vol 1 - 1827-1862, p 145
“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. The whole company of believers were united in the truth. There were those who came in with strange doctrines, but we were never afraid to meet them. Our experience was wonderfully established by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.”

And finally, read the following quote very closely and carefully.

Ellen White, MS 760, p 9,10 - To Build Upon the Foundation
“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.”
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Chapter 7: The Six Periods According to Story One

In this section, Dr. Moon breaks his theory into six parts, covering six periods of Adventist history. While it is possible that the history of the trinity doctrine in Adventism can indeed be broken into six periods, it is also possible that Moon is moving these periods back earlier than they actually had taken place, and is making vague and ambiguous articles and statements appear more significant, and more “trinitarian”, than they actually were.

Moon---The development of the doctrine of the Godhead in Seventh-day Adventism may be divided into six periods: (1) Antitrinitarian Dominance, 1846-1888; (2) Dissatisfaction with Antitrinitarianism, 1888-1898; (3) Paradigm Shift, 1898-1913; (4) Decline of Antitrinitarianism, 1913-1946; (5) Trinitarian Dominance, 1946-1980; and (6) Renewed Tensions, 1980 to the Present. The first three periods have been treated by Gane, Holt, and Froom, and the 1888-1957 era by Merlin Burt, but only Froom addresses the trinitarian issues of the Kellogg crisis and no one has dealt extensively with the period from 1980 to the present.

ANTITRINITARIAN DOMINANCE: 1846-1888
From about 1846 to 1888, most of the leading Adventist writers rejected the concept of the Trinity, although the literature contains occasional references to members who held trinitarian views. Ambrose C. Spicer, the father of General Conference President William Ambrose Spicer, had been a Seventh Day Baptist minister before his conversion to Adventism in 1874. He evidently remained trinitarian, because W. A. Spicer recounted to A. W. Spalding that his father “grew so offended at the antitrinitarian atmosphere in Battle Creek that he ceased preaching.”

Response--- Here, the author tries to link anyone in the early church with trinitarianism and so he finds a non-leader, the father of an Adventist
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leader. In his attempt to show trinitarianism, the best he can do in this case is to say that “evidently” Ambrose Sr. was trinitarian because his reported that he complained about “anti-trinitarian atmosphere”. Nevertheless, even if Spicer Sr. was trinitarian it would only serve to prove that trinitarianism did not come in by study but by others bringing it in through the door when they joined the church. But by 1874 there was a unanimous Principles of Faith that Adventists held in common.

Not only does this attempt prove the virtual absence of trinitarianism in the early church, it is just as possible that his complaint was not necessarily with the Adventist doctrine itself, but with a group that became pre-occupied about the one issue. This would be similar to a situation where a congregation speaks obsessively about “health reform”, or “the law” to the negating of other doctrines. Ellen White herself wrote, “We have spoken ‘the law, the law’, until we are dry as the hills of Gilboa.” This certainly does not mean Ellen White changed her position on the immutability of God’s law. It just means there are other issues to consider.

Moon- S. B. Whitney had been trinitarian, but in the course of his indoctrination as an Adventist in 1861, became a convinced antitrinitarian. Whitney’s experience would seem to indicate that at least some Adventist ministers taught antitrinitarianism as part of their instruction of new converts.

Response-- And perhaps the fact that the church was so decidedly non-trinitarian as a matter of foundational belief had something to do with this. Ellen White herself came from a trinitarian background and then left that view in favor of the Adventist view. Again, according to Walter Martin, Ellen White made “a briefcase full” of anti-trinitarian quotes in her writings.

Moon---R. F. Cottrell, on the other hand, wrote in the Review that while he disbelieved in the Trinity, he had never “preached against it” or previously written about it.

Response- A short comment by Moon, but a misleading one. Therefore I will respond with a statement by another author regarding this very comment.
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Dr Moon notes that R.F. Cottrell indicates that he had never preached against the trinity, or to have previously written about it. This supposed lack of written or spoke evidence appears to have been interpreted by Dr Moon to suggest that RF Cottrell took a neutral position regarding the doctrine of the trinity, or down-played the importance of the doctrine of God, but when the entire article is read, this assumption is proved to be incorrect. It reveals that Cottrell believes the doctrine of the trinity is one that should be rejected as non-biblical. In the article, Cottrell states:

“My reasons for not adopting and defending it, are 1. Its name is unscriptural - the Trinity, or the triune God, is unknown to the Bible; and I have entertained the idea that doctrines which require words coined in the human mind to express them, are coined doctrines. 2. I have never felt called upon to adopt and explain that which is contrary to all the sense and reason God has given me. All my attempts at an explanation of such a subject would make it no clearer to my friends. But if I am asked what I think of Jesus Christ, my reply is, I believe all that the Scriptures say of him. If the testimony represents him as being in glory with the Father before the world was, I believe it. If it is said that he was in the beginning with God, that he was God, that all things were made by him and for him, and that without him was not anything made that was made, I believe it. If the Scriptures say he is the Son of God, I believe it. If it is declared the Father sent his Son into the world, I believe he had a Son to send. If the testimony says he is the beginning of the creation of God, I believe it. If he is said to be the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person, I believe it. And when Jesus says, “I and my Father are one,” I believe it; and when he says, “My Father is greater than I,” I believe that too; it is the word of the Son of God and besides this it is perfectly reasonable and seemingly self evident.”

Perhaps Mr. Cottrell didn’t actively need to add his voice of protest to the chorus of anti-trinitarian sermons sounding forth from the pioneers, but nonetheless, Cottrell did speak negatively about the trinity prior to 1869 and he wrote very strongly soon afterwards also (which Jerry Moon appears not to mention in his study on the trinity.) (S. Turner, Identifying the Unknown God)

Moon- A third bit of evidence that not all were agreed on antitrinitarianism was the remark of D. T. Bourdeau in 1890: “Although we claim to be believers in, and worshipers of, only one God, I have thought that there are as many gods among us as there are conceptions of the Deity.”

Response- Once again, I will defer to the book “Identifying the Unknown God” for a concise and well written response.
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Dr Moon quotes D.T. Bordeau's statement in "We May Partake of the Fullness of the Father and the Son" published in the Review and Herald, 18 November, 1890 p 707. The statement reads, “Although we claim to be believers in, and worshippers of, only one God, I have thought that there are as many gods among us as there are conceptions of the Deity.”

In fact, when read in its context, Bordeau's article certainly does not promote neutrality about the doctrine of God.

"Although we claim to be believers in, and worshippers of, only one God, I have thought that there are as many gods among us as there are conceptions of the Deity. And how many there are of these, and how limited are most of them! Rather, how limited are all of them! We do not half study the character of God the Father and of God the Son, and the result is that we make God and Christ such beings as ourselves. (emphasis in original). The article is about overcoming and partaking of the fullness of God and Christ.

Bordeau continues:

“In approving sin in ourselves, we sometimes make God a sinner. This is true when we would make it appear by an appeal to God or to the Bible, that wrong is right, and that when we are tempted of God to do evil, we are tempted of God to do right. James says we should not do this. Thus he speaks on this point: 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but ever man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. 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.' James 1:12-17.”

Bordeau is not dealing with the matter of the nature of God, but with the concept of sin and how a misconception of the divine character causes people to hold a misconception of sin, temptation and overcoming of sin.

Dr Moon did not mention the context of Bordeau's quote and this leads to doubt about whether the early pioneers were united on the doctrine of God. (Turner, Identifying the Unknown God, pg 427)

Moon--It must not be misunderstood that those who rejected the traditional Trinity doctrine of the Christian creeds were nevertheless devout believers in the eternity of God the Father, the deity of Jesus Christ “as
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Creator, Redeemer and Mediator,” and the “importance” of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Response-- Moon is right in being one of the few to actually admit that the pioneers, and those who believe like they did, do in fact accept and preach the divinity of Christ, as well as the existence and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Where Story One goes astray is in its insistence that the pioneers “grew” to this understanding from what they call an Arian view, which is a fallacy. They had always believed in and preached the divinity of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This “growth” is used to “prove” a slowly changing and evolving understanding of the trinity on the part of the church. Again, this is one of the false presuppositions upon which their entire story depends.

Joseph H. Waggoner - “Many theologians really think that the Atonement, in respect to its dignity and efficacy, rests upon the doctrine of the trinity. But we fail to see any connection between the two. To the contrary, the advocates of that doctrine really fall into the difficulty which they seem anxious to avoid. Their difficulty consists in this: They take the denial of a trinity to be equivalent to a denial of the divinity of Christ. Were that the case, we should cling to the doctrine as tenaciously as any can; but it is not the case. They who have read our remarks on the death of the Son of God know that we firmly believe in the divinity of Christ; but we cannot accept the idea of a trinity, as it is held by Trinitarians, without giving up our claim on the dignity of the sacrifice made for our redemption. (J. H. Waggoner, 1884, The Atonement In The Light Of Nature And Revelation, pp 164, 165)

Waggoner was not espousing a “new view”, but answering the critics regarding the anti-trinitarian stance of the Seventh day Adventist Church.

Moon- They held, however, that unlike the Father, the Son had a beginning, though by 1888 it was widely accepted that the Son had preexisted from “so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension” he was “practically without beginning.” Moreover, they initially believed that the Holy Spirit was an expression for the divine presence, power, or influence, but not an individual divine Personality.
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Response: Moon is mostly correct here as well. However, where he is wrong is that the pioneers did believe the Holy Spirit was a personality—the personality of Christ and of God. The pioneers did not believe the Holy Spirit was a separate being like trinitarians and tritheists do, and this can be proven from the Bible and the writings of Ellen White. The pioneers also were right to believe the Son had a beginning, or He could not be the Son of God. However, as I pointed out in the last response, Moon is attempting to “show growth” among the pioneers by saying things like “though by 1888 it was widely accepted that the Son had preexisted from ‘so far back in the days of eternity’”. Again, the vast majority of pioneer Adventists always believed this and did not grow to understand it over time.

Regardless, the pioneers and their like-minded followers believed that to say Jesus was co-eternal with God the Father would mean that God had no Son. Trinitarian Adventists confirm this in their belief that the relationship of the Father and the Son are not a substantial fact, but mere roles entered into by separate “Gods” for the purpose of salvation, though most say “divine Beings” instead of “Gods”.

In a week of prayer readings published by the Review and Herald, the modern Adventist tritheistic position is outlined—

"A plan of salvation was encompassed in the covenant made by the Three Persons of the Godhead, who possessed the attributes of Deity equally. In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered into, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son. The remaining divine Being, the Holy Spirit, was also to participate in effecting the plan of salvation. All of this took place before sin and rebellion transpired in heaven. By accepting the roles that the plan entailed, the divine Beings lost none of the powers of Deity. With regard to their eternal existence and other attributes, they were one and equal. But with regard to the plan of salvation, there was, in a sense, a submission on the part of the Son to the Father."

_Gordon Jenson- Adventist Review, October 31, 1996, p.12 (Week of Prayer readings)_

There is no sign of such a teaching anywhere in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy. Not a single verse or quote. The plan of salvation, as well as the relationship of God to His only begotten Son was perfectly laid out in such books as _The Story of Redemption_ and _Patriarchs and Prophets_. Not only is the sonship of Christ before the incarnation clearly spelled out, but
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the notable absence of the Holy Spirit as a third being cannot be ignored.

"Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will." Patriarch and Prophets, pg36

"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.

"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting.... When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Proverbs 8:22-30. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pg 34

Ellen White leaves no room for a mere “role play” so nship of Christ, but consistently describes a real personal singular God who has a real personal and begotten Son.

"The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each." Ministry of Healing Pg 421

Please note that the quote does not say “Between the F ather and the Son”, but “Between God and Christ.” God, not the trinit y, is one individual person, Christ is the other. When trinitarians think “God”, they think of the trinity, when Ellen White thought “God” she thought of the Father only.

"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." 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
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Godhead bodily. The Signs of the Times - 05-30-95 (note the date)

"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. Advent Review and Sabbath Herald - 07-09-95 (note the date)

Both of these quotes were made during the time Dr. Moon and others say that Ellen White was “converting to trinitarianism“, 1890-1900. The second quote states that Christ was begotten, torn from the bosom of the “Eternal Father”, the One God who was the Father of Christ, and then “sent Him down to earth”. Tritheists contend that Christ was not God’s Son until His birth Bethlehem. This obviously refutes that notion.

"God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son. Testimonies for the Church Volume Eight - pg 268

Again, Ellen White does not say anything about “entering into roles”, but puts it as plainly as anyone could, that God is the Father of Christ and that Christ is the Son of God. Once again, she does not refer to “the Father” and “the Son”, but refers consistently to God and Christ as being separate personal and singular beings.

"Before the foundations of the world were laid, Christ, the Only Begotten of God, pledged Himself to become the Redeemer of the human race, should Adam sin. ...
" 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." 1Selected Messages, pg 226, 227

Here, Ellen White is saying that Christ became a Son in a “new sense” at the incarnation. Of course logic demands that this means that before the incarnation He was the Son of God in the “old sense”. This, along with the many other statements to the same effect, means that Christ, according to the Spirit of Prophecy, was indeed God’s Son even before the incarnation. This is emphasized by the context which says that
Chapter 8: Why the Pioneers Rejected Trinitarianism

Why did the pioneers reject trinitarianism? That is a good question, and one with plain and logical answers from the pens of the pioneers themselves. Dr. Moon will attempt to reveal the reasons why the pioneers rejected the trinity doctrine. However, he limits this rejection to only “certain views” of the trinity, leaving the door open for a “biblical” trinity. Is this true? Let’s see.

Moon- No Biblical Evidences for Three Persons
The early Adventists set forth at least six reasons for their rejection of the term “Trinity.”

Response- The pioneers did not merely reject the term “Trinity”. They rejected trinitarian doctrines and teachings of all kinds. Any doctrine that made the one true God more than one person was rejected by the pioneers and Ellen White outright as “destroying the personality of God and Christ.” This is made plain by the words of James White:

"The way spiritualizers have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural Trinitarian creed viz., that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain scripture testimony in abundance that he is the Son of the eternal God." (James White, Jan 24 1846, The Day Star)

According to James White that “old unscriptural trinitarian creed” was that Jesus is the One true and most high God, which as White points out, has not a single verse of Scripture to back it up. Every form of trinity doctrine, including the “Adventist trinity” maintains that same position. While the different pioneers took exception to various views within trinitarian thinking, they did not single out one specific version of the trinity as being wrong, leaving the door open for a “trinity” that was right. This is a very important point, since in Part 2 we will see that the whole
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argument of Story One depends in large part on the idea that the pioneers only opposed one certain form of the trinity doctrine.

This statement by White, saying that any doctrine that makes Jesus the most High God is false, puts that angle to rest. Yet, this point will be brought up several more times in this writing, and I apologize in advance for its redundancy.

**Moon**- The first was that they did not initially see biblical evidence for three persons in one Godhead. This was not a new objection. In its simplest form, the concept of Trinity is the result of affirming, on the authority of Scripture, both the “oneness” and the “threeness” of God, despite human inability to fully understand the personal, divine Reality those terms point to. How this can be explained has been the subject of much thought and speculation over the centuries. The influence of Greek philosophy on the doctrinal developments of early and medieval Christian history is well known. *(emphasis mine)*

**Response**- Moon betrays his own position by admitting to, but playing down, the influence of pagan Greek philosophy on the acceptance of the trinity doctrine. But not only did the original pioneers not “initially” see biblical evidence for three persons in the trinitarian sense, they *never* accepted that there was *any* biblical evidence for it. The acceptance of any kind of biblical “evidence” for the trinity began primarily with second and third generation Adventists like Froom, Rogers and Wilcox. I hope you are now beginning to see how important the “pioneer growth” aspect is to the veracity of Story One, as evidenced by its constant repetition. Yet this supposed “growth” is done purely with smoke and mirrors and does not reflect historic reality.

Moon also unwittingly points out the biblical problem with any kind of trinity doctrine by saying that it can only be arrived at by first accepting the “oneness” of God and then accepting the “threeness” of God. But the connection of “oneness” to “threeness” is never made in the Bible! The Bible never says “Our God is three”. There are only three references to the “Father…. Son….Holy Ghost” in the Bible, two of which are proven to be interpolations added at a later date, and none of which describes the actual relationship between, or the substance of, the three. Trinitarians have read into those verses that which they desire to believe.
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On the contrary, Jesus said:

“This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3)

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 8:6:

“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.”

These verses, among many others, leave no room for a trinity doctrine. Moon, like all trinitarians, must lean on the “mysteriousness” and incomprehensibility of the trinity doctrine in its defense. How is it possible that the most important doctrine to any religion, the identity of its deity, can be outside of its adherent’s understanding in terms of its basic existence and identity? If the trinity is so mysterious as to not be understood or explained, then how can it be a test of orthodoxy? How can a doctrine that is admittedly built upon unclear teachings and relying upon words such as “hypostasis”, which is limited exclusively to pagan Greek philosophers, be the centerpiece of Christianity?

Moon—Trinity Makes the Father and the Son Identical

A second reason the early Adventists gave for rejecting the Trinity was the misconception that it made the Father and the Son identical. The first of the three recognized cofounders of Sabbatarian Adventism, Joseph Bates, wrote that: “Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was an impossible for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same being.” At the time of his conversion to Christianity in 1827, Bates told his father, “If you can convince me that we are one in this sense, that you are my father, and I your son; and also that I am your father, and you my son, then I can believe in the trinity.” Because of this belief, and that of baptism by immersion, the younger Bates joined the Christian Connection rather than the Congregational church of his parents. D. W. Hull, J. N. Loughborough, S. B. Whitney, and D. M. Canright shared this view.

But biblical trinitarians do not teach that Christ and the Father are one person. The point of the term “three persons” is that the Father, Son, and
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Holy Spirit are not held to be “one and the same” person. The concept that the Father and Son are identical approximates an ancient heresy called Modalist Monarchianism, or Sabellianism (after Sabellius, one of its third-century proponents). Modalists “held that in the Godhead the only differentiation was a mere succession of modes or operations.” Modalists denied the threeness of God and asserted that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not separate personalities. In view of this history, it is tempting to dismiss the view of Bates and others as simple ignorance of the meaning of Trinity, but in their defense, it must be admitted that there have been in history and still are today, a variety of views claiming the term Trinity. R. F. Cottrell observed in 1869 that there were “a multitude of views” on the Trinity, “all of them orthodox, I suppose, as long as they nominally assent to the doctrine.” In the second part of this study I will present some fundamental differences between the biblical view of the Trinity and the traditional trinitarianism derived from Greek philosophy.

Response- The understanding of Bates was correct that in reality any kind of trinity doctrine must by necessity make the Father and Son “interchangeable” to some degree. That is because in the Trinitarian understanding, the Son is not actually God’s Son and the God is not actually Christ’s Father. Again, I will point to the Week of Prayer statement by Gordon Jenson to prove that Bates was right in his assessment of trinitarianism, including the modern Adventist variety. Please read carefully and see if you can spot the reasoning of why Bates’ comment applies even to the “Adventist trinity“.

"A plan of salvation was encompassed in the covenant made by the Three Persons of the Godhead, who possessed the attributes of Deity equally. In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered into, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son."

Gordon Jenson- Adventist Review, October 31, 1996, p.12 (Week of Prayer readings)

According to the above theology, is it or is it not just as possible that the “Divine Being” that entered into the “role of the Son” could have just easily entered into the “role of the Father” instead, and vice versa? Absolutely! But far more importantly, where is this even remotely taught in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy? How can anyone accept such an
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unbiblical and preposterous idea? For Moon to try to limit this unbiblical theology to the modalists borders on dishonesty.

But the biggest problem for tritheistic trinitarians is that they wish to use the term “person” in the sense of an individual being. The irreconcilable problem is that throughout the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, God is always described as an individual Person, and never as a group of individual beings or as a “thing” comprised of individual and non-descript “persons” (hypostases).

**Moon—The Trinity Presupposes the Existence of Three Gods**

A third and opposite early Adventist objection to the Trinity doctrine was based on the misconception that it teaches the existence of three Gods. “If Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each God, it would be three Gods,” wrote Loughborough in 1861. But Loughborough clearly misunderstood the meaning of the term Trinity. Biblical trinitarians do not believe in three Gods. The whole point of the word Trinity is to maintain the biblical truth that there is only one God, without denying what the Bible also teaches, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three individual persons.

**Response**- Once again, Story One contradicts itself. First it says that the pioneers only rejected the orthodox trinity. Then it says that it opposed modalism. And it now it admits that it also rejected tritheism, which, regardless of the protests to the contrary, is the current view of the Adventist church. Any doctrine which says that God is made up of “three divine beings” is saying that there are three gods, plain and simple. It must also be recognized that this statement by Loughborough is taken from a question and answer article that Loughborough ran in the Review and Herald, similar to the ones that are written now by Angel Rodriguez in *Adventist World*, which are designed to establish the position of the church on various points of belief. Here is another section of the article from which Moon pulled his one sentence.

“Read the seventeenth chapter of John, and see if it does not completely upset the doctrine of the Trinity. To believe that doctrine, when reading the scripture we must believe that God sent himself into the world, died to reconcile the world to himself, raised himself from the dead, ascended to himself in heaven, pleads before himself in heaven to reconcile the world to himself, and is the only mediator.
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between man and himself. It will not do to substitute the human nature of Christ (according to Trinitarians) as the Mediator; for Clarke says, “Human blood can no more appease God than swine’s blood.” Commentary on 2 Sam. 21:10. We must believe also that in the garden God prayed to himself, if it were possible, to let the cup pass from himself, and a thousand other such absurdities. Read carefully the following texts, comparing them with the idea that Christ is the Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Supreme, and only self-existent God: John 14:28; 17:3; 3:16; 5:19, 26; 11:15; 20:19; 8:50; 6:38; Mark 8:32; Luke 6:12; 22:69; 24:29; Matt. 3:17; 27:46; Gal. 3:20; 1 John 2:1; Rev. 5:7; Acts 17:31. Also see Matt. 11:25, 27; Luke 1:32; 22:42; John 3:35, 36; 5:19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26; 6:40; 8:35, 36; 14:13; 1 Cor. 15:28, &c. The word Trinity nowhere occurs in the Scriptures. The principal text supposed to teach it is 1 John 5:7, which is an interpolation. Clarke says, “Out of one hundred and thirteen manuscripts, the text is wanting in one hundred and twelve. It occurs in no MS. before the tenth century. And the first place the text occurs in Greek, is in the Greek translation of the acts of the Council of Lateran, held A. D. 1215.” - Com. on 1 John 5, and remarks at close of chapter.

3. Its origin is pagan and fabulous. Instead of pointing us to scripture for proof of the trinity, we are pointed to the trident of the Persians, with the assertion that “by this they designed to teach the idea of a trinity, and if they had the doctrine of the trinity, they must have received it by tradition from the people of God. But this is all assumed, for it is certain that the Jewish church held to no such doctrine. Says Mr. Summerbell, “A friend of mine who was present in a New York synagogue, asked the Rabbi for an explanation of the word ‘Elohim’. A Trinitarian clergyman who stood by, replied, ‘Why, that has reference to the three persons in the Trinity,’ when a Jew stepped forward and said he must not mention that word again, or they would have to compel him to leave the house; for it was not permitted to mention the name of any strange god in the synagogue.” (Discussion between Summerbell and Flood on Trinity, p. 38) Milman says the idea of the Trident is fabulous. (Hist. Christianity, p. 34) This doctrine of the trinity was brought into the church about the same time with image worship, and keeping the day of the sun, and is but Persian doctrine remodeled. It occupied about three hundred years from its introduction to bring the doctrine to what it is now. It was commenced about 325 AD and was not completed till 681AD. See Milman’s Gibbon’s Rome, vol. 4, p. 422. It was adopted in Spain in 589, in England in 596, in Africa in 534. - Gib. vol. 4, pp. 114, 345; Milner, vol. 1, p. 519. (To be continued.) (J. N. Loughborough, November 5,1861, Review & Herald, vol. 18, page 184, par. 1-11)."

According to Moon’s tritheistic trinitarianism, “God” is not a Person but the name of a group of divine beings. In this view, God is not a “Him” that sent “His” Son but a “they” that sent “th eir” Son. But what
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saith the Lord’s messenger?

"The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each."

Ministry of Healing - pg 421

"God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son. Testimonies for the Church Volume Eight - 268"

It will be noted that these clearly say “God and Christ” each have a personality of their own. It does not say “God the Father and God the Son”. According to the Bible and Ellen White, God is a personal singular being, the Father, as well as the supreme source of Christ’s position.

"There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son". - - U. T., July 3, 1898. {HL 287.1} (Note the date)

There are many issues in our world today in regard to the Creator not being a personal God. God is a being, and man was made in His image. After God created man in His image, the form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it had no vitality. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, breathing, intelligent being. All parts of the human machinery were put in motion. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the perceptions of the mind, the senses, were placed under physical law. It was then that man became a living soul. {TDG 273.3}

Through Jesus Christ, God--not a perfume, not something intangible, but a personal God--created man, and endowed him with intelligence and power. . . . {TDG 273.4}

“Those who think they can obtain a knowledge of God aside from His Representative, whom the Word declares is “the express image of his person” (Heb. 1:3), will need to become fools in their own estimation before they can be wise. It is impossible to gain a perfect knowledge of God from nature alone; for nature itself is imperfect. In its imperfection it cannot represent God, it cannot reveal the character of God in its moral perfection. But Christ came as a personal Saviour to the world. He represented a personal God. As a personal Saviour, He ascended on high; and He will come again as He ascended to heaven--a personal Saviour. He is the express image of the Father's person. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). {1SM 295.2}
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“Our ministers must be very careful not to enter into controversy in regard to the personality of God. This is a subject that they are not to touch. It is a mystery, and the enemy will surely lead astray those who enter into it. We know that Christ came in person to reveal God to the world. God is a person and Christ is a person. Christ is spoken of in the Word as “the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person.” (1SAT 343.3)

Ellen White speaks plainly in these quotations that God Himself is a singular Person, and not “persons”. These quotes present an insurmountable problem for trinitarians, since they believe that God is not a Person, but a group made up of three Persons, something the Bible simply does not teach. If God is a person and each of the three members of the Godhead are also persons, then that would make four persons of the Godhead, a “Quadrinity”: Father, Son, Holy Ghost and the Godhead Himself. So the pioneer Adventists were right to say that the trinity teaches that the Father and the Son are the same person, since God is a Person that would include both the Father and the Son, then certainly that makes the Father and the Son one and the same being, the singular entity called God.

Ellen White, in the last quote, also warned Adventist ministers not to enter into controversy over the personality of God. At the time of her writing that comment, the church was non-trinitarian and viewed God as a singular person (not a group of three persons) as she reminds us later in the quote. But enter into this controversy they did, and eventually the hybrid Adventist tritheistic trinity doctrine, officially accepted in 1980, with no systematic explanation attempted until 2002, was the result.

Now, when these quotes are presented, trinitarians make the assertion that they were referring to pantheism, and that Ellen White was saying that God was not a tree, but a real and tangible thing. But that does not change the fact that she is saying that God is a singular “Person” and that Christ the Person is not God the Person.

Moon--The Trinity Diminishes the Value of the Atonement
A fourth view was that belief in the Trinity would diminish the value of the atonement. Since the “ever living, self-existent God” cannot die, then if Christ had self-existence as God, he couldn’t have died on Calvary, they reasoned. If only his humanity died, then his sacrifice was only a human
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one, inadequate for redemption. Thus, in order to protect the reality of his death on the cross, the early Adventists felt they had to deny that Christ in his preexistence possessed divine immortality. However logical that reasoning may have seemed to some, its basic premises were flatly rejected by Ellen White in 1897. She stated positively that when Jesus died on the cross, “Deity did not die. Humanity died.” Her influence on Adventist readers, and their confidence in the source of her information was such that the implications of such a pronouncement could not be ignored, giving Adventist scholars one more reason to reassess their basic paradigm regarding the Godhead.

Response— The premise was definitely not “flatly rejected” by Ellen White. This statement must be taken in context, which I hope you have noticed that thus far Moon has not been forthcoming with context in most of his quotes of the pioneers or Ellen White. In this case he limits his quote to one sentence. Ellen White made several comments regarding the death of Christ, some of which appear to contradict the others. Please read the following excerpt:

“Ellen White states in Youth’s Instructor, 4 August, 1898 that “Humanity died: divinity did not die.” How can these statements be harmonized with the Bible and her other previous statements?

The Gnostic and the Trinitarian doctrines both appear to be in agreement with some of the following statements by Ellen White that the divine part of Christ “did not die.” How is this possible? There is much confusion on this important topic and this is reflected in the “apparently” conflicting writings of Ellen White, but with a correct knowledge of the gospel and what happens at death to the spirit, these quotations are seen to be harmonious. Christ’s divine spirit/mind was simply unconscious, non-functional – quiescent, for the 3 days that He (the divine/human being) was dead. His Father gave Him a command to “come forth” which awoke the Saviour’s unconscious mind and the Son, being given commandment, obeyed the instruction of His Father and came forth to life that was then again, “in Himself.” (Turner, ITUG)

1. R H.1887-07-05.005

“As a member of the human family he was mortal, but as a God he was the fountain of life to the world. He could, in his divine person, ever have withstood the advances of death, and refused to come under its dominion; but he voluntarily laid down his life.”

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2. R H.1887-07-05.005
“... He bore the sins of the world, and endured the penalty which rolled like a mountain upon his divine soul. He yielded up his life a sacrifice that man should not eternally die. He died, not through being compelled to die, but by his own free will.”

3. S T.1915-01-05.013
“Through the death of Christ a door of hope was opened for fallen man. Man was under sentence of death for the transgression of the law of God. He was under condemnation as a traitor, as a rebel; but Christ came to be his substitute, to die as a malefactor, to suffer the penalty of the traitors, bearing the weight of their sins upon His divine soul.

4. 2 SP.011.001
“...The salvation of fallen man was procured at such an immense cost that angels marveled, and could not fully comprehend the divine mystery that the Majesty of Heaven, equal with God, should die for the rebellious race.”

5. S T.1884-04-03.007
"It is a mystery that One equal with the eternal Father should so abase himself as to suffer the cruel death of the cross …"

6. R H.1872-12-17.004
“The divine Son of God was the only sacrifice of sufficient value to fully satisfy the claims of God's perfect law.”

7. Letter 280, 1904; 5BC p 1113
"When Christ was crucified, it was His human nature that died. Deity did not sink and die; that would have been impossible."

8. M S 153, 1898; 7BC 907
"Men need to understand that Deity suffered and sank under the agonies of Calvary.” (ITUG, Turner, pp 175-176)

Here are the Ellen White quotations, some of which say that deity could not “sink and die“, while others say that “deity suffered and sank”. And while saying that deity could not die, it says that nothing but the death of deity could atone for our sins. She meant that Christ’s deity, his divine nature, went back to God at his death the same way our “spirit” (nature) does. His deity, His divine nature, did not die even though His living being,
all of Him, did indeed suffer and die on Calvary. To believe that His divine being was merely “locked in the tomb”, but was alive and well, would be dualism and spiritualism, since that implies that Christ was not a living being but two living beings sharing the same body (Jesus the human and Christ the God, which is gnosticism), one of which died, and the other of which did not.

**Moon- Being the Son of God, Christ had a More Recent Origin**

Fifth, the fact that Christ is called “Son of God” and “the beginning of the creation of God” (Rev 3:14) was thought to prove that he must be of more recent origin than God the Father. Of course, these texts are no longer understood in this way.

**Response**—The author says “of course these texts are no longer understood this way“, but offers no proof of his claim by quoting Ellen White, the Bible or any scholar of note. Also, Moon mentions “texts” in the plural but then gives only a reference to one verse. It is also very revealing that he says that Christ being called “Son of God” is not understood this way”. How then is it understood? It is “understood” in the modern Adventist view that the Son is not really the Son, but is only a role play by a co-eternal “divine being”; a teaching that is absent from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy!

**Moon**—Ellen White insisted on the eternal preexistence of the Son, and the “beginning of the creation of God” (Rev 3:14) is no longer understood to refer to the first being created, but to the being who was the Source, the Initiator, the Beginning of all the creation of God (cf. John 1:1-3).

**Response**—Here, the author begins with a false premise, that anti-Trinitarians always use Revelation 3:14 as proof of a “created being”, then refutes his own false assertion. *Most* non-trinitarian Adventists do not use Rev.3:14 as proof of any kind. It should be noted that he does not quote any pioneer as using Rev.3 to support their view. But it should be kept in mind that Moon’s interpretation of Rev.3:14 is not set in stone, nor is it agreed to by every Bible scholar.
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He also states that Ellen White taught the _eternal_ pre-existence of the Son which, interestingly enough, he does not have any quotational support for. Why not? Because there isn’t any. Ellen White wrote that Christ was pre-existent, to which the pioneers and all subsequent non-Trinitarian Adventists agree. She wrote that Christ had always been in close fellowship with God during His existence. But she never said or taught that Christ had “eternal pre-existence” like God does or that He was “co-eternal”, a word that is not found in any of her writings or the Bible.

**Moon- Expression Suggesting that the Holy Spirit is a Power**

Sixth, it was argued that “there are various expressions concerning the Holy Spirit which would indicate that it [sic] couldn’t properly be considered as a person, such as its being ‘shed abroad’ in the heart [Rom. 5:5], and ‘poured out upon all flesh’ [Joel 2:28].” These arguments, however, depended on giving a very literal interpretation to expressions that could also be seen as figures of speech. These arguments made sense within an overall antitrinitarian paradigm, but when that paradigm was called into question, these points were recognized as being capable of fitting either interpretation. None of these is a valid objection to the basic trinitarian concept of one God in three Persons. Yet all of them were based on biblical texts. Adventists eventually changed their view of the Godhead because they came to a different understanding of the biblical texts.

**Response--** Is God the Father or Jesus Christ _ever_ called “it” in any writing by any author? Again, Moon offers no textual or Spirit of Prophecy support for assertion that “it” is an acceptable way to address “God the Holy Ghost”, another term that is _never_ used to describe the Holy Spirit in either the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy. If this term “it” can fit the trinitarian view, then why did the White Estate find it necessary to alter her writings in the book “Ye Shall Receive Power”, changing the “its” to “Him”s? Please examine the following passages both in the original and then in the altered version.

*Original statement*

**SIGNS OF THE TIMES, September 27, 1899**

We need to pray for the impartation of the divine Spirit as the remedy for sin-sick souls. The surface truths of revelation, made plain and easy to be understood, are accepted by many as supplying all that is essential; but the Holy
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Spirit, working upon the mind, awakens an earnest desire for truth uncorrupted by error. He who is really desirous to know what is truth cannot remain in ignorance; for precious truth rewards the diligent seeker. We need to feel the converting power of God's grace, and I urge all who have closed their heart against God's Spirit to unlock the door, and plead earnestly, Abide with me. Why should we not prostrate ourselves at the throne of divine grace, praying that God's Spirit may be poured out upon us as it was upon the disciples? Its presence will soften our hard hearts, and fill us with joy and rejoicing, transforming us into channels of blessing.

The Lord would have every one of His children rich in faith, and this faith is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit upon the mind. It dwells with each soul who will receive it, speaking to the impenitent in words of warning, and pointing them to Jesus, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. It causes light to shine into the minds of those who are seeking to cooperate with God, giving them efficiency and wisdom to do His work.

Reprinted statement
YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER (published 1996) P.59

We need to pray for the impartation of the divine Spirit as the remedy for sin-sick souls. The surface truths of revelation, made plain and easy to be understood, are accepted by many as supplying all that is essential; but the Holy Spirit, working upon the mind, awakens an earnest desire for truth uncorrupted by error. He who is really desirous to know what is truth cannot remain in ignorance; for precious truth rewards the diligent seeker. We need to feel the converting power of God's grace, and I urge all who have closed their heart against God's Spirit to unlock the door, and plead earnestly, Abide with me. Why should we not prostrate ourselves at the throne of divine grace, praying that God's Spirit may be poured out upon us as He was upon the disciples? His presence will soften our hard hearts, and fill us with joy and rejoicing, transforming us into channels of blessing.

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The EGW Estate now admits to, individual inquirers, they were wrong to alter these writings and has updated their website accordingly, but no public statement has ever been made, no public apology offered, and the hardcopies of the book itself remain unchanged.

Moon makes no attempt to reconcile the use of the word “it” both in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, but simply chooses to ignore its implications. The truth is that the Holy Spirit has attributes of both a being
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and a non-being. That is not because it is a “hypostasis” or a separate being, but because the Holy Spirit is the omnipresence of God and Christ, the Spirit of their Being, acting as an agency of their very own presence. Please read the following Spirit of Prophecy quotes and it will become apparent who and what the Holy Spirit is.

“There is a great work to do; and the Spirit of the living God must enter into the living messenger, that the truth may go with power. **Without the Holy Spirit, without the breath of God, there is torpidity of conscience, loss of spiritual life.** Unless there is genuine conversion of the soul to God; **unless the vital breath of God quickens the soul to spiritual life;** unless the professors of truth are actuated by heaven-born principles, they are not born of the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever. Unless they trust in the righteousness of Christ as their only security; unless they copy his character, labor in his spirit, they are naked; they have not on the robe of righteousness. The dead are often made to pass for the living; for those who are working out what they term salvation after their own ideas, have not God working in them to will and to do of his good pleasure.” *Review and Herald*, 3-12-1908 (*note the date*)

“The Indwelling of the Spirit. —The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. We do not see Christ and speak to Him, **but His Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as in another.** It works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith” (MS 41, 1897).6BC-1112

" 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** to take away sin.” *This Day with God*: - 257

"The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. **The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ.** It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life **the Christ-life is manifested,** are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church.” *DA* 805 (*note that this quote is from The Desire of Ages*)

"All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God, will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental 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. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and
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every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. DA- 827*(note that this quote is form The Desire of Ages)*

But lest one think I am leaning on Ellen White alone and not the Holy Bible, here are some Bible texts to consider-

John 14:17-23
*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.

{18} *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

{19} *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*

(20) At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

(21) 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.*

(22) Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

(23) 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.*

The position of the historic Adventist church was that the holy Spirit was not merely a “power” as trinitarian apologists accuse, though it certainly is that, but is the presence of God Himself and Christ Himself. It is the mind of Christ, the Divine Nature, the Holy Influence, the power of God, the presence of Christ. It is all these things, but it is NOT a separate co-equal and co-eternal “divine Being”. That is taught now here in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy, but is supposed by the misunderstanding of certain texts that use the word “Him”. Yet, Christ spoke of Himself often in the third person as the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth. He spoke of “Wisdom” also as being a personal “her” when he said, “Wisdom is justified of all her children” (Matthew 11:19).

As a side note, and an important one, to translate using the pronoun “He” for the Holy Spirit is in most cases inaccurate. In the Greek, the neuter “Holy Spirit” in most cases is framed within either a neuter or feminine qualifier. In these instances, and there are many, the proper pronoun would either be “it” for the neuter qualifier or “ she” for the feminine qualifier, just as is done for the word “wisdom” which is used in
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the feminine. Wisdom, in at least one case, is used with a qualifier such as “children”. Thus we get “Wisdom is justified of all her children”. Holy Spirit is often translated as having a masculine qualifier when it in fact it usually does not (there are a couple of exceptions). Some have questioned the integrity of certain Bible translators for this fact.

Moon- The focus of the 1888 General Conference session on “Christ our righteousness” and the consequent exaltation of the cross of Christ called into serious question whether a subordinate, derived divinity could adequately account for the saving power of Christ. E. J. Waggoner urged the necessity of “setting forth Christ’s rightful position of equality with the Father, in order that His power to redeem may be the better appreciated.” While by 1890 Waggoner had not yet fully grasped Christ’s infinitely eternal preexistence, he argued convincingly that Christ was not created, that “He has ‘life in Himself’ [John 10:17]; He possesses immortality in His own right.” Waggoner insisted on “the Divine unity of the Father and the Son” and averred that Christ is “by nature of the very substance of God, and having life in Himself, He is properly called Jehovah, the self-existent One” (Jer 23:56), “who is on an equality with God” (Phil 2:6, ARV), “having all the attributes of God.”

Waggoner was not yet trinitarian, but he saw clearly that a more exalted conception of Christ’s work of redemption demanded a higher conception of his being as Deity. “The fact that Christ is a part of the Godhead, possessing all the attributes of Divinity, being the equal of the Father in all respects, as Creator and Lawgiver, is the only force there is in the atonement. . . . Christ died ‘that He might bring us to God’ (1 Peter 3:18); but if He lacked one iota of being equal to God, He could not bring us to Him.” The force of this logic leads inevitably to the recognition of Christ’s full equality in preexistence as well.

Thus, the dynamic of righteousness by faith and its consequences for the doctrine of God provide the historical context for the provocative comment of D. T. Bourdeau that “although we claim to be believers in, and worshipers of, only one God, I have thought that there are as many gods among us as there are conceptions of the Deity.” Such a comment from a highly respected evangelist and missionary seems to indicate that the collective confidence in the anti-Trinitarian paradigm was showing some cracks.

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**Response**- Here, Moon is taking Waggoner’s meaning out of its historical and literary context and then applying that to Bourdeau’s quo te, also lifted out of context. Both of these quotes were dealing with the human/divine nature of Christ and our relationship to that nature as fallen humans. The thrust of the 1888 message of Waggoner and Jones was that Christ overcame with no advantage that is not also available to us; that Christ came in the fallen nature of humanity and overcame by His constant connection with God by faith. Part of this teaching was that the atonement for past sins is all sufficient because God sent His actual divine Son to die for our sins, and that only a fully divine Son could accomplish that.

Waggoner was by no means bringing anything new to the table in terms of the understanding of the Godhead among Adventists of that day, but clarifying its importance. Adventists had always held the position that Christ was fully divine. To say that Adventists “grew” to accept Christ’s divinity is a constantly repeated theme of the Story One apologists. Waggoner’s view of Christ was identical to that published in the 1874-1914 Principles of Faith, as was Bourdeau’s. It appears the closer in history to the Adventist acceptance of the trinity doctrine we get, the more history is being re-written and quotes taken out of their historical and literary context.

**Moon**- Further evidence that this was so appeared two years later in 1892, when Pacific Press published a pamphlet titled “The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity,” by Samuel T. Spear. The pamphlet corrected two prevailing misconceptions of the Trinity doctrine, showing that it “is not a system of tri-theism, or the doctrine of three Gods, but it is the doctrine of one God subsisting and acting in three persons, with the qualification that the term ‘person’ . . . is not, when used in this relation, to be understood in any sense that would make it inconsistent with the unity of the Godhead.”

**Response**- While this book by Mr. Spear (no relation to Adventist Ron Spear) used the word “Trinity” it also taught subordinationism, (that is, that Christ was not co-equal with the Father) a teaching that all trinitarians reject wholesale. It should also be considered that this book was not written by a Seventh-day Adventist, but was published by Pacific Press for an outside author, a fact that Moon neglects to include. Also, Ellen White,
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at one point after this incident, warned Pacific Press about publishing books that contained non-Adventist teachings. While it is not proven that the following is a direct reference to Spear’s anti-Adventist teachings, it should not go unnoticed and it is very possible that it is a reference to the above mentioned “trinitarian“ book:

“I feel a terror of soul as I see to what a pass our publishing house has come. The presses in the Lord’s institution have been printing the soul-destroying theories of Romanism and other mysteries of iniquity. The office must be purged of this objectionable matter. I have a testimony from the Lord for those who have placed such matter in the hands of the workers. God holds you accountable for presenting to young men and young women the fruit of the forbidden tree of knowledge. Can it be possible that you have not a knowledge of the warnings given to the Pacific Press on this subject? Can it be possible that with a knowledge of these warnings you are going over the same ground, only doing much worse? It has often been repeated to you that angels of God are passing through every room in the office. What impression has this made on your minds?” {8T 91.2}

Moon-- In 1898, Uriah Smith prepared *Looking Unto Jesus*, the most comprehensive and carefully nuanced exposition of the nontrinitarian view among Adventists. Smith emphatically repudiated his earlier view that Christ had been created, but still held that “God [the Father] alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be,—a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity,—appeared the Word.” Through some means not clearly revealed in Scripture, Christ had been “brought forth,” “begotten,” or “by some divine impulse or process, not creation,” Christ had been given existence by the Father. In one paragraph Smith comes surprisingly close to a trinitarian statement: “This union between the Father and the Son does not detract from either, but strengthens both. Through it, in connection with the Holy Spirit, we have all of Deity.” But this slow struggle toward a fuller understanding was eclipsed by the bold declarations of *The Desire of Ages*, published in the same year. *Desire of Ages* produced a paradigm shift in Adventists’ perceptions of the Godhead.

Response-- Uriah Smith was supposedly one of the few true Arians in the early Adventist Church. This book by Smith, which I have not read, but
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will assume Moon is being honest in his assessment of it, would be nothing more than a biblical exposition of the view held by the church from its very beginning until 1931, which Smith had apparently come to understand and agree with over time. His book was not a sign of a weakening of the Adventist view, but rather, cemented Smith’s final acceptance of that view. When it is understood that “in connection with the Holy Spirit” does not refer to another being, but to the spirit shared by God and Jesus, one finds that this is not only nowhere near a trinitarian statement, but actually helps define Ellen White’s writings that appear to be trinitarian as well.

The so-called “bold declarations” of *The Desire of Ages* were also not in conflict with the established Principles of Faith, as trinitarians would have us believe, neither did they produce a “paradigm shift”. But we shall answer that specifically later.
Chapter 9: The mythical Paradigm Shift

In this chapter, we will examine the “paradigm shift” that Story One says occurred in the church beginning in 1898 with the publishing of *The Desire of Ages* and culminating in the 1913 use of the word “trinity” in an article by F.M. Wilcox. Is Dr. Moon rewriting history and manipulating events and statements to push the adoption of the trinity further back than actual reality?

Pushing the dates back can make it appear that it was Ellen White that was the primary force in the shift, but if it can be shown that the shift took place much later, that would allow for the influence and work of ecumenical-minded men (like Leroy Froom), who arose in the 1920’s, and would put space between the “bold trinitarian statements” of Ellen White and the “shocking” response to those statements that supposedly led to the adoption of the trinity doctrine.

If Ellen White’s statements in *The Desire of Ages* did not make the monumental impact that Story One propagators insist they did, then something else must have moved the church away from the established Principles of Faith. For that reason, it is important to Story One to come up with a major reaction by the church at large to Ellen White’s “trinitarian statements”. Did this reaction actually happen? Did Ellen White really make “anti-trinitarian statements” in *The Desire of Ages*?

Moon-
The period from 1898 to 1913 saw an almost complete reversal of Adventist thinking about the Trinity. I say “almost” because this paradigm shift did not lead to unanimity on the topic. As Merlin Burt has documented, a few thought leaders who tended toward the “old view” remained vocal, but with declining influence, for many years.

Nevertheless, the publication of Ellen White’s *Desire of Ages* in 1898 became the continental divide for the Adventist understanding of the Trinity. Beginning with the first paragraph of the book, she called into question the dominant view of early Adventists regarding the relationship
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of Christ to the Father. Her third sentence in chapter 1 declared, “From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father” (emphasis supplied). Yet even this was not sufficiently unequivocal to clarify her position regarding the deity of Jesus, for as we have seen, others had used similar language without believing in Christ’s infinitely eternal preexistence.

Response-- That this “paradigm shift” was the result of “new light”, increased biblical understanding or the supposed “trinitarian conversion” of Ellen White exists only the minds of trinitarian supporters. Ellen White’s comment regarding Jesus’ pre-existence was not in conflict with the established Adventist view, which believed that Christ was begotten so far back in the “days of eternity” that it is incomprehensible to the human mind, or as Ellen White remarked, “it cannot be counted in years”. The author rightly states that antitrinitarians used the same terminology in describing the pre-incarnate relationship of Christ to God, including Uriah Smith and E.J. Waggonner.

Moon- Later in the book, writing on the resurrection of Lazarus, she quoted the claim of Christ, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25) and followed it with a seven-word comment that would begin to turn the tide of antitrinitarian theology among Adventists: “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived” (emphasis supplied). “Life, original” means Christ possessed life at the point of the origin of all life—no one had life before Him. “Unborrowed” means that life was intrinsically His own; He did not owe His life to any Other; His preexistence life was not dependent on any other. Finally, “underived” adds the third layer of White’s redundant insistence that Christ did not ultimately derive his divine life from the Father.

Response--Moon is interpreting this “part of a sentence” according to the wishful thinking of Story One tellers. There is no doubt that this line was important, but it was only “monumental” to the later trinitarian Adventists who saw it as something to latch onto and attempt to say that Ellen White was changing the direction of the church. This is completely false, as Ellen White made many plain anti-trinitarian statements after the printing of The Desire of Ages, and in fact made many anti-trinitarian comments within the pages of The Desire of Ages itself.
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_The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture._—Selected Messages, book 1, p. 42.

If we let Ellen White’s writings interpret themselves, in context, we find a completely different teaching. According to Moon, “life original” meant that Christ possessed life at the point of the origin of all life. Is there a Spirit of Prophecy quote or a Bible verse to support this claim?

No, there isn’t. Instead, we find Ellen White’s intent when she used the very same sentence in a deeper and more complete context one year prior to the publishing of, and during the time she was writing, _The Desire of Ages._

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life, which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Lifegiver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. “I lay it down of myself” (John 10:18), _He said._ _In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived._ This _life is not inherent in man._ He _can possess it only through Christ._ He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour. _(_The Signs of the Times, April 8, 1897—See Also 1 SM, pp. 296, 297)_

If “life, original” means as Moon says, that it means no beginning or from the point of origin of all life, then man, when he attains this as a free gift, becomes an eternal non-begotten being, that has existed from all eternity.

When Moon says, “unborrowed adds the third layer of White’s redundant insistence that Christ did not ultimately derive his divine life from the Father” then he is not only saying that man can have the same, but is contradicting the Bible itself, which says:

“For as the Father hath life in Himself; _so hath He given to the Son_ to have life in Himself.” John 5:26

And again we find in _Patriarchs and Prophets_, speaking of His pre-existence _before_ the incarnation—
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“Like the angels, the dwellers in Eden had been placed upon probation;” (see also ST.1887-11-24.008) however, the Son of God was not created as was man. The Son of God “came forth from the Father.” “He was the Only Begotten Son of the Father.” Patriarchs and Prophets, p 53, 1890

Moon- (Of course, in the incarnation, Christ voluntarily “humbled Himself” (Phil 2:6-8), became dependent (John 5:19, 30), and subordinated his will to the Father (John 5:30) in order to live as humans must, but that was not His position from eternity). Even as a man, He retained the power to lay down his life and take it up again (John 10:18). Thus with reference to Christ’s resurrection, Ellen White again asserted his full deity and equality with the Father, declaring “The Saviour came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself.”

Response-- There is a problem with this assertion. Ellen White is clear in both Patriarchs and Prophets and The Story of Redemption that Christ was subordinate from the very start and that any equality was bestowed upon Him by God the Father.

"Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will." Patriarchs and Prophets - pg 36

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. The Story of Redemption, pg 13

Certainly there can be no doubt that Christ’s sonship has existed since the beginning of His existence, and that Christ has always been subject to God, with God the Father investing Him with authority. But as you can
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plainly see, Christ, even before the incarnation, was subject to the Father’s will, being subordinate to God.

In fact, *The Desire of Ages*, the book that supposedly taught trinitarianism, makes the bold statement saying that everything Christ had or was, was received from God and that God the Father is “the great Source of all”. Also, as you read this quote from DA, no te that this all took place *before* the incarnation.

“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 [God the Father]*. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” Desire of Ages - pg21

And this comment confirming the same:

“The Ancient of Days is God the Father. Says the psalmist: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." Psalm 90:2. It is He, the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the judgment. And holy angels as ministers and witnesses, in number "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," attend this great tribunal." GC- PG- 479

Here are a collection of clearly anti-trinitarian quotes from the pen of Ellen White, all written *after* the printing of *The Desire of Ages*, which all refer to Christ’s position *before* the incarnation. Please note the dates on each.

“In his humanity He was a partaker of the divine nature. In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God...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.” Signs of the Times, 2 August 1905; 5BC-1114, 1115.

“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
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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 of which Christ prayed just before His trial and crucifixion.” Review and Herald, 8 March, (1906) p 19

“Christ saw that the time had come when Satan’s power over mankind must be broken. Before the fall of man, The Son of God had united with His Father in laying the plan of salvation.” Review and Herald, 13 September, (1906) p 4

“ There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son.” Review and Herald, 8 November, (1898); 6BC p 1068

“In the Psalms, in the prophecies, in the gospels, and in the epistles, God has by revelation made prominent the vital truths concerning the agreement between the Father and the Son in providing for the salvation of a lost race.” Review and Herald, 24 September (1908) p 1

“They have one God and one Saviour; and one Spirit--the Spirit of Christ--is to bring unity into their ranks.” Testimonies for the Church, 1909, p 189

“In the depths of omnipotent wisdom and mercy the Father took the work of salvation into His own hand. He sent His only-begotten Son into the world to live the law of Jehovah.” Signs of the Times, 4 August (1898) p 3

“As a priest, Christ is now set down with the Father in His throne. Upon the throne with the eternal, self-existent One, is He who “hath borne our grieves, and carried our sorrows” (Isa 53:4), who “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).” Great Controversy, p 416 (1911)

The last quote, from the 1911 Great Controversy, points to the Father as the “eternal, self-existent One”. Were Christ also eternal and self-existent, Ellen White would NOT have written this, that God the Father is the “One” who is both “eternal” and “self-existent“. The other quotes point to Christ as being God’s begotten Son prior to the incarnation or that God and Christ are two separate entities, not “God the Father and God the Son“, being co-equal parts of the same entity, or non-entity as the case may be. It is a major point among trinitarians that Christ was not God’s actual
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Son until Bethlehem. Contrary to the wishful thinking of trinitarians, Ellen White did not teach any such thing, and neither does the Bible.

Moon- These statements came as a shock to the theological leadership of the church. M. L. Andreasen, who had become an Adventist just four years earlier at the age of eighteen, and who would eventually teach at the church’s North American seminary, claimed that the new concept was so different from the previous understanding that some prominent leaders doubted whether Ellen White had really written it.

Response— I have Andreasen’s book, Without Fear or Favor: The Story of M.L. Andreasen, from which most of these assertions are taken (there was also a term paper written by an Andrews University student that some apologists quote), and Andreasen does not say, “the concept was so different“, neither does he mention any thing of the s ort. The idea that “theological leaders” were “shocked” by The Desire of Ages also has no foundation or written proof and is an exaggeration by the author. You will notice that Moon offers no evidence for this assertion.

M.L. Andreasen was not a church leader at the time of the writing of The Desire of Ages, but was a new Adventist, and a young one at that. Andreasen wrote, in retrospect many years later, that The Desire of Ages had an impact on the denomination in terms of the divinity of Christ. However, there were just as many close friends of Ellen White that were common visitors to her home on a regular basis such as J.S. Washburn, that never got the slightest hint that Ellen White had changed her stance or that her comments in The Desire of Ages were meant to be taken as teaching trinitarianism. J.S. Washburn was a staunch defender of the non-trinitarian view of the historic Adventist church, and was a close personal friend and supporter of Ellen White.

Andreasen wrote the following in his book, which is taken by many to mean he had switched from an Arian view to a trinitarian view:

Especially was I struck with the now-familiar quotation in The Desire of Ages, page 530: "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived." This statement at that time was revolutionary and compelled a complete revision of my former view—and that of the denomination—on the deity of Christ. (Without Fear or Favor, pg 76)
While it could be said that Andreasen changed his view from a nontrinitarian to a trinitarian view, three things should be considered. First, many people misunderstood Ellen White’s statement, as evidenced even today. And of these, many misunderstood because the budding trinitarian movement within the church, as it does today, took this passage out of its historical and literary context. As a new Adventist, Andreasen was no doubt influenced by his leadership’s interpretation of this text. Second, Andreasen was only a young man and as such his interpretation and reaction to this one quote cannot be considered as irrefutable proof of its actual meaning. We have seen already that Ellen White made many statements after this that would plainly refute the notion that she was teaching any form of the trinity.

Moon- After Andreasen entered the ministry in 1902, he made a special trip to Ellen White’s California home to investigate the issue for himself. Ellen White welcomed him and gave him “access to the manuscripts.” He had brought with him “a number of quotations,” to “see if they were in the original in her own handwriting.” He recalled: “I was sure Sister White had never written, ‘In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.’ But now I found it in her own handwriting just as it had been published. It was so with other statements. As I checked up, I found that they were Sister White’s own expressions.”

Response- This, unfortunately, is a common fabrication by Story One apologists; an outright falsehood. Moon is also misquoting Andreasen. Andreasen’s trip to California was not made so he could investigate “the issue” of the trinity doctrine for himself. M.L. Andrasen journeyed to California so he could see her writings, but for a variety of reasons. Investigating the trinity, according to Andreasen’s own book, was not given as a reason for his visit. But I will let Andreasen explain in his own words why he ventured to the California home of Ellen G. White.

“I stated my reason for coming, which was to obtain permission to examine her writings in manuscript before anyone had done any editorial work on them. I had brought with me many quotations from her writings that were of outstanding interest either for their theological import or their beauty of expression.
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In my own mind I was convinced that Sister White had never written them as they appeared in print. She might have written something like them, but I was sure that no one with the limited education Sister White had could ever produce such exquisitely worded statements or such pronouncements on difficult theological problems. They must have been produced by a well-trained individual, conversant not only with theological niceties but also with beautiful English. “(pg 76)

It should also be noted that Andreasen never mentions discussing the writings with Ellen White or that she confirmed that she was teaching the trinity by her one quote in The Desire of Ages.

**Moon—**Desire of Ages contained equally uncompromising statements regarding the deity of the Holy Spirit. Repeatedly, Desire of Ages employed the personal pronoun “he” in referring to the Holy Spirit, climaxing with the impressive statement, “The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this, the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. . . . 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” (emphasis supplied).

**Response—**While it is true that Ellen White used the term “third person of the Godhead”, it must be understood that she did not mean this term as used by trinitarians, as witnessed by her many “anti-trinitarian” statements about the Holy Spirit in the very same book. As is common with those who twist texts, the author takes this out of its context, using half a statement with no contextual connection. Also, in its original form, “third person” was not capitalized. That was a later addition by the editors. Here is the quote in its original context.

The Desire of Ages, p 671 (1898)

“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 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
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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.”

We must let the author of these quotes interpret them in her own writings. If one reads the Spirit of Prophecy, including The Desire of Ages, one sees that she was certainly not teaching the existence of a third “divine being” called the Holy Spirit. There is indeed a third person of the Godhead, but that person is the life of Christ, His own Spirit, not a separate being. Please note the dates of the following quotes.

“They have one God and one Saviour; and one Spirit—the Spirit of Christ—is to bring unity into their ranks.”9 Testimonies for the Church, p 189, (1909)

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.’ Christ is not here referring to his doctrine, but to his person, the divinity of his character.”
Review and Herald, 1 April, 1906, p 12

Moon--- These and similar statements drove some to a fresh examination of the biblical evidence about the Godhead. Others, disbelieving that they could have been wrong for so many years, studied to bolster the old arguments. Ellen White’s testimony, however, by calling attention to Scriptures whose significance had been overlooked, created a paradigm shift that could not be reversed. As Adventists returned to the Scriptures to see “whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11), they eventually came to a growing consensus that the basic concept of the Trinity was a biblical truth to be accepted and embraced.

Response--- The issue was not whether “others” had been “wrong for so many years”, but rather, it was about the very foundation of the Seventh day Adventist faith. The problem was multifaceted.

First, If Ellen White was a prophet of God who had given
inspired testimonies to the church concerning God and His Son, as in books such as *Patriarchs and Prophets*, testimonies that were decidedly and unmistakably anti-trinitarian, then what does it mean if that same prophet says, albeit indirectly, “Oops, I suppose God showed me the wrong things. I guess those visions were false.” In other words, her earlier works could not have been inspired if they contained gross error on the first principle of the Christian faith, the identity of God and Christ. And not only her written works, but the fact that she had repeated over and over again that the church was walking in the light of God’s truth before its move away from the Principles of Faith.

Regarding the book *The Desire of Ages*, it can be shown, and I believe I have, that the anti-trinitarian statements greatly outnumber the supposed trinitarian statements. So much so, that if the church was trinitarian prior to the writing of *The Desire of Ages*, it could be said that Ellen White was reversing herself and had just come out with an non-trinitarian book!

Please examine the following quotations, which prove that Ellen White could in no way have been pressing for a change in theology on any level or doctrinal issue in the church in the early 20th century.

"Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith—the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work by prayerful study of the word and by revelation. Upon these foundations we have been building for the last fifty years. Men may suppose that they have found a new way and that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid. But this is a great deception. Other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid. “

8 Testimonies for the Church, p 297 (1904)

"One thing it is certain is soon to be realized, the great apostasy, which is developing and increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout. We are to hold fast the first principles of our denominated faith and go forward from strength to increased faith. Ever are we to keep the faith that has been substantiated by the Holy Spirit of God from the earlier events of our experience until the present time. We need now larger breadth, and deeper more earnest, unwavering faith in the leadings of the Holy Spirit. If we needed the manifest proof of the Holy Spirit's power to confirm truth in the beginning, after the passing of the time, we need today all the evidence in the confirmation of the truth, when souls are departing from the faith and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

"Special Testimonies, Series B, no. 7, p57. (4 December, 1905 ).

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“The past fifty years have not dimmed one jot or principle of our faith as we received the great and wonderful evidences that were made certain to us in 1844, after the passing of the time. The languishing souls are to be confirmed and quickened according to his word. And many of the ministers of the gospel and the Lord's physicians will have their languishing souls quickened according to the word. Not a word is changed or denied. That which the Holy Spirit testified to as truth after the passing of the time, in our great disappointment, is the solid foundation of truth. Pillars of truth were revealed, and we accepted the foundation principles that have made us what we are -- Seventh-day Adventists, keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus. "New York Indicator, Standing in the Way of God's Messages – 7 Feb, 1906 p 4

Loma Linda Messages p 149, 150 Sanitarium, California.
11 December, 1905 - Letter to Brother Burden
"When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained. We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God's word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar of the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake. He who makes such an application knows not the wonderful demonstration of the Holy Spirit that gave power and force to the past messages that have come to the people of God."

Please note that all of these statements were made after the publishing of The Desire of Ages, and refer to the years from 1844 to 1907.

The second problem is that the assumption must be made that great biblical theologians like A.T. Jones, who wrote a masterpiece of church history titled “The Two Republics”, along with scholars such as Andrews, Loughborough, Waggoner, Daniells, Bates and James White, all “neglected” important scriptures regarding the personality of God and Christ. However, the author does not say which texts were “neglected” by the great minds that founded the Seventh day Adventist Church or how they were wrong in their interpretation.

Another mystery is that while Moon says that Adventists returned to the scriptures to “see if these things were so”, he wrote earlier that there
was not a single published complete biblical study of the “Adventist trinity” until 2002. It is true that there was a Bible conference in 1919 that included the topic of the God’s identity, but that study resulted in the original beliefs being retained, and the trinity doctrine was not foisted upon the church until the last pioneer Adventist died. Then it was introduced mainly on the authority of a few men in the publishing work. A publishing work that had been warned repeatedly by Ellen White for printing “the soul destroying doctrines of Romanism.”

But finally, the biggest problem, and mystery, is that God would call a heretical church to carry his last days message to the world. Some may brush this off by saying, “Well, God knew the church would eventually grow to accept the trinity doctrine.” But we have the testimony of Ellen White which said that God had established every doctrine and foundation of the Adventist church in the first fifty years as being true and never-changing; that anyone who would bring a fundamental change to the church should be silenced and the teaching rejected.

The trinity doctrine was not even fully introduced into the church until 1980, long after Ellen White’s death. The problem is that if the church today is right about God, then the church was founded upon heresy and blasphemy. Carefully consider the following statement, made by George Knight (who, like Moon, was an Andrews University Seminary professor) in Ministry magazine, the official Seventh-day Adventist journal for ministers:

"Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination’s Fundamental Beliefs. More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the trinity.” - George Knight, Ministry, October 1993, p. 10.

Moon-- While Desire of Ages set in motion a paradigm shift regarding the Adventist understanding of the Godhead, it was not Ellen White’s last word on the subject. Later, during the Kellogg crisis of 1902-1907, she repeatedly used expressions such as “three living persons of the heavenly trio,” while continuing to maintain the essential unity of the Godhead. Thus she affirmed the plurality and the unity, the threeness and the oneness, the foundational elements of a simple, biblical understanding of the Trinity.
Response- Moon again makes an inaccurate comment in saying that Ellen White “repeatedly” used such expressions as “the three living persons of the heavenly trio”. The truth is that she said it one time and one time only, but it has been republished in compilations several times since. Let us look at that statement by Ellen White.

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

Notice that not only does she not use the term 'trinity" but she also does not specify the relationship between the "three powers" or "heavenly trio". She does not say that Jesus is "God: the Son", nor does she say that the Holy Spirit is "God: the Holy Spirit". Neither does she say that the three are One Being and three Beings all at the same time, or are a group called God, or that God is not a Person but "persons". She is not saying they are co-equal or co-eternal.

In fact, when taken in context with her mass of writings that all confirm that the Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of Christ" and "the Spirit of God", we can be affirmed in the truth that the "heavenly trio" is made up of God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son, and Their Holy Spirit which is their omnipresent virtue, or presence. So there are "three powers": God the Father in Heaven on the throne, Jesus Christ our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, and the Holy Spirit of God, the Comforter that is Jesus Christ in omnipresent form.

Is there any proof that Ellen White considered Christ to be the Comforter spoken of the above quotation? Please read and carefully consider the following.

"Christ declared that, after His ascension, He would send to His church, as His
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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 to take away sin.* This *Day with God* - 25

R&H Vol 2, p 422; R&H 26 August, (1890) para 10; Reflecting Christ, p 21; The Ellen G White 1888 Materials p 696

"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."

MR vol. 14, p 179, 11 June (1891)

"John 14: 16-17 (quoted) This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter."

MS 20, 16 July (1892)

".... Jesus the Comforter."

MS #548, Vol 8, p 49

How Ellen White Bore Suffering

"**The Saviour is our Comforter.** This I have proved Him to be."

Home Missionary, 1 November, (1893) p 28

"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."

Please notice that the next two examples are from Desire of Ages--

"**The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ.** It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church." A- 805

"All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God, will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental 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

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heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. A-827

Moon--Evidence that at least a portion of church leadership recognized the Desire of Ages statements as removing the objections to a biblical doctrine of the Trinity is a summary of Adventist beliefs that F. M. Wilcox published in the Review and Herald in 1913, during Ellen White’s lifetime, and on the same page with an article by Ellen White, where she would surely have been aware of it. The editor of the denomination’s most influential periodical, Wilcox wrote that “Seventh-day Adventists believe,—1. In the divine Trinity. This Trinity consists of the eternal Father, . . . the Lord Jesus Christ, . . . [and] the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead.”

Response-- Ellen White, in her weak and feeble state in 1913, did not necessarily know about this, and had she known she likely would have said something. Now, whether that something would have been printed and published by the Ellen G. White Estate is another matter of speculation. And then there is the question of if she did say something, would we necessarily have it on hand today, and would the White Estate or the conference release such a statement?

There is no doubt that “at least a portion” of the leadership were trinitarian by 1913, just as Kellogg was trinitarian in 1902, but there is no evidence that The Desire of Ages, an anti-trinitarian book, was the cause of it. There is the chance that some, like Moon and his colleagues today, may have taken hold of the few statements, misinterpreted them, and then used those quotes to support a doctrine they wished to see accepted.

Now, as to Wilcox’s “trinity”. I have ever been skeptical when someone quotes a source and uses small individual words and phrases separated by an ellipsis (...). The ellipsis is used in writing for two reasons. One use is to save space by eliminating irrelevant material. The other use is when an author uses it to remove the context of the statement or other important clarifying words. Is there a reason why Wilcox’s article is presented with the ellipses between “eternal Father, . . . the Lord Jesus Christ, . . . [and] the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead”? There certainly is, and it is not for fear of taking up too space in the article.

The very fact that the 1919 Bible conference that discussed the
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trinity six years later and resulted in the retention of the historic view is proof enough that Wilcox’s article did not speak for the church, and while using the word “Trinity” to describe Wilcox’s own views of “the Godhead,” it was little different from the Principles of Faith as published by the church until the death of Ellen White.

Gilbert Valentine, ironically a trinitarian, contradicts Moon’s view of Wilcox’s statement as being “trinitarian”.

“Although Review editor F. M. Wilcox was able to say in a doctrinal summary in the Review in 1913 that Adventists believed “in the divine Trinity,” his language sidestepped the issue of the eternal self-existent deity of Christ and was still sufficiently vague as to be able to include both the traditional semi-Arians and the Trinitarians. Jesus was simply “the son of the Eternal Father.”

http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/valentine.htm

S. Turner concurs:

“The ambiguously worded “Trinitarian statement of beliefs” produced by FM Wilcox tends more to reflect the early Seventh-day Adventist denominationally accepted beliefs that the Son was as fully divine as His Father, but in subjection in authority to the Father. The statement used the term “trinity,” but thereafter described the non-trinitarian God.” (Turner, ITUG)
Chapter 10: The Supposed Decline of Non-trinitarianism

The historical doctrine of God in the Adventist church was beginning to come under attack by 1915, 17 years after the publishing of *The Desire of Ages*. But again, it was not by consensus or by Bible study, but by individuals within the publishing work. The first time the Godhead came up in an actual Bible study was 1919, 21 years after *DA* and four years after the death of Ellen White. The results of this study will be considered in this chapter.

It is also true that even the “trinitarian” statements of 1913, 1931 and 1946 (all written by the same man) were not clear as to the theology of the church, and were similar in language to the original Principles of Faith of 1874-1914.

**Moon-**

Despite Wilcox’s declaration in the *Review*, (or perhaps because of it), the debate over the Trinity intensified in the early decades of the twentieth century. At the 1919 Bible Conference, Christ’s eternity and his relation to the Father were major and unresolved subjects of debate.

**Response** — As was just pointed out and clarified, Wilcox’s “trinity article” in the *Review*, while using the word *trinity*, reflected theology that was consistent with the Principles of Faith of 1874 to 1914, a point which will be reiterated again before the end of this writing. The author rightly states that the 1919 Bible Conference ended with no decision to accept the trinity, in spite of the push for its acceptance by a few ecumenical-minded leaders and publishers.
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**Moon**--Curiously, in view of Ellen White’s *Desire of Ages* statement that Christ’s life was “underived,” even W. W. Prescott, the foremost proponent of a trinitarian view at the conference, held that Christ’s existence was in some way “derived” from the Father. This may constitute evidence that the leadership were not content to simply accept White’s pronouncement without seeing it for themselves in Scripture. Or perhaps, it shows Prescott’s conscious or unconscious reflection of classical trinitarian sources.

**Response**-- Or perhaps many interpreted the *Desire of Ages* quote properly in that Ellen White was not making a trinitarian statement in that text. Perhaps these men and women had read “Patriarchs and Prophets”, which deals plainly with the issue of Christ’s origin and His relationship to God the Father, which is that He was the only begotten Son of the Most High God prior to the incarnation. Moon is so desperate to set *The Desire of Ages* as the turning point for the trinity in the church that he cannot fathom someone actually seeing it in the proper non-trinitarian way. But as we saw from the greater context of the statement, it was in no way a trinitarian quotation, since even man can attain this original, underived and unborrowed life.

**Moon**--The polarization of American Christianity between modernism and fundamentalism in the first two decades of the twentieth century tended to push Adventists closer to a trinitarian position, since in so many other areas—such as belief in creationism, Christ’s virgin birth, miracles, and literal resurrection—Adventists were in opposition to modernists and in sympathy with fundamentalists. (Emphasis mine)

**Response**--Please read Moon’s comment again. Here, the author unwittingly admits that ecumenism was involved in the acceptance of the trinity doctrine. According to Moon, our positions that agreed with other fundamentalist religions created a desire in some leaders to conform with them on other levels. When one of the foremost and most knowledgeable trinitarian apologists for the church admits that ecumenism played a role, then that is big news.
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Moon ---In 1930, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists received a request from its African Division that “a statement of what Adventists believe be printed in the Year Book” to “help government officials and others to a better understanding of our work.” In response, the General Conference Committee appointed a subcommittee (comprised of M. E. Kern, associate secretary of the General Conference; F. M. Wilcox, editor of the Review and Herald; E. R. Palmer, manager of the Review and Herald Publishing Association; and C. H. Watson, General Conference president) to prepare a statement of Adventist beliefs. Wilcox, as the leading writer among them, drafted a 22-point statement that was subsequently published in the SDA Year Book of 1931. The second point spoke of the “Godhead, or Trinity,” and the third affirmed “that Jesus Christ is very God,” an echo of the Nicene creed.

Response--- There is much to consider in this paragraph. First, it is acknowledged that the trinity doctrine was brought into the church by a hand-picked committee of four people, two from the General Conference and two from the Review and Herald, one of which had already been attempting to stealthfully and incrementally bring the trinity doctrine into the church beginning nearly two decades prior, and was undoubtedly involved in the ceasing of the publication of the Principles of Faith of 1874-1914. It was no accident that the writer of the 1913 “trinitarian” article and the key figure in the squelching of the Principles of Faith, was tapped as the man to write the new Principles of Faith.

Moon- Lest anyone think that Adventists intended to make a creed, “no formal or official approval” was sought for the statement. Fifteen years later, when the statement had gained general acceptance, the General Conference session of 1946 made it official, voting that “no revision of this Statement of Fundamental Beliefs, as it now appears in the [Church] Manual, shall be made at any time except at a General Conference session.” This marked the first official endorsement of a trinitarian view by the church, although “the last of the well known expositors” continued to “uphold the ‘old’ view” until his death in 1968.
Response-- Of course it was intended to be authoritative, even if it was not publicly advertised or enforced that way. Prior to 1931 there was no church manual, and along with the new “trinitarian” Principles of Faith and Church Manual, were the newly rewritten baptism vows, which reflected semi-trinitarianism.

At this point there is much error and inaccuracy, as well as what appears to be deception, in Moon’s essay. I have no doubt, and am not contesting, the fact that part of the church eventually adopted trinitarianism during the 1920’s and 1930’s. That the Seventh day Adventist Church organization eventually gravitated to a trinitarian view is not in contention. The contention is over the rewritten history, misinterpreted Ellen White statements and deceptive manner in which the trinity’s acceptance is being portrayed by its supporters. But there is much more to this long line of twisted and retold stories that will be examined. For now, let us finish this part of the story and then I will conclude Part 1 with some closing thoughts.
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Chapter 11: Trinitarian Dominance

Beginning in the late 1920s, trinitarians did indeed begin to dominate the church, but once again, it began in the publishing houses. Leroy E. Froom’s book, *The Coming of the Comforter*, published in 1928, was the first widely distributed pro-trinitarian book in the church. Still, the impact was somewhat delayed. Strangely, Dr. Moon does not mention this important book. I wonder why?

**Moon--**
From the retirement of F. M. Wilcox in 1944 to the publication of *Movement of Destiny* in 1971, L. E. Froom was the most visible champion of trinitarianism among Seventh-day Adventists. His book, *The Coming of the Comforter* was unprecedented among Adventists (except for a few passages in Ellen White) in its systematic exposition of the personhood of the Holy Spirit and the trinitarian nature of the Godhead. Froom’s leading role in the preparation of the 1957 work, *Questions on Doctrine*, has been amply documented elsewhere.

**Response--** Moon curiously does not mention Leroy Froom’s key role of “champion of the trinity” to the church as early as 1928 with his book, *The Coming of the Comforter*. Being known for his ecumenical-mindedness during the QOD affair, and long before that, may be a reason why Moon is silent on the role of Froom in the early drama.

**Moon--** *Questions on Doctrine* evoked a storm of controversy for certain statements on christology and the atonement, but its clear affirmation of “the heavenly Trinity” went virtually unchallenged—perhaps because M. L. Andreasen, the book’s chief critic in other areas, was a convinced trinitarian.

**Response--** As noted earlier, Andreasen was indeed trinitarian, but he was not a church pioneer and came into the game later. The story behind *Questions on Doctrine* (which is widely available) should serve as a wake
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up call to any and all concerned Adventist that men like Leroy Froom, among others even to this day, are perfectly capable of distorting historical facts in the name of ecumenical unity.

Moon---Froom’s final word was his 700-page *Movement of Destiny*, published in 1971. Despite “instances of special pleading” and problems of bias that “somewhat diminish the work as dependable history,” it nevertheless thoroughly documents the movement of Adventist theology toward a biblical trinitarian consensus. (emphasis mine)

Response-- Here, even Moon admits that Leroy Edwin Froom was biased in his presentation of Adventist history. Yet at the same time, Moon and other Adventist scholars look to Froom’s account of history as a foundation upon which to build their own written works.

Moon---The climax of this phase of doctrinal development was a new statement of fundamental beliefs, voted by the 1980 General Conference session in Dallas. The new statement of twenty-seven “Fundamental Beliefs,” like the 1931 statement, explicitly affirmed belief in the Trinity. The affirmation came in the second article of the statement (following a preamble and a first article on the inspiration and authority of Scripture).

“2. The Trinity[.] There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.” Article 4 affirms that “God the eternal Son became incarnate in Christ Jesus. . . . Forever truly God, He became also truly man.” Article 5 declares that “God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption,” and was “sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children.” At several points, the statement echoes the terminology of the classical trinitarian creeds, even including the Filioque clause with reference to the Holy Spirit. (emphasis mine)

Response-- Earlier in this essay, and again in Part 2, Moon avers that Ellen White and the pioneers categorically condemned the trinity as taught in the “classical trinitarian creeds”. Here, Moon now says that the “Adventist trinity” echoes the terminology of the pagan-based “classical” (Roman Catholic) creeds on several points. Beyond this, the Seventh day Adventist Church has in recent years professed full agreement with the “classical”
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trinitarian creeds. As Doug Batchelor says in his evangelistic seminars, “If you want to know what a church believes, do not listen to individuals and theologians, go to the official documents.”

That is what we will do now. Please read through the following information carefully.

“The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a community of churches on the way to visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ. It seeks to advance towards this unity, as Jesus prayed for his followers, "so that the world may believe" (John 17:21)

http://www.sdadefend.com/assisi.htm

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not officially a full member of the World Council of Churches, but it is accepted as being represented in a personal capacity - as is only one other church - the Roman Catholic Church, as an observer-consultant. However, this arrangement conceals the fact that the SDA General Conference has a voting representative in the WCC in Pastor Bert Beverly Beach.” (Turner, ibid, pg 54)

“BB Beach has been the General Conference representative to the WCC since 1967—the same year that Pope Paul VI appointed its first Vatican representative to the WCC. The SDA General Conference appointed Bert Beach as a voting "personal representative" to this key WCC interfaith Faith and Order Commission, especially set up for the purpose of cooperating with the Vatican II objective of sending representatives to the other churches and to the WCC, but not joining the WCC.

http://www.sdadefend.com/assisi.htm

"The SDAC is regularly represented through observers or advisers at WCC and other church meetings. For many years, an SDA has been a member of the WCC Faith and Order Commission in a personal capacity. The SDAC has participated in dialogues with the WCC and various religious bodies and since 1968 has been represented at the conference of secretaries of Christian World Communions. "More recently, the SDAC has been represented at the annual conference of U.S. church leaders. Christian World Communions and various churches have responded to the SDA invitation and sent observers to the quinquennial General Conference Sessions."

In the Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, p 919
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As the World Council of Churches, the Seventh-day Adventists accept the fundamental articles of the Christian faith as they were created by the three ancient symbols of the Church (apostolic symbols, of Nicea-Constantinople, of Athanasius). http://www.tagnet.org/gcconf/A/Historical.html

Dr B.B. Beach and Dr. Lukas Vischer – (Faith and Order Secretariat) write: “The member churches of the World Council of Churches and Seventh-Day Adventists are in agreement on the fundamental articles of the Christian faith as set forth in the three ancient symbols (Apostolicum, Nicaeno-Constantinopolitum, Athanasium). This agreement finds expression in unqualified acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity and the Two-Natures.” Constitution: World Council of Churches, quoted in So Much in Common, p. 40, 107 (1973). Co-authored by Dr B.B. Beach and Dr. Lukas Vischer – Faith and Order Secretariat.

The terms Apostolicum, Nicaeno-Constantinopolitum, Athanasium are translated to refer to the Apostle’s Creed, the Nicene-Constantinople Creed and the Athanasian Creed, the three “classical” pagan-influenced trinity creeds that were devised by the Roman Catholic Church in the 4th century A.D.. These are the creeds that Moon and his colleagues insist were categorically condemned by Ellen White and the pioneers.

Moon--A brief recapitulation of Adventist belief statements may clarify the significance of the 1980 action. The first Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by Seventh-day Adventists (1872) was the work of Uriah Smith.

Response- The original Principles of Faith were not written by Uriah Smith. This is one of the “biased” historical comments made by Leroy Froom that in this case Moon chooses to accept and use. The real primary contributor was James White.

‘The formulation of principle doctrines of the Seventhday-Adventist Church here presented was constructed earlier than the indicated publication date in the Signs [1874]. Though there is no assurance that James White was the only author, he no doubt had a large part in its composition.’ (The Living Witness, 1959, Pacific Press Publishing Association, pages 1, 2).
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What purpose would it serve to say that Uriah Smith wrote the Principles of Faith? Simple, according to the rewritten Adventist history of the trinity adoption, James White had at this point in his life begun his conversion to trinitarianism, which as we shall see in the next installment, is a fable contrived and pieced together from out-of-historical-context statements. If James White wrote this it would mean that his views regarding the origin and nature of Christ had not changed a single iota. In order to sustain the story, another author for the Principles of Faith had to be found. Smith was the logical choice since he is often painted as a “black hat” irritant in the church, and that he had a truly Ar ian background.

Moon- Its first two articles deal with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
— I —
That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps. 139.7.
— II —
That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist; that he took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that he dwelt among men full of grace and truth, lived our example, died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in heaven, where, with his own blood he makes atonement for our sins.

Response- This is the actual historic Adventist Fundamental belief regarding the nature and personality of God and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Any significant change or alteration would be apostasy away from the foundations of the church and from the plain ‘Thus saith the Lord“ of the Holy Bible.

Moon--It is notable that while there is no reference to the term Trinity, neither is there any overt polemic against a trinitarian position. Smith was clearly striving to adhere as closely as possible to biblical language. The statement represented a consensus at the time, but in harmony with its preamble’s explicit disclaimer of any creedal statement it was never given the status of official approval.
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Response-- Moon is right that there is no “overt polemic against the trinity” in the Principles of Faith. Then again, there is no overt polemic against modalism, gnosticism, Satanism or any other false view of God. The document was put together by James White to explain what the church believed on the doctrine of God, not to say what it did not believe. While the statement did not have the “status of official approval” the preamble is clear (in the part that Froom leaves out in his book Movement of Destiny) that it represented unity of thought among the Seventh day Adventist Church. The baptismal vows of that time also made reference to the accepting of “the teachings of the Seventh day Adventist Church”. What were the teachings of the church? They were outlined in this “unofficial” statement of Principles. At the time of the writing of the Principles of Faith, there was no trinitarianism within the church.

Moon--The second statement of “Fundamental Principles” (1889), also by Uriah Smith, is likewise a consensus statement that avoids pressing any points of disagreement. As with the 1872 statement, the preamble maintains “no creed but the Bible,” and further claims that “the following propositions may be taken as a summary of the principal features of their [Seventh-day Adventists’] religious faith, upon which there is, so far as we know, entire unanimity throughout the body” (emphasis supplied).(bold mine)

Response--- Once again, Smith was not the primary contributor to the Principles of Faith. James White was according to “The Living Witness”, a book published by Pacific Press. Even though by this time White had passed away, the fine tuning of the Principles did not stray from White’s original statement. But look at the last sentence. In 1889 the church was in “entire unanimity” on the doctrine of God. Ellen White, for her part, did not reprove or make any correction to this view or these words.

Moon--Apparently, Smith did not consider the fine points of the doctrine of the Godhead as ranking among the “principal features” of the SDA faith at that time, because he could hardly have been unaware that there were certain minor disagreements related to the Trinity. Article I from 1872 (quoted above), was reproduced without change in the 1889 statement.
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Article II in the 1889 statement has some modifications in the language about the work of Christ, but no material change in its reference to the person of Christ.

Response-- Moon would have us believe that Uriah Smith, if he did in fact update and reprint the Principles of Faith, did not carefully consider the doctrine of God. This would be the same Uriah Smith that rewrote his book Daniel and the Revelation to reflect his carefully reconsidered views on the godhead and the origin of Christ. But as we saw already, there were no “minor disagreements” in regard to the Godhead in the church at this time. These minor disagreements exist only in the carefully worded essays and papers of Story One apologists. In Part 2, you will see the masterpiece of detailed historical spin that has become the “official story” of how Adventists came to be trinitarian.

Moon--Because these articles adhere closely to biblical terminology, they were capable of being interpreted favorably by either nontrinitarians or trinitarians.

Response-- Were that true, then Wilcox and co. would not have felt it necessary to rewrite the Principles of Faith in 1931. Also, the “Adventist trinity” doctrine cannot accept, by any means, Article 1 of the Principles of faith, which declares God to be a personal Being in the singular sense:

“That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being [singular]….”

The modern 1980 Adventist trinity does not believe God to be a personal being (singular), but three personal beings. The only way the church could accept any part of the original Principles of Faith and still be trinitarian would be if they adopted the Roman Catholic creedal Trinity doctrines, which say that God is One being made up of three “hypostases”.

But the author, in spite of the official statement by the SDA representative to the World Council of Churches, has stated plainly that the church rejects as pagan and false the orthodox creedal trinity doctrines (while at the same time saying that the language is virtually identical). It has also been admitted that the early Adventist church rejected wholesale the orthodox trinity and that it was condemned by Ellen White. So we know that by
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these two facts, that this Principles of Faith are not compatible with any trinity doctrine of any kind.

Moon—The third statement of “Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists” was prepared under the direction of a committee, but it was actually written by F. M. Wilcox, editor of the *Review and Herald*.

Response—True statement.

Moon—Fifteen years later, in 1946, it became the first such statement to be officially endorsed by a General Conference session. Article 2 declares, “That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption. Matt. 28:19.”

Response—Even though there was evolution to be seen in the different versions of the Principles of Faith, the steps of “growth”, which in reality were steps in attempting to gain acceptance, were even longer than Moon admits. Look again at the 1946 statement, and you will see subtlety and vagueness, with the only actual trinitarian terms being “consists of” and “trinity”. Whereas the 1931 Principles written by this same Wilcox use only the word “trinity” and then describe the historic non-trinitarian belief, the 1946 statement adds only the two words “consists of” to what was previously written.

While adding “consists of” is definitely trinitarian, it is not blatant enough to have caused a stir at the General Conference Session, since the rest of the statement was not too far off from the original Principles of Faith.

The 1946 article can be pointed to as a “transition” and a furthering of the incremental push for the trinity doctrine in the Adventist Church that was adopted over a 65 year period, beginning with the halting of the original Principles of Faith in 1915 and culminating in the 1980 Dallas
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statement. And while it can be said that this is a “trinitarian” statement, it does not mention anything about “God the Son”, “God the Holy Spirit”, “co-equal” or “co-eternal”. Like the 1931 Principles of Faith, it used the word “Trinity”, but did not go into any explicit definition of what is meant by the word. In the 1946 article, the Father is still “the eternal Father”, Jesus Christ is still “the Son of the Eternal Father ” (Christ is not called “God the eternal Son”), and the Holy Spirit is still “the great regenerating power”. The historic church believed all of this. It is the defining of these that becomes the problem, with the belief that Jesus Christ is the most High God and is thus a rejecting of Jesus Christ as God’s actual begotten Son, as well as the Holy Spirit being considered a separate “divine being” that is the problem with any trinity doctrine. Neither the 1931 nor the 1946 statements make these claims for the church.

That is why many historic Adventists look to the 1980 GC statement as the first truly trinitarian statement of belief in the church’s history.

Moon--Thus, the statement voted at Dallas in 1980 was the fourth fundamental beliefs statement of Seventh-day Adventists, but only the second to be officially voted by a General Conference session. The official adoption of the explicitly trinitarian Dallas statement might have been expected to bring closure to the century-old debate, but it proved to be a precursor of renewed tensions.

Response-- The 1980 Dallas Statement of Fundamental Beliefs was in reality the only truly explicitly trinitarian statement of beliefs the church has ever seen. And while some may say it is a different trinity than the orthodox creedal trinity doctrines, in its simplest description it is essentially identical to the Roman creedal trinity teaching:

“There is One God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present….”
The Godhead- Seventh day Adventists Believe, pg 16.

This is exactly the same way the orthodox trinity is described. While Adventist apologists may be working to assure their members that they do not believe in the Roman trinity, the language is virtually identical, and is accepted by both the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic
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Church as being “close enough” to the orthodox trinity as to not incite a controversy.

So with this in mind it should bring renewed tensions, since it is not only a vague description that is easily applicable to any trinity doctrine, but it also was not brought in the same way the original pioneers formed doctrines, which was by years of Bible study confirmed by the visions of a prophet of God. This doctrine was brought in the way Satan brings in all negative change: incrementally, stealthfully and under the table. It must be emphatically repeated that the church did not “grow into” the trinity, but that it was “brought in” by certain people using the power of the pen in publishing, editing, altering, and manipulating the writings of Ellen White and deconstructing and then reconstructing the history of the church.

AT Jones quoted a member of the General Conference in His “Final Word and a Confession” 1906 p 13, who stated:

“You know that the Testimonies of Sister White are from the Lord. You know, too, how to distinguish between men’s manipulations of these Testimonies and what these Testimonies themselves actually teach.”

Then on pages 13 & 14, AT Jones comments himself, "I do not count it any reproach to him that he recognizes the fact that men do manipulate the Testimonies; and that a distinction must be made between men’s manipulations of them and the Testimonies themselves. It is the sober truth…. It must be recognized that mistakes have been made and are made; that men do manipulate the Testimonies." (ITUG)
Chapter 12: Renewed Tensions and Continuing Debate

The releasing of Ellen White’s writings over the internet by the Ellen G. White Estate has made research into Adventist history more accessible to the average person. Her quotes can be checked for context and compared with her other writings for consistency, definition and substance. This has meant trouble for those who would take her writings out of context or claim support for their views by quoting obscure writings that the everyday Adventist did not previously have access to.

This, I believe, is the primary reason for the renewed debate on the trinity doctrine, and brings the entire church into the issue instead of a few privileged scholars who have access to her writings while the rest of the members are left with the choice to either believe they are being used properly or that they are being abused, manipulated and misquoted.

In this chapter, Moon has taken a cue from the QOD authors who inferred that those who question the veracity of adopting “new theology” are the “lunatic fringe”, as seen in Moon’s very first statement.

Moon---The period from 1980 to the present has been characterized by renewed debate along a spectrum of ideas from the reactionary to the contemporary. Soon after the Dallas statement—and perhaps in reaction to it—voices from the “edges” of the church began to advocate that the pioneers earliest views were correct, that Ellen White’s apparently trinitarian statements had been misinterpreted, and that the Dallas statement represented apostasy from the biblical beliefs of the pioneers.

Response---Perhaps the author should have defined what he meant by “edges” of the church. This of course is an attempt to paint historic Adventists as the “lunatic fringe” the same way Froom and co. did when preparing Questions on Doctrine. Those who protest the tritheistic doctrine of “a” trinity, do so for very good reason…it is unbiblical, it is not taught by the Spirit of Prophecy and our church was not founded upon the doctrine of tritheism. To this end, the Dallas statement did in fact represent apostasy from the pioneer church. Since apostasy is a changing of the faith, is the author then saying that the church has not changed its faith in regard
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to the doctrine of God? Of course it has.

Moon---Some, in apparent ignorance of the 1946 action, believed that the Dallas statement was the first ever officially voted statement of Adventist belief, and hence, that its very existence was an aberration from the historical pattern. Citations from the primary sources, extracted from their historical context and repackaged in plausible conspiracy theories, proved quite convincing to many.

Response--- One of the main weapons of Story One apologists is to paint their counterparts as “conspiracy theorists”. There is no theory here at all, as you have seen in this response, which is simply correcting the historical evidence with written and authoritive facts. It is a matter of historical fact how the tritheistic trinity doctrine was brought into the church. It is not because historic Adventists believe there was no previous statement of beliefs, but because of the truth that the Dallas statement was the first to explicitly outline the trinity in its clearest terms, as we have seen.

Now, whether one considers it a “conspiracy” to alter the writings of a prophet after her death, manipulate and remove from their historical and literary context the writings of pioneer leaders, wrongly assign credit for the Principles of Faith to Uriah Smith, state that the 1889 Principles of Faith were “ambiguous” so they could be accepted by both trinitarians and antitrinitarians, imply that the pioneer founders such as wunderkind A.T. Jones who wrote “The Two Republics”, were uneducated in their knowledge of the trinity and the Bible, and that people who research the issue for themselves and find glaring inconsistencies are “conspiracy theorists”, I will leave up to the prayerful discernment of the reader.

Moon---A more substantial development was the continued quest to articulate a biblical doctrine of the Trinity, clearly differentiated from the Greek philosophical presuppositions that undergirded the traditional creedal statements. Raoul Dederen had set forth in 1972 a brief exposition of the Godhead from the OT and NT. He rejected the “Trinity of speculative thought” that created philosophical “distinctions within the Deity for which there is no definable basis within the revealed knowledge of God.” Instead, he advocated the example of the apostle s: “Rejecting the
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terms of Greek mythology or metaphysics, they expressed their convictions in an unpretending trinitarian confession of faith, the doctrine of one God subsisting and acting in three persons.”

Response-- A biblical doctrine of the trinity is not possible for Seventh-day Adventists, who depend upon a plain “Thus saith the Lord” of Holy Scripture. Unfortunately for Moon, Dederen and others, all trinity doctrines depend upon human speculation and philosophical theory. It should be noted that the first “brief exposition” did not take place until 1972, 41 years after the trinity was introduced into the church. Moon then curiously cites the apostles as expressing their convictions of a three in one God. Where did Moon or Dederen get this notion? Where is the evidence? There is certainly no Bible text that confirms the apostles as believing that the One God consisted of three “divine beings” acting as one “God committee”. I believe the current tritheistic understanding of the Godhead is definitely a “Trinity of speculative thought”.

While I have not read Dederen’s book, I still cannot agree with this second-hand “evidence” for such a thought, since it was written some time ago. However, I have read other works since that probably are no different, and not a single one can provide a verse of Scripture to show that the apostles believed in the trinity concept of God. In fact, according to history from nearly every scholars perspective there was no concept of a trinity at all prior to the 2nd century A.D., and the actual trinity doctrine of Rome was formed in the 4th century A.D.. The tritheistic “Adventist trinity” is new to the scene, has no basis in Christian history, and the overall basic concept of the doctrine is shared only with the Mormons as far as I know. Ironically, the Mormons are considered “non-trinitarian” while holding virtually the same view as the “Adventist trinity”.

Moon--Building on this line of thought, Fernando Canale, Dederen’s student, set forth in 1983 a radical critique of the Greek philosophical presuppositions underlying what Dederen had referred to as “s peculative thought.” Canale’s dissertation, A Criticism of Theological Reason, argued that Roman Catholic and classical Protestant theology took its most basic presuppositions about the nature of God, time, and existence, from a “framework” provided by Aristotelian philosophy. Canale maintained that for Christian theology to become truly biblical, it must derive its
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“primordial presupposition” from Scripture, not from Greek philosophy.

Response-- Unfortunately, Moon has already admitted that the trinity as outlined in Seventh-day Adventists Believe has unmistakable Nicene and Athanasian language and influence in various parts. We also have the confession of the Adventist representative to the World Council of Churches that says Adventists are in official agreement with the trinity doctrine as spelled out in the Nicene-Constantinople and Athanasian Creeds, the two documents that Moon is trying to distance himself from. Moon, Dederen and now Canale all admit that the trinity is based on pagan Greek philosophy.

The idea of “One God consisting of three Persons” is the very foundation of the pagan-influenced trinity. Yet, every Adventist publication uses these same words to describe the doctrine. The only difference between Moon’s “Adventist trinity” and that of Rome is emphasis. Rome emphasizes God as a single “thing” made up of three “semi-beings”, while Adventist trinitarians emphasize that God is one “group” made up of three divine actual beings. The Roman trinity makes God an “it”, while the Adventist trinity makes God a “them”. Rome emphasizes the oneness, the Adventists emphasize the “threeness”. How anyone can maintain a journalistic “straight face” while saying that the “Adventist Trinity” is more biblically-based than the pagan-influenced Roman Catholic trinity that it is a variation of is truly a mystery.

Moon--In the more recent *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (2000), edited by Dederen, Canale authored a magisterial article on the findings from his continuing work on the doctrine of God. Again, Canale explicitly differentiates between a doctrine of God based on Greek philosophical presuppositions and one based on biblical presuppositions, making a strong case for his view that only through a willingness to “depart from the philosophical conception of God as timeless” and to “embrace the historical conception of God as presented in the Bible,” can one discover a truly biblical view of the Trinity.

Response-- I do agree with Canale that we must be willing to separate from “tradition” if we are to find the biblical Godhead. The historical conception of God in the Bible is that God is a single person, a single
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entity, and is always referred to as such. Jesus prayed to God and worshipped God. Not just to “the Father”, but to “God”.

“This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3

Paul always referred to God and Jesus as separate beings and personal entities. In the greeting of every Pauline epistle, the apostle greets his readers with a variation of “God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ”. Paul wrote that, “To us there is but One God, the Father, of whom are all things… and one Savior, Jesus Christ, by whom are things…” 1Cor.8:6

In the Holy Bible and the writings of Ellen White, God is never called “they” or “them”, neither is He ever called “it” or “what”.

Moon---A third line of thought seeks to locate Adventist trinitarianism in the context of contemporary systematic theology. Seconding Canale’s discontent with classical theology, but taking the critique in a different direction, was Richard Rice’s Reign of God (1985). Rice argued that the Trinity was implied, though not explicit, in Scripture.

Response-- Once again, Seventh-day Adventists will believe in only that which carries a plain “Thus saith the Lord”. Implied is not good enough when it comes to the very identity of the deity we worship. But at the same time, even the implication of the trinity is not taught in the Bible. Both references to “Father, Son and Holy Ghost” were interpolations added to the Bible at a later date, probably around the fourth century. There is no record of anyone being baptized into the “threefold name” prior to the third century. But it is difficult to respond to the assertions made by the author when the author presents no actual quotes from these writers or their work. We are left to either guess what the substance of their studies were, or simply believe what Moon says. From what has been seen so far it is a dicey proposition either way.

Moon- Fritz Guy, in Thinking Theologically (1999), agrees that “the traditional formulations” of the Trinity doctrine “are not entirely satisfactory.” He warns against a perceived tendency to ward tritheism and
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favors updating the language to make it more “functional and gender-neutral.” Guy’s book, however, is not a systematic exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, and how his suggestions will ultimately affect the discussion remains to be seen.

Response-- Now the author is quoting someone who believes the Godhead should be made “gender neutral”. The author Moon speaks of gives a warning against a “perceived tendency toward tritheism”, a valid concern given the tritheistic nature of the “Adventist trinity”. I am not even sure why Moon brings Guy into the topic, outside the possibility that Moon is looking for as much written material as possible to show that thought and study has gone into the adoption of the tritheistic trinity doctrine.

So far, for a doctrine that is supposedly 76 years old (1931-2007), there is little to show in support of it in terms of actual sensible study. In the material I have read so far in support of the “Adventist trinity” nearly all of it is made up of the same few Ellen White quotations from *The Desire of Ages* and *Evangelism*, the fictitious Trinitarian “growth” of James White, and the standard Bible texts that are mistranslated, misinterpreted or lifted out of context.
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CHAPTER 13: Closing Thoughts to Parts One

We will now present a summary on Part One of this essay and response before heading into Part Two, which deals primarily with Ellen and James White and J.H. Kellogg.

Here, Dr. Moon will reiterate his basic theory which, as we have seen, holds no water because of its many errors in logical interpretation of events and history, but this will be an opportunity to see it all put together into a concise statement and rebuttal.

Moon-----The long process of change from early Adventists’ initial rejection of creedal trinitarianism to their eventual acceptance of a doctrine of the Trinity could rightly be called a search for a biblical Trinity.

Response-- Here, the author implies by his wording that the same people who rejected the trinity in all of its forms would have, or did, come to accept the trinity doctrine. The fact is that the trinity doctrine in the church (not just the word *trinity*) did not come in until all of those pioneers were dead and gone. There was no “search for a biblical trinity”. There was instead a search for a trinity that certain leaders could somehow work into nominal agreement with the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. If there was a search for a biblical trinity doctrine, which history will confirm that it was pursued primarily by those who were already trinitarian, then that search must continue, since so far finding a biblical trinity doctrine, one that carries with it a plain “Thus saith the Lord” of the Holy Bible, has not been accomplished.
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Moon--The early Adventists were not so much prejudiced against traditional formulas as they were determined to hew their doctrine as closely as possible to the teaching of Scripture.

Response---Interestingly enough, this same author, as well as others of the same persuasion, have said just the opposite in other writings. They have averred that it was the pioneer’s fear of traditional formulas that were the reasoning behind Loughborough’s “five steps to apostasy” statement and James White’s anti-trinitarianism. This statement by Moon represents a complete turn-around in that thinking. It will be interesting to see how many of his colleagues adopt this view or stick to their previous assertions. Nevertheless, he is right that being biblical was the main motive behind the theology of the pioneers, was the reason they rejected trinitarianism as “absurd”, and in the words of James White “they have not one verse of Scripture to support it”.

Moon-- In order to base their beliefs on Scripture alone, and to disallow tradition from having any theological authority, they found it methodologically essential to reject every doctrine not clearly grounded in Scripture alone.

Response-- And it appears we have gone away from that methodology in order to adopt the trinity doctrine. How can it be that the pioneers, who were so adamant that the church accept only that which the Bible plainly and honestly teaches, were so wrong in their conclusions, being completely and diametrically opposed to the “truth” we have now?

Moon---Since the traditional doctrine of the Trinity clearly contained unscriptural elements, they rejected it. Eventually, however, they became convinced that the basic concept of one God in three persons was indeed found in Scripture. In the second part of this study will consider in more detail the role of Ellen White in that process.

Response-- And of course it has been shown in this book that nothing could be further from the truth. There is no evidence whatsoever that the pioneers changed their theology on even one point during the first fifty years of the church’s organizational existence. The only notable exception
to this was Uriah Smith, who changed from a fully Arian view to the established view of the church, and enthusiastically edited his own book to support the view as put forth in the 1874-1914 Principles of Faith.

The “gradual acceptance” of “a” trinity doctrine is not in doubt. However, the story of how it came into the church, and the reasons for its adoption are a fabricated tale. I believe that one needs to do nothing more than carefully read Moon’s essay, and find all of the contradictions therein, to agree with this conclusion.

On one hand he says the pioneers categorically rejected the trinity doctrine, but only the Roman Catholic version. The truth is that the present Adventist version was not in existence to reject, which is one of the main reasons it exists in its present form, since that would be the only way to speculate that the pioneers would have accepted it if they had not died first. Also, the pioneers never once singled out a particular version of the trinity for rejection and condemnation, but said any doctrine that made God “one in three and three in one” or that “made the Father and the Son interchangeable”, and especially, according to James White, if it “made Christ the very and eternal God”, was to be rejected. The current teaching certainly does, and officially the Adventist church has admitted to accepting the Roman trinity doctrines of the Nicene-Constantinople and Athanasian Creeds.

Dr. Moon states that the creedal versions of the trinity are unbiblical. He then admits that the church uses the same language to describe its trinity as the “false and pagan” creedal trinities do.

Ellen White never changed her views on the doctrine of God, and certainly James White never did. Ellen White’s “bold trinitarian statements”, as we shall prove in Part 2, were made that way by creative editing, altering and misinterpreting.
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Part Two: The Birdsnest and the Birdsnest Unraveled

When I was young, I used to love to fish. Every morning when there was no school I would get up early, grab my fishing rod, hooks and bait and head down to the river near my country home. I often fished with my Dad, but every so often I would get to go fishing with my grandfather.

Now, my grandfather was a kind and patient man, as evidenced by his willingness not only to take his impatient grandson fishing, but in that he would also work out my mistakes for me.

One of these mistakes would take place whenever I used a level-wind fishing reel. A level-wind reel is the kind that has a horizontal spool that had the line laid evenly across the spool as you reeled it in. When casting a level-wind reel, one must be careful to put a slight amount of pressure on the spool with his thumb. This kept the spool from "backlash". In other words, the spool would turn so fast that the momentum of the spool outran the speed of the outgoing line, with the line then unraveling on the spool itself. This would result in a "birdsnest" of monofilament fishing line and an unusable reel; that is, until the massive knot was undone or until the line was cut off and replaced.

As a youth, I would simply cut off all the old line and start over. But when my grandpa was there, he would ask for the reel and then slowly, methodically work out the "birdsnest". An hour later, he would hand back the reel with the line all evenly laid back down and, amazingly enough, trust me to cast it out again.

As I read the following essay, the second part of Moon’s "Overview of the Adventist Trinity Debates", it became apparent that what was once a neatly laid spool of historical events and beliefs has become a tangled mess of twisted facts, out-of-context writings and misplaced or misinterpreted historical events. Like when I was a young boy, I felt a bit overwhelmed at first, wanting to simply “cut off all the line” and start over. But instead I feel that it is in the best interest of God’s people that I slowly, methodically untangle each individual loop and knot.

As we begin this endeavor it is important to keep a couple of things
in mind. First, that in Part One we saw that many of the presuppositions on which Story One depends are not true or based on events that never happened. Even the trinitarian proponents of Story One, for all of their PhDs, doctoral theses, and symposiums cannot agree on some of even the most basic questions.

Among these basic questions is- was Ellen White ever trinitarian as an Adventist? Some say she was always trinitarian, but imply that she hid it from the church and “hinted“ the church in the right direction. Some say she was never trinitarian, but that some of her statements merely opened the door to further study and that the church became trinitarian based on these biblical studies. Still others say she was non-trinitarian, but that she became trinitarian over time as God revealed “new light”.

Another thing that academia cannot agree on is whether the church became trinitarian on the strength of Ellen White’s writings and “bold trinitarian statements“, or if the statements, like suggested in the last point, merely “opened the door” to further Bible study.

Still another area of disagreement among the academic elite is which version of the Trinity the church even believes in. We saw in Part One that Moon and some other Adventist scholars affirm that the orthodox trinity of the ancient creeds is “pagan-influenced” and “unbiblical”. Yet, as we also saw, the Adventist trinity is described using the very same terms and ideological expressions that the “classic” creeds are. On top of that, we had the words from the Adventist representative to the World Council of Churches, confirming that Adventists do in fact agree to what Moon called the “pagan- influenced” and “unbiblical” creedal trinities.

I have heard several different versions of the trinity preached among Adventist preachers, ranging from the orthodox creedal trinity to plain and unashamed tritheism, with many variations between the two. So while the trinitarian academics of the church work hard to convince us of the truth of the trinity and its growth among Adventists, they cannot consistently identify, or even agree on, the teaching that the church officially adopted only a few short years ago.

Historic Adventists, on the other hand, are more solidified in their views. They point to the 1874-1914 Principles of Faith as the teachings and understanding of the pioneers, including Ellen White, and can show from her own writings that this was the view that she not only accepted when the church began, but was the view she kept the remainder of her life.
Chapter 14: The Issues

To put the issues in direct language, we are being asked to believe the following concerning the church:

1. That the Seventh day Adventist Church began its mission on a platform of error regarding the most basic doctrine of any religion, the identity of its deity.
2. That the founders of that church changed their view even after their prophet confirmed that they were building on a platform of truth.
3. That the 180 degree shift in theology on the identity of the deity is due to “increased understanding”, and is neither a correction of heresy on one hand or apostasy from the truth on the other. The invisible tightrope that Story One walks is one of avoiding condemning the founders as heretics, while showing the acceptance of the trinity as a new truth which makes the original view heretical.
4. That the church could be in complete heresy on any church’s most foundational doctrine and not be reproved or corrected by their prophet.
5. That Ellen White taught trinitarianism in The Desire of Ages, a book that has many anti-trinitarian statements.
6. That books such as Patriarchs and Prophets and The Story of Redemption are to be ignored concerning the history and position of the preincarnate Christ.
7. That Ellen White, while warning the church against moving a single pin of doctrine in the early 1900s was at the very same time instrumental in changing the most foundational doctrine of the church.
8. That Ellen White, while warning ministers not to enter into controversy regarding the Godhead in the early 1900s, was herself creating a controversy regarding the Godhead.
9. That James White changed his views regarding the divinity of Christ.
10. That the pioneers were ignorant that there were different versions of the trinity doctrine, and protested only one certain view, leaving room for a
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more acceptable trinity doctrine.
11- That while saying in the early 1900s the church’s foundation was set in stone in the first fifty years or so (depending on which statement you read) from 1857-1907, Ellen G. White was encouraging change in one of those foundational beliefs.

To expect a Bible and Spirit of Prophecy believing Adventist to accept any one of these assertions is difficult. But how much worse it is that we are expected to accept all of them! As we look down this short list (there are actually more than what is listed here) using our common sense, each idea seems more and more preposterous the more we consider it. That is how I view Part Two of the essay from Dr. Moon. The problem with responding to this work is that the facts are so skewed and so twisted that even a reasonable explanation sounds fabulous. Nevertheless, I will do my best to unravel the “birdsnest” of spins, twists and lo ops, laying the line of history straight once again.

As in Part One, I will label Moon’s points “Moon” and my own “Response”. Because Dr. Moon reiterates some of his points from the previous article, there will necessarily be redundancies in the essay and in the responses, for which I ask your patience.

Moon--In 1846 James White dismissed the doctrine of the Trinity as “the old unscriptural trinitarian creed.” A century later, in 1946, the denomination he co-founded voted a “Fundamental Beliefs” statement that specifically endorsed the doctrine of the Trinity. That most of the early leaders among Seventh-day Adventists held an antitrinitarian theology, and that a major shift has since occurred, has become standard Adventist history in the 43 years since E. R. Gane wrote an M.A. thesis on the topic. What is now disputed by some is Gane’s second hypothesis, that Adventist co-founder Ellen G. White (1827-1915) was “a trinitarian mono theist.” Since the 1980s, that view has come under intense attack from some writers. This renewed scrutiny of the role of Ellen White in the development of the Adventist Trinity doctrine has raised enough questions to warrant a fresh examination of the issue.
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Response--Indeed it does warrant a fresh examination. It is also true that the story has become “standard Adventist History”. The truth is that it did not begin as “standard Adventist history”, but like the author says, it became standard history. This is one paragraph where Dr. Moon is completely accurate. I would pray that it might stay that way.

Moon---In the previous newsletter we identified six stages in the development of the Adventist doctrine of God, from opposition to the Trinity doctrine, to acceptance of the basic concept of one God in three eternal divine persons. In the second part of our study I will present evidence in support of a fourfold hypothesis: (1) That Gane’s characterization of Ellen White as a “trinitarian monotheist” is accurate regarding her mature concept of God, from 1898 onward.

Response-- Moon is already beginning to build his case on unscriptural and man-made phrases such as “mature concept of God”. He is also right to call Gane’s theory as a “hypothesis”, that is, an “educated guess”. We will see as this study moves along that Gane and others have guessed wrong about Ellen White.

Moon---In the 1840s, however, she did not yet have all the components of that view in place. Her mature view developed through a 40-year process that can be extensively documented. (2) That her writings describe two contrasting forms of trinitarian belief, one of which she consistently opposed, and one that she eventually supported.

Response--- As we saw in Part one, the Trinity which Ellen White “consistently opposed” was the very Trinity doctrine that the Adventist representative to the World Council of Churches claimed that the church held. Also, according to Moon himself, our trinity doctrine as described in various official writings uses expressions, words and ideas that are virtually identical to the orthodox trinity, which Dr. Moon says Ellen White opposed. He also says there was a trinity doctrine that Ellen White supported. That is pure conjecture and speculation on which the “educated guess” is based.

Moon---(3) That Ellen White’s developing understanding exerted a strong
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influence on other Adventist writers, leading eventually to a substantial degree of consensus in the denomination; and….

Response--- Some writers did indeed use Ellen White’s writings to support their errant views on the Godhead, but Ellen White reproved those who did thus. John Harvey Kellogg, as we will see later in this writing, was one such person.

Moon---(4) that the method by which early Adventists came to this position was by disallowing tradition from having any normative authority and insisting on Scripture alone as the basis for doctrine and tests of membership. This rejection of tradition led them initially to some heterodox views that received severe criticism from the broader Christian community.

Response-- Moon is right that the early Adventist church, unlike the present one, was a “Bible only” church. They were right to disallow tradition from having authority in doctrinal matters. As such there is no way to defend the trinity from the Bible alone, as witnessed by the strong emphasis that trinitarian Adventists try to put on certain statements by Ellen White. Those who are most persuasive in presenting the trinity are those who can convince people that other church figures of authority believed it. The introduction of the trinity at the Council of Nicea was not based on the Bible but on the authority of “tradition” and platonic philosophy.

Moon---Their dependence on Scripture, however, brought them eventually to what they believe is a more biblical view of the Trinity.

Response-- I am not sure who the author’s “they” is supposed to be, but the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist church never accepted a trinity of any kind. The wording implies that it is the same group of people that rejected tradition in the name of Scripture. That would be the original pioneers “after the passing of time in 1844” in the church’s existence. However, the author is incorrectly linking the original pioneers who rejected the trinity in all of its forms, with a minority of second and third-generation Adventists who eventually attempted to bring the trinity into the
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church through the publishing houses.

Moon--This material will be presented under four subheadings, (1) Evidences for Change, (2) Varieties of Trinitarianism, (3) The Development of Ellen White’s Doctrine of God and Its Influence on Other Adventist Writers, and (4) Conclusions.

Response-- Let’s get started. Let the “birdsnest” begin.
Chapter 15: The Core of the Debate - Did Ellen White Change?

It is one of the main assertions that Ellen White “grew and matured” in her understanding in many areas of life, including how she viewed God. Outside trinity debate, this same point is made in nearly every area of contention within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It has been used to defend changes in the church ranging from the nature of Christ to her views on jewelry, and from whether God kills or not to whether she accepted the Catholic view of original sin, as well as Sabbath observance and dietary issues. These are all places where Mrs. White supposedly “grew” to accept a more “mature” view. But is it true? Did the prophetess Ellen G. White change her views on different theological issues? Did she “grow” from a non-trinitarian to a trinitarian? Let’s look at Dr. Jerry Moon’s assertions and test them for accuracy and relevancy.

Moon—At the core of the debate is the question whether Ellen White’s position on the Trinity ever changed. Some assume that she never changed, that either she always believed in the Trinity or never believed in the Trinity. There is ample evidence, however, that Ellen White’s beliefs did change on a number of other issues, so it is entirely plausible that she grew in her understanding of the Godhead as well.

Response— I have yet to see a comparison equal in importance to changing one’s views regarding the very identity of the deity. Notice also the assertion of Moon that “Ellen White’s beliefs changed on a number of other things”. This is a common assertion, and history shows what Moon is not saying: that these “changes” took place almost entirely before the actual formation of the church, and dealt primarily with her conversion from Methodism to Adventism.

For example, she was trinitarian in the Methodist Church, but changed that view when the Adventist church rejected trinitarianism. She also changed her beliefs on the natural immortality of the soul, eternal punishing, the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, etc., all because these were
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Adventist beliefs that the church adopted in the first few years of its existence. So for Moon to say that she changed her beliefs on a number of issues is misleading if he is implying that she changed them after the formation of the church in 1863.

**Moon**—When she declared in 1849, “We know we have the truth,” she was referring to the beliefs that Sabbatarian Adventists held in distinction from other Christian groups.

**Response**—Yes, she was saying that the Advent Movement had the truth on the issues *that were issues at that time*. This is another misleading statement by Dr. Moon. She was not saying that their Advent Movement group (it was not a church yet) had the truth on *every* issue or that *every* issue had been hashed out for truth. There were obviously doctrines that had not been examined for truth within the movement, which was only a few years old at that time. For example, she had not been confronted with the dietary issues yet, and so she was *not* saying, “We know we have the truth about diet.” She *was* saying, “We know we have the truth about why Christ did not return on October 23, 1844, and that the Holy Sabbath day was not changed or abolished, and that God is not a trinity of divine beings.”

**Moon**—She did not mean that there was no more truth to be discovered or that Adventists would never need to change any of their views. “We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn,” she wrote in 1892. “God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.”

**Response**—I think anyone will agree that “learning and unlearning lessons” is not the same as changing your core beliefs about the identity of God from a “heretical semi-Arian” view, to an acceptable Evangelical “trinitarian view”. This quotation that Moon uses, in its totality, speaks directly against the position of Story One, and I am stunned that he even tried to use it separated from its context. The actual situation is that of the
formative years of the church. And her point was that there were those who would attempt to twist the Bible to support their own opinions that were unbiblical. The piece is too long to reprint it all here, but I will provide a few excerpts so you will see the basic point of the quote. It is also my hope that you will go to the Ellen G. White Estate website and read the whole message, as it is exactly what we need in this day and age in our church. It affirms the historic church and doctrines and the way they were arrived at. Please take the time to read this in its entirety:

“It was the unwillingness of the Jews to give up their long established traditions that proved their ruin. They were determined not to see any flaw in their own opinions or in their expositions of the Scriptures; but however long men may have entertained certain views, if they are not clearly sustained by the written word, they should be discarded….

One point at a time was made the subject of investigation. Solemnity characterized these councils of investigation. The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth. After earnest prayer, if any point was not understood, it was discussed, and each one expressed his opinion freely; then we would again bow in prayer, and earnest supplications went up to heaven that God would help us to see eye to eye, that we might be one, as Christ and the Father are one. ….

We spent many hours in this way. We did not generally study together more than four hours at a time, yet sometimes the entire night was spent in solemn investigation of the Scriptures, that we might understand the truth. On some occasions the Spirit of God would come upon me, and difficult portions were made clear through God's appointed way, and then there was perfect harmony. We were all of one mind and one Spirit. ….

In those days God wrought for us, and the truth was precious to our souls. It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. We are in the school of the Master here, that we may be trained for the school above. We must learn to bear disappointment in a Christ-like manner, and the lesson taught by this will be of great importance to us. (RH, July 26, 1892 par. 6)

Ironically, this statement by Ellen White gives further credence to the doctrinal position of the pioneers church, since it describes the painstaking process, confirmed by the Spirit of God that brought about the unified position of the church on all major points of doctrine. The point being made here, as most would have perceived, is that people will have personal opinions not sustained by a plain “This saith the Lord”. This in no
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way said that the church would receive “new light” on the Godhead that would contradict the established truth:

“He (God) does not give one man new light contrary to the established faith of the body. In every reform men have arisen making this claim. Paul warned the church in his day, “Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” The greatest harm to God’s people comes through those who go out from among them speaking perverse things. Through them the way of truth is evil spoken of.” (CW 45.2)

“Satan hopes to involve the remnant people of God in the general ruin that is coming upon the earth. As the coming of Christ draws nigh, he will be more determined and decisive in his efforts to overthrow them. Men and women will arise professing to have some new light or some new revelation, whose tendency is to unsettle faith in the old landmarks. Their doctrines will not bear the test of God’s word, yet souls will be deceived. False reports will be circulated, and some will be taken in this snare. They will believe these rumors, and in their turn will repeat them, and thus a link will be formed connecting them with the archdeceiver. This spirit will not always be manifested in an open defiance of the messages that God sends, but a settled unbelief is expressed in many ways. Every false statement that is made feeds and strengthens this unbelief, and through this means many souls will be balanced in the wrong direction.”-- Testimonies, Vol. 5, pp. 295, 296. (1885.)

These statements must also be seen in light of Ellen White’s statements made during the supposed “switch to trinitarianism”. Please note the dates of the following Ellen White comments, which is speaking of the experience of the church in developing its doctrine:

8 Testimonies for the Church, p 297 (1904)
"Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith--the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work by prayerful study of the word and by revelation. Upon these foundations we have been building for the last fifty years. Men may suppose that they have found a new way and that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid. But this is a great deception. Other foundation can no man lay than that which has been laid."

MS 135. (1903).
Ellen G. White, The Early Years Vol 1 - 1827-1862, p 145
“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. The whole company of believers were united in the
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truth. There were those who came in with strange doctrines, but we were never afraid to meet them. Our experience was wonderfully established by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.”

Here was Ellen White, it was 1903, and according to Gane, Moon, Froom and the other proponents of Story One, she had now become trinitarian and was encouraging the church to make the change and had published “bold trinitarian statements” making this new position “perfectly clear”.

Now, what on earth had possessed this woman to make the statements she was now making, that from the very start until 1903 and 1904 the church was united in the truth, that the points of faith were clearly defined and that these were the doctrines as we hold them today in 1903? Yet, we are asked to believe that the early pioneer church was in error, were not united, and that by 1903 Ellen White had done a 180 degree turnaround in her belief on the identity of God, thus putting the historic church in heretical error.

Moon-- My argument that her views did change is based on the recognition that at every stage of life her knowledge of God and His will was a combination of what she had learned through ordinary means such as parental training, church attendance, Bible study, and personal experience, and—after December 1844—what she received through visions. Furthermore, she herself considered her visions as an educational process that continued in cumulative fashion throughout her lifetime. Consequently, her personal understanding, especially in the early years, contained some elements not fully consistent with her later beliefs, because neither her Bible study nor her visions had yet called her attention to those inconsistent elements.

Response-- Yes, Ellen White and the church increased their wisdom on certain points such as dietary issues, the hours of the Sabbath and other minor topics. These were almost entirely cases of ignorance of things not yet learned, details not yet discovered, not reversing their belief system on foundational doctrines.

Moon----For instance, after her first vision in December 1844, she continued to observe Sunday as the Sabbath for almost two more years.
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She had not yet learned about the seventh-day Sabbath. A second example of a changed view was the discovery in 1855 of the “time to commence the Sabbath.” For nine years after they accepted the seventh-day Sabbath, the Whites and most of the Sabbatarian Adventists observed the Sabbath from 6:00 p.m. Friday to 6:00 p.m. Saturday. Not until J. N. Andrews in 1855 demonstrated from Scripture that the biblical Sabbath begins at sunset, did Ellen White very reluctantly acknowledge that for nine years Adventists had been ignorant of the biblical time to begin the Sabbath.

Response-- It will be seen how weak these arguments are when one considers the difference between not knowing about the specific hours of the Sabbath and being completely wrong about the identity of God and the Sonship of Christ. Keeping the Sabbath from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. was not a truth that the church arrived by countless hours of study, and was not a foundational doctrine.

To make an accurate comparison, we would have to set up a hypothetical scenario where, in 1898, Ellen White said that Sunday is actually the Sabbath, that she had “grown” in her understanding of the issue to say “God showed me that the Seventh day is the true Sabbath” and then reversed herself again and said, “Sunday, the Lord’s Day” in a book she wrote in 1898. That is what is being implied of her and the denomination’s understanding of the sonship of Christ. I think we can agree that in no way is her growing understanding of the particulars of Sabbath keeping comparable to her “reversing herself” twice (once when she left the Methodist Church and again in 1898) about the personality of God.

Moon--A third example is what Adventists have historically called health reform. Until 1863, most of them, including James and Ellen White, were heavy meat eaters, even slaughtering their own hogs. Not until after basic denominational organization had been achieved, was the attention of the movement called to a broader platform of health principles, including complete abstinence from eating pork products and the strong recommendation of vegetarianism.

In view of these and other areas of conceptual development, it is not particularly surprising that Ellen White should show both development and change in her view of the Godhead. Her writings about the Godhead show
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a clear progression, not primarily from anti- to pro-trinitarianism, but from relative ambiguity to greater specificity. Some of her early statements are capable of various interpretations, but her later statements, 1898-1905, are explicit to the point of being dogmatic. Her change of view appears clearly to have been a matter of growth and progression, rather than reversal, because unlike her husband and others of her associates, she never directly attacked the view of the Trinity that she would later support. (emphasis mine)

Response-- The Seventh-day Adventist Church was not even an organized church until 1863. By then, every major point was established through intense study, as Ellen White said, “The leading points of our faith as we hold them today were firmly established.”

But again it needs to be reiterated that an equal and reasonable comparison, if we were to use the health message for an example as Moon is doing, would be to say that after a having visions and affirmations of the health message from 1863 to 1897, Ellen White came out in 1898 and wrote, “Pork and cheese are the healthiest foods you can put into your body. Surely the Lord has given me new light on this issue.”

Ellen was once trinitarian as a Methodist. She gave up that view and affirmed that the pioneers had the truth on every point of doctrine in 1903. We are asked to believe that Ellen White gave up her trinitarian view based on thorough Bible study and prophetic visions of affirmation, then regained her trinitarian view by the same means. We are asked to believe that Patriarchs and Prophets and many, many other writings were inspired by God, but that after 1898 some of them were retroactively uninspired. If this were the case of a regular church member, I would agree it is possible. But we are talking about a prophetic message here. The implication is that if this happened as Story One says it happened then Ellen White was a false prophet, plain and simple.
Chapter 16: Doctrinal Aspects

Now we will examine the assertion that Ellen White and her husband James only protested a particular version of the trinity, while allowing for, and later adopting, a “hybrid” version of the same. This is where the real “birdsnest” comes into play, with the author taking a few statements by James and Ellen White, and then extremely broadening the scope of those statements on one hand while minimizing what the Whites were actually referring to. This is a masterpiece of spin.

If you have ever been inside large caves with rock hanging from the ceiling, then you have no doubt seen a “keystone”. A keystone is a single rock that holds the pile up in place. Remove the keystone and the entire pile falls. This is what we are going to tackle next. Moon’s words are a bit convoluted, so I will try to take this in bits and pieces.

Moon---The conceptual key that unlocks the enigma of Ellen White’s developmental process regarding the Trinity is the discovery that her writings describe at least two distinct varieties of trinitarian belief. One of these views she consistently opposed throughout her adult ministry, and the other she eventually endorsed. The trinitarian concept that she opposed was one that “spiritualized” the members of the Godhead as distant, impersonal, mystical, and ultimately unreal.

Response-- What the Whites, both James and Ellen, opposed was any doctrine that destroyed the personality of God and Jesus. Ellen White was adamant in her belief and teaching that God is a person. Any teaching that said God is not a person was to be rejected outright.

Moon----The concept that she favored portrayed God as personal, literal, and tangible. She did not initially recognize His trinitarian nature, but when she did, she would describe the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as real individuals, emphasizing Their “threeness” (individuality) as willing, thinking, feeling, and relational persons, and explaining Their oneness in terms of nature, character, purpose, and love, but not of person. The basis
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of these differentiations will become clearer as we examine the historical context and process of her developing thought.

Response-- Actually what the author is leaving out is that Ellen White’s view not only made God “personal” but made God a person. A singular actual person.

“Our ministers must be very careful not to enter into controversy in regard to the personality of God. This is a subject that they are not to touch. It is a mystery, and the enemy will surely lead astray those who enter into it. We know that Christ came in person to reveal God to the world. God is a person and Christ is a person. Christ is spoken of in the Word as “the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person.” {1SAT 343.3}

Now, this is impossible to refute, and is completely incompatible with any kind of trinity doctrine. She is not merely saying that God is “personal”, but that God is a person. This of course refers to God the Father. And God cannot be both “a person” and “persons”. We saw this back in Part One, but I felt it was a good opportunity to reiterate the point. Notice also that at the same time she is warning the ministers not to enter into controversy on the topic of the Godhead:

1- This comment was made after the time when she supposedly changed her view of the personality of God and Christ.
2- While giving this warning not to enter into controversy about the Godhead, she affirms the historical view of the church that God is a single person, and not “persons”.

Of course trinitarians argue that this was in response to J.H. Kellogg’s pantheism. But what bearing does that have on the statement that God is a single person and not “persons”? Time and place do matter, but only when time and place are relevant. The statement that “God is a person [singular] and Christ is a person” is not bound by time, place, or circumstances.
For Story One, this chapter is where things go from bad to worse. This is where their errors are laid open; where the evidence is proven to be a contextual “house of cards” that is easily knocked over simply by bumping the table, or in this case, adding the missing context to a single quote. Dr. Moon claims to be “reconstructing historical evidence”. But what Story One does not tell you is that they first de-construct that historical evidence before “re-constructing” it to fit their fable.

The “keystone” in this evidence is the single quote by James White, supposedly condemning only certain view of trinitarianism that “spiritualized away” God and Christ. But if we pull the keys tone, or prove that is not what James White was referring to, then the whole story falls into the dust and is proven for what it is.

Moon--Three pieces of evidence are particularly significant for reconstructing the historical context of Ellen White’s earliest references to the Godhead: (1) the role of “spiritualizers” in post-disappointment Millerism; (2) the polemics of James and Ellen White against those spiritualizers; and (3) a contemporary Methodist creed that the Whites (and other early Adventists) repeatedly cited in support of their rejection of traditional trinitarianism.

Response -- We are about to see how the evidence is being manipulated to make Ellen White a false prophet, or not a prophet at all, but a regular church member whose “prophetic words” and visions were influenced by her personal experiences.

Moon---In the post-disappointment period of 1845, many former Millerites “spiritualized” the second coming, by interpreting the biblical prophecies of Christ’s return as having a spiritual, not literal meaning. Hence the
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Spiritualizers could believe that Jesus did come on October 22, 1844, not literally, but “spiritually.” This view led to a wide range of aberrant behavior. Among the most extreme were the “no work” fanatics who believed that the seventh millennium had already been inaugurated as a Sabbath of perpetual rest, and that the way to demonstrate saving faith was to refrain from all work. Others of the “spiritualizers” dabbled in “mesmerism,” joined the Shakers, or even became followers of occult spiritualism.

Response-- This is completely irrelevant to the issue, but is being set up as a piece of evidence. What the author appears to be doing is creating and illustrating the White’s indignation against those who spiritualized the Second-coming. This is to be able to make James White’s lifted quote against the trinity about “spiritualizers” and not about the sonship of Christ, since Moon knows that Ellen White was in full support of that view and confirmed it through visions and prophetic words.

Moon---James and Ellen White believed this teaching was false, because it took a Bible doctrine that they believed was clearly intended to be “literal” and made it nonliteral or “spiritual.” The core belief of Millerite Adventism was the literal, bodily, premillennial second advent. To the early Adventists, if the second advent were not a literal, bodily return of the same divine-human Jesus who ascended, but rather some subjective spiritual “revelation” to the individual heart or mind, then the teaching of His literal return had been not just modified, but destroyed—hence the phrase “spiritualize away.” To “spiritualize away” meant to take something intended as literal, and by calling it “spiritual” to so radically change the concept that it no longer had any real meaning.

Response-- Once again, this is not relevant to the discussion of the trinity. This reminds me so far of Sunday keeping apologists, skilled in rhetoric, who say, without actual evidence, that the Sabbath was part of the ceremonial law and then spend the main part of their diatribe showing why the ceremonial law was fulfilled. Here, Moon is using all of his words to show why the White’s were disgusted by those who did not believe in the literal Second-coming.
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Moon—For this reason both James and Ellen White came early to the conviction that they must oppose this spiritualizing as rank heresy. Ellen’s polemics against this doctrine and its resulting behaviors are well known. James also wrote repeatedly in the post-Millerite Day-Star against these spiritualizing tendencies.

Response-- Okay, now here comes the keystone….

Moon---One of James’s polemics against the spiritualizers included a remark about the Trinity that implied a similarity of belief between the spiritualizers and the trinitarians. Apparently some of the “spiritualizers” were supporting their error by reference to what James called “the old unscriptural trinitarian creed.” James charged that both the “spiritualizers” and the traditional trinitarians “spiritualize[d] away the existence of the Father and the Son, as two distinct, literal [sic], tangible persons.”

Response-- All that Dr. Moon said previously about spiritualizers was so that he could write what he just wrote. Now, I will put the entire quote here again so we can see that regardless of what disgust or indignation James and Ellen White may have had for the “spiritualizers” within the Millerite movement, the point of his comment was not about “the Father and the Son being “separate, tangible persons”, but was a bout whether Jesus was “the eternal God“:

““The way spiritualizers have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural Trinitarian creed viz., that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain scripture testimony in abundance that he is the Son of the eternal God.” (James White, Jan 24 1846, The Day Star)

Now, with that clarified, Moon’s next few remarks make no sense because the foundation has been pulled out from under of his historically-de/reconstructed “house of cards“.

Moon---In maintaining that the Father and the Son are “real, ” “literal” persons, the Whites certainly didn’t doubt that “God is spirit” (John 4:24), but they insisted that as Spirit, God is still Someone real, tangible, and literal; not unreal, ephemeral, or imaginary. They felt that the terms used
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for Trinity in the creeds and definitions they knew of, made God seem so abstract, theoretical, and impersonal, that He was no longer perceived as a real, caring, loving Being. Thus the attempt to make Him “spiritual” rather than literal, actually “spiritualized Him away,” that is, destroyed the true concept of who He is and what He is like.

Response-- Like I said, this is a finish up to the strawman he has imposed on the Whites. This makes no sense and is now purely “story telling” based on a false presupposition.

Moon---A third piece of evidence confirms that James was indeed linking the spiritualizers with traditional trinitarians—two groups that were in almost every other way theological opposites. Furthermore, a Methodist creed of the same period, and the way this creed was quoted and rebutted by early Adventist writers, support the suggestion that there was some agreement between Ellen White’s earliest statements about the person(s) of God, and her husband’s rejection of the “the old unscriptural trinitarian creed.” (emphasis mine).

Response-- Some agreement? The truth is that Ellen White, a former Methodist, at no time “disagreed” with the views of the Adventist church, whose doctrines she helped form in its formative years. If she had, she would have been dishonest in claiming to have visions and inspired counsel that supported their view.

James White made the quote, which Moon has used small parts of, but do not expect to see the entire quote from the pen of Dr. Jerry Moon.

It is astonishing that the Ellen G. White Estate itself also altered White’s quote, leaving out the context:

Our forefathers consistently were averse to the doctrine of the Trinity as defined in church creeds, notably the Methodist. They saw in it an element that "spiritualized" away both Jesus Christ and God. James White in a letter sent to the Day Star and published in the issue of January 24, 1846, speaks of—

“A certain class who deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. This class can be no other than those who spiritualize away the existence of the Father and the Son, as two distinct, literal, tangible persons, also a literal Holy city and throne of David…. The way
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spiritualizers this way have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural trinitarian creed.” [http://whiteestate.org/books/egww/EGWWc05.htm](http://whiteestate.org/books/egww/EGWWc05.htm)

Both Dr. Jerry Moon and the Ellen G. White Estate are guilty of breaking journalistic ethics by lifting part of a sentence out of context without using the ellipsis to indicate such. By doing this, both sources have implied that there is nothing more to the quote, thus manipulating its meaning. The relevant part of James White’s quotation, all of it, appears below:

"The way spiritualizers have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural Trinitarian creed viz., that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain scripture testimony in abundance that he is the Son of the eternal God." (James White, Jan 24 1846, The Day Star)

Please take note, dear reader, that the “spiritualizers” the White’s opposed were those doctrines which hold that Jesus was “the eternal God”, a position held by every version of a trinity doc trine, including the hybrid tritheistic version of the modern Adventist church. This point of “spiritualizers” and this misuse use of the White’s words is one of the major keystones for Story One, or as Moon put it earlier, “The conceptual key that unlocks the enigma of Ellen White’s developmental process regarding the Trinity …”

Moon--The suggestion that there is a dual linkage here—spiritualizers with philosophical trinitarians, and Ellen’s concept of a personal God with James’s antitrinitarianism—may sound far-fetched to many readers. But consider the wording of a typical trinitarian creed of the time. One aspect of traditional trinitarianism espoused by some Protestant creeds, but rejected by several early Adventists, was the somewhat curious statement that “There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts.” Early Adventists read this creedal statement as describing a shapeless, amorphous God who could morph from one to three and from three to one because He had no certain form. This they vigorously refuted, citing several Bible passages that portrayed God as having both “body” and “parts.”
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Response-- Absolutely the Whites vigorously opposed the notion that God had no form. Then again, all trinity doctrines teach the same, including the hybrid Adventist trinity. Why? Because all trinities teach that God is not a single person, but rather, is either a single divine Being made up of three persons (hypostases) or a group of beings called God. Only a single person can have a body with parts.

Moon---The question of God’s form was evidently on the mind of Ellen White as well, because twice in early visions of Jesus, she asked Him questions related to the “form” and “person” of God. In one early vision, she “saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus’ countenance,” she said, “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.’”

About 1850 she reported, “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.’” Thus she gained visionary confirmation of what her husband had written in the Day-Star in 1846, that the Father and the Son are “two distinct, literal, tangible persons.” In terms of the trinitarian question, this statement is ambiguous. By itself it contains nothing contradictory to early Adventist antitrinitarianism, nor does it directly contradict her trinitarian statements of 1897-1905.

Response-- Wrong! This is not the slightest bit compatible with the trinity doctrine. Again, Ellen White saw in vision that God had a form. How can God have a form if God is three forms, or is the name of a group of two forms and one shape-shifting form?

Moon--Other hints of her early views came in 1858 with the publication of the first volume of Spiritual Gifts. Her belief in the Holy Spirit is not in question, for she links the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in Christ’s baptismal narrative. But she does not mention the Holy Spirit in connection
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with the divine councils about creation and the plan of salvation. These statements, like the 1850 statements above, were ambiguous, in the sense that they could be read without conflict from either a trinitarian or non-trinitarian point of view.

Response--The author insists on using language that is misleading as to the actual beliefs of Ellen and James White. The author keeps using “the Father” as to refer to a person of the trinity, and not as the Whites used the term, which was that the Father is God Himself. But unless he and other trinitarian Adventists do this, there no credibility whatsoever for their assertions. But in regard to the baptismal narrative, she wrote in the “trinitarian” book The Desire of Ages-

Desire of Ages p 111, 112, (1898)
“The Saviour’s glance seems to penetrate heaven as He pours out His soul in prayer. Well He knows how sin has hardened the hearts of men, (p 112) and how difficult it will be for them to discern His mission, and accept the gift of salvation. He pleads with the Father for power to overcome their unbelief, to break the fetters with which Satan has enthrallad them, and in their behalf to conquer the destroyer. He asks for the witness that God accepts humanity in the person of His Son. Never before have the angels listened to such a prayer. They are eager to bear to their loved Commander a message of assurance and comfort. But no; the Father Himself will answer the petition of His Son. Direct from the throne issue the beams of His glory. The heavens are opened, and upon the Saviour's head descends a dovelike form of purest light,--fit emblem of Him, the meek and lowly One.

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.’ 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. John had been deeply moved as he saw Jesus bowed as a suppliant, pleading with tears for the approval of the Father. As the glory of God encircled Him, and the voice from heaven was heard, John recognized the token which God had promised. He knew that it was the world’s Redeemer whom he had baptised. The Holy Spirit rested upon him, and with outstretched hand pointing to Jesus, he cried, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

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As can be seen here, Ellen White describes the Holy Spirit as “the glory of God”, the “beams of His glory”, “the light that ever surrounds the throne of God”, a “dovelike form of purest light”..an emblem of Christ. There is no hint of the “third being” Holy Spirit in his account.

Moon--Perhaps her first statement that clearly disagreed with her antitrinitarian colleagues came in 1869 in a landmark chapter, “The Sufferings of Christ,” where in the opening paragraph she asserted on the basis of Heb 1:3; Col 1:19; and Phil 2:6 that Christ in His pre-existence was “equal with God.” Here it became evident that if no one else was listening, her husband was. Though James White’s early statements about the Trinity were uniformly negative, by 1876 and 1877 he was following his wife’s lead.

In an editorial comparison of the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists with Seventh Day Baptists, James included the Trinity among the doctrines which “neither [SDAs nor SDBs] regard as tests of Christian character,” that is, tests of fellowship. James now held that one could believe in the Trinity and still be an Adventist in good standing, because the Trinity was not a test of membership.

Response-- More slick wordplay from Dr. Moon. Ellen White did in fact confirm Christ’s equality with God, but the church never held a Principles of Faith that denied the equality of Christ with God, only that this equality was bestowed upon Him by God the Father- a view that never changed for the church or for Ellen White.

This is where the assertion is made that James White was beginning to change his beliefs to agree with his wife’s growing trinitarian view. This argument is made on a false view of history, that is, that James White once denied the divinity of Christ and his equality with God. There is not a single statement ever used by Story One advocates where James White denies either Christ’s divinity or His equality with God. The truth is that Ellen and James White had always agreed that Christ was given His equality with God by God Himself. Please note that the following quote was made six years after the publishing of The Desire of Ages:
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8 Testimonies for the Church p 268 (1904)

“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.”

This statement is unambiguous in the affirmation that Christ is the Son of God, and is not playing a role called “God the Son.” God the Person, not the trinity, is the Father of Christ. According to Ellen White in 1904, Christ was given his equality with God. Have you noticed yet that Dr. Moon does not use complete statements in his examples, but only fragments? Have you noticed that the context he provides are his own interpolations, and not from the actual documents he is quoting?

Moon then goes on to say that James White had no problem with the trinity because he did not use it as a test of fellowship. However, the words “test of fellowship” are those of Dr. Moon and not James White. James White may have believed that one can have a Christian character who believed in the trinity, or that those who did not have the light on the issue could still be saved. We do not know because Dr. Moon does not provide any context at all or evidence for his assertion; we are simply asked to believe him.

Regardless, the early Adventist church rejected creeds of all kinds, which is why there was no church manual or “enforced” “Fundamental Beliefs” until the semi-trinitarian FBs of 1946. In White’s day, the church did not disfellowship for doctrine but to restore those who had fallen into sin. Dr. Moon uses this as proof that since people were not disfellowshipped for their views on the personality of God and Christ, that it means James White was changing his own views. What a leap! The truth is there is not a single example of anyone ever being disfellowshipped for their views of the Godhead in James White’s day. At the same time, there is no evidence of anyone keeping the trinity doctrine. In other words, this did not imply growth to a trinitarian position based on a “new tolerance”, since the early church had always been tolerant of some varying views, knowing that they would be won to the doctrinal truth when joining the church.

Today, ironically, the trinity is sometimes a test of fellowship (though it is not supposed to be). If you do not believe in the trinity you are in many cases disfellowshipped, since it is now an enforced “Fundamental Belief.”
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Moon—“Adventists hold the divinity of Christ so nearly with the trinitarian,” he continued, “that we apprehend no trial [controversy] here.” Clearly James was moving away from his early polemics against trinitarianism.

Response—As we get closer to the close of Moon’s arguments and points you will find an increase in his use of the word “clearly”. This is a common tactic among apologists and debaters.

I do not mind the use of “clearly” when it is true. But when it is accompanied by a single sentence out of context, then a red flag goes up. This is true of the statement above. James White did indeed say, “Adventists hold the divinity of Christ so nearly with the trinitarian that we apprehend no trial [controversy] here.”

But let us look at what is really being said and what is not.

James White is NOT saying-
1- That Seventh-day Adventists believed that Christ had no beginning, was not God’s actual Son, or that He was not subordinate to God the Father. 2- That Seventh-day Adventists believed that Christ was the Almighty and eternal God Himself.

Moon is implying the opposite. Moon means to say that White’s comment means that Seventh-day Adventists had come to define divinity the same way that trinitarians did. This is certainly not what James White was saying. White was saying that Seventh-day Adventists believed that Christ was divine, period. He was saying that we believe Christ is just as divine as trinitarians do.

One thing we can do, and must do, in verifying the intent of such quotes is to realize that neither James White nor Ellen White operated in a vacuum. By that I mean to say that they functioned within their church and had fellow brethren that shared their views, faced the same problems and were brought to answer the same questions. To this extent, they made similar comments regarding similar issues. Here is a contemporary and parallel statement by another pioneer that mirrors and expands James White’s thought.

Joseph H. Waggoner - “Many theologians really think that the Atonement, in respect to its dignity and efficacy, rests upon the doctrine of the trinity. But we
fail to see any connection between the two. To the contrary, the advocates of that doctrine really fall into the difficulty which they seem anxious to avoid. Their difficulty consists in this: **They take the denial of a trinity to be equivalent to a denial of the divinity of Christ. Were that the case, we should cling to the doctrine as tenaciously as any can; but it is not the case.** They who have read our remarks on the death of the Son of God know that we firmly believe in the divinity of Christ; but we cannot accept the idea of a trinity, as it is held by Trinitarians, without giving up our claim on the dignity of the sacrifice made for our redemption. (J. H. Waggonner, 1884, The Atonement In The Light Of Nature And Revelation, pp 164, 165)

Here is another example of parallel statements regarding the trinity made by James White and a colleague:

**James White**—"Here we might mention the Trinity, which does away with the individual personality of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and of sprinkling or pouring instead of being "buried with Christ in baptism," "planted in the likeness of his death:" but we pass from these fables to notice one that is held sacred by nearly all professed Christians, both Catholic and Protestant. It is, the change of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment..." (James White, Dec 11 1855, Review and Herald, Vol. 7, no. 11, P 85 Par 16)

**J. N. Andrews** - "The doctrine of the Trinity which was established in the church by the council of Nice, A. D. 325... **This doctrine destroys the personality of God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.** The infamous measures by which it was forced upon the church which appear upon the pages of ecclesiastical history might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush. (J. N. Andrews, March 6, 1855, Review and Herald, Vol. 6, No. 24, P. 185)

In the above examples, both men agree that the trinity “does away with” or “destroys” the individual personality of God. And while trinitarian Adventists deny it, even their own hybrid version of the trinity, like all trinity doctrines, does away with the individual personality of God, replacing it with three divine beings that together are called God. All trinity doctrines are in agreement that God is not a singular person, therefore all versions of the trinity fail on this point.

**Moon**—A year later, 1877, in a *Review* article titled, “Christ is equal with God,” he showed he was in sympathy with certain aspects of trinitarianism. “The inexplicable trinity that makes the godhead three in one and one in three is bad enough,” he wrote, “but ultra Unitarianism that makes Christ..."
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inferior to the Father is worse.”
In asserting Christ’s equality with the Father, James was echoing what his wife had written eight years earlier.

Response-- Once again, James White was stating a position that he and the church had always held. To imply that he did not believe this until his wife “moved toward trinitarianism” is misleading at best and dishonest at worst. Please notice, which apparently the author did not, that in the above quote, James White wrote “the inexplicable trinity is bad enough”. What part of that comment implies a move toward an acceptance, or “sympathy with certain aspects” of trinitarianism? As was already said, James White always believed in the divinity of Christ and was only stating the truth, which is that to believe Christ was not given equality with God is just as unscriptural or worse as saying He is God Himself. James White was contrasting two extremes, ultra-Unitarianism on one hand, which believed Christ was “just a man”, and trinitarianism on the other hand that believed Christ was the Almighty God Himself.

Moon--For another evidence of her leading her colleagues, note that her assertions that Christ was uncreated preceded by more than two decades Uriah Smith’s published acceptance of that concept.

Response- It is a well known fact that Uriah Smith was one of the very few, possibly the only, true Arian in the church. As I stated earlier, the pioneer church was tolerant of different views in hopes of bringing people to the truth by Bible study. Such was the case with Uriah Smith on the Godhead. Smith eventually came around to the established view of the church on the divinity and origin of Christ. But certainly that is not evidence of a church wide acceptance of trinitarianism, especially when Smith, like all the pioneers, did not ever become trinitarian.

Moon--Brick by conceptual brick, (perhaps without even being aware of it herself) she was slowly but surely dismantling the substructure of the antitrinitarian view, and building a trinitarian view.
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Response-- I hope you, dear reader, are beginning to see how far-fetched Story One really is. We have already established that these “conceptual bricks” exist only in the minds of men like Dr. Moon, E.R. Gane and L.E. Froom. They were spun from straw on a loom of dismantled and then poorly reconstructed history.

Moon---In another clear break with the prevailing semi-Arian consensus, she declared in 1878 that Christ was the “eternal Son.” Ellen White did not understand his eternal Sonship to imply derivation from the Father. Sonship in His preexistence denoted that He was of the same nature as the Father, in unity and close relationship with the Father, but it did not imply that Christ had a beginning. For in taking human flesh Christ became the Son of God “in a new sense.” From the perspective of His humanity, He for the first time had a “beginning,” and also, as a human, He began a new relationship of dependence on the Father.

Response-- Here, the author takes two words, “eternal Son” out of context, and then applies an entire story. He gives the thoughts, heart and intent of Ellen White of what Ellen White meant by two words in 1878. What is interesting about this is that this happened in a time, and even afterwards, when Ellen White supposedly had not yet changed her in view in any way, and was making dozens, perhaps hundreds, of statements to just the opposite effect as what Moon is attempting to pin in her.

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

Review and Herald, 9 March 1897 (one year prior to publishing Desire of Ages)
“And this is life eternal, that they might know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” To render acceptable service to God, it is essential that we should know God, to whom we belong, in order that we may be thankful and obedient, contemplating and adoring him for his wonderful love to men. We could not rejoice in and praise a being of whom we had no certain knowledge; but God has sent Christ to the world to make manifest his paternal character.
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Desire of Ages (1898) p 21.

“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.”

In reality, any statement that says “His Father”, or “God’s only begotten Son” is an admission that Christ did not “enter into the role of a Son”, but is God’s actual and literal Son. There is not a single quote from Ellen White, nor a verse of text that would even seem to suggest otherwise. As such, one could take every reference in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy that says “God’s Son”, “Christ’s Father”, “My Father”, “My Son”, and rightfully say it is an antitrinitarian statement. How many statements would that add up to?

The hybrid tritheistic trinity depends on certain wording for its support. Phrases such as “The Father”, “The Son” and “The Holy Ghost” are vital to the theory that One God exists in three co-eternal and co-equal and non-relational “persons”, and that each “took a role” in the plan of salvation. That these “roles” were “the Father”, “the Son” and “the Holy Ghost”, using words that are the closest that God is capable of using for our understanding (apparently God is not capable of communicating clearly with His creation). Phrases such as “God’s Son”, “His Son” and “My Father” explicitly imply a real paternal relationship and are avoided at all cost by Adventist trinitarian apologists. That is why if you go back and read through Moon’s entire essay you will not find these phrases such as “God’s Son” and “Christ’s Father” flowing freely from his pen. Neither will you find phrases like “God and Christ”, but rather “The Father and the Son”.

Moon—“In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. Said the angel to Mary, ‘The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.’ While the Son of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense. Thus He stood in our world—the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race. . . . “From all eternity Christ was united with the Father, and when He took upon Himself human nature, He was still one with God [emphasis supplied].”
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Response— Let us use our common sense for a moment. If in His incarnation Christ became the Son of God in a “new sense”, does not logic demand that there must have been an “old sense” in which He was God’s Son as well? Of course it does. Dr. Moon must be pretty desperate to be using an antitrinitarian statement as proof of a move toward trinitarianism on the part of Ellen White. The “old sense” was that Christ was not a human baby, but the Majesty of heaven, Michael the Prince, a divine spiritual being. Jesus was the Son of God in new sense when he took on fallen humanity, was born in the conventional sense, and lived as a human being, yet retaining the divine character.

Moon— An even more fundamental departure from the “old view” emerged in 1888, in the context of the struggle over the law in Galatians [3:19–3:25] and a clearer view of justification through substitutionary atonement. Ellen White and others came to the realization that a broader concept of the atonement and of righteousness by faith demands the full Deity of Christ. “If men reject the testimony of the inspired Scriptures concerning the divinity of Christ,” she wrote, “it is in vain to argue the point with them; for no argument, however conclusive, could convince them. [1 Cor 2:14 quoted.] None who hold this error can have a true conception of the character or the mission of Christ, or of the great plan of God for man's redemption” (emphasis supplied). Christ is “one with the eternal Father,—one in nature, in character, and in purpose,” “one in power and authority,” she proclaimed, “the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.” The context shows that her phrase “the only being” contrasts Christ to the angels. Nevertheless, this statement precedes the fuller exposition of the role of the Holy Spirit.

Response— This is an even more fundamental departure? Departure from what? The Seventh-day Adventist church had always believed in the divinity of Christ. They also always believed in the atonement by Christ’s death. If anything, this would only make sense if it were being directed to trinitarians, or those who believed that Christ was the most high God. Ellen White herself stated that not even the death of a perfect angel could atone for our sins. Only the divine Son of God, who took on human nature for the purpose of death, could do it. He is the only being in the universe that
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could die as a propitiation for our sins.

E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones, the primary authors and preachers of the 1888 message regarding the law of Galatians, were both solidly anti-trinitarian. One of their main teachings was “Christ in you” by faith, and “the complete forgiveness of sins”. The message of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” is completely incompatible with trinitarianism, which believes it is a third being, the Holy Ghost, that is in you and not Christ. Why would Ellen White soundly support the anti-trinitarian message and views of Jones and Waggoner and at the same time rebuke them as being in error on the divinity and nature of Christ? Why would A.T. Jones, one of Ellen White’s biggest supporters, need to be warned to heed her counsel in 1888? Dr. Moon’s application of this quote does not make sense in terms of its historical context.

Moon—In 1890, she followed up her 1888 affirmation of Christ’s unity with the Father (in nature, character, and purpose) with perhaps her last major statement that can still be read ambiguously. “The Son of God shared the Father’s throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both.” Retrospectively, this phrase harmonizes perfectly with her later statements (especially Desire of Ages, 530) that Christ is “self-existent” and that His Deity is not “derived” from the Father. It is also possible, however, to read the sentence from a binitarian (two-person Godhead) or even semi-Arian (Christ inferior to the Father) perspective— that Jesus, exalted to the Father’s throne in the presence of the angels, was “encircled” by “the glory of the eternal, self-existent One,” i.e., the Father. Patriarchs and Prophets, where the phrase appears, was an amplification of an earlier work, Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1 (1870), where the corresponding phrase says simply, “The Son was seated on the throne with the Father.” The surrounding context in both works is similar, reflecting her earlier perspective, while the new phrase, “the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both,” reflects her growing understanding in 1890.

Response— Not only is this statement non-trinitarian, it is one of the most blatant anti-trinitarian statements to come from the pen of Ellen White. First, it says “The Son of God”, which as we saw, is an antitrinitarian statement in itself when speaking of the pre-incarnate Christ. Second, the glory of the self-existent One (not two) encircled them both. What is this
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“glory of the self-existent One”? It is the same glory that came down from the Father’s throne at Jesus’ baptism. It is the same glory that descend as a dove of light on Christ. It is God the Father’s shekina glory, the Holy Spirit, that rested upon Christ as an anointing from God. But like we did earlier, let us see what this is not saying.

It is not saying that Christ was not begotten in the days of eternity. It is not saying that Christ is not God’s actual Son. It is not saying that the Holy Spirit is a separate living being. What it is saying is that Christ is God’s Son. And what it is saying is that God’s glory encircled them both, like it did at Christ’s baptism. What it is saying, when taken in context with the baptism story in The Desire of Ages, is that the Holy Spirit is the glory of God.

Moon-- A pamphlet published in 1897 carried the next major component in her developing doctrine of God, that the Holy Spirit is “the third person of the Godhead.” This concept would receive wider attention and more permanent form in The Desire of Ages (1898), where she repeated and emphasized the previous two points: “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, undervived,” and the Holy Spirit is the “Third Person of the Godhead.”

Response-- We have already covered these issues, but let us briefly review. First, Ellen White’s reference to “the third person of the Godhead” is not meant to be taken as saying that the Holy Spirit is an actual separate being, like modern Adventists believe. Ellen White consistently referred to Christ and God as “beings” and never once uses this term to describe the Holy Spirit. When one researches Ellen White’s definition of this statement, she is talking about “the life of Christ in the soul”, the “divinity of Christ’s character”, and the omnipresence of Christ and of God. We will get into the nuts and bolts of this as we move along to the next section regarding J.H. Kellogg’s trinitarianism.

Moon--In 1899 she confirmed the other side of the paradox, that in His “person,” Christ was “distinct” from the Father. Here the essential trinitarian paradox of the unity of God in a plurality of persons is clearly articulated, and her trinitarianism is essentially complete.
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Response—What this really means is that Story One is almost finished, and that Moon is desperately misusing the word “clearly” again. In clarifying that God and Christ were separate beings, or “persons” in this case, Ellen White was not moving away from, but was affirming, the Principles of Faith of the church she was a member of.

Moon—All that remains for her capstone statements of 1901 and 1905 is to affirm most explicitly that the three “eternal heavenly dignitaries,” the “three highest powers in heaven,” the “three living persons of the heavenly trio,” are one in nature, character, and purpose, but not in person.

Thus there is a clear progression from the simple to the complex, suggesting that Ellen White’s understanding did grow and change as she received additional light. Fernando Canale has pointed out that this progression is similar to the one presented in the NT. In the gospels, the first challenge was to convince the disciples that Christ was one with the Father. Once their concept of monotheism had been expanded to accept “one God” in two divine persons, it was comparatively easy to lead them to recognize the Holy Spirit as a third divine person.

Response—This is what we are being asked to believe; that by 1890 Ellen White did not believe or agree to the fundamental beliefs of the church she helped found. Dr. Moon is now asserting that Ellen White, while saying that the church was built on a solid theological foundation, has now fully turned away from that foundation and is trying to bring the church with her by using occasional “trinitarian” comments to undermine the Principles of Faith of her church, which were held and published until after her death. How insidious that trinitarian Adventists now have Ellen White playing the role of Judas!

Also, in the New testament, the disciples by no means were taught to believe that Jesus and the Father were “One God”. There is not a single verse to support that. When Jesus said, “My Father and I are one”, it was in the context of saying that He wanted his disciples to be one in the very same way. Jesus did not claim to be “the one true God” even once in the entire Bible.

We now move to the close of the theory of Story One, and its convoluting of the events surrounding John Harvey Kellogg’s trinitarian conversion. Since John Harvey Kellogg stated that he had come to accept
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the trinity doctrine based on Ellen White’s writings, and that Ellen White’s response was that he completely misunderstood her writings, to the point of saying he was influenced by Satan, Story One has some major damage control on its hands.

Moon--As noted above, Ellen White’s writings on the Godhead address at least two distinct varieties of trinitarian belief—one she consistently opposed, and another she eventually came to agree with. Her differentiation between these two views of the Trinity became most explicit during the Kellogg crisis of 1902-1907.

Response- We now know that this is not true, and that both Ellen White and her husband consistently rejected any teaching that made Christ “the eternal God” or implied that He was not the literal Son of God. The theory that Moon is trying set up here, that Ellen White differentiated between an “acceptable trinity” and an “unacceptable trinity” is not founded upon factual information but on a consistent pattern of misinformation.
Chapter 19 - The Kellogg Controversy

It seems no discussion of Adventist history would be complete without bringing up J.H. Kellogg’s *Living Temple* apostasy and what it meant to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Story Two supporters point to Kellogg’s trinitarianism and the subsequent rebuke from Ellen White as evidence that she was not at any time trinitarian, since she had said that Satan was leading Kellogg during the time of his “trinitarian conversion”. This leaves some serious damage control work for Story One, in order to maintain that Ellen White had become fully trinitarian by the time Kellogg apostatized. Story One propagators then assert that Ellen White only condemned a certain wrong application of Kellogg’s trinitarianism, while upholding the trinity doctrine and making a distinction between her “true trinity” and Kellogg’s “false trinity”. In other words, it is the same theory that Moon made regarding the Millerite “spiritualizers” only this time it is applied to Kellogg.

Does history support this assertion?

Moon--Because certain of the writings of both J. H. Kellogg and Ellen White during this period have been seriously misunderstood in recent years, it is necessary to consider this controversy in some detail.

Response-- Dr. Moon is right that the Kellogg controversy has been seriously misunderstood. Most knowledgeable Adventists know that Kellogg taught pantheism in his book *The Living Temple* and that much controversy surrounded its publishing. However, most do not realize that Kellogg was one of the first trinitarians in the Seventh-day Adventist
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Church. Even fewer know that he was married to a trinitarian Seventh-day Baptist woman and that much of what he learned about the nature and personality of God he learned from his wife’s trinitarian Seventh-day Baptist pastor. But putting all of that aside for now, let’s hear Moon’s explanation.

**Moon**---Dr. J. H. Kellogg, medical superintendent of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, was the leading person of scientific credentials among SDAs at the turn of the twentieth century. *Possibly influenced by intellectual companions from outside Adventism,…* (emphasis and ellipsis mine)

**Response**-- Here, the author neglects to mention that these “intellectual companions” included his Seventh-day Baptist wife and her pastor. And according to experts in Adventist history, there is no doubt as to the influence of both on Kellogg’s theology.

**Moon**--- …he eventually theorized that the life of every living thing—whether tree, flower, animal, or human—was the very presence of God within it. His view was a form of pantheism, of which traces can be found in his public presentations in the 1890s, but the “crisis” did not break until 1902.

Following the Battle Creek Sanitarium fire of February 18, 1902, Kellogg proposed a fund-raising plan to finance the rebuilding. He would donate to the Review and Herald Publishing Association the manuscript for a new book on health. If the Review and Herald would donate the costs of publishing, and if the 73,000 members that composed the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1902 would undertake to sell 500,000 copies at one dollar each, the proceeds would both pay off long-standing debts and rebuild the sanitarium. This plan was accepted. *The Living Temple* was primarily a handbook on basic physiology, nutrition, preventive medicine, and home treatments for common ailments. But the title page quoted 1 Cor 6:19 about the body being the “temple of the Holy Ghost,” and here and there Kellogg incorporated his theological views. (ellipsis mine)

**Response**-- So far, so good. But then again he has not yet discussed Kellogg’s trinitarianism or Ellen White’s response to it.
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**Moon**—While preliminary readers of the manuscript were pleased with what it said about physiology, they sharply criticized some of its speculations about the doctrine of God. Despite this criticism, Kellogg pressed ahead with publication. On December 30, 1902, however, while the Review and Herald Publishing Association was in the midst of printing the first edition, the publishing house burned to the ground. Among other losses were the printing plates and unfinished copies of *The Living Temple*. Kellogg promptly took the manuscript to another printer and contracted for 3,000 copies at his own expense.

When the book was finally distributed, **the most flagrant departures from established Adventist theology** appeared in the opening chapter, “The Mystery of Life.” “God is the explanation of nature,” Kellogg declared, “–not a God outside of nature, but in nature, manifesting himself through and in all the objects, movements, and varied phenomena of the universe. (bold mine)

**Response**—It is nice to see Dr. Moon affirming that there was indeed an “established Adventist theology” at the time of Dr. Kellogg’s book in 1902. He is also right in saying that many criticized him for his view of the doctrine of God, which was contrary to the Principles of Faith of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As to the rest, it really bears no relevance to the issue at hand.

**Moon**—Evidently reacting to some of his prepublication critics, Kellogg sought to blunt or circumvent their objections by specific reference to the Holy Spirit. He reasoned that if the Holy Spirit could be everywhere at once, and if the Holy Spirit were also a Person, then no one could say that the God Kellogg set forth as dwelling in all things was an impersonal God. “How can power be separated from the source of power?” Kellogg asked? “Where God’s Spirit is at work, where God’s power is manifested, God himself is actually and truly present.” In claiming that God’s power equals His presence, Kellogg blurs his logic, as a brief example will show. A military commander can issue orders to mobilize the armed forces, and through those orders the leader’s power reaches right down to the home of an individual soldier, but that’s clearly different from the commander visiting that home in person.

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Response-- While Kellogg’s pantheistic conclusions are very much wrong, the Spirit of Prophecy has abundant evidence that the Holy Spirit is Christ’s actual presence. The early Adventist church rightly believed that Christ was present by His own Holy Spirit, which is not compatible with a “third being” Holy Ghost.

Review and Herald, 4 January (1887) p 7
“When the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart, like sweet fragrance it cannot be hidden. The holy influence it reflects through the character will be manifest to all. Christ will be formed within, “the hope of glory.” His light and his love will be there; his presence will be felt. There have been times when the blessing of God has been bestowed in answer to prayer, so that when others have come into the room, no sooner did they step over the threshold than they exclaimed. “The Lord is here!” Not a word had been uttered; but the blessed influence of God’s holy presence was sensibly felt. The joy that comes from Jesus Christ was there; and in this sense the Lord had been in the room just as verily as he walked through the streets of Jerusalem, or appeared to the disciples when they were in the upper chamber, and said, “Peace be unto you.”

Desire of Ages p. 270 (1898)
“Jesus came to “destroy the works of the devil.” “In Him was life,” and He says, ‘I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.’ He is ‘a quickening spirit.’ 1 John 3:8; John 1:4; 10:10; 1 Cor. 15:45. And He still has the same life-giving power as when on earth He healed the sick, and spoke forgiveness to the sinner. He ‘forgiveth all thine iniquities,’ He “healeth all thy diseases.” Psalm 103:3.”

John 14:17-20
“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 in me, and I in you.”

Colporteur Ministry, p 107
“The Lord Jesus standing by the side of the canvasser, walking with them, is the chief worker. If we recognize Christ as the One who is with us to prepare the way, the Holy Spirit by our side will make impressions in just the lines needed.”
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1888 Materials, p 58, 59
“Could our eyes have been opened, we could have seen Jesus in our midst with His holy angels. Many felt His grace and His presence in rich measure…. We knew that the sin pardoning Saviour was in our midst…I knew that Jesus was in our midst.”

Letter 296, 9 September, 1906 (letter to O.A. Olsen); the Upward Look, p 266
“As disciples they are to learn continually of Christ, to lift up their thoughts, to enlarge their expectations, and to have the loftiest conceptions of His excellence and grace, that the endowment of His Holy Spirit may compensate for the loss of His personal presence.

Kellogg partly understood Ellen White’s writings, but then came to a wrong conclusion about how omnipresence works, and that it was his belief in a literal third being that largely constituted his misunderstanding of omnipresence. Ellen White, however, unmistakably defined this “third person” in the following way:

MSR# 1084 – 7; MS 5a,
“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 [Christ] would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.”

Moon---Then Kellogg spins his defining metaphor—the most quoted paragraph from The Living Temple: “Suppose now we have a boot before us,—not an ordinary boot, but a living boot, and as we look at it, we see little boots crowding out at the seams, pushing out at the toes, dropping off at the heels, and leaping out at the top,—scores, hundreds, thousands of boots, a swarm of boots continually issuing from our living boot,—would we not be compelled to say, ‘There is a shoemaker in the boot’? So there is present in the tree a power which creates and maintains it, a tree-maker in the tree, a flower-maker in the flower,… an infinite, divine, though invisible Presence . . . which is ever declaring itself by its ceaseless, beneficent activity.”

Response-- Once again, nobody is controverting the fact that Kellogg taught a form of pantheism.
Moon---Kellogg’s theory was vigorously debated in the church for several years. Since leading Adventists had pointed out its weaknesses, Ellen White hoped at first that it would not be necessary for her to get involved. But by September 1903 Kellogg’s views were gaining adherents. When he claimed publicly that the teachings of *The Living Temple* “regarding the personality of God” were in accord with the writings of Ellen White, she could remain silent no longer. “God forbid that this opinion should prevail,” she declared. “We need not the mysticism that is in this book,” she continued. “[The writer of this book is on a false track. He has lost sight of the distinguishing truths for this time. He knows not whither his steps are tending. The track of truth lies close beside the track of error, and both may seem to be one to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit, and which, therefore, are not quick to discern the difference between truth and error.”

Response--- Ellen White was right to say that Kellogg’s views were not in harmony with her own. Kellogg had misunderstood her statements, just like many do today to support their own theories. Ellen White was also right in saying that the track of truth and the track of error lie side by side, and are not distinguished by minds that are not worked by the Holy Spirit of God.

Moon---In a follow-up letter, she zeroed in on the core issue: “The Lord Jesus . . . did not represent God as an essence pervading nature, but as a personal being. Christians should bear in mind that God has a personality as verily as has Christ.”

Response-- Ellen responds to Kellogg’s pantheistic trinitarianism with a blatantly antitrinitarian statement! Look at this statement closely:

“The Lord Jesus . . . did not represent *God* as an essence pervading nature, but as *a* personal being (singular) . . .”

This statement distinguishes between Christ and God. Note that she did not refer to “God the Father and God the Son”, but Jesus Christ *and* God.

Did you catch the other point here? Kellogg believed that the Holy
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Spirit was the essence pervading nature, and Ellen White is correcting his view that the Holy Spirit does not pervade all nature. But Ellen White did not say, “The Holy Spirit does not represent God as an essence…”, but rather, she said, “*Jesus Christ* does not represent God as an essence…” This is more proof that Ellen White was in agreement with the church that the Holy Spirit was Christ’s omnipresence, and that the Holy Spirit is Christ Himself divested of His humanity and independent thereof. But Kellogg misunderstood Ellen White’s view of omnipresence. The proper view of omnipresence is that God and Christ are everywhere present, not that they are literally the things they created. God *controls* His creation, He is not the substance of His creation.

Moon--A few weeks later, in a letter to former General Conference president G. I. Butler, Kellogg defended his view: “As far as I can fathom the difficulty which is found in the Living Temple [sic], the whole thing may be simmered down to this question: Is the Holy Ghost a person? You say No.” (Butler was of the older antitrinitarian school who held that the Holy Spirit was an aspect or power of God, but not a person.)

Response-- Here is where it gets interesting, and where trinitarianism finally comes into play. Dr. Moon is now asking us to believe that *neither* John Harvey Kellogg, *nor* G.I. Butler, a General Conference President, understood the writings and teachings of Ellen White regarding the Godhead. On one hand we have Dr. Kellogg, who believes that the Holy Spirit is an actual personal being. On the other hand we have G.I. Butler who, assuming he has read *The Desire of Ages* and is familiar with the writings of the church’s prophet, believes that Ellen White meant something else when she used the expression “third person of the Godhead”. Which of the two was rebuked harshly by Ellen White? Was G.I. Butler and like-minded believers ever corrected by Ellen White for holding an “erroneous view of the Godhead”? The answer is an unequivocal “No.”

Moon---Kellogg continued: “I had supposed the Bible said this [that the Holy Spirit is a person] for the reason that the personal pronoun ‘he’ is used in speaking of the Holy Ghost. Sister White uses the pronoun ‘he’ and has said in so many words that the Holy Ghost is the third person of the
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God-head [sic]. How the Holy Ghost can be the third person and not be a person at all is difficult for me to see.”

Response-- Apparently, John Harvey Kellogg was a brilliant man regarding his medical knowledge, his creative dietary programs and his business savvy, but that did not make him much of a Bible scholar if he was not led by God’s Spirit when he read the Scriptures.

Kellogg misunderstood the writings of Ellen White much the same way that people do today. I will admit that if one were to take her writings out of context, using a sentence here and a sentence there, one could become confused about her teachings on the Holy Spirit. But when taken in the whole, it is very obvious that there is more to her use of “third person” than initially meets the eye. If a person is conditioned to see certain words through trinitarian eyes, then phrases like “third person of the Godhead” will be assumed as being intended in the trinitarian sense.

Such was not the case with Ellen White, who while using “third person of the godhead” on a couple of occasions, also gave ample information as to avoid the appearance of teaching the trinity. One of the ways she did this was by directly defining the “third person of the Godhead” as “[Christ] Himself divested of the encumbrances of humanity”, “The life of Christ”, “The presence of Christ”, “The power of Christ” and “Christ the Comforter”. With all of these easily accessible to the common reader there was no reason to assume she was teaching the trinity doctrine by her use of these words.

Today, it is a bit more difficult to clarify because of the alterations, out of context usages and historical deconstruction of her writings. Those who would attempt to illustrate the trinity within her writings go out on a limb to make them say what she did not intend. This is what she rebuked John Harvey Kellogg for. But even then, this rebuke was worded to include nameless others who were guilty of the same or similar.

Moon—Here is a fascinating example of Kellogg as a debater. Essentially he is saying, “I have been misunderstood. I didn’t claim that the Father is in everything; it is the Holy Spirit who is in everything. And if the Holy Spirit is a person, then Ellen White is wrong in saying my view undermines the personality of God.” Thus he sought to outmaneuver Ellen White’s reproof and maintain the legitimacy of his own opinion.
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Response-- Yes, that is what Kellogg was implying, but the problem is that Ellen White never taught that the Holy Spirit was a separate individual being. And you will not find a single quotation from her that says it is. Also, he was saying that the personal presence of God pervades His creation, that essentially God is His creation because the Holy Spirit, being a “part of the trinity”, is in everything. This was one of the main objections to Kellogg’s views.

Moon--Butler’s reply, however, shows that he was not fooled. “So far as Sister White and you being in perfect agreement is concerned, I shall have to leave that entirely between you and Sister White. Sister White says there is not perfect agreement. You claim there is. . . . I must give her the credit. . . of saying there is a difference.”

Response-- Yes there was indeed a difference because, as we have seen, Ellen White did not teach the trinity doctrine in any form, and did not teach that the Holy Spirit was a separate personal being as part of a “three in one” God. Kellogg claimed that his trinitarian view was in harmony with Ellen White, but in reality it was a view he gained outside of Adventism by his Seventh-day Baptist wife and her pastor.

Moon--Kellogg is here telling half-truths to Butler, attempting to rationalize that the “pantheism” of Living Temple was simply a scientific perspective of the same doctrine that Ellen White had expressed in Desire of Ages. That was what Kellogg wanted his readers to believe, but that did not make it true, although Ellen White herself acknowledged that “to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit” it might seem so.

Response-- Ellen White was right in believing that to minds unworked by the Holy Spirit, it would seem she was teaching the personal being of the Holy Spirit and that God pervades His own creation. However, it should be noted again that while Kellogg’s theology was considered a “major crisis” and “the alpha pf apostasy”, there was not a single word of correction for the view of G.I. Butler and others who believed that the Holy Spirit was the omnipresence, power and life of Christ in the soul. If Butler and others were as wrong as Kellogg regarding the Godhead and the personality of
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God and of Christ, then how could she remain silent? In other words, there is not the corresponding indignation from Ellen White. Yet, if Moon is correct, she should have been just as adamant.

Moon--As the conflict dragged on into 1905, Ellen White wrote another document that exposed the matter to the church in such stark lines that it could not be misunderstood. The manuscript offered perhaps the most radical, foundational indictment she ever wrote against a false view of the Trinity, followed by her most explicit description of what she considered to be the true understanding of the Godhead. In this document, published in 1905, she labels the first view “spiritualistic,” “nothingness,” “imperfect, untrue,” “the trail of the serpent,” and “the depths of Satan.” She said those who received it were “giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, departing from the faith which they have held sacred for the past fifty years.” (bold mine)

Response- Did Ellen White speak against “a false trinity” or against the trinity, period? There’s a hint from the pen of Dr. Mo on himself in the last sentence of the above paragraph. I’ll repeat it again.

“…giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, departing from the faith which they have held sacred for the past fifty years.”

What doctrine regarding the personality of God was “held sacred” by the church for “the last fifty years” at the time Ellen White wrote that statement? Even Moon and his colleagues admit that the “personal being of the Holy Spirit” was the very last piece of trinitarianism to come into the church, long after the death of Ellen White. Ellen White was affirming two things here. First, that Kellogg was being led by Satan in his trinitarian pantheistic view. Second, that the church had a proper view of the personality of God for its entire fifty year history.

Moon---In contrast to this view which she unsparingly denounces, she sets forth another view which she regarded as “the right platform,” in harmony with “the simplicity of true godliness,” and “the old, ol d times . . . when,
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under the Holy Spirit’s guidance, thousands were converted in a day.” The antagonism between two opposing views could scarcely be drawn in more stringent terms in a theological context, than a disagreement between doctrines of “seducing spirits” and the doctrine of “the old, old times” of the original Pentecost. She is talking about two contrasting doctrines of the Trinity.

**Response**-- That cannot be since she just said that the views of the church regarding the personality of God had always been correct; that the views for “the last fifty years” were “the right platform”. And those views were unashamedly anti-trinitarian in every way.

Like we saw in Part One, Moon is trying to pick up momentum as he nears the end of his essay. However, every time he attempts this, he just goes further from the truth.

**Moon**---Here is the first, attributed explicitly to “Dr. Kellogg” and his associates in “our leading medical fraternity.”

“I am instructed to say, The sentiments of those who are searching for advanced scientific ideas are not to be trusted. Such representations as the following are made: ‘The Father is as the light invisible; the Son is as the light embodied; the Spirit is the light shed abroad.’ ‘The Father is like the dew, invisible vapor; the Son is like the dew gathered in beauteous form; the Spirit is like the dew fallen to the seat of life.’ Another representation: ‘The Father is like the invisible vapor; the Son is like the leaden cloud; the Spirit is rain fallen and working in refreshing power.’

“All these spiritualistic representations are simply no thingness. They are imperfect, untrue. They weaken and diminish the Majesty which no earthly likeness can be compared to. **God can not be compared with the things His hands have made.** These are mere earthly things, suffering under the curse of God because of the sins of man. **The Father can not be described by the things of earth [emphasis supplied].**” (bold mine)

**Response**-- Of course, this is true. Kellogg is trying to make a single Being, God, into three expressions of one Being. Not only is this a false view of God, it is trinitarian to the core. Sadly, I have heard similar expressions used in Sabbath School in recent years. But if God is “three in
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one” then these types of comparisons are to be expected. It is revealing that Ellen White was here rejecting every attempted explanation of the trinity as “spiritualistic”. She also, as illustrated by my bold and underlined emphasis, equated “God” directly with “The Father” and not a trinity of beings.

Moon—Then she defines what she understands to be the truth about the Godhead. “The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be ‘the express image of His person.’ ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Here is shown the personality of the Father.

“The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fulness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ [emphasis supplied].

Response—This statement by Ellen White is not in any way trinitarian, and it does not contradict the Principles of Faith of the Seventh day Adventist Church of that day. The heavenly trio are not here, or anywhere else, described as “personal beings”. The heavenly trio is comprised of “three powers”. One of these powers is God Himself, the “One true God” (John 17) who is the Father. Two of these powers are Divine Beings, God and His only begotten and fully divine Son, Jesus Christ. Three of these powers are divine personalities: God, His Son Jesus Christ and the Spirit of Christ. Please note the dates on the following quotations.

9Testimonies for the Church, 1909, p 189
“They have one God and one Saviour; and one Spirit--the Spirit of Christ--is to bring unity into their ranks.”

8 Testimonies for the Church, p 46 (1904)
“To our physicians and ministers I send the message: ….Shall we not wrestle
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with God in prayer, asking for the Holy Spirit to come into every heart? The presence of Christ, manifest among us, would cure the leprosy of unbelief that has made our service so weak and inefficient. We need the breath of the divine life breathed into us.

Advance Power for Service, 25 February, (1903) Receive the Holy Spirit, and your efforts will be successful. Christ's presence is what gives power.

Moon—In charging that Kellogg, with his “spiritualistic” trinity doctrine, was “departing from the faith” Adventists had “held sacred for the past fifty years,” she clearly refutes the assumption that all doctrines of the trinity are the same and that objection to one demands the rejection of all. She is clearly distinguishing between two varieties of trinitarianism.

Response—Here goes Moon once again with his emphasis on the word “clearly”. Let me ask you, in saying that Kellogg was departing from the faith that the church had “held sacred for the past fifty years”, was Ellen White in any way advocating any type of trinity doctrine? Did Ellen White, in her communication with Kellogg, ever attempt to distinguish between two kinds of trinity doctrines? The answer is simple, “No“.

Common sense and logic demand that:

-if she was distinguishing between trinity doctrines she would have said so somewhere in the communication, instead of responding in support of the historic non-trinitarian view of the church.
- That if the Seventh-day Adventist church in its first fifty years was antitrinitarian, which even Moon and his colleagues admit, there is no way she could be advocating any kind of trinity while at the same time saying that the truth regarding the personality of God was held by the non-trinitarian church.

Moon—Significantly, Ellen White condemns Kellogg’s view of the Trinity in almost identical terms to those used by her husband James in 1846 when he condemned the “old unscriptural trinitarian creed” for “spiritualiz[ing] away the existence of the Father and the Son, as two distinct, literal, tangible persons.” This parallelism supports the interpretation that she was at least in partial agreement with him in 1846, and that she later saw
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similarities between the creeds that claimed God was “invisible, without body or parts,” and Kellogg’s “spiritualistic representations” of God under metaphors of light and water.

**Response**— As we have already established, James and Ellen White’s non-trinitarian statements were not limited to the orthodox trinity, but to any trinity doctrine that made Christ “the eternal God”, since to make Christ God in that sense was to mean that God was not a singular person and that Christ was not God’s only begotten Son. Ellen White was not merely in “partial agreement” with her husband, but complete agreement. This document proves that fifty years later, she was still in perfect agreement with her husband’s, and the church’s, non-trinitarian theology.

**Moon**—Furthermore, Ellen White claims that in Kellogg’s heresy she “recognized the very sentiments” she had opposed among spiritualizing ex-Millerites in 1845 and 1846. The implication is that the spiritualizing of the post-disappointment fanatics, the creedal teaching that God is formless and intangible, and Kellogg’s impersonal concepts of God were all associated by James and Ellen White under the general heading of “spiritualistic theories.”

This is directly germane to the current debate, because some have claimed that Kellogg’s view which Ellen White condemned is the same view of the Trinity later accepted by the church—a claim that is not supported by the evidence. She clearly rejected any traditional view of the Trinity that made God seem distant, untouchable, or impersonal; and she embraced a literal, biblical view of the Trinity, a view that portrayed one God, subsisting in three divine personalities, who are perfectly united, hence one, in nature, character, purpose, and love.

**Response**— I will reprint the James White quote which Moon is referring to one more time for clarification and emphasis.

““The way spiritualizers have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural Trinitarian creed viz., *that Jesus Christ is the eternal God*, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain scripture testimony in abundance that he is the Son of the eternal God.” (James White, Jan 24 1846, The Day Star)
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Regardless of Kellogg’s theology, whether it is identical to the current view or not (I have never heard anyone actually say this), the current view does indeed say that “Jesus Christ is the eternal God”. This is what Moon has spent all these pages trying to convince us of, that Ellen White and the historic Adventist church came to the conclusion that both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit were the “eternal God”, the basis of all trinity doctrines, including the tritheistic trinity of the modern church. This is what James and Ellen White condemned in their former brethren.

Further, according to Moon’s own description of the Adventist trinity, it does in fact teach that God is not a personal being, with form and substance, but merely the name given to three personal beings working together as a committee.

Whether one speaks of the orthodox trinity which makes God an “it” made up of three semi-beings, or the tritheistic trinity shared by Mormons and Adventists that make God a “they” comprised of three personal beings, the result is the same: there is no actual Father, there is no actual Son. In the orthodox trinity the Son is an “eternal generation” projected by the Father (one in being). In the tritheistic trinity, the Son is a role play entered into by one of three “god beings”.

Moon—Her latest affirmations of one God in three persons are fully in harmony with the first explicitly trinitarian belief statement among Seventh-day Adventists, published in 1913, during her lifetime, by F. M. Wilcox, editor of the *Review and Herald* from 1911-1944, and one of the original five trustees appointed by Ellen White to superintend her estate. “Seventh-day Adventists believe,—” Wilcox explained, “1. In the divine Trinity. This Trinity consists of the eternal Father, . . . the Lord Jesus Christ, . . . [and] the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead”

Response—As pointed out in Part One, Gilbert Valentine, a trinitarian, contradicts Moon’s view of Wilcox’s statement as being “trinitarian”.

“Although *Review* editor F. M. Wilcox was able to say in a doctrinal summary in the *Review* in 1913 that Adventists believed “in the divine Trinity,” his language sidestepped the issue of the eternal self-existent deity of Christ and was
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still sufficiently vague as to be able to include both the traditional semi-Arians and the Trinitarians. Jesus was simply "the son of the Eternal Father." http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/valentine.htm

Another author said this about Wilcox's article-

1913 – Statement of Beliefs - FM Wilcox -R&H, Vol 6, 9 October 1913, p 21) The ambiguously worded “Trinitarian statement of beliefs” produced by FM Wilcox tends more to reflect the early Seventh-day Adventist denominationally accepted beliefs that the Son was as fully divine as His Father, but in subjection in authority to the Father. The statement used the term “trinity,” but thereafter described the non-trinitarian God. ”

(Turner, ITUG)
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Chapter 19: Conclusions and Closing Thoughts

So, now we come to the end of the essay and final comments by both Dr. Moon and myself. As we close I would ask you to not only carefully consider the major points being made, but to examine any and all “evidence” put forth by both sides of the question. We live in a time when nothing can be simply taken for granted based on how many PhD’s someone holds, or their position within the church.

Moon--In the first part of our study we noted that the 1946 General Conference session voted the first officially Adventist endorsement of belief in the Trinity, just 100 years after James White’s strong rejection of that idea in the 1846 Day-Star. This change was not a simple reversal. The evidence is that Ellen White agreed with the essential positive point of James’s belief, namely that “the Father and the Son” are “two distinct, literal, tangible persons.” Subsequent evidence shows that she also agreed with James’s negative point: that the traditional, philosophical concepts held by many trinitarians did “spiritualize away” the personal reality of the Father and the Son.

Response-- I will not repeat the James White quote, since by now it should be obvious that Moon’s Story is a fabrication that took the statement out of context and lifted a small section from the middle of a sentence. What is interesting is that Moon says it took “just” 100 years to become officially trinitarian. The fact is that the “Adventist” trinity as it is currently understood has only been officially in the church for 27 years! The 1946 statement was vague and was not explicitly trinitarian, even though the word “trinity” was used. It did not use terms like co-equal, co-eternal, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit or “entered into roles“. It did not say that the Holy Spirit is a separate being, nor did it say that Christ is the eternal God.
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In reality, it was very similar to Wilcox’s 1913 article. The trinity doctrine as it appears today, with full orthodox Trinity terminology first appeared in the 1980 Dallas G.C. statement.

Moon—Soon after this she added the conviction, based on visions, that both Christ and the Father have tangible forms. She progressively affirmed the eternal equality of Christ and the Father, that Christ was not created, and by 1888, that an adequate concept of the atonement demands the full and eternal Deity of Christ.

Response—When a trinitarian uses the term “full Deity”, he is really saying that Christ is co-eternal and co-equal with God and is not God’s Son, but God Himself, the very sentiments that both Ellen White and the church condemned. And once again, the church never did believe that Christ was “created”. That was isolated to only a very few who did not speak for the church on the doctrine of God. But the author’s implication that an “adequate atonement demands the full and eternal Deity” simply means that he is accusing Ellen White of teaching trinitarianism, since what he is really is saying is that the death and blood of God’s only begotten divine Son is not good enough, but that it must be God Himself who dies (which is impossible). But of course, Jesus said no such thing:

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

Moon—Only in the 1890s did she become aware of the full individuality and personhood of the Holy Spirit, but when she did, she referred to the Holy Spirit in literal and tangible terms much like those she had used in 1850 to describe the Father and the Son. For instance, at Avondale in 1899 she declared, “the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds, unseen by human eyes; . . . He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind.”

Response—So Moon waits until now to spring that quote from the trinitarian apologist playbook. You will notice that he once again uses the ellipsis (…). What is missing? Even the compilation book Evangelism
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alters the quote and ends it in the middle of a sentence. In *Evangelism*, the quote is presented thus:

“We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.” Evangelism 616 (1946)

Here is the original quote as found in MSR # 487-1.

“The Lord instructed us that this was the place in which we should locate, and we have had every reason to think that we are in the right place. We have been brought together as a school, and we need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds, that the Lord God is our keeper, and helper. He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind."

I will once again appeal to your common sense. If “the Holy Spirit is as much of a person as God is a person” are there not two possibilities present?

First, is she listing the Holy Spirit as one thing and God as another, or second, is she saying that the Holy Spirit is a person because God is person and the Holy Spirit is the omnipresence of God?

If it is the former, that God and the Holy Spirit are two separate entities, then she is saying that the Holy Spirit is not God, since she is comparing God and the Holy Spirit side by side as a contrast. In other words, the only way this could be even remotely interpreted as trinitarian is if she had said, “The Holy Spirit is a person as much as the Father is a person”.

If it is the latter, then that squares with her other writings, in saying that the Holy Spirit is God’s omnipresence, and therefore is the presence, power and personality of God Himself, part of the Father’s being. This, of course, would be in harmony with the “first fifty years” statements she made in regard to the personality of God as believed by the church from 1853 to when she made that statement for the first time in 1903.

Review and Herald, 4 January, 1887 p 7

“When the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart, like sweet fragrance it cannot be hidden. The holy influence it reflects through the character will be manifest to all. Christ will be formed within, “the hope of glory.” His light and his love will be there; his presence will be felt. There have been times
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when the blessing of God has been bestowed in answer to prayer, so that when others have come into the room, no sooner did they step over the threshold than they exclaimed, “The Lord is here!” Not a word had been uttered; but the blessed influence of God’s holy presence was sensibly felt. The joy that comes from Jesus Christ was there; and in this sense the Lord had been in the room just as verily as he walked through the streets of Jerusalem, or appeared to the disciples when they were in the upper chamber, and said, "Peace be unto you."

And as we know, the early Adventist church was a “Bible only“ church, as Moon himself had to admit. So it makes sense that our doctrines would be consistent with the Holy Bible:

Jesus said in John 14:17-20
“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 in me, and I in you.”

Matthew 18:20 (Jesus said)
“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Matthew 28:20 (Jesus said)
“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Moon---This confirms the fourfold hypothesis with which this article opened. First, E. R. Gane’s characterization of Ellen White as a “trinitarian monotheist” is accurate regarding her mature concept of God, from 1898 onward. She never, however, used the term “Trinity” to describe her belief about God.

Response-- It is fascinating that this bold, outspoken woman would become a “trinitarian monotheist” (a contradiction in terms) without ever describing her views as such or using those words even once. It is almost humorous that the author would describe this as “her mature concept of God”.

Here is another problem with the concept that Ellen White, and the
church, “matured” in their concept of God. First of all, to “mature” means
to have become an older, more experienced and wiser version of the same
thing. A “mature” tomato plant was always a tomato plant, began from a
seed as a baby tomato plant and grew to be a mature tomato plant. A
“mature” dog, began as a puppy, grew through adolescence, and then
became an adult dog. It was always a dog.

The point is that to go from an anti-trinitarian view of God to a
trinitarian view; to go from saying “God is One” to saying “God is three”
is not “maturity” but apostasy for better or worse. A trinitarian view is not
a “more mature” version of non-trinitarianism. It is not “maturity” to go
from believing Christ was God’s pre-existent only begotten Son to
believing He was not a Son at all prior to the incarnation.

On the contrary, trinitarianism is not built on scholarly study, but
on ignorance; relying on darkness for its very survival like a fungus. Take
this very essay for example. Dr. Jerry Moon is relying on the ignorance of
his readers in order for his story, which is built on a sandy foundation of
“half-sentences” and out-of-context quotes, to be believed and accepted.

In my research I have found that nearly all non-trinitarian
Christians are non-trinitarian because they had studied the issue carefully
and decided the trinity doctrine was not taught in the Bible. Conversely,
most trinitarian Christians have not studied the issue at all, and are relying
on the teachings of church leaders to tell them what to believe regarding
this most important topic.

Moon---Perhaps the closest she came was her use of the phrase “heavenly
trio.” A likely reason why she consistently shunned the term “Trinity,”
even after she had embraced certain aspects of trinitarian teaching, is the
second hypothesis: that she had become aware of two varieties of
trinitarian belief, one that she embraced and one that she vehemently
rejected. An uncritical use of the term “Trinity” might appear to endorse
philosophical concepts to which she was diametrically opposed.

Response-- Or maybe it was because she did not believe in a trinity
doctrine of any kind, but knew there were “three powers”, even if there
were not three different personal beings. Moon is right that she apparently
made an effort to avoid using the term “trinity” to describe her beliefs.
But I think the evidence shows that not only did the church oppose the
orthodox trinity, but also tritheism and the other forms of trinitarian thought. If Ellen White knew of only two trinity doctrines, then she certainly lacked education in contemporary theology, since there were at least five different versions of the trinity doctrine at that time. But yes, an uncritical use of the word “Trinity” would certainly appear to endorse concepts she and the church opposed, since they opposed the trinity in every form.

**Moon**—This seems especially plausible in light of the third hypothesis, that as she endorsed conceptual steps toward a biblical trinitarianism, her developing understanding exerted a strong influence on other Adventist writers, leading eventually to a substantial degree of consensus in the denomination.

**Response**—We have already proven this to be a false theory with no basis in fact, but is a convoluted web of twisted information and rewritten history. The only Adventist writer at that time who apparently believed Ellen White was teaching trinitarianism was John Harvey Kellogg, whom Ellen White rebuked in the strongest possible terms, even saying he was being led of Satan, and was twisting her writings to fit his theology. Nothing new under the sun, apparently.

**Moon**—Fourth, the method by which the early Adventists sought to separate the biblical elements of trinitarianism from the elements derived from tradition, was to completely disallow tradition as a basis for doctrine, and struggle through the long process of constructing their beliefs on the basis of Scripture alone. In doing so, they virtually retraced the steps of the NT church in first accepting the equality of Christ with the Father, and second, discovering Their equality and unity with the Holy Spirit as well. In the process, their theology showed temporary similarities to some of the historical heresies, particularly Arianism. The Adventists’ repudiation of tradition as doctrinal authority was costly in terms of the ostracism they endured as perceived “heretics,” but their dependence on Scripture brought them eventually to what they believe is a more biblical view of the Trinity. A controversial corollary is the conviction that the classical formulation of the Trinity doctrine, resting as it does on Greek philosophical presuppositions of timelessness and impassibility, is simply
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incompatible with a thoroughly biblical theological system. (emphasis mine)

Response-- It is good to see Dr. Moon again admit that the orthodox trinity is pagan-based and unbiblical. Unfortunately, The Seventh day Adventist church, through certain representatives, has claimed to accept that theology as their own.

Dr B.B. Beach and Dr. Lukas Vischer -- (Faith and Order Secretariat) write:

“The member churches of the World Council of Churches and Seventh- Day Adventists are in agreement on the fundamental articles of the Christian faith as set forth in the three ancient symbols (Apostolicum, Nicaeno- Constantopolitum, Athanasium). This agreement finds expression in unqualified acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity and the Two-Natures.” Constitution: World Council of Churches, quoted in So Much in Common, p. 40, 107 (1973). Co-authored by Dr B.B. Beach and Dr. Lukas Vischer -- Faith and Order Secretariat.

Once again, it should be clarified that the “Apostolicum, Niceano-Constantinopolitum and Athanasium” are references to the Pagan-based trinitarian creeds more commonly called The Apostle’s Creed (which was not written by the apostles), The Nicene- Constantinople Creed and the Athanasian Creed. These are the same creeds that Dr. Moon said that Ellen White and the pioneer church condemned.

In part one we saw Dr. Moon aver that the current SDA view does, in fact, incorporate various points of influence and language from these Roman creedal versions of trinitarianism. Moon confirms that the 1980 Statement of Fundamental Beliefs----

“At several points, the statement echoes the terminology of the classical trinitarian creeds, even including the Filioque clause with reference to the Holy Spirit.
(From Part One of Moon’s essay/ emphasis mine)

Moon--As a systematic theologian deeply involved in the development of the Adventist doctrine of God, Fernando Canale has written extensively on the distinction between a theology based on Greek philosophical presuppositions, and one based on biblical presuppositions. He makes a strong case for his contention that because Adventists, “departed from the philosophical conception of God as timeless” and “embraced the historical
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conception of God as presented in the Bible,” they were enabled to develop a genuinely biblical view of the Trinity.

Response-- I believe it has been proven beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Moon’s essay, and Story One in general, makes some very serious errors. Dr. Jerry Moon is not alone in this, but is only one of several authors that have formulated Story One including Gerhardt Pfandl, E.R. Gane, Leroy Froom and others whom Moon has simply stood on the shoulders of. They have taken historical events, as well as quotations describing those events, out of their proper context. They have manipulated the writings of Ellen White and the pioneers, in particular James White.

Here are the major errors in retrospect--

1- That the early Seventh day Adventist Church condemned only one kind of trinitarianism. This was supported by taking the 1946 Day Star quotation of James White out of its context and using only part of his statement.

Moon and the White Estate both quoted James White as saying: “the old unscriptural trinitarian creed.” But James White actually said:

"The way spiritualizers have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural Trinitarian creed viz., that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain scripture testimony in abundance that he is the Son of the eternal God." (James White, Jan 24 1846, The Day Star)

2- That Ellen condemned only the orthodox trinity because it “spiritualized away the members of the Godhead“.

The truth is that she condemned any doctrine that spiritualized away God as a singular entity, or made Him a non-personal Being. There is no version of the trinity that teaches that God is a single person, including the tritheistic trinity shared by modern Adventists and Mormons. The tritheistic trinity doctrine teaches that God is not a person or a being, but merely the name of a group of three separate divine beings working together. The orthodox trinity, while teaching that God is a single being, believes that this single Being is made up of three “semi i-beings”, or hypostases. This is the version that the Adventist representative to the
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World Council of Churches acknowledged as being accepted by Adventists.

3- That Ellen White evolved her conception of God from a non-trinitarian, single person, God who begat a divine Son, to a tritheistic committee of divine beings that were co-eternal and co-equal from eternity.

We have shown ample proof from Ellen White’s writings, especially in *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *Story of Redemption*, and the writings of other witnesses, that Ellen White always believed that:

- God is a single person, The Father.
- Christ was God’s only begotten Son even prior to the incarnation.
- God Himself gave Christ His position of authority and equality.
- God the Father is the “source of all being”.
- “Life original, unborrowed and underived“ was, according to Ellen White, a kind of life that even mortal man can attain through Christ.
- The Holy Spirit is the omnipresence of God and of Christ.
- The church in 1863 had the truth in every aspect of doctrine.
- James White never changed regarding the divinity of Christ, he had always believed Christ to be the divine Son of the eternal God.
- Ellen White condemned J.H. Kellogg’s trinitarian views in the strongest possible terms. She did not present an alternative trinity doctrine.
- Ellen White warned the church not to depart from the original Principles of Faith as late as 1907.
- Ellen White was at no time as an Adventist “trinitarian” in any sense of the word.
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4- That the Seventh-day Adventist church brought in the trinity doctrine because of Ellen White’s writings and by diligent, systematic Bible study.

The truth is that it is a fact that Ellen White’s writings were misunderstood by some as teaching a form of trinitarian doctrine, but that every false doctrine claims inspired support. I have shown that her “trinitarian statements” were in reality nothing of the sort. I have also shown that Ellen and James White’s writings have been altered, manipulated and taken out of context by certain authors and the Ellen G. White Estate.

We have seen that Moon’s claim that the trinity came into the church based on Bible study is also false. According to Moon himself, there was not a single systematic study published on the topic prior to the 1970s, and no complete study was published on the Godhead within the church prior to 2002. The truth is that part of the issue (the eternality of Christ) came up for study for the first time in 1919, four years after the death of Ellen White. That study did not lead to the acceptance of the doctrine, but rather, the original view was retained.

5- That Ellen White developed a “mature concept of God” from an “immature” one.

The truth is “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Nobody.” Truth does not “evolve” from error, it boldly replaces error. If the historic Adventist church was in error, then certainly the acceptance of the trinity doctrine was a correction of error. However, it is not possible that the historic church was founded upon a “platform of eternal truth”, that later needed to be changed because it was heretical.

As mentioned earlier, mature things come from immature versions of the same things. A puppy can mature into a dog, but a puppy cannot mature into a cat. By the same token, a non-trinitarian doctrine cannot “mature” into a trinitarian one. There are only three possibilities regarding the views of the Godhead as held by the Adventist church then and now:
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1- The “semi-Arian” view was blasphemous and needed reform. Thus the church was founded upon a platform of error.

2- The tritheistic view is blasphemous and needs reform. Thus the church was originally founded upon a platform of truth and the modern church is in apostasy on this point.

3- Both views are blasphemous and the truth is “still out there”. Thus the church was founded upon a platform of error and is still on a platform of error.

   In other words, if God is truly One Person, then it is blasphemy to say He is three, as that destroys the personality of God according to common sense, and as illustrated by both James White and J.N. Andrews. If the trinity is correct it is blasphemy to deny Christ His so-called “full deity” and the Holy Spirit “His” full independent being.

   If Story One is true then God has worked in a way He has never worked before. That is, God has not reproved or corrected error, but has sneaked truth in through the back door. Instead of boldly speaking His truth in love, He has used the deconstructing and rewriting of history, the altering and manipulation of words and the twisting of writings to undermine the way he has led us in the past and His teaching in our past history. Does God Almighty work this way? Has He ever?
Appendix A: Chronology of the Trinity Doctrine and its acceptance into the Seventh day Adventist Church

The following is the series of events that chronicle the evolution and eventual acceptance of the trinity doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Pre-1872- The church believed in One God, the Father, that His only begotten Son Michael (Christ) had been brought forth or "begotten" at some point in the dateless ages of eternity past, and that the Holy Spirit was the omnipresence of God and of Christ. The large majority of pioneers did not believe Christ to be a created being like men or angels, but truly divine and an inheritor of all things from the Father. This view was not unanimous at that point, with a few true Arians, (that is, they believed Christ was a created being) mixed into the fray. Among these was Uriah Smith, who after careful study and exposure to the doctrines of Adventism, had also adopted the "semi-Arian" view. At this time there was no evidence of trinitarianism among the church or its leadership.

1872- James White (not Uriah Smith as some believe) presents the non-trinitarian, "Principles of Faith of Seventh day Adventists" for the Adventist Yearbook. This was then published in Signs of the Times, in June 1874. The principles teach that:

1. 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. Psalm 139:7.

2. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the One by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist...."- Signs of the Times, June 4, 1874
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These were the published fundamental beliefs of the church regarding the Godhead from 1874 to 1914.

1892 - Bible Students' Library series produced as lessons for the public. #90 called "The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity." Reprint of article first published in the New York Independent in 14 November, 1889. Author - Samuel Spear (non-SDA). Promoted "one God subsisting and acting in three persons," but also in “eternal divine subordination of the Son to the Father." This "semi-trinitarian" series was published by Pacific Press.

1898 - Ellen White releases The Desire of Ages- One passage read, "In Him was life original, unborrowed, underived." This is mistakenly considered support for the trinity doctrine by some, and is considered the beginning of the rise of trinitarianism within Adventism.

1901 - Ellen White "fears" for our publishing houses because they have been publishing "the soul-destroying theories of Romanism". I feel a terror of soul as I see to what a pass our publishing house has come. The presses in the Lord's institution have been printing the soul-destroying theories of Romanism and other mysteries of iniquity. The office must be purged of this objectionable matter. I have a testimony from the Lord for those who have placed such matter in the hands of the workers. God holds you accountable for presenting to young men and young women the fruit of the forbidden tree of knowledge. Can it be possible that you have not a knowledge of the warnings given to the Pacific Press on this subject? Can it be possible that with a knowledge of these warnings you are going over the same ground, only doing much worse? It has often been repeated to you that angels of God are passing through every room in the office. What impression has this made on your minds? {8T 91.2}

1902 - The Review and Herald Publishing house is destroyed by fire. Earlier the same day, fire inspectors pronounced the building "satisfactory" with no fire danger present.

J.H. Kellogg publishes Living Temple. The book is condemned by Ellen White as teaching the "Alpha of deadly heresies": "Living Temple contains the alpha of these theories. I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people." (Selected Messages bk.1, p. 203)
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"One thing it is certain is soon to be realized, – the great apostasy, which is developing and increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout. . . . " (Special Testimonies, Series B7, p. 57-8)

1903- Ellen White warns that while Living Temple contains the Alpha of Deadly Heresies, the omega would follow soon and be of a "most startling nature":

"In the book Living Temple there is presented the alpha of deadly heresies. The omega will follow, and will be received by those who are not willing to heed the warning God has given." (Selected Messages bk.1, p. 200)

"Living Temple contains the alpha of these theories. I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people. I knew that I must warn our brethren and sisters not to enter into controversy over the presence and personality of God..." (Selected Messages bk.1, p. 203)

"Be not deceived; many will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. We have now before us the alpha of this danger. The omega will be of a most startling nature." (Selected Messages bk.1, p. 197)

J.H. Kellogg promotes trinitarianism in order to gain acceptance of his book, claiming that under trinitarianism, his theories are sound. Kellogg gains more and more supporters.

Ellen White, in response to Kellogg, re-establishes the unity of faith and doctrine among Seventh-day Adventists in her memoirs of the early SDA church:

MS 135, 1903
“The leading points of our faith as we hold them today (that is, in 1903) were firmly established. Point after point was clearly defined, and all the brethren came into harmony. The whole company of believers were united in the truth. There were those who came in with strange doctrines, but we were never afraid to meet them. Our experience was wonderfully established by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.”

1905- Ellen White, responding both to Kellogg's alpha apostasy, and in anticipation the omega of deadly heresies, warns the church to not depart from the foundational doctrines that were established in the first fifty years of the work.

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Special Testimonies, Series B, no. 7, p 57. (4 December, 1905, California).

“One thing it is certain is soon to be realized, the great apostasy, which is developing and increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout. We are to hold fast the first principles of our denominated faith and go forward from strength to increased faith. Ever are we to keep the faith that has been substantiated by the Holy Spirit of God from the earlier events of our experience until the present time.

“One by one the pioneers are passing away. The word given me is, Let that which these men have written in the past be reproduced. [...] We are now to understand what the pillars of our faith are, - the truths that have made us as a people what we are, leading us on step by step. [...] Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established.” (Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, May 25, 1905, paragraph 23)

“When men come in who would move one pin or pillar from the foundation which God has established by His Holy Spirit, let the aged men who were pioneers in our work speak plainly, and let those who are dead speak also, by the reprinting of their articles in our periodicals. Gather up the rays of divine light that God has given as He has led His people on step by step in the way of truth. This truth will stand the test of time and trial.” (Manuscript Releases Volume One, page 55, paragraph 1)

1913- FM Wilcox publishes supposed “trinitarian tract” R&H Vol 1 6, 9 Oct, 1913, p 21, but the language used is ambiguous – similar language was used by Ellen White to describe non-trinitarian concepts. This marks the first appearance of the word "trinity" used in a positive sense in the Review and Herald.

1914- Unbeknownst to the church, The Principles of Faith, as written by James White and endorsed by the church, are published in the Yearbook for the last time.

1915- Ellen White dies. The Principles of Faith (1874-1914) are no longer included in the Yearbook.

1919- There is a heated Bible Conference on the doctrine of the Trinity, which has been picking up steam since the promotions of Kellogg, the removal of the Principles of Faith from the Yearbook and the deaths of
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some of the pioneers, such as Ellen and James White, E.J. Waggonner, Daniel Bordeau, Dr. David Paulson and Uriah Smith. After much debate, it is decided that there will be no vote on the acceptance of the doctrine.

1922 – Antitrinitarian Stephen F. Haskell dies

1924 – Antitrinitarian J N Loughborough dies

1926—"Leroy Edwin Froom...was called to the General Conference headquarters, where he was first, associate secretary and then secretary of the Ministerial Association from 1926 to 1950," the SDA *Encyclopedia* states. "During this time he founded *The Ministry* magazine and was its editor for 22 years." *(ibid, Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, Second Revised Edition, 1995, Review and Herald Publishing Association, emphasis supplied).*


1931 – Yearbook with new Statement of Beliefs and church manual published. The new Statement of Beliefs uses the word “trinity” but then describes a semi-Arian view of the Godhead.

1939 - JS Washburn resists the invasion of trinitarianism by writing a letter of protest against the trinity doctrine. This is the first time a church leader has published a work identifying the trinity doctrine as "the omega of apostasy". The letter was circulated by a conference president to 39 other ministers:

“Seventh-day Adventist claim to take the word of God as supreme authority and to have ‘come out of Babylon’, to have renounced forever the vain traditions of Rome. If we should go back to the immortality of the soul, purgatory, eternal torment and the Sunday Sabbath, would that be anything less than apostasy? If, however, we leap over all these minor, secondary doctrines and accept and teach the very central root, doctrine of Romanism, the Trinity, and teach that the son of God did not die, even though our words seem to be spiritual, is this anything else or anything less than apostasy? and the very Omega of apostasy?"
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1941 – Semi-Trinitarian baptismal vows formulated.

1945 – Removal by committee of all 18 non-trinitarian statements from Uriah Smith’s book *Daniel and the Revelation*.

1946 – Leadership officially endorses FM Wilcox’s statement of belief – virtually identical to the semi-trinitarian statement which was penned in 1931. Compilation of *Evangelism*, containing Ellen White’s *supposedly* Trinitarian statements.

1947 - Charles S. Longacre, (1871-1958) SDA evangelist, author, editor, minister, administrator and religious liberty authority, specifically protested the push by the leadership toward trinitarianism in his article “The Deity of Christ.” The article reveals the truth as the denominated church believed it up until the alterations to the Principles of Faith were imperceptively forced upon the unsuspecting members in 1931. The article is still available from “Truth will Triumph,” P. O. Box 6137, Towoomba, Qld 4350 Australia.


1971 – Movement of Destiny written by LeRoy Froom. *Froom admitted alterations were made from 1931 to “standard works” to correct “erroneous views on the Godhead” i.e. to make them pro-trinitarian* (Movement of Destiny, 1971, p. 422)

1980 – World General Conference in session, officially voted to accept the first fully defined trinity doctrine. “Classical” Trinitarian language is used.

1984 - Baptismal vow reformatted again – pro-trinity

1985 - A new, trinitarian, Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal takes the place of the older, (1941) non-trinitarian Church Hymnal.
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1988 - Seventh-day Adventists Believe published (strongly Trinitarian), no mention of Michael the Archangel as pre-incarnate Christ. This teaching would refute the trinity.

2002 - The first exhaustive book of the “historic” and theological study of the Trinity is published by an Adventist publisher.

2003 - *Questions of Doctrine* republished and circulated by Andrew’s University – pro-trinitarian, pro-unfallen human nature of Christ.

2007 - The “official Story” of how the trinity was evolved in the Seventh-day Adventist church is challenged line by line in this book.
Appendix B: The Trinity Index

The following terms and the number of times they are mentioned in the Bible and in the writings of Ellen G. White are very revealing when one studies their implications. One will find that not only is the word “trinity” absent from both sources, but that the very language of trinitarianism is almost, and in some cases completely, non-existent in both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

New Testament (KJV)-
The number of times-

- Jesus referred to Himself as God- 0
- Jesus is called the "Son of God"- 44
- Jesus is called "God the Son"- 0
- The Father is called "God the Father"- 25
- The Holy Spirit is called "God the Holy Spirit"- 0
- The Father is called "the first Person of the Godhead"- 0
- Jesus is called "the second Person of the Godhead"- 0
- The Holy Spirit is called "the third person of the Godhead"- 0
- "Trinity" is used- 0
- "Triune" is used- 0
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**The Spirit of Prophecy** ("hits" in more than 100,000 pages of written Testimony and assuming at least some repeat uses)-

The Number of times Ellen White-

- Called the Father "God the Father"- 140
- Referred to Jesus as "the Son of God"- 2513
- Referred to Jesus as "God the Son"- 0
- Called the Holy Spirit "God the Holy Spirit"- 0
- Used the word "Trinity"-0
- Used the word "Triune"- 0
- Used the term "heavenly trio"- 1 (with the same quote repeated 5 times in different publications and compilations)
  - Called the Father “the first Person of the Godhead”- 0
- Called Jesus “the second person of the Godhead”- 0
  - Called the Holy Spirit the “third person of the Godhead” - 5 (with the same quotes repeated about 4 times each)
- Referred to “God and Christ”- 190
- Referred to “God and the Holy Spirit” - 0