Chapter 14

**Trinitarian No Quotes - 5 through 8**

In Chapter 13 we studied Trinitarian No Quotes 1 through 4. This chapter will cover the last four No-Quotes—numbers 5 through 8—again with the intent to show that these quoted phrases do not mean what Trinitarians have interpreted them to mean, but, instead, support the non-trinitarian pioneer position. Those four No-Quotes are:

1. Eternal Heavenly Dignitaries;
2. The Holy Spirit, Who is as Much a Person as God is a Person;
3. Holy Spirit is a Person;
4. Gave Themselves.

**5. “Eternal Heavenly Dignitaries”**

The phrase “eternal heavenly dignitaries,” is from the following quotation: “The *eternal heavenly dignitaries*--God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit--arming them [the disciples] with more than mortal energy, … would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin.”(Ms 145, 1901; Ev 616)

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the eternal dignitaries of Heaven. There is no doubt that there are three. No one denies that there is a Holy Spirit! But are they three separate divine beings?

The Spirit of prophecy quotation above does not tell us about the relation among the Father, Son and Spirit. It does not tell us that they are three beings. It does not tell us that the Spirit is a co-equal being with God and Christ. It does not tell us that Jesus is begotten of His Father. It merely tells us there are three, which everyone believes. Sometimes all three of them are listed together, but more often only two of them are. Why is that, and what is the relationship among those three, if any? Let us allow the writings of Mrs. White to answer those questions for us. We shall again make use of that trusty key, letting the passages explain one another.

“The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. [Hebrews 1:1-5 quoted] God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” (8T 268}

“Christ was the Son of God; He had been one with Him before the angels were called into existence.” (PP 38)

“A complete offering has been made; for ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,’-- not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (ST May 30, 1895)

As you have read for yourself, Christ’s literal Sonship is affirmed both in Ellen White’s writings and in God’s Word, in which both Father and Son speak in acknowledgement of Christ as the Son of God. The next quotation is very explicit, as well:

“The dedication of the first-born had its origin in the earliest times. God had promised to give the *First-born of heaven* to save the sinner.”(DA 51)

Based on that quotation, we can confidently conclude that Jesus came to earth at the appointed time to be “born again.” In other words, when He was born on earth, He became the Son of God in “a new sense.” Notice:

“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. 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.” (1SM 226, 227)

“While upon this earth, the Son of God was the Son of man; yet there were times when His divinity flashed forth.” (8T 202)

“…The whole [Jewish] nation called God their Father, and if Jesus had done this in the same sense in which they did, the Pharisees would not have been so enraged. But they accused Jesus of blasphemy, showing that they understood that *Christ claimed God as His Father in the very highest sense*.” )RH March 5, 1901)

From the clear passages above, we learn that Christ was begotten of His Father, in that He was the First born in heaven long before the incarnation took place. It is easy to understand things when we allow Mrs. White to explain herself. Things will become even plainer as we proceed, so let us continue to our second question on this topic of “eternal heavenly dignitaries:”

What relation does the Spirit hold to the Father and Son? The trustworthy key will show us that “the” Spirit is “his” Spirit, referring either to the Spirit of God or of Christ—which is the same Spirit, as there is but “one Spirit.” (Eph 4:4)

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

Not only does Christ give “a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin” when He gives us His Spirit, but He also gives us His life!

“The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ.” (DA 805)

“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.” (DA 827)

“…The Spirit is life because of [Christ’s] righteousness.” (Romans 8:10)

Where did this life of Christ originate?

 “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” (John 5:26)

Thus we know that the Father and Son share the same life (Spirit). It is the same “one Spirit” (life) of the Father and Spirit (life) of the Son, as we can see in the quotation below.

 “But ye are not in the flesh, but in *the Spirit*, if so be that the *Spirit of God* dwell in you. Now if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ,* he is none of his. And if *Christ be in you*, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the *Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell* in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by *his Spirit that dwelleth* in you.” (Romans 8:9-11. See also Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 3:14-17)

Therefore, when we have that life (Spirit) of the Father and Son, we are really having communion and fellowship with them both.

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3; see also 2 John 9)

“By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you.”(ST January 15, 1893)

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John 14:23)

“The sinner then stands before God as a just person; he is taken into favor with Heaven, and through the Spirit has fellowship with the Father and the Son.” (3SM 191)

We can indeed praise the Father and Son for their magnificent gift. What gift can possibly exceed the fact that they share their life with us via Their indwelling Spirit!

“…The followers of Christ are to become like Him—by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification…. This work can be accomplished only through faith in Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God.” (Mar 231)

“…If we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and are filled with the joy of His indwelling Spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace….” (SC 78)

 Truly “grace and peace” have been “multiplied unto [us] through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given us *all things* that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue….” (2 Peter 1:2-3) That “all things” includes the truth of their indwelling presence by the Spirit. This, then, is the defensible, reasonable, inspired, wonderful understanding of who “the eternal heavenly dignitaries” are. But there is more.

The book *Evangelism* by Ellen White is actually a compilation of her writings related to that topic. The selected passages were assembled in book form years after her death, with introductory headings supplied by the editor(s) and/or compiler(s) before each quoted passage, and published in 1946. A number of E. G. White statements about the Godhead were included in the compilation, and the supplied headings for those quoted passages gave evidence of the Trinitarian leaning of those who wrote those headings. Thus when Mrs. White’s Godhead quotations were read in conjunction with the supplied headings, they seemed to imply that she was advocating the Trinity doctrine. For example, one of the short introductory headings was “The Eternal Dignitaries of the Trinity.” The quotation from her writings that followed that heading began with these words: “The eternal heavenly dignitaries—God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit….” In that listing of three, the compilers of *Evangelism* assumed or implied that she was supporting the Trinity doctrine, which she was not. In truth, the word “Trinity” in the heading was used in a wording and sense never utilized by Mrs. White during her lifetime. In fact, she used the word “trinity” only once in her writings when she referred to “the world’s trinity” of “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” (Ltr 43, May 19, 1898)

Unfortunately, that *Evangelism* quotation is still used to justify or support the Trinity doctrine. Common sense and honest scholarship tell us, though, that no doctrine can reasonably be supported by a straightforward list of three. Also, had the full context of the quoted portion been included in the book, there would have been no justification for using the heading that was used. The full context includes at minimum the paragraphs before and after the sentence or phrase or word being studied. In this case, we’ll look only at the paragraph just before the one from which the phrase “eternal heavenly dignitaries” was quoted, as well as paragraph in which the phrase was used. (That phrase was actually used at least four times in her writings.) We will quote from *Manuscript Releases,* Volume 16. The first of the two paragraphs is below. Note especially Mrs. White’s unusual emphasis of Jesus’ words in the third sentence: “Hear it….”

“There was kept before them that His people must be a combined, united power in love and efficiency, to become a light amid the moral darkness. By these combined forces [He] specified that they all may be one. Hear it, every one who is a Seventh-day Adventist; hear it: ‘As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.... I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me’ (John 17:21, 23).

Jesus, as He spoke to the Father, named only two divine Beings—the Father and Himself—with whom we have the stupendous privilege of being “one.” That “one” is not numerical, any more than the “oneness” of Father and Son is. And Jesus said of Himself in this quotation “I in them.” That answers who the Comforter is that has come to dwell in us. In John 14, Jesus told His disciples, “I in you.” Further, the Holy Spirit was not included by Jesus when He spoke to His Father in that passage above for a reason. Jesus knew it is because “the Spirit” is the Spirit “of” God and “of” Christ; it is Father and Son—They Themselves—in spiritual presence.

The unnamed editor(s) and compilers of *Evangelism* were men of experience in Seventh-day Adventist understanding of God’s Word. No doubt they also were quite familiar with the writings of Ellen White. It is more than probable that their advocacy of the Trinity doctrine influenced their misinterpretation of the passage quoted, hence the misleading brief heading that was supplied, which has added to the confusion about the Godhead. However, their interpretation was not based on sound biblical exegesis. Enough evidence contrary to the Trinity doctrine was in that two-paragraph passage to give pause to such a heading. Especially is it true that a listing of three does not give evidence in any degree to the concept of three gods in one. Not only that, but they most likely well knew that Mrs. White had always been a non-trinitarian. Some may claim Mrs. White rejected the “wrong view” of the Trinity, but matured to embrace the “right view,” but at www.revelation1412.org can be found a video recording of Imad Awde’s presentation *Ellen G. White and the Trinity,* which proves beyond any reasonable doubt that Mrs. White never accepted any version of the Trinity doctrine. So for the editor(s) and/or compiler(s) to put such a misleading heading to introduce a passage from her writings was unprofessional, at the very least. The prophet warned of attempts to make her writings say something other than what she intended.

The danger of believing in three coequal, coeternal gods is that the truth about who the Holy Spirit really is, and His crucial role in our spiritual growth and in our service to our Lord, is kept from us. In the absence of knowledge of the true, we accept the false. We are led to believe a false gospel and worship a false god who cannot save us. It leads us to break the first commandment. Further, without the understanding of the presence and power of our indwelling Savior to draw upon, we become spiritually vulnerable. Satan understands that, even if we don’t. To deceive us and make us vulnerable to his snares is identified as one of the objectives of Satan: “…He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter….” (RH Aug. 26, 1890)

The following passage from the writings of Ellen White is the continuation of the context for the phrase “eternal heavenly dignitaries.” We’ve just discussed the paragraph preceding the one in which the phrase is found. Next is the paragraph containing the phrase itself. This passage from Mrs. White makes the conflict between our life-giving Savior and the destroyer plain. It focuses on Satan’s attack against the truth about the Holy Spirit, and reinforces Jesus’ message in the previous paragraph of our need to be “a combined, united force”—“one” with each other and with Them.

“The Lord Jesus described the difficulties they should meet. Having called their minds to rise to an eminence, He bids them behold the vast confederacy of evil arrayed against God, against Christ, against all who unite with these holy powers. Christ tells them they were to fight in fellowship with all the children of light; that satanic agencies would combine their forces to extinguish *the light of the life of Christ* out of their ranks. But they were not left to fight the battles in their own human strength. The angelic host coming as ministers of God would be in that battle. Also there would be the eternal heavenly dignitaries—God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit—arming them with more than mortal energy, and would advance with them to the work, and convince the world of sin.” (16MR 204)

In the first paragraph, we read of only two divine Beings “in” each other. We may be one “in” them—in Father and Son. What Christ was talking about could not be possible physically, but only by the Spirit. So it is that the Holy Spirit is one of the heavenly dignitaries, because without it dwelling in us, we would have no way to be “in” Father and Son.

In the second paragraph, we read that we may “unite” with these holy powers. What are the forces of evil trying to do? “Extinguish the light of the life of Christ” out of our ranks.” This is a most important point. It is something Jesus said we are to act unitedly to prevent. We read earlier that Satan and his doomed angels are trying to “shut Jesus from [our] view as the Comforter….” (RH Aug. 26, 1890) What is the “light of the life of Christ”? Notice in the following excerpts that “life of Christ” refers to the Holy Spirit. It is “life” to us.

“The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the *life of Christ*. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ.” (ChS 254) The Holy Spirit is something we may receive: “…Those who receive the light of the *life of Christ*…” We need to be “guided by divine wisdom.” (MH 461) “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).

Without the true Holy Spirit, we are lost. It is the Holy Spirit, which is the life of Christ in us, along with His attributes, that those evil powers are seeking to remove from our lives through deceptive teachings. One such deceptive teaching is of a counterfeit third god called “God the Holy Spirit,” when Scripture and Spirit of prophecy plainly speak of only two divine Beings dwelling in each other and in us. What follows is a description of what may be ours. It is manifest why Satan tries to keep this from us, and why we should individually and unitedly seek for it.

“Those who at Pentecost were endued with power from on high, were not thereby freed from further temptation and trial. As they witnessed for truth and righteousness, they were repeatedly assailed by the enemy of all truth, who sought to rob them of their Christian experience. They were compelled to strive with all their God-given powers to reach the measure of the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Daily they prayed for fresh supplies of grace, that they might reach higher and still higher toward perfection. Under the Holy Spirit’s working, even the weakest, by exercising faith in God, learned to improve their entrusted powers and to become sanctified, refined, and ennobled. *As in humility they* *submitted to the molding influence of the Holy Spirit,* *they received of the fullness of the Godhead and were fashioned in the likeness of the divine*.

“The lapse of time has wrought no change in Christ’s parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude.

“Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God. Companies of Christian workers should gather to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely. Especially should they pray that God will baptize His chosen ambassadors in mission fields with a rich measure of His Spirit. The presence of the Spirit with God’s workers will give the proclamation of truth a power that not all the honor or glory of the world could give.

“With the consecrated worker for God, in whatever place he may be, the Holy Spirit abides. The words spoken to the disciples are spoken also to us. The Comforter is ours as well as theirs. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amidst the hatred of the world, and the realization of their own failures and mistakes. In sorrow and affliction, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone,—these are the times when, in answer to the prayer of faith, the Holy Spirit brings comfort to the heart.” (AA 49-51)

**6. “The Holy Spirit, Who is as Much a Person as God is a Person”**

The full sentence reads, “We need to realize that *the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person,* is walking through these grounds.” (Ms 66 1899; Ev 616)

First, let it be established again that I know of no Seventh-day Adventist, trinitarian or non-trinitarian, that does not accept that there are three persons of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit being one of them. Beyond that, there is disagreement—unnecessary disagreement, because solid study principles would remove it. As in all cases involving Scriptural interpretation, context provides valuable clues as to the “persons” being talked about in that passage above. Here is that same sentence in the full paragraph:

“The Lord says this because He knows it is for our good. He would build a wall around us, to keep us from transgression, so that His blessing and love may be bestowed on us in rich measure. This is the reason we have established a school here. 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, unseen by human eyes; that the Lord God is our Keeper and Helper. He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind.” (2SAT 136-137; 7MR 299)

Did you notice that it is “the Lord God” who is our Keeper and Helper, and not someone else? That He—not another God—was “hearing” their every word? Mrs. White used “the Lord God” synonymously with “the Holy Spirit” in this quotation. There were not two divine personages there on the grounds, but one. It was the Lord Himself who was “unseen by human eyes” as he walked the campus of the school. Even though God was and is here on earth by His invisible Spirit, yet still He was and is as much a real person as if He were here in visible, physical form! In other words, *both the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy list three persons of the Godhead, all active for our salvation, but speak of one of those three as the Spirit of the other two.* As texts and quotations elsewhere in this book have shown, the Holy Spirit is a person, but not in the same sense as Father and Son—not a person “just like” them. Thus this passage under study is speaking about the “Lord God” in His divine omnipresence—His non-physical, or spiritual, form—walking through the grounds, listening as He went. After all, Mrs. White said He had an interest in the property and the work to be done there; it was He who told them to locate the school there.

Romans 8:9-11 presents the same understanding about the Holy Spirit. In those verses below, notice just who the apostle Paul says dwells in the believer. In order of mention, it’s “the” Spirit, “the Spirit of God,” “the Spirit of Christ,” “Christ … in you,” “the Spirit of him that raised Jesus from the dead” [meaning the Father], “his” [meaning the Father’s] Spirit that dwelleth in you.” All of those mentions mean the same thing: the Spirit of God and/or the Spirit of Christ. Here’s Paul, from Romans 8:

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in *the Spirit,* if so be that the *Spirit of God* dwell in you. Now if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his. And if *Christ be in you*, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the *Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead* dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by *his Spirit* that dwelleth in you.”

Five times Paul used the word “Spirit,” but nothing in that three-verse passage suggests a third-god holy spirit. No other God is mentioned besides God and Christ. And do not miss the additional point made in that biblical passage: If a person “have not the Spirit of Christ,” he is *not* Christ’s. Fearful condition! That is why knowledge of who the indwelling Spirit is, is so critical. We may believe in a different indwelling Spirit—one not named in those verses above—but that counterfeit spirit cannot save us. It is not “of God,” and has no power or authority from Him. It would be an “apostate spirit.” (4SP 320)

Getting back to the quotation we are studying, it is interesting to note that not only did “the Lord God” walk through the grounds “unseen by human eyes,” meaning He was there by His Spirit, but a similar thing was written about Christ:

“Christ walks unseen through our streets. With messages of mercy He comes to our homes. With all who are seeking to minister in His name, He waits to co-operate. He is in the midst of us, to heal and to bless, if we will receive Him.” (MH 107)

“Remember that Jesus is beside you wherever you go, noting your actions and listening to your words. Would you be ashamed to hear his voice speaking to you, and to know that he hears your conversation?” (YI February 4, 1897)

Who walks unseen in our streets? Who is it that listens to our words and hears our conversation? Why, it is Jesus! But how do we know He is always beside us, if we can’t see Him?

“That Christ should manifest Himself to them, and yet be invisible to the world, was a mystery to the disciples. They could not understand the words of Christ in their spiritual sense. They were thinking of the outward, visible manifestation. They could not take in the fact that they could have the presence of Christ with them, and yet He be unseen by the world. They did not understand the meaning of a spiritual manifestation.” (SW September 13, 1898)

“By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you.” (ST January 15, 1893)

“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.” (CM 107)

The last quotation makes it so plain. The canvasser doesn’t have two different people by his side. The Lord Jesus standing by the side of the canvasser and the Holy Spirit “by our side” are one and the same person.

In sum, with all of these inspired statements before us, we are justified in concluding that the Holy Spirit is the unseen, personal, but very real and precious presence of the Father and/or the Son.

**7. “Holy Spirit is a Person”**

Non-trinitarians agree with Trinitarians that the Holy Spirit is a person, but they disagree with Trinitarians on *Who* that person is. Trinitarians believe the Holy Spirit is one of three self-existent Gods, but non-trinitarians know the Bible says otherwise. They believe the disagreement can easily be resolved, if words are permitted to have their true meaning. Here is the context for the clause under discussion:

“The *Holy Spirit is a person*, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God….

“The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. ‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.’” (20MR 69 [1906])

The quoted Bible verse in the second paragraph above (1 Corinthians 2:11) is the key to understanding the statement. According to Paul, man and his spirit are comparable to God and His Spirit. Just as man’s spirit is not a different person from man, even so God’s Spirit is not a different person from God. Just as man’s spirit is his very own person, even so God’s Spirit is His very own person. Simply put, the Holy Spirit is a person because God is a person; the Holy Spirit is the person of God. And the Spirit has a personality, of course—because God has a personality.

 “In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” (7T 273)

When God gives us Himself in Spirit, His Spirit is not devoid of personality. It is not just some impersonal force or essence. No, it is very personal and intimate. It is God’s own person, having God’s very own personality. The Spirit is also a divine person. This is because God is a divine person. You see, God is a Spirit, and yet a person.

“God is a Spirit; yet He is a personal Being; for so He has revealed Himself:” (MH 413)

“The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. ‘*…* the Lord’s throne is in heaven:’ (Psalm 11:4); yet by His Spirit He is everywhere present. He has an intimate knowledge of, and a personal interest in, all the works of His hand.” (Ed 132)

There is only one divine Spirit (Eph 4:4), so the Spirit is also the person of Christ. When Jesus was with His disciples for three and a half years, they were comforted by His presence. When He was to separate Himself from them on the physical plane, He promised them that the Father would send another comforter in His name. In John 14:18 He pledged Himself to come to them when He said, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” The next quotation explains that His person would be divested of His humanity—His human form—so that He could manifest Himself in His followers by the person of His omnipresent Spirit.

“Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. The Holy Spirit is Himself, divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.” (PrT May 30, 1895; Lt119- Feb. 19, 1895)

According to that inspired passage, the Holy Spirit is the person who once had the personality of humanity, and who at a later point was divested of that humanity. Those qualifications refer to only one person: Jesus Christ. That is who the person of the Holy Spirit is.

These inspired statements and others like them use uncomplicated, straightforward language to express the exalted concepts they teach. They leave no reason for speculation that God’s nature is triune. Their clarity exposes as speculative any interpretations involving a new biblical hermeneutic, role-playing gods, and a counterfeit third god.

**8. “Gave Themselves”**

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit *gave themselves* to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order to fully carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love?”(AUCR April 1, 1901; CH 222)

As earlier chapters have substantiated, the Holy Spirit is given for the working out of the plan of salvation designed by the Father and Son, who covenanted to give all the resources of heaven to save us, including the Holy Spirit. Despite that substantiation, some assume from the wording of the quotation above that the Holy Spirit was present as a third member in the formulation of the plan of salvation. Thus the statement is sometimes used to prove that the Holy Spirit is a third individual god-being—a being just as God the Father and Christ His Son are Beings. We already know that is not a trustworthy understanding supported by “line upon line.” A careful reading and comparison using the divine key could easily clarify the matter. We would reasonably expect a consistent finding with earlier chapters, for they have shown that the Spirit is the invisible omnipresence/life/mind of the Father and Son. But because in this chapter we are looking at specific phrases used to bolster the Trinity doctrine, we will undertake a brief study on the topic again, approaching it from a different angle.

Two points should first be noted. Firstly, the Spirit of God is always a part of God Himself. Though on the throne of the universe, God can operate by that Spirit elsewhere in the universe. (Ed 132; 7T 273) Secondly, “working out the plan” means fulfilling the plan—carrying it out, not formulating it.

The first sentence of the quotation under discussion says, in part, “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption.” In Webster’s 1828 dictionary, “work out” means “to effect [accomplish] by labor and exertion.” It does not mean to *devise* a plan of labor, but to carry out, or bring about, the accomplishment of the plan already formulated. A text given as a reference in the dictionary is Philippians 2:13. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” We are not to devise our own plan, but to co-operate with God in working out *His* plan for our salvation.

With “working out” defined, let us now consider who has been doing the “working out.” For contextual clues, we’ll read the paragraphs that precede and follow the one in which “gave themselves” is found, as well as the one wherein it is located. We’ll read them in order, mining them for understanding. There is another point to be established by doing this. So here are the three paragraphs. Read slowly and thoughtfully, please:

“It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image, by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God decided to give human beings an unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He ‘so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order to fully carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love?

“God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Christ He gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing might be wanting in the plan for man’s uplifting.” (AUCR April 1, 1901)

In the first of the three-paragraph quotation above, we see that “God [the Father] decided” to give His Son. He was making up His plan. In the second paragraph, we see that during the devising stage, the Father and Son together decided that Christ would give Himself. Is that a contradiction? No. But didn’t the Father decide to give the Son? Yes, but according to the full passage and context, it was a mutual decision. God the Father would give His Son; Christ would give Himself.

Only Father and Son were involved in the devising of the plan. Remember, Christ is the only being who can enter into all the counsels and purposes of God (PP 34). There were only two Beings present in that counsel of peace: “… and the counsel of peace shall be between them *both*.” (Zech 6:13) There was no third being present in the formation of the plan of salvation.

“Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race.” (DA 834)

 “Before the fall of man, the Son of God had united with his Father in laying the plan of salvation.” (RH September 13, 1906)

“A covenant has been entered into by the Father and by the Son to save the world through Christ.” ST October 10, 1892)

Then, in the second of those three paragraphs, regarding the carrying out of the plan, we read the “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave themselves.” Three of them carried out the plan. But notice the third paragraph! There we read of God that “with Christ He gave all the resources of heaven.” There two of them fulfilled the plan.

Why wasn’t the Holy Spirit part of the counsel of peace? What didn’t the third paragraph include the Holy Spirit in the giving, as the second paragraph did? Is there a contradiction there? No, again. Actually, the Holy Spirit is the most important part of “all the resources of heaven” given with Christ. While it is certainly true that the Holy Spirit is sent by God into the hearts of believers, it is not necessary for the Holy Spirit to be a third, independent God just like Father and Son in order for that to happen. As said before, there are two divine Beings—Father and Son—and their divine, omnipresent Spirit works for our salvation as verily as do Father and Son in heaven. We praise God for His divine Son and His divine Spirit!

“Christ the Word, the Only Begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,--one in nature, in character, and in purpose,--the only being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.” (PP 34) In that excerpt from Mrs. White’s writings, we read in what way God and Christ are “one.” It is not a numerical oneness, but a relational, spiritual oneness that is not said of the Holy Spirit. We also read what qualifies Christ to be the “only being” to enter into God’s counsels. It is because He is the “only begotten” of God. That, too, is never said of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is simply *not* like Father and Son in all respects, and it is because it is part of them, or, more specifically, They Themselves, omnipresent. (Mrs. White sometimes referred to the Spirit as “it” (see *Testimonies on Sabbath School Work,* 106.1, for example, or AA 50.2, but never did she do so regarding Father or Son.) The Holy Spirit is the Father and Son, without physical form. It can’t be expressed any plainer than the Bible has already expressed it in these possessive phrases: “The Spirit of God,” “the Spirit of Christ,” “the Spirit of His Son,” “His Spirit.”

To analyze the topic another way, we’ll pose this dilemma: Either the Holy Spirit is a coequal god-being (Trinitarian view) who, for some reason, is not permitted to enter into the counsels of the other gods with whom He is allegedly equal (!)—OR—the Holy Spirit is *not* a coequal being like Father and Son, but is rather the life and character and mind and personal presence of both the Father and the Son (non-trinitarian view). In fact, when the Father and Son were in counsel, it was decided that the Spirit would be “*given* as a regenerating agency” for man, should he fall. (AA 52) So while we read that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit “gave themselves,” we must make that statement harmonize with other inspired statements wherein the Holy Spirit has been “sent” or “given.” It is subject to the will of those whose Spirit it is: the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Christ. You can read that for yourself in the following clarifying passage:

“…Christ declared that the divine influence of *His Spirit* was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter *has been sent* to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness….”

How very important to us is the gift of the Holy Spirit. If we cherish any hope of eternal face-to-face communion with our God and His dear Son (blissful thought!), we must have the help of the third agency of divinity. It is the Spirit that makes effective what Christ has done for us. It is the Spirit that directs us, as co-laborers with Christ, to hasten His return.

“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.”(RH November 19, 1908)

“We shall be judged according to the light we have had, according to the privileges we have been granted, according to the opportunity we have had to hear and understand the word of God. These privileges have been given us through an infinite cost to the Father and the Son. The plan of redemption has been devised and carried out so far through the sacrifice of all heaven, and the gift of the Holy Spirit has been provided, that the divine may unite with the human, and man be elevated in moral and spiritual worth.” (YI June 15, 1893)

 “That the Holy Spirit is to be the grand helper, is a wonderful promise. Of what avail would it have been to us that the only begotten Son of God had humbled Himself, endured the temptations of the wily foe, and wrestled with him during His entire life on earth, and died, the Just for the unjust, that humanity might not perish, if the Spirit had not been given as a constant, working, regenerating agent to make effectual in our cases what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer?” (3SM 137)

“As the divine endowment--the power of the Holy Spirit--was given to the disciples, so it will today be given to all who seek aright. This power alone is able to make us wise unto salvation and to fit us for the courts above. Christ wants to give us a blessing that will make us holy…. In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” (7T 273}

“No truth is more clearly taught in the Bible than that God by His Holy Spirit especially directs His servants on earth in the great movements for the carrying forward of the work of salvation.” (GC 343)

 In conclusion, with the identity of the Holy Spirit rightly understood, there is no inconsistency in saying there are only two divine Beings, but three heavenly agencies that have been working selflessly for our redemption. With the biblical confirmation of the true Father-Son relationship between God and Christ, there is no inconsistency in the understanding that “to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things.” God is not mystically three-in-one, but literally one Being. He is truly the God and Father of His truly begotten Son. The “unity” of divinity is a spiritual unity, not a numerical one. Father and Son are “one” because by the Spirit, they are “in” one another. The wonderful gospel news is that Jesus wants that same spiritual “oneness” with us: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” (John 17:21) When we “take the Bible as it reads,” we are safe from the snares and ploys of Satan that would deceive us into accepting “another Jesus,” “another spirit,” and “another gospel.” (2 Cor 11:4) Let us praise God for His great gifts of His Son and His Spirit. “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

 A final comment regarding these and other Trinitarian No-Quotes: We are admonished to be like the Bereans, searching God’s Word to see if what we’ve read or been told is true. I would add, “Use your common sense, too.” Both searching and common sense are essential, for poor biblical scholarship is behind many, if not most, Trinitarian claims. A case in point is this: The apostle Paul’s benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14 lists Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That simple listing of the three divine entities is used to support the doctrine of the Trinity. However, a simple listing neither provides nor implies any further information, and specifically, a simple listing is *not* supportive of a doctrine that teaches role-playing gods, three sovereigns of the universe, and metaphorical interpretations of certain passages of the Bible—passages that, if read literally, would disprove the Trinity doctrine. Those who present Paul’s benediction as proof of three coequal, coeternal Gods are dishonest in their claim and in their reasoning. If *one* benediction naming three gods is evidence for the Trinity doctrine, as they claim, then Paul’s *thirteen other* benedictions naming only *two* Gods is much stronger evidence *against* the Trinity view! That is nothing but fair, common-sense reasoning. Additionally, all but one of Paul’s fourteen salutations list only Father and Son; the lone exception simply says “grace.” Thus the weight of evidence is heavy in favor of the non-trinitarian (apostolic and pioneer) understanding of only two divine Beings who, with the added gift of the Holy Spirit, work to accomplish our redemption. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Note: Portions of the material covered in chapters 13 and 14 came from Nader Mansour’s *Putting the Pieces Together,* and was used with permission. The entire booklet can be read online or freely downloaded from [revelation1412.org](http://revelation1412.org); look under “literature.”