

When the Visions Led: an Adventist Anomaly

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It is a commonplace among church leaders at all levels (from James White forward), and among students of Adventist history generally, that Ellen G. White did not initiate any Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal positions. But in fact, late in her ministry, Mrs. White did precisely that. With the publication of *The Desire of Ages* in 1898, she quietly, arbitrarily and unilaterally redirected Seventh-day Adventist theology of the Godhead from a generally semi-Arian position to one that is fully Trinitarian. What few Adventists seem to realize is how she acquired her position. This brief paper focus on compelling evidence for the who, when, where and how of Mrs. White's rather personal and punctiliar evolution on the Godhead without which the mid-1950s rapprochement with the evangelicals could not have taken place, and *Questions On Doctrine* would not have been published.

1868-1874 was an unusually rough time for the toddling Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Nathan Fuller, at that time the most charismatic and effective soul winner among the remnant, and president of the New York-Pennsylvania Conference, had confessed to serial adultery and the embezzlement of six months tithes and offerings from several of his congregations.¹

Roswell Cottrell and J. N. Loughborough, pioneers of the third angels' message, were recovering from extended battles with typhoid fever² when Cottrell replaced the felonious Fuller as conference president.³

James White had recently returned from a debilitating stroke, with his bi-polar tendencies exaggerated.⁴ And with no authority whatever to do so, in 1868 he tore down a nearly completed,

four-story addition to the nascent Western Health Reform Institute.⁵

Later (early 1870), with the same brigandine authority, White disfellowshipped all but thirteen of the 400-member Battle Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁶ George Amadon and Uriah Smith were among Battle Creek's "crooked ones," who lost their membership (and their jobs at the Review and Herald office) to the purge.⁷

Roswell changes the subject

Although since 1851 he had written in the neighborhood of 1,000 items for the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Roswell Fenner Cottrell (great grandfather to the late *SDA Bible Commentary* editor, Raymond Forrest Cottrell) never had written an article about the nature of the Godhead. He'd taken shots at the doctrine of the Trinity along the way,⁸ but so had lots of other Adventist pioneers⁹ of both fame (G. W. Amadon,¹⁰ J. N. Andrews,¹¹ Joseph Bates,¹² R. F. Cottrell,¹³ J. B. Frisbie,¹⁴ D. W. Hull,¹⁵ J. N. Loughborough,¹⁶ Uriah Smith,¹⁷ J. H. Waggoner¹⁸ James White,¹⁹) and, somewhat undeserved, infamy (J. M. Stephenson,²⁰ and D. M. Canright).²¹

Why Cottrell chose in 1869 (and this late in his writing ministry) to address the Trinity topic is a mystery. He did clarify why he had *not* written about it before: "I do not think it the most dangerous heresy in the world." And belief in it he considered "not so much an evidence of evil intention as of intoxication from that wine of which all the nations have drunk."²²—Roman Catholicism.

Peacemaker that he was, Roswell may have simply been trying to write on something (provide

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some column inches for the *Review*) that was manifestly not, in the Adventist context, at all controversial. Or it may be that he had been watching the protracted, on again-off again, merger flirtation between the Unitarians and his former restorationist friends of the Christian Connexion²³—both belligerently Arian. And they were not just Roswell Cottrell’s former brethren.

Adventism’s Christian roots

Few third-millennium Adventists realize how much they owe their theological peculiarity to the Christian Connexion that congealed from several Protestant rivulets in the early nineteen hundreds.²⁴ Beginning with the 1844 disappointment, three of the remnant’s minority position doctrines—conditional immortality, the destruction of the wicked and a militant anti-Trinitarianism—were inherited from the Christian Connexion.²⁵

Well before the Millerite movement, Roswell Cottrell’s father had grown up Seventh Day Baptist; but then he married Mary “Polly” Stillman, the seventeenth of Dr. Elisha Stillman’s seventeen children.²⁶ Dr. Stillman’s sixteenth child, Mary’s next older sibling, was the Reverend Willet Stillman, a Christian Connexion minister²⁷. . . and Roswell Cottrell’s uncle.

Very reasonable conjecture suggests it was the influence of Willet Stillman that encouraged John Cottrell (while maintaining the seventh-day Sabbath) to leave the Seventh Day Baptists over the immortality of the soul, the eternal punishment of the wicked and the Trinity. It seems just as likely that through John Cottrell’s influence Willet Stillman became the Sabbatarian who converted his Plainfield, New York, congregation to a seventh-day Sabbath-keeping (but otherwise) Christian Connexion church.²⁸

All of this explains how it was that Roswell

Cottrell could write in January of 1869, “My early religious education was a cross between the doctrines of Seventh-day[sic] Baptists and those of the denomination calling themselves Christians. The true Sabbath was taught me from my infancy, and I . . . never have been tempted to give it up; but in other doctrines my bias was toward the Christian denomination, so that my proper appellation would have been seventh-day Christian.”²⁹

It also explains why Roswell, when he heard William Miller’s message, did not take up the “midnight cry.” He had “believed in the personal appearing of Christ, according to the Scriptures,” from his youth, “but when the Millerite heralds announced, in 1843 and 1844, “The hour of his judgment is come . . . I felt no disposition to oppose it.” But he “was not disappointed when the time passed by.” From Roswell’s perspective “the proclaimers of the Advent [were] in darkness in regard to the commandments of God, and bowing [by their Sunday keeping] to an institution of Papacy; and perhaps,” he concluded, “this was the reason I did not believe.”³⁰

Finally, it makes sense that when in 1850 he encountered the earliest issues of the *Review and Herald*, emphasizing the fourth commandment—as well as his Christian Connexion heresies—Roswell Cottrell and his father had found a doctrinal home.³¹

For the position advanced here, it is important to recognize that of Seventh-day Adventism’s founding “trinity,” two (James White and Joseph Bates) were Christian Connexion ministers. Other early Adventist leaders who came from one Christian Connexion congregation in Washington, New Hampshire, included “[Cyrus K. and William] Farnsworth, Mead, [C. P.] Russell . . . Ball” and, most notably, Uriah Smith, who “was converted in that Washington

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church.”³² In short, a substantial group of the earliest disappointed Millerites to join the Sabbath and shut door Adventists defected (apostacized?) *en bloc* from the Washington, New Hampshire Christian Connexion congregation.

Nevertheless, the Millerites were refugees from a diverse cross-section of denominations; Andrews University professors Woodrow Whidden, Jerry A. Moon, and John Reeve estimate that of the Millerite leaders 8 percent were from the Christian Connexion³³—including the most effective promoter of Miller’s end-time message, Joshua Vaughan Himes,³⁴ and its subsequent chronicler, Isaac Wellcome.³⁵ And from lists he compiled, Leroy E. Froom was able to determine that of the twenty-nine Millerite expositors who wrote on the book of Daniel, the greatest number (nine) were from the Christian Connexion; and of the twenty-three who expanded on Revelation, again the largest number (seven) were from the Christian denomination.³⁶

“in a sense not contrary to sense”

The Millerites who attached themselves to Joseph Bates, James White and Ellen Harmon White (the Methodist outcast) were nearly of one mind in their social, religious and political prejudices. They were abolitionists who detested the American government. And although they were theologically and ecclesiastically libertarian in the extreme (anti-organizational, anti-creedal, anti-Catholic), the focus here is on their militant anti-Trinitarianism.

It was Roswell Cottrell’s understanding that the Trinitarian heresy had “been a popular doctrine and regarded as orthodox ever since the bishop of Rome was elevated to the popedom on the strength of it.” And when he finally wrote an article about the Trinity in 1869 he was brief, emphasizing two points: “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 that God has given me”—that three individuals were actually one individual and also the reciprocal.³⁷

“But if I am asked what I think of Jesus Christ,” Cottrell’s reply was, “I believe all that the Scriptures say of him.” This was not a dodge, as he went on for several column inches stringing together biblical phrases pertaining to Jesus (or Christ) and his Father that seem at first glance problematic, insisting that he believed each.

If the testimony represents him as being in glory with the Father before the world was, I believe it. If it is said that he was in the beginning with God, that he was God, that all things were made by him and for him, and that without him was not anything made that was made, I believe it. If the Scriptures say he is the Son of God, I believe it. If it is declared that the Father sent his Son into the world, I believe he had a Son to send. If the testimony says he is the beginning of the creation of God, I believe it. If he is said to be the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person, I believe it. And when Jesus says, “I and my Father are one,” I believe it; and when he says, “My Father is greater than I,” I believe that too; it is the word of the Son of God, and besides this it is perfectly reasonable and seemingly self-evident.³⁸

Roswell then explained to his own satisfaction “how I believe the Father and Son are one . . . in a sense not contrary to sense.”

If the “and” in the sentence means anything, the Father and the Son are two beings. They are one in the same sense in which Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one. He asked his Father that his disciples might be one. His language is, “that they may be one, even as we are one.”³⁹

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Recognizing this explanation appeared to lead commandment keepers into a dilemma, Cottrell asked, In “worshipping the Son and calling him God, [do we not] break the first commandment of the Decalogue?” His answer concluded the article with a profusion of Bible quotations supporting the argument that “God the Father required both men and angels to worship the son; therefore we honor God in honoring his Son.”

No; it is the Father’s will “That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.” We cannot break the commandment and dishonor God by obeying him. The Father says of the Son, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” Should angels refuse to worship the Son, they would rebel against the Father. Children inherit the name of their father. The Son of God “hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than” the angels. That name is the name of his Father. The Father says to the Son, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” Heb. I. The Son is called “The mighty God.” Isa. ix, 6. And when he comes again to earth his waiting people will exclaim, “This is our God.” Isa. xxv, 9. It is the will of the Father that we should thus honor the Son. In doing so we render supreme honor to the Father. If we dishonor the Son we dishonor the Father; for he requires us to honor his Son.

But though the Son is called God yet there is a “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. i, 3. Though the Father says to the Son, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever,” yet, that throne is given him of his Father; and because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, he further says, “Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee.” Heb. i, 9. “God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ.” Acts. ii, 36. The Son is “the everlasting Father,” not of himself, nor of his Father, but of his children. His language is, “I and the children which God hath given me.” Heb. ii, 13.⁴⁰

Cottrell’s scriptural argument seems to imply

a heavenly hierarchy of beings any of which might appear as gods to humans.

Within five weeks the *Review* published Cottrell’s rejoinder to a critique of his article that had appeared in the *Baptist Tidings*, suggesting that Cottrell’s concern “seemed to be solely in the use of the word trinity . . . [because] the term ‘trinity,’ or ‘triune God,’ does not occur in the Bible.” The *Tidings* author noted other commonly held Protestant “belief[s] and expression[s], ‘immortality of the soul,’ [and] ‘future rewards and punishment,’ as samples” of other doctrinal terms not found in Scripture—and doctrines Cottrell did not believe.⁴¹

Nevertheless the seasoned Adventist feinted with an admission: “A term not found in the Scriptures may truly express a scriptural idea,” and then threw a three-punch combination: “If our friend had coupled with” his examples “‘the first day of the week’ as the ‘Christian Sabbath’ . . . [he] would have formed a *trinity*, or at least a *trio*, not only of unscriptural expressions, but of unscriptural ideas and doctrines, all of which have been ‘generally received’ from the ‘mother church,’ without a scriptural investigation.”⁴²

Roswell followed that volley with a quick left and right:

As for the examples which the *Tidings* refers to as scriptural truths, though not found expressly stated in the Scriptures, we observe that the Bible does promise a reward to the righteous and punishment to the wicked, and the fact that they are *promised* makes them future. But the “immortality of the soul,” though “generally received,” is not only an expression not found in the Scriptures, but the idea is not found there, except as the reward of the righteous, to be conferred at the resurrection of the just.⁴³

The *Tidings* critique of Cottrell had defined the “trinity of God” as “the three *offices* of Father, Son,

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and Holy Spirit, in one divine and eternal Person.” Cottrell responded, “We understand that the term trinity means the union of three *persons*, not offices, in one God; so that

The Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
Are three at least, and one at most.”

It was that idea—“That one person is three persons, and that three persons are only one person”—that Cottrell found “contrary to reason and common sense.”⁴⁴

The *Tidings* author claimed that when Cottrell described the Trinity notion as “*contrary* to all the sense and reason God has given me,” he was putting “his ‘sense and reason’ in direct *antagonism* to the doctrine of the trinity.” Then he surmised that “Perhaps the word ‘contrary’ was only designed to mean *out of reach* of his [Cottrell’s] sense and reason, or *above* them.” The snide *Tidings* writer thought that likely, but he objected to the notion that “what sense and reason God has given” Cottrell might be “the measuring-rod of God himself.”⁴⁵

Without reservation Cottrell agreed that “The being and attributes of God are *above, beyond*, [and] *out of reach* of my sense and reason.” What he objected to was a doctrine that “is *contrary*, yes, that is the word, to the very sense and reason that God has himself implanted in us. Such a doctrine he does not ask us to believe.”⁴⁶

Cottrell brushed over the speculative extremes on which barrels of ink had been spent. “Some have made Christ a mere man, commencing his existence at his birth in Bethlehem; others have not been satisfied with holding him to be what the Scriptures so clearly reveal him, the pre-existing Son of God, but have made him the ‘God and Father’ of himself.”⁴⁷

“When Jesus says, ‘I and my Father are one,’” Cottrell remonstrated, “do not add to it ‘person,’

but understand them to be one, as two, three, or any number of Christians are one Then when the same divine Son of God says, ‘My Father is greater than I,’ you will not make him contradict himself. But if you interpolate person, or being, you have a contradiction, and are obliged to resort to another invention.” Cottrell provided more examples and more logic; but in closing he focused on two points: human “sense and reason are very limited,” he wrote, but “the little we have,” God “doubtless intended we should use in the investigation of his word.”⁴⁸

“Let us believe all he has revealed, and add nothing to it,” he concluded.⁴⁹

“Perhaps I should not have written my first article on the subject of the trinity,” wrote Roswell, because it had the potential (he quoted from Proverbs 17:14) to start “strife . . . as when one letteth out water,” that is difficult to stop.⁵⁰

Although he wrote for another twenty-three years, Cottrell did not let out any more water (or ink) on the Trinity issue. Others did, but not significantly, until 1889, when the emphasis on righteousness by faith that E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones brought to the 1888 General Conference session began to concentrate intellects more steadily on the kind of Savior required for a vicarious atonement—a focus that to many minds leads only to moral *cul de sacs*. Waggoner wrote, “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.”⁵¹ For Waggoner, Christ was a simulacrum of the Father; but that did not Waggoner a Trinitarian make.

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Change of place; change of theology

As many Adventists realize, Mrs. White was exiled to Australia in late 1891,⁵² at the behest of the beast of her own creation. How could she refuse a vote of the General Conference in session, after having in 1875 “been shown that . . . when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must . . . be surrendered?”⁵³

“I had not one ray of light that He [the Lord] would have me come to this country [Australia]. I came in submission to the voice of the General Conference, which I have ever maintained to be authority,” the prophetess wrote from Australia late in 1896.⁵⁴ But in the middle of 1895 she had written to the General Conference leaders saying, “I know that God sent me here”⁵⁵ At the very end of 1896 Ellen White wrote the General Conference president to make certain he understood that “The Lord was not in our leaving America. He did not reveal that it was His will that I should leave Battle Creek. . . . The Lord would have had W. C. White, his mother, and her workers remain in America. . . . It was not the Lord who devised this matter.”⁵⁶ But a little more than two years later the prophetess wrote to the General Conference in its spring session to share with it what God was telling her: “Ask of my people the means that should have gone to advance the work in the Australasian field, the new world to which I have sent you.”⁵⁷ And then eight months later, in a letter soliciting funds for the Australian work, Mrs. White wrote, “God sent me to Australia. . . . Call to the men in America, call to Dr. Kellogg, for the help which they should give to build up the work in places where I have sent my experienced workers.”⁵⁸

Nevertheless, during her sojourn in the Antipodes

Mrs. White unilaterally adjusted the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s doctrine of the Godhead—a revision process that was neither argued nor articulated. And nowhere has it been explained with very much candor how this revision actually came about.⁵⁹ In 2002 the aforementioned Andrews University professors made a manful effort in *The Trinity: Understanding God’s Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships* to contend that it was the accumulated weight of decades of visions that led in 1898 to the Trinity-friendly statements first published in Ellen White’s *The Desire of Ages* which “became the continental divide for the Adventist understanding of the Trinity.”⁶⁰

But there is in Ellen White’s personal history, and in documents available at Andrews University, an alternative explanation that relies more on parsimony than on the prophetic gift.⁶¹

As the lone Methodist come-outer among the trio credited with founding the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen Harmon White was raised on a Trinitarian creed. She spent her adult life immersed in the writings of widely published nineteenth-century English (and uniformly Trinitarian) clerics, regularly requisitioning passages from their writings for the printed matter (articles and books) that was published over her name. She would have to be inhuman, not be influenced by her upbringing and her reading.

Time and chance

Somewhere the book of Ecclesiastes says there is an element of time and chance in all things.⁶² Halfway through her Australian sojourn, Ellen White wrote a letter to W. L. H. Baker.⁶³ The young pastor had done editorial work at Pacific Press in California and at the nascent Echo Publishing House in Australia, before engaging evangelistic work in Tasmania.⁶⁴ Five paragraphs of White’s letter address Christology.

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After warning Baker to be “careful, exceedingly careful” how he presented the human nature of Christ, Mrs. White counseled him not to set Jesus “before the people as a man with the propensities of sin,” like Adam’s posterity who were “born with inherent propensities of disobedience.” She emphasized the point adding, “not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity.”⁶⁵

The paragraphs from that letter, published 1956 in the *SDA Bible Commentary*’s Ellen G. White comments on the Gospel of John, are closely paraphrased from a Sermon by Henry Melvill entitled “The Humiliation of the Man Christ Jesus.” In counseling Pastor Baker, White adopts Melvill’s argument and language for the nature of Christ that is neither pre-lapsarian nor post-lapsarian.⁶⁶

As it happened (Ecclesiastes again), Herbert Camden Lacy,⁶⁷ a young man raised in the Church of England (and therefore Trinitarian), was brought “into the Truth” in 1888 during his late teens by “Elder M. C. Israel, and young brother W. L. H. Baker.” He “went through Healdsburg College, and Battle Creek College, with a dim sort of a feeling that there was something wrong about our teaching on the Ministry and Personality of the Holy Ghost.”⁶⁸ At the age of twenty-four, Lacey went to Australia (September, 1895) to teach Bible and Greek in Melbourne, Victoria, at the precursor to Avondale College. (In 1897 the College was relocated to its present site in Cooranbong, New South Wales.)

A month earlier, William Warren Prescott, then Adventism’s foremost educator and minister,⁶⁹ also went to Melbourne to assist in setting up the ministerial training school that would become Avondale College. Prescott was working on a year’s worth of Sabbath School quarterly lessons based on the Gospel of John, and he took advantage of the

long sea voyage to immerse himself in a study of the beloved disciple’s reminiscence. When he arrived in Sydney (August 1895) he bought a second-hand copy of Augustus Neander’s *Lectures on the History of Christian Dogmas*.⁷⁰ Prescott’s typical, heavy blue underlining begins at the Trinity in chapter six of volume one.⁷¹

Marian Davis, who Willie White referred to as his mother’s “bookmaker,”⁷² was “severely taxed in preparing the work Desire of Ages,” Ellen White acknowledged privately.⁷³ Marian appealed to both Lacey and Prescott for help with *Desire of Ages*. She took copious notes while sitting in on separate lecture series presented by the two educators. According to Lacey (who Dores. E. Robinson says was “the first one he knows of to teach the straight doctrine of trinity in Australia”⁷⁴),

Professor Prescott was tremendously interested in presenting Christ as the great “I AM” and in emphasizing the Eternity of His existence, using frequently the expression “The Eternal Son.” Also he connected the “I AM” of Exodus 3:14, which of course was Christ the Second Person of the Godhead, with the statement of Jesus in John 8:58, which we all agreed to; but then linked it up also with other “I ams” in that Gospel—7 of them, such as “I am the Bread of Life” “I am the Light of the Word” “I am the Door of the Sheep” etc. all very rich in their spiritual teaching—but which seemed a little far-fetched to me especially, as the “I am” in all these latter cases is merely the copula in the Greek, as well as in the English. . . . Sr. Marian Davis seemed to fall for it, and lo and behold, when the “Desire of Ages” came out, there appeared that identical teaching on pages 24 and 25, which, I think, can be looked for in vain in any of Sr. White’s published works prior to that time.⁷⁵

Lacy suspected that “Professor Prescott’s interest in the ‘Eternity of the Son,’ and the great ‘I AMS’ coupled with the constant help he gave Sr. Davis in

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her preparation of the ‘Desire of Ages,’ may serve to explain the inclusions of the above-named teachings in that wonderful book.”⁷⁶

While Prescott “stressed especially the ‘Eternity’ (past as well as future) of the ‘SON’ the eternal I AM, in his conferences and camp-meetings in Australia,” it was Lacey “who taught the Personality of the Holy Spirit (not Corporeality—a very different thing, as I know you understand!) but that the Holy Ghost was not a mere Influence, but a distinct Person, even the Third Person in the Godhead, and should therefore be spoken of as He, Him, His, Himself, if we would be truly reverent!”⁷⁷

Marian Davis, wrote Lacey, “was greatly worried about finding material suitable for the first chapter. She appealed to me personally many times as she was arranging that chapter (and other chapters too for that matter) and I did what I could to help her; and I have good reason to believe that she also appealed to Professor Prescott frequently for similar aid, and got it too in far richer and more abundant measure than I could render.”⁷⁸

Sometime in 1896 there was a complete draft of *The Desire of Ages*, but Mrs. White had asked Prescott to review it critically;⁷⁹ and after an indeterminable amount of revision, it was published two years later.⁸⁰

Although Lacey and his wife were tasked to teach at Cooranbong, Marian Davis, Lacey said, was “anxious to have me join the editorial staff of Sr. White’s books . . . but I was far too much interested in the Educational work to give that up, even though Elder W. C. White favored the editorial idea quite a bit.”⁸¹

When Lacey conducted “a series of Bible Studies at the 9:00 o’clock hour in a convention in Cooranbong in 1896,” he expanded on “the

ministry of the ‘Holy Ghost’ in our lives as . . . a real, definite, divine person the Comforter as taught by Jesus Christ in His last paschal discourse, and as revealed in the book of Acts” This, he recalled, was “very much to the interest (I well remember!) of Sr. Marian Davis, who took copious notes.” A. G. Daniells, then president of the Central Australian Conference, “was frequently present” at Lacey’s lecture series, “and expressed conservative appreciation.” But “When the ‘Desire of Ages’ came out in 1898, Brother Daniells himself called my attention to the expression found on page 671, where the Spirit is spoken of as ‘the third person of the Godhead’ . . . and made some kindly comments.”⁸²

Writing to Arthur Spalding (as W. C. Whites brother in law) decades after the fact (May Lacey was Willie’s second wife), Lacey asked Spalding, “why do we not more generally speak of Him [the Holy Spirit] in that way, as [did] . . . the Early Writings of Sr. White, until she came under the influence of her husband and other of the pioneers?” As he closed, Lacey responded to a Spalding question: “How prove the unity of the faith in our succession if our pioneers were Arians, and we are Athanasians?” Well now, the answer is obvious—to you, as well as to the rest of us; so, let us leave it there!”⁸³

Twenty-one years later, as he chaired the 1919 Bible Conference in July of that year, General Conference President A. G. Daniells was uncertain about the eternal deity of Christ. Prescott and Lacey, both present and assertive, supported the notion.⁸⁴

“We could hardly believe it”

Not many church members noticed the unannounced change in Seventh-day Adventists Christology; but M. L. Andreasen noticed. It was probably in 1909 or 1910 that he went to Healdsburg

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to see Ellen White “with a number of quotations that I wanted to see . . . in the original in her own handwriting.” He recalled “how astonished we were when Desire of Ages was first published, for it contained some things that we considered unbelievable, among others the doctrine of the Trinity which was not then generally accepted by the Adventists. Andreason “was particularly interested in the statement in Desire of Ages . . . : ‘In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.’ p. 530. . . . We could hardly believe it,” recalled Andreasen, “but of course we could not preach contrary to it. 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.”⁸⁵

If Andreasen was startled to find such a Trinitarian statement in the *Desire of Ages*, imagine his alarm had he noticed among the books in Mrs. White’s library John Cumming’s *Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament: St. John* that contained the statement: “He [John the apostle] at once begins by asserting the Deity of Christ as God and Lord of all; and he states, ‘In him was life,’—that is, original, unborrowed, underived.”⁸⁶ It would be interesting to know whether Andreasen could have made a silk purse from the results of Fred Veltman’s thorough, General Conference-sponsored study of Ellen White’s sources in fifteen chapters randomly selected from *The Desire of Ages*.⁸⁷

As Andreasen checked other statements of interest, he “found that they were Sister White’s own expression. . . . In the final analysis,” he said, “it was her work all the way through.” Andreasen became “profoundly impressed with the fact that Desire of Ages was really her work. I could account for the writings of Sister White only on the basis of inspiration.”⁸⁸

Handwriting proof

Elder Andreasen was not the first Adventist to use handwritten Ellen White material as proof that her writings were inspired, and certainly not derivative. “We are sometimes told that she required the assistance of secretaries and that all the beauties of her wonderful books are the work of assistants, wrote J. S. Washburn, at the beginning of his twelve-page pamphlet entitled, “A Wonderful Letter in the Handwriting of Mrs. E. G. White.” He sold “copies of this invaluable document” from his 404½ West Washington Street in Hagerstown, Maryland, for “whatever you consider it worth.” Washburn believed the charges regarding Mrs. White’s need for secretaries and assistants “This letter in her own handwriting, proves . . . false.” Rhetorically he asked, “Could any other living person without the direct aid of the Holy Ghost write so wonderful a letter so filled with the very breath of heaven—the Holy Spirit?”⁸⁹

Unless the Reverend John Harris was filled with the very breath of heaven 60 years earlier, Washburn was wrong. Because nearly all of the letter’s five long, consecutive, devotional paragraphs were paraphrased closely from pages 91-94 of the 1836 edition of John Harris’ *The Great Teacher*.⁹⁰

Old light by fiat

Had James White and J. N. Andrews lived during the production of *The Desire of Ages*, the leading brethren would have studied the matter of the Godhead for some time, J. N. Andrews would have written a definitive review of the relevant Scripture and a position would have been taken—subject, of course, to confirmation by “the gifts.” In their absence, the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the Godhead appears to have been changed by stealthy, borrowed fiat.

The obituary sketch in the *Review* for April 19,

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1892, said that of his final night Roswell Cottrell “held that pen literally to the last. . . . He wrote nearly all night. Just at the last he wanted to rise to offer prayer. When assured he had not the strength to rise, “he prayed on his bed, with his family around him, then like a tired pilgrim and a battle-worn soldier, he dropped away in the peaceful slumber of death.”⁹¹

But if Roswell was wrong in his conditionalist belief regarding the state of the dead, he could not have rested in peace, when six years later his beloved Sister White took the church (to which he had contributed so much) quietly, arbitrarily, unilaterally Trinitarian.

Notes

- 1 Brian Strayer, “The Triumph and Tragedy of Nathan Fuller,” *Adventist Heritage* 4 (Summer 1977), pp. 3-12.
- 2 Brian Strayer.
- 3 *SDA Encyclopedia* (Review & Herald, 1966), p. 857.
- 4 Author’s diagnosis. James White does seem to have had a rage disorder.
- 5 Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health* (Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 111-115.
- 6 John Harvey Kellogg, interview with George Amadon and A. C. Bourdeau, October 7, 1907.
- 7 See especially George Amadon’s handwritten diary, particularly for February 19, 1870, and April 9, 1870; R. J. Hammond’s “The Life and Work of Uriah Smith” (dissertation, 1944, SDA Theological Seminary), pp. 46-50; also Milton Hook, *Flames Over Battle Creek* (Review and Herald, 1977), pp. 56-65. Amadon was readmitted to membership a year or so later, after being refused admittance for a time. See Amadon and Bourdeau, interview with Kellogg. Uriah Smith and G. W. Amadon, “A Record of Some of the Pride and Extravagances of the Battle Creek Church,” unpublished ms. (circa 1870), 1 p. Although both men signed the satire, the original is in Uriah Smith’s distinctive hand. Some of the document is quoted in Eugene F. Durand, *Yours in the Blessed Hope, Uriah Smith* (Review and Herald, 1980), p. 123.
- 8 Roswell F. Cottrell, “E. R. Pinney’s ‘Three Sabbaths’ Reviewed,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 5:15 (May 2, 1854), pp. 113-115. “I should think he had discovered a new illustration of the doctrine of the Trinity,” Cottrell wrote derisively. Cottrell, R. F., “Meeting With the Disciples,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 11:2 (November 19, 1857), p.13. Cottrell reported—negatively—on the discourse of a Disciples preacher in Lancaster, Erie County, New York: “He proceeded to affirm that ‘man is a triune being,’ consisting of body, soul and spirit. I never heard a Disciple confess faith in the doctrine of the trinity; but why not, if man consists of three persons in one person? especially, since man was made in the image of God? But the image he said, was a moral likeness. So man may be a triune being without proving that God is. But does he mean that one man is three men?”
- 9 For a very readable review of the early Seventh-day Adventist Arians and semi-Arians, see Norman H. Young, “Christology & Atonement in Early Adventism,” *Adventist Heritage* 9:2 (Fall, 1984), pp. 30-39.
- 10 G. W. Amadon, “How Shall We Explain It?” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 18:17 (September 24, 1861), p. 136. Amadon as apologist explains that Revelation 1:8 is not a problem for those who reject the doctrine of the Trinity.
- 11 J. N. Andrews, “The Three Angels of Rev. XIV, 6—12,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 6:24 (March 6, 1855), pp. 185-187: “A few instances of her corruption of the truths of the Bible must suffice: . . . 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.”
- 12 Joseph Bates, *The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates* (Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1868), pp. 204-205: “Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was 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. I said to my 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 my father, and you my son, then I can believe in the trinity. . . . In a few days I was immersed and joined the Christian Church.”
- 13 R. F. Cottrell, “The Doctrine of the Trinity,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 33:23 (June 1, 1969), pp. 180-181. R. F. Cottrell, “The Doctrine of the Trinity,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 34:2 (July 6, 1969), pp. 10-11. Cottrell responded to the Tidings: “Some have made Christ a mere man, commencing his existence at his birth in Bethlehem; others have not been satisfied with holding him to be what the Scriptures so clearly reveal him, the pre-existing Son of God, but have made him the ‘God and Father’ of himself.”
- 14 J. B. Frisbie, “The Seventh Day-Sabbath Not Abolished,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 5:7 (March 7, 1854), p. 50. Frisbie refers to the teachings of the Trinity writing, “These ideas well accord with those heathen philosophers.” J. B. Frisbie, “The Trinity,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath*

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- Herald* 9:19 (March 12, 1857), p. 115: “How many personal Gods of one substance does it take, including the person of Christ, to make one God without body or parts?”
- 15 D. W. Hull, “Bible Doctrine of the Divinity of Christ,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 14:25 (November 10, 1859), pp. 193-195. Hull rejects the Nicene Creed: “The inconsistent positions held by many in regard to the Trinity, as it is termed, has, no doubt, been the prime cause of many other errors. . . .” D. W. Hull, “Bible Doctrine of the Divinity of Christ [part two],” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 14:26 (November 17, 1859), pp. 201-202.
 - 16 J. N. Loughborough, “Questions for Bro. Loughborough,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 18:23 (November 5, 1861), p. 184. Loughborough offers several objections to the doctrine of the Trinity.
 - 17 Uriah Smith, *Thoughts Critical and Practical on the Book of Revelation* (Steam Press, 1865) p. 59: “Moreover he [Christ] is ‘the beginning of the creation of God.’ Not the beginner, but the beginning, of the creation, the first created being, dating his existence far back before any other created being or thing, next to the self-existent and eternal God.” As late as 1890 (“In The Question Chair,” *Review and Herald* 67:42 [October 28, 1890], p. 664), Smith was very clear that the Holy Spirit was not a person. Erwin Roy Gane, provides a good review of Smith’s views in “The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer,” Masters thesis, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 1963, available: <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/gane-thesis/index.htm>
 - 18 J. H. Waggoner, “The Atonement—Part II,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 22:23 (November 3, 1863), pp. 181-182: “They take the doctrine of a trinity for their basis and assume that Christ is the second person in the trinity, and could not die.” J. H. Waggoner, “The Atonement—Part II (cont.),” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 22:24 (November 10, 1863), pp. 189-190: “Surely I said right, that the doctrine of a trinity degrades the atonement, by bringing the sacrifice, the blood of our purchase, down to the standard of Socinianism.”
 - 19 Editor [James White], “Protestants not Guided by Scripture,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 6:2 (August 22, 1854), p. 13. Editor [James White], “The Position of the Remnant,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 6:5 (September 12, 1854), p. 36: “As fundamental errors, we might class with this counterfeit Sabbath other errors which Protestants have brought away from the Catholic church, such as sprinkling for baptism, the trinity, the consciousness of the dead and eternal life in misery. The mass who have held these fundamental errors, have doubtless done it ignorantly; but can it be supposed that the church of Christ will carry along with her these errors till the judgment scenes burst upon the world? We think not.”
 - 20 J. M. Stephenson, “the atonement,” *Review and Herald* 6:14 (November 14, 1854), p. 105. A militant Arian, Stephenson wrote, “The idea of the Father and Son supposes priority of the existence of the one, and the subsequent existence of the other. To say that the Son is as old as the Father, is a palpable contradiction of terms. It is a natural impossibility for the Father to be as young as the Son, or the Son to be as old as the Father.”
 - 21 D. M. Canright, “Jesus Christ the Son of God,” *Review and Herald* 30:1 (June 18, 1867), pp 1-3; D. M. Canright, “The Holy Spirit,” *The Signs of the Times* 4:28 (July 25, 1878), p. 218: “All trinitarian creeds make the Holy Ghost a person, equal in substance, power, eternity, and glory with the Father and Son. . . . But this we cannot believe. The Holy Spirit is not a person. In all our prayers we naturally conceive of God as a person, and of the Son as a person, but whoever conceived of the Holy Ghost as being a person, standing there beside the Father and equal with Him?” D. M. Canright, “The Holy Spirit Not a Person, But an Influence Proceeding from God,” *The Signs of the Times* 4:30 (August 8, 1878), p. 236; D. M. Canright, “The Personality of God,” *Review and Herald* 52:10 (August 29, 1878), pp. 72-73; 52:11 (September 5, 1878), pp. 81-82; 52:12 (September 12, 1878), pp. 89-90; 52:13 (September. 19, 1878), p. 97.
 - 22 R. F. Cottrell, “The Doctrine of the Trinity,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 34:2 (July 6, 1869), pp. 10-11.
 - 23 Thomas H. Olbricht, “Christian Connexion and Unitarian Relations 1800-1844,” *Restoration Quarterly* 9:3 (Autumn, 1966), available: http://www.acu.edu/sponsored/restoration_quarterly/archives/1960s/vol_9_no_3_contents/olbricht.html
 - 24 Joshua V. Himes, “Christian Connexion,” in Fessenden & Co.’s *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge: or, Dictionary of the Bible, Theology, Religious Biography, All Religions, Ecclesiastical History, and Missions*, ed. J. Newton Brown (Brattleboro’ Typographic Co., 1838), pp. 363-364:

That there is one living and true God, the Father almighty, who is unoriginated, independent, and eternal, the Creator and Supporter of all worlds; and that this God is one spiritual intelligence, one infinite mind, ever the same, never varying: That this God is the moral Governor of the world, the absolute source of all the blessings of nature, providence and grace, in whose infinite wisdom, goodness, mercy, benevolence and love have originated all his moral dispensations to man: That all men sin and come short of the glory of God, consequently fall under the curse of the law: That Christ is the Son of God, the promised Messiah and Savior of the world, the Mediator between God and man, by whom God has revealed his will to mankind; by whose sufferings, death and resurrection a way has been provided by which sinners may obtain salvation, may lay hold on eternal life; that he is appointed of God to raise the dead and judge the world at the last day: That

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the Holy Spirit is the power and energy of God, that holy influence of God by whose agency, in the use of means, the wicked are regenerated, converted and recovered to a virtuous and holy life, sanctified and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; and that, by the same Spirit, the saints, in the use of means, are comforted, strengthened and led in the path of duty: The free forgiveness of sins, flowing from the rich mercy of God, through the labors, sufferings and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ: The necessity of repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ: The absolute necessity of holiness of heart and rectitude of life to enjoy the favor and approbation of God: The doctrine of a future state of immortality: The doctrine of a righteous retribution, in which God will render to every man according to the deeds done in the body: The baptism of believers by immersion: And the open communion at the Lord's table of Christians of every denomination having a good standing in their respective churches.

- 25 Bert Haloviak, senior archivist for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in "A Heritage of Freedom: The Christian Connection Roots to Seventh-day Adventism," published online, (November 1995) provides a very helpful overview of the doctrine and polity of the Christian Connexion, its profound influence on the little flock and the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Available: http://www.adventistarchives.org/doc_info.asp?DocID=46
- 26 Mary was the youngest of Elisha Stillman's seventeen children. Widowed twice, Elisha had no children by his third wife. Available: <http://www.stillman.org/c7.htm>
- 27 E. W. Humphreys, *Memoirs of Deceased Christian Ministers*, (Christian Publishing Association, 1880) p. 345, quoted in Haloviak, Bert, "Some Great Connexions: Our Seventh-day Adventist Heritage from the Christian Church," unpublished ms., May 1994, available: http://www.adventistarchives.org/doc_info.asp?DocID=43
- 28 J. R. Freese, *A history of the Christian Church: Its rise, progress, present condition, sentiments and government: with an advocacy of each* (Christian Herald Office, January 1849), 156 pp., quoted in Haloviak.
- 29 R. F. Cottrell, "Sacred Notions, No. 1," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 33:5 (January 26, 1869), p. 36.
- 30 Roswell F. Cottrell to Bro. [James] White, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 2:7 (November 25, 1851), p. 54. It was his introduction to "the message of the third angel" of Revelation 14, six years after the great disappointment, Roswell wrote, that had caused him, in November 1850, to reassess the Millerite movement. "Was it from Heaven or of men?" he wanted to know. "After some nine months careful and cautious examination," he concluded, "I believe with all my heart it was from Heaven."
- 31 Cottrell to White.
- 32 Haloviak.
- 33 Woodrow Whidden, Jerry A. Moon and John Reeve, *The Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002), p. 188. The authors assign the remaining Millerite leaders denominational backgrounds as follows: 44.3 percent Methodists, 27 percent Baptist, 9 percent Congregationalist, 7 percent Presbyterian, 2 percent Episcopalian, 1.5 percent Dutch Reformed, .6 percent Lutheran, and .6 percent Quaker.
- 34 Three influential leaders of the Christians allied themselves with the Miller movement almost from its inception — Joshua Vaughan Himes of Boston, Joseph March, who succeeded Joseph Badger as editor of the *Christian Palladium* in 1839, and L. D. Fleming of Portland, Maine. See Thomas H. Olbricht.
- 35 Isaac C. Wellcome (*History of the Second Advent Message* [Advent Christian Publication Society, 1874], pp. 397-404) "remember[ed] catching" Ellen Harmon "twice to save her from falling upon the floor," and in early 1845 "accepted that opportunity and were baptized by Eld. White, which we should not have consented to a few days later."
- 36 Cited in Haloviak.
- 37 R. F. Cottrell, "The Doctrine of the Trinity," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 33:23 (June 1, 1969), p. 180.
- 38 Cottrell, pp. 180, 181.
- 39 Cottrell, p. 181.
- 40 Cottrell, p. 181.
- 41 R. F. Cottrell, "The Trinity," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 34:2 (July 6, 1969), p. 10. R. F.
- 42 Cottrell, p. 10.
- 43 Cottrell, p. 10.
- 44 R. F. Cottrell. Cottrell's argument was the very rational one often made against the Trinity by Unitarians.
- 45 Cottrell, p. 10.
- 46 Cottrell, p. 10.
- 47 Cottrell, p. 11.
- 48 Cottrell, p. 11.
- 49 Cottrell, p. 11.
- 50 Cottrell, pp. 10, 11.
- 51 Ellet J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness* (Pacific Press, 1890), p. 44.
- 52 According to Arthur L. White, Ellen G. White: *The Australian Years* (Review & Herald, 1983), p. 16, she

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- sailed September 9, 1891.
- 53 Ellen G. White, *Testimony for the Church*, No. 25 (Steam Press, 1875), pp. 43-44, reprinted in *Testimonies for the Church*—3 (Pacific Press, 1948), p. 492. After Mrs. White was in Australia, her opinion of the General Conference varied. 1898: “It has been some years since I have considered the General Conference as the voice of God” (Ellen G. White, *GC Bulletin* [August 26, 1898], p. 74). 1901: “It is working upon wrong principles that has brought the cause of God into its present embarrassment. The people have lost confidence in those who have the management of the work. Yet we hear that the voice of the Conference is the voice of God. Every time I have heard this, I thought it was almost blasphemy. The voice of the Conference ought to be the voice of God, but it is not, because some in connection with it are not men of faith and prayer, they are not men of elevated principle” (Ellen G. White, April 1901 [Ms. 37-1901]. 1909: “When in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. Never should a laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body” (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*—9 [Pacific Press, 1948], p. 260).
- 54 E. G. White to J. E. White, August 9, 1896. Bracketted words are handwritten corrections on the typescript of the letter.
- 55 Ellen G. White “To Brethren in Responsible Positions in America, July 24, 1895 (Letter 5, 1895).
- 56 Ellen G. White to O. A. Olsen, December 1, 1896 (Letter 127, 1896).
- 57 Ellen G. White, “Important Communication From Australia,” *The Daily Bulletin* (March 1, 1899), pp. 130, 131.
- 58 Ellen G. White to Philip Wessells, November 4, 1899 (Letter 175, 1899). Most likely Ellen White apologists would argue that James 1:8 is addressed specifically to men.
- 59 It is obvious that both Spaulding and Froom were aware of the Lacey and Prescott impetus for Mrs. White’s new Trinitarian emphasis. And as he worked on his doctoral dissertation biography of W. W. Prescott, Gilbert Murray Valentine (“William Warren Prescott: Seventh-day Adventist Educator,” Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1982, 660. pp.) learned what they knew and more. While this paper was first presented on March 25, 2006, to the Schumann Pavilion Sabbath School class on the Loma Linda University campus, in the summer of 2007 this writer became aware, while internet surfing, that Valentine had used many of the same source documents (see *Ministry* 77:5 [May 2005], pp. 14-19) to make rather obliquely several points that have been argued more explicitly here.
- 60 Whidden, Moon and Reeve, p. 196. In their book *The Trinity*, Whidden, Moon and Reeve (pp. 208-210) attempt to create a timeline for an evolving (yet not contradictory) Ellen White Christology. But the authors slip in much later references under much earlier years in their timeline. For 1887 (p. 209), they cite Ellen White’s July 5, 1887, *Review and Herald* article “Christ Man’s Example” to support their statement, “Christ preexisted with the Father from all eternity”; but nothing resembling that is to be found in White’s 1887 article. It also just happens that the article relies heavily on Henry Melvill’s sermon, “The Humiliation of the Man Christ Jesus,” published in Henry Melvill, B.D., *Sermons*, Volume 1 (Francis & John Rivington, 1846), pp. 95-126. It is unclear why The Trinity authors also cite *The Desire of Ages* (1898), p. 19, in support of the same, 1887 timeline statement.
- 61 Clearly Whidden, Moon and Reeve support a Trinitarian position; but as the late Paul Landa used to say, “Pinning down the truth of the trinity is like trying to nail jello to the wall.” Anyone who intends responsibly to maintain the doctrine of the Trinity from Scripture will need to surmount the scholarship in Anthony Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound* (University Press of America, 1998) 365 pp.
- 62 Ecclesiastes 9:11 (NIV): “I have seen something else under the sun: . . . time and chance happen to them all.”
- 63 Ellen G. White to W. L. H. Baker, letter 8, 1895, Manuscript Release No. 414. Although the Baker letter is dated 1895, Woodrow W. Whidden (*Ellen White on the Humanity of Christ* [Review and Herald, 1997], note 1, p. 66) points out that Lyell Heise (“The Christology of Ellen G. White Letter 8, 1895, An Historical Contextual and Analytical Study” [Andrews University research paper], March 1975) has presented evidence that it was actually written in 1896.
- 64 Whidden, p. 60.
- 65 White to Baker.
- 66 Henry Melvill, *Sermons of Henry Melvill* (Stanford and Swords, 1854), pp. 40-50. The five paragraphs on the nature of Christ that White paraphrased from Melvill for her letter to Baker appear in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*—5 (Review and Herald, 1956), pp. 1128, 1129. The Ellen G. White Estate has published “Henry Melvill and Ellen G. White: A Study in Literary and Theological Relationships” (Ellen G. White Estate, April 1982), 85 pages of clear, parallel passages between Melvill’s Sermons and White’s books and articles. Melvill was the minister of Camden Chapel, Camberwell, chaplain to the Tower of London, and late fellow and tutor of St. Peter’s College, Cambridge.
- 67 According to the *SDA Encyclopedia*, Herbert Camden Lacey was born (1871) in England. Lacey lived in India until age 11, when he moved to Tasmania, where in 1888 his family accepted SDA beliefs. After attending college at Healdsburg and Battle Creek, he married and taught at Cooranbong,

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- returning to the U. S. in 1902 to teach Bible and ancient languages at Healdsburg College.
- 68 H. Camden Lacey to L. E. Froom, August 30, 1945.
- 69 Gilbert Murray Valentine's doctoral dissertation on W. W. Prescott is revised and updated in *The Shaping of Adventism: The Case of W.W. Prescott* (Andrews University Press, 1992), 307 pp.
- 70 Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 4 volumes, Trans. Joseph Torrey (Boston: Crocker & Brewster; London: Wiley & Putnam, 1854).
- 71 Gilbert Murray Valentine, "William Warren Prescott: Seventh-day Adventist Educator," Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1982, pp. 220-221.
- 72 William C. White to L. E. Froom, 1928 letter quoted in Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*—3 (Review and Herald, 1980), Appendix C, p. 460. See also Fred Veltman's "Summary and Conclusions," from his "Life of Christ Research Project," May 30, 1988, 858 pp. plus appendices. Available: <http://www.adventistarchives.org/documents.asp?CatID=13&SortBy=1&ShowDateOrder=True>
- 73 Ellen G. White to Marian Davis, October 20, 1899.
- 74 A. W. Spaulding to H. C. Lacey, June 2, 1947.
- 75 H. Camden Lacey to L. E. Froom, August 30, 1945. In both Prescott's lectures and *The Desire of Ages*, the meaning of phrases such as "I am the Bread of Life," "I am the Light of the World," "I am the Door of the Sheep," etc., were extended far beyond what the copula in the Greek or English could convey.
- 76 Lacey to Froom, August 30, 1945.
- 77 H. C. Lacey to A. W. Spaulding, June 5, 1947.
- 78 Lacey to Froom.
- 79 W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, 1896, referenced in Valentine, p. 221.
- 80 Valentine, p. 221.
- 81 Lacey to Froom. Fannie Bolton had left Mrs. White's editorial staff for the final time May 1896 (see Alice Elizabeth Gregg, "Fannie's Folly," *Adventist Currents* 1:2 (October 1983), pp. 24-27, 34. Fannie has, W. C. White wrote his brother, J. Edson White (October 25, 1895), "remarkable talent and handles mother's matter very intelligently and rapidly, turning off more than twice as much work in a given time as any other editor mother has ever employed."
- 82 Lacey to Froom. Although it was published in 1900, *Testimonies for the Church*—6 contained a curious mixture of personal and impersonal designations for the Holy Spirit: page 42: "... we are to remove every hindrance to His working"; page 51: "We are in great need of the heavenly influence, God's Holy Spirit . . ."; page 266: "... the controlling power of the Holy Spirit, and now is the time to pray for it."; page 316: "... for the Holy Spirit will impress minds as they read the books, just as He impresses the minds of those who listen to the preaching of the word. The same ministry of angels [!] attends the books that contain the truth as attends the work of the minister" (emphasis added).
- 83 Lacey to Spaulding.
- 84 Merlin D. Burt, "Demise of Semi-Arianism and Anti-Trinitarianism in Adventist Theology, 1888-1957," research paper for Andrews University course GHIS 974 (December 1996), p. 30.
- 85 M. L. Andreasen, "The Spirit of Prophecy," chapel talk at Loma Linda, CA, November 30, 1948, pp. 3, 4.
- 86 *John Cumming's Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament: St. John* (Arthur Hall Virtue & Company, 1857), p. 6, quoted in Merlin D. Burt, p. 12. (An earlier edition, published by John P. Jewett [1856] ran 464 pages.) Mrs. White paraphrased the same Cumming passage in "Christ the Life Giver," *Signs of the Times* (April 8, 1897), pp. 6, 7. From 1832 to 1879, the Rev. John Cumming (1807-1881) was the popular and influential minister of the National Scottish Church in London's Covent Garden. During that time, he increased the church's membership from 80 to about 900, preached to 500-600 people every Sunday, published approximately 180 books (including a volume on beekeeping) and helped operate the Brewer's-Court Ragged School in Drury Lane. Cumming's favorite theological topics were anti-Catholicism and apocalyptic prophecy. He crusaded against what he liked to call "Romish error" in books and pamphlets.
- 87 Fred Veltman, "Summary and Conclusions," Full Report of the Life of Christ Research Project (November 1988), 958 pp. (plus another roughly one thousand pages of appendices), available: <http://www.adventistarchives.org/documents.asp?CatID=13&SortBy=1&ShowDateOrder=True> Ellen White apologists take solace in Veltman's finding in fifteen randomly selected chapters from *The Desire of Ages* only "31.4 percent . . . literary dependency at the paraphrase level" (p. 921). But "when you add to the literary dependence the similarity of ideas," Veltman writes, "it becomes apparent that Ellen White is more dependent on her sources than the actual verbal parallels indicate" (p. 922). He adds that "one is not able to recognize any general category of content or catalog of ideas that are unique to Ellen White's comments in the DA text" (p. 922). Many students of Ellen White are unaware that the material from her diaries, letter books and earlier published articles that Marian Davis edited for inclusion in *Desire of Ages* contained much more slavish paraphrases of the sources identified in her life of Christ volume. As Veltman expressed it, "Generally the closer one is able to move back through the textual tradition

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to Ellen White's own hand, the greater is the degree of literary dependency" (p. 913). Furthermore, the calculated percentage of dependency was diluted by including in the word counts for *Desire of Ages* chapters the many Bible passages White quoted, while not counting those words as parallels, even though the sources she relied on used the same Scripture passages in precisely the same way.

88 Andreasen, pp. 4, 7.

89 Photocopy of Washburn's pamphlet and Ellen White's handwritten letter are in the author's collection.

90 John Harris, *The Great Teacher: Characteristics of Our Lord's Ministry* (Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, 1836), 352 pp. Many editions of Harris' work were published in both England and the United States and their pagination varies.

91 W. A. Spicer, "R. F. Cottrell's First Report a Century Ago," 128:43 *Review and Herald* (October 25, 1951), pp. 12-13.