

My Beloved



Adrian Ebens

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by

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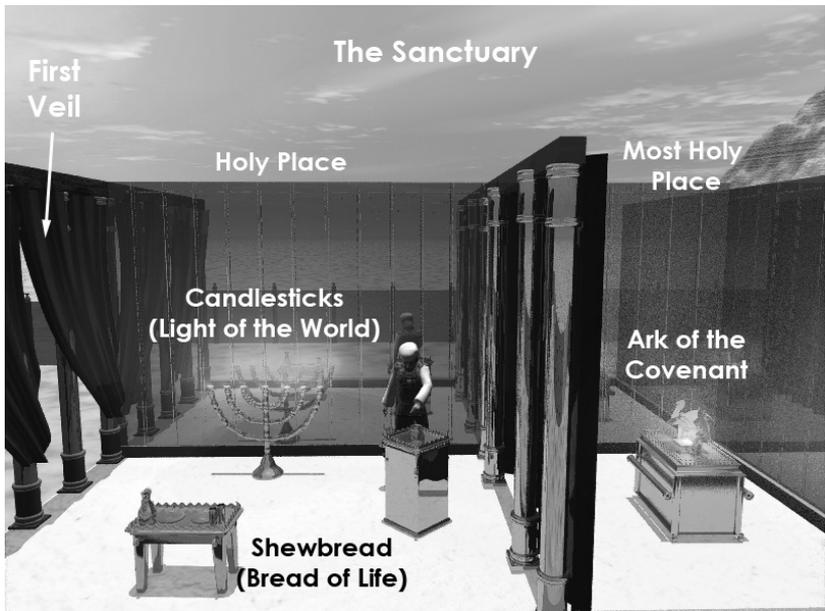
Unless otherwise stated, all Bible references are taken from the King James Bible.

For Lorelle.
My companion and
dearest earthly friend.

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Journey towards the Most Holy Place



Forward

Let's take a journey! This book is all about the journey, a trip through life, a walk through the sanctuary, a path in the steps of Jesus. But the journey has a parallel one. It walks beside Christian and his Pilgrim Progress. It shoulders up to the experience we all share in living life, facing choices, searching for acceptance, honor and love.

Voices beckon to us from both the Beloved and the Deceiver. They sound so much alike! Pastor Ebens describes in a most personal way his journey of discovery in finding the One altogether lovely, hearing His voice, the voice of a Son and the voice of His Father. The voice is soft and still, small in the eyes of men who are so easily attracted to the tinsel and glitter, praise and acclaim that entices each of us every day and in so many ways. The voice speaks clearly through the reading of His Word, and this book is filled with Scripture, lighting our way through the Holy Place and finally into the Holiest of all!

Who is the Beloved? Why is He Beloved? Who has Beloved him? Crucial questions that receive clear answers in the following pages. The critical difference between Who he is and What he does is the great divide over which the god of this world has committed all his energy to hide, obscure and deceive the whole world and if possible the very elect. Our eternal life depends on knowing the difference. What you are about to read will make that difference real and wonderful.

So, take the first step in a journey of joy, peace and love—from discovering Your Beloved.

Dr Gary Hullquist.
Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

Prelude

I hear His footsteps, my pulse quickens in anticipation.

I hear His voice like the sound of many waters. It is like a sweet balm to my soul. My Beloved is calling. Could it be I for whom He calls? How could such precious hope be nurtured in my breast? From where does this notion rise? Why should I be counted worthy of His notice—this mighty Prince, Beloved Son of the Father?

Do I dare to hope? Will it not reveal the folly of my mind? Shall I not be laughed to scorn for my childish dreams? This is the mighty and valiant Prince, the strength and pride of His majestic Father; how could it be possible that He calls for me?

Listen! Do you hear in the stillness? He calls again! His voice, most sweet, penetrates the chilled night air, searching for His beloved. Oh heart of mine, do not give way to doubt! Do not expose yourself to the arrows of the scornful! He calls for me; yes, for me He is calling. I hear my name! Surely He is calling for me!

Oh my Beloved, I am here! Every fibre of my being thrills for you. All that I am is yours. Faith takes the wing and soars upon courage over the majestic mountains covered with roses and into the valleys perfumed with lilies.

I see Him! From my vantage point of the Sycamore, can't you see Him? My Beloved comes; the desire of all ages comes! Oh dear Ancient of Days, grant me strength; my heart faileth for joy; I am overcome with delight! I hasten my request to you by the hand of my Beloved.

Oh daughters of Jerusalem, rejoice with me, for I see in Him such matchless charms; O how I love Him! This majestic Prince perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, emerges from the mist. I turn my head to see Him, straining my eyes to see, if truly, He is looking for me.

Then I awake. Where am I? What happened? Was it all a dream? Have I deceived myself with childish hopes? Surely, He is looking for me! I am certain of it. Take courage dear heart of mine. Trust, oh yes, trust that He is looking for you.

Section One. The Invitation

1. The Bridegroom

The Father rises from His throne and in a flaming chariot goes into the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary. Thrones are set in place, and the Ancient of Days is seated. The prophet Daniel, beholding this scene in vision, reveals that His garments are white like snow, and His hair is like pure wool. Millions of angels surround the throne; some are directly involved in the proceedings while the rest gaze upon the majestic scene in anticipation.

The Son of Man, from the time He left the earth, has been engaged in the precious work of intercession for the fallen sons and daughters of Adam. The prayers of the saints ascend to the Father with requests for forgiveness, grace, strength, courage, light, comfort, and cheer. Jesus faithfully presents these requests to His Father and pleads His blood on behalf of His brethren from earth.

The Father sees the Spirit of His Son moving in the hearts of the suppliants; as He witnesses their love for His Son and trust in His Word that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life,” (John 3:15) the Father of lights mercifully sends forth the comforting Spirit of Christ with healing, grace, love, power, and joy.

Although the sacred mediatorial work of Christ was obscured by the mystical philosophy of the little horn power, millions of souls still found access to grace through Christ, their Lord and Saviour. Down through the centuries of the Dark Ages the saints of God could come boldly to the throne of grace, knowing that the Son of God “ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25).

In several places in the Scriptures God left evidences of a time when a significant change would take place in the intercessory work of Christ. Paul spoke to Felix of “judgment to come” (Acts 24:25). John saw a messenger flying in the midst of heaven proclaiming the time when “The hour of his Judgment is come” (Revelation 14:6, 7). He also saw the temple of God opened in heaven, and he saw the ark of His testament with lightnings, voices and thunders amongst other things. (Revelation 11:19)

In preparation for this judgment hour, the earth was lightened with a message from heaven that indicated that Christ was coming. The prophetic framework had been painstakingly laid by William Miller amongst others who traced the time for the cleansing of the Sanctuary to the year 1844. Mission stations around the world heralded the news that Christ was coming! Christ was indeed coming but it was not to the earth to claim His bride, but rather to His Father to determine who would comprise the bride. The wedding does not take place after the Second Coming but before!

The wise virgins who heard the cry “Behold the bridegroom cometh” were enabled to discern their misunderstanding of where the Bridegroom was going. And so we read:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the **Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days**, and they brought him near before him. (14) And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:13-14.

As Jesus was carried on a cloud and brought near to the Ancient of Days, the whole concept of sanctification for the Christian was transformed. Until this time those who trusted in Christ had little idea that a time would come when the work of forgiveness for sin would cease *before* the coming of Christ to claim His bride.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, **shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in**: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. (2) **But who may abide the day**

of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: (3) **And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier** of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. (4) Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. (5) **And I will come near to you to judgment;** and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. Malachi 3:1-5.

As God's people studied carefully the prophecies of the Bible, they discovered that those who would abide the day of His coming would pass through the refiner's fire and be purified like gold and silver. They discovered that God would come so close to them in judgment that they would stand before God without a mediator for sin. (Isaiah 59:16).

The Most Holy Place experience would bring God's people into such intimate connection with their Saviour that truly it can be said of them:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.
1 John 3:2.

At the time that Jesus was brought in before the Father, the majority of the Christian world refused to accept that Christ was firstly coming, and secondly that He was coming to the Ancient of Days to receive a kingdom through the Investigative Judgment.

The Investigate Judgment is a process by which the Bridegroom searches the heart of His bride to see whether she truly loves and trusts Him. Does she trust Him enough to bring her through the Judgment? Does she believe that He can carry her to the point where she could live without mediation for sin? Will His promises to her hold fast and bring her into the haven of rest?

The Most Holy Place experience requires the prospective bride to closely examine her prospective Husband even as He closely examines her. Who is this Son of Man? Where did He come from? What are His credentials? What is His relation to the Ancient of Days, the Father? Why does He require such an exacting process of refinement? Is it possible for a person to be intimate with another person of whom little to nothing is known of His origins? Would such a person be trusted to carry another through the Most Holy Place experience?

This brings us to the theme of this book, learning all we can about the Son of Man in the context of the Most Holy Place experience. While it would be possible to simply list all the facts of Scripture concerning this majestic Prince of Life, the Most Holy Place experience invites us to a marriage and therefore sets the stage for the telling of a love story. I think most of us prefer stories to raw facts if given the option.

In the coming chapters I will share with you my experience in coming to know the Bridegroom and why I have fallen in love with Him. I will show you how He captured my heart and why He was worth forsaking all to obtain.

Jesus is the way to life, and we are told in Psalms that:

Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? Psalm 77:13.

This love story will be built upon the path of the Sanctuary, starting with the door and leading right into the Most Holy Place. Added to this main theme will be elements of the story from Pilgrim's Progress¹ along with themes contained in the Song of Solomon.

1. "The Pilgrim's Progress,...., portrays the Christian life so accurately, and presents the love of Christ in such an attractive light, that hundreds and thousands have been converted through its instrumentality." Ellen White, *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of Seventh-day Adventists*, page 151.

2. The Allurement

I stood transfixed gazing into the starry heavens. Beneath a cloudless sky I surveyed the majesty and grandeur of the Milky-Way Galaxy. It is one of my earliest memories of an encounter with my Creator. I was four years old and the vividness of that memory remains with me. What beauty, what greatness my eyes beheld. I was taught as a child that:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Psalm 19:1.

By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. Psalm 33:6.

My mother would take every opportunity to tell me that God made this world and everything in it. These thoughts were buried under the many exciting activities afforded a carefree child growing up in the 1970's. Most of my childhood was centred on playing with friends, going to school and keeping myself entertained. I scan my memory looking for moments when my attention was arrested to hear the voice of my Beloved.

There are many things I could assume took place, but it is what springs from the memory that connects the dots of the love story. There are some things that I recall through negative experiences. I recall one night when my parents attended a concert and one of their friends took care of my sister and me. I distinctly recall the anxiety I felt as I lay awake in my bed, straining my ears listening for the sound of an engine coming into our drive way.

Though I did not recognise it then, I see now that my parents manifested the protection of my Beloved. I have clear memories of feeling safe in the knowledge of my father's strength, especially when he hugged me and held me close. To me, my father could run like the wind, lift heavy objects, swing an axe with grace and power, and build anything. My experience confirms the truth that:

Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory
of children are their fathers. Proverbs 17:6.

My Beloved placed my father in my life as an expression of His strength, grace and ability to do anything for the love and protection of His children. The other thing I recall is the encouragement, sympathy and nurture of my mother. There were the special treats she would bake, cuts and bruises she would nurse, her cheering voice when I had scaled some obstacle or her calming voice quoting from the Psalms as a violent storm passed over our dwelling. Once again I could hear the voice of my Beloved through the nurturing care of my mother.

By an encounter with an angry tiger snake and an unaccountable escape from certain harm in a car accident, I became aware of the protection of My Beloved. My mother's favourite text from Scripture was deeply impressed upon me:

The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that
fear him, and delivereth them. Psalm 34:7.

I distinctly recall a picture from the Bible stories my mother would read to me. It showed a little boy in a red toy wagon with a car coming towards him and an angel with large wings shielding the boy from the car. This was such a comforting message sent from my Beloved, revealing how He sends His angels to care for us.

My father's faith in God has been simple and practical. I recall two themes from his lips: keep the commandments of God and love your fellow man. Two of the texts that he emphasised were:

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

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should
do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the
prophets. Matthew 7:12.

His emphasis on doing right and being honest caused me to develop a tender conscience. I recall a number of occasions when I transgressed the law and my conscience was smitten with guilt. I recall a tearful prayer to God to forgive me at the age of six. Today, guilt is often perceived as a terrible affliction. Yet for me, I thank God for such a tender conscience. Through it, I heard the loving, guiding, warning voice of my Beloved.

My parents purchased a ten volume series called "The Bible Story." Some of these stories we had on vinyl record. I recall listening to the story of Moses and the Red Sea, Joshua and Jericho, David and Goliath, Elijah and Elisha. We still have this series in my home and many of the pictures bring back childhood memories. These stories laid upon the protective and nurturing care of my parents allowed me to catch glimpses of my Beloved. Through these stories He taught me the story of this world, how it began, what went wrong, the conflict between good and evil, the remedy for sin, how this world will end, and what will be the reward of those who love God and keep His commandments including the Sabbath.

I recall attending church and Sabbath School as well as attending the church primary school. Of the first twelve years of my life, I recall few if any events that caught my attention concerning spiritual matters. I remember colouring in pictures, singing songs, playing with fuzzy felts, but there is no recollection of any real spiritual impact. What I find even more amazing is that although I had listened to many stories about Jesus in my first twelve years, I have almost no memory of it. I have one or two memories of altar calls and my feeling the pressure of many eyes looking at me with knowledge that those who stood up were seen as good and those who didn't were seen as bad.

Our Church has a youth organisation called Pathfinders in which a young person progresses through various levels for certain course work and activities achieved. At age twelve I was required to read through the Bible as part of my course work. This was the first time I really had to engage the Bible. I have several memories from the stories in Genesis and Numbers. I confess I skim read Leviticus amongst other books of the Bible! I remember some of the other stories in the Old Testament and the Gospels. Although my motivation was primarily to get the task completed, there was also an interest arising in my heart that yielded questions about certain stories that

aroused my curiosity. This was my first real taste of the Word of God. Part of my course work required me to memorise the twenty-third Psalm and the Beatitudes of Matthew 5. These words impacted me:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (2) He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. (3) He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (4) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (5) Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. (6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. Psalm 23:1-6.

It is from this passage that my Beloved first really enticed me to meditation about Him. As I read the words "the LORD is my shepherd," I thought about someone tenderly caring for sheep, scanning the horizon for any potential danger. I made the connection between the Shepherd and Jesus. Then the question gently surfaced in my mind, *What does "I shall not want" mean?* I remember discerning that I would not lack anything because the Shepherd would supply all that was needed. My Beloved was speaking to me by His Word. The voice was soft and subtle, yet I felt the stillness of the waters I was reading about. How I wish that I could have listened to that voice undisturbed, but there was another voice that we will discuss in the next chapter which distracted me, deceived me, flattered me, frightened me and discouraged me.

Around this time I took Bible studies with our Church pastor in preparation for baptism. I do not recall much of those lessons, but I had a sense that God, my parents and my church were pleased with my decision. I had no distinct ideas of the God I was vowing to serve. I knew that there was God and Jesus His Son. I had been taught about the Holy Spirit but had no real idea of its work. When I was baptised, I was asked on September 22nd 1979:

Do you believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit?

I had read of all three personalities in the Bible, so I just took them at face value. I believed that God sent His Son into the world and that if I

believed in Jesus I would have eternal life. It was a simple transaction done in simple faith.

As I ponder my foundational years, I see the hand of my Beloved in so many places. Foundation stones were set in place that moved me towards a knowledge of my Lord. Yet despite all these advantages, my inheritance from Adam and the environment in which I grew up made my childhood baptism far less meaningful than it could have been. In all the years of education I had received, I still did not really know enough about my Beloved to make my baptism truly meaningful. Also there were several cross currents sweeping my church that were moving my Beloved further away from me and beyond my grasp.

I trust that God was pleased with my commitment to Him and His Son, yet my simple childhood vow was soon completely undermined by a harvest of tares that the wicked one had managed to sow into my life.

3. Confusion

The voice of my Beloved anointed my childhood through the tender loving care of my parents, my encounters with nature and the stories of the Bible. The allurements were soft and subtle, yet I smile now as I reflect on the peace, tranquillity and blessing I would sense in those encounters. How I wish that this was the only voice my ears had ever heard.

It was difficult to hear the voice of my Beloved for although He was very close to me, He sounded far away. Another voice appeared to be much closer. It was louder, more assertive and even forceful at times. This voice can best be summed up in these verses:

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also
upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the
north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will be like the most High. Isaiah 14:13-14.

This voice had a natural resonance with me. It suggested that happiness was found in entertainment and amusement, in candy (lollies in Australia!) and cartoons, in drawing attention and admiration. Early in my experience I discerned that holding an audience, making them laugh or invoking praise brought a high level of satisfaction. The emotions that washed over my soul felt similar to those that came from gazing into the heavens or being embraced by my parents. They both felt good; I just could not discern the difference between the voices.

This voice enticed me to find delight in cakes, lollies, ice cream and fizzy drink. Parental restraint caused me to complain loud and long until I felt the rod of correction. Television was a significant educator. I watched characters with super powers defeating dangerous foes. I observed families that looked similar to mine deal with life's challenges by their own intelligence without the need for prayer. I watched children's movies that portrayed happy endings without the central characters feeling the need for God, a Bible or prayer.

Part of my unspoken educational training at school was that happiness came from gaining the notice and attention of those around me. This unwritten law suggested to me that if I wanted approval, I needed to study hard. As a young child, studying hard was not at all inviting; therefore I discovered other ways to gain attention! Playing the clown both caught the attention of the other students and caused the teacher to stop the class just for me! It was wonderful while it lasted. Yet once again the rod of correction informed me that there were costs to seeking this type of attention.

Upon reflection, the voice of the tempter would push in two directions. I was either enticed to gain attention by clowning and challenging authorities in my life or by seeking to gain the attention of authorities and admiration of friends through diligent effort to study, excel and be a model child. Either way, this voice suggested that happiness comes from holding the attention of an audience in some capacity.

The less I felt accepted by my parents, the more the voice of the tempter would push me towards challenging authority and playing the clown. The more I felt accepted by my parents, the more I endeavoured to distinguish myself by good grades at school. Yet this was not all. I also would seek to show my family and friends that I was a good Christian. In this context the voice of my Beloved and the voice of the tempter sounded almost identical.

My Beloved wanted me to obey my parents, read the Bible, pray and do well in my studies. Yet when the tempter saw that I desired the approval of those in authority over me, he would encourage me to do exactly the same things, yet for a very different purpose. As a child, I had no capacity to understand and discern difference of purpose. A child only understands that he receives commands and chooses to obey or disobey. There is no understanding of why he chose to obey or disobey.

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; (2) But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. (3) Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: Galatians 4:1-3.

The allurements of my Beloved through my parents and the Bible stories convinced me that seeking notoriety by resistance to authority was both wrong and painful. These conclusions were not really conscious; they were just subconscious observations. So I favoured the path of attention through hard work, effort and acceptable achievements. This did not mean I did not fall onto the other path when authorities appeared to be unjust, biased or inconsistent. I learned that even after hard effort, the goal of honour could still elude me.

Nearly every area of my experience informed me that the aim of life was to seek attention through achievement. There was one lone, still voice that was trying to tell me something different. Around the time I read the Bible for myself at twelve years of age, I became interested in the story of Jesus dying on the cross for sinners. I had received enough discipline in my life to know that I was a sinner, although I felt I was not as bad as others!

The story of the cross suggested to me that God accepted people just as they are regardless of their achievements. I know that my Beloved was calling to me, but the voice was so soft in comparison to the other voice that suggested to me that heaven went to great expense to deal with my sin problem and that since God had gone to all this trouble to send His Son to die for me then I really needed to show Him that I was grateful. I needed to demonstrate that I was worth all this fuss and effort.

This made so much sense to me. I discerned from many of my encounters with human authorities that the time involved in correcting me caused irritation and used up precious resources that were otherwise put to a more worthy cause. As the voice of the tempter has often cried:

To what purpose is this waste? Matthew 26:8

So we see that through the underlying chorus of seeking attention, the most enduring symbol of a Father's love for His children in giving His Son to die was turned into the greatest reason to gain approval by

displaying my gratitude through faithful adherence to the disciplines of the Christian life. These stirrings in my soul were all very embryonic for a twelve year old, yet the seeds were sown and the harvest was coming.

After my baptism the voice of the tempter reminded me that I was now locked into being a good boy and at the same time was encouraging me to gain attention by old and familiar methods. Like my Saviour before me, he was trying to get me to prove myself by *turning stones into bread or jumping down from the temple* to gain attention. The Sabbath was the toughest experience in this frame of mind. It was like climbing Mount Sinai every seventh day. Within a very short time of my baptism, I began to despair of being able to please God. Very little of this was evident to my mind; it just manifested itself in the gradual decline of spiritual interest, being replaced by activities to help me forget what I had vowed to God.

Looking back now, I see the cunning wiles of the tempter drawing me into a desire to please God driven by an underlying desire to gain attention and approval. I fell into the predictable result of seeking to immerse myself in diversional entertainment. Right in the critical teen years, I became a vessel riding the current of disillusionment born on the winds of self-exaltation. Within the space of five years I was chewing on the husks in the swine troughs.

My childhood training prevented me from plunging into the depths of self-harm and abuse where many teenagers find themselves, yet the emotions were of a similar harvest. I thank my Beloved so much that I did not encounter the physical scars that many teenagers experience.

I can only imagine how hard it was for my Beloved to watch me respond so easily to the voice of the tempter and follow his suggestions. How hard it must have been to watch me reap the harvest I had sown. Many times I thought that the voice that was guiding me was indeed the voice of my Beloved when sadly it was the voice of my adversary.

I shudder to think that I knew so little about my Beloved that I could not discern His voice from that of the tempter. The warm glow that came from receiving an award at school before my peers felt similar to the warm embrace of my father. The laughter that exploded in response to my clowning felt very similar to when I gazed in awe upon the starry heavens. The actions of reading the Bible, praying

and attending church were desired by both my Beloved as well as the tempter, yet for very different reasons that were beyond the comprehension of my developing mind.

The battle to tell these two voices apart will unfold in the coming chapters. I pray that as you ponder these things you will discern some of the nature of this battle and the narrowness of the way to life. The thought that I could so easily respond to the tempter and hurt my Beloved is a source of shame and humiliation for me, but I trust in His merciful forgiveness and tender patience.

4. The Door



Retreating from my vow to God by the means of diversional entertainment began to yield a harvest of dizzying proportions. My merry-go-round experience seemed to go faster with each tightening circle. The need for attention and acceptance placed increasingly greater demands upon

me, while opportunities to succeed seemed to diminish.

So many young people clamouring for the central position of attention in the various modes of my culture could only be held by a few at one time. The tempter's suggested dreams and aspirations nurtured in my heart began to yield the predictable harvest of disillusionment. I often would imagine myself performing some great achievement for which all my peers, my community and nation would congratulate me. I would sit mesmerised watching heroic sportsmen from Australia receive the gold medal for their chosen field and the tempter would whisper to me that this was the road to salvation.

Justifying my existence by distinguished achievements of mind and body appeared to be the perfect solution to dealing with the imagined irritation that I had caused God, my parents, and my church by my failures. This desire to justify my existence was as natural and instinctive as breathing. I had no idea that I was being groomed in the worship of Cain, seeking to offer what I had produced as an offering for

worship to God. By listening to the tempter's voice, I had unwittingly placed myself on a collision course with the law of life. Justification of my existence through achievement in comparison with others is diametrically opposed to loving and caring relationships with those same people. True friendship unknowingly slipped from my grasp because every individual around me was potentially a threat to my goals or conversely an ally to be used in obtaining those goals. Yet all the while I desired to be loved and have close friends.

These oppositional forces would erupt in my soul from time to time as warning signals of the path I was treading. I distinctly remember a basketball game that caused an eruption for all to see. I had managed to dislodge the ball from an opponent at a critical point in the game, yet the teacher refereeing called a foul against me. The spirit of achievement focused on self-justification momentarily immobilised all sense of respect for my teacher by my issuing a torrent of angry words as to the incorrectness of his decision. I completely lost all sense of my obligation to respect those in authority. Rage engulfed me and suggested a range of very unsavoury responses.

I heard the voice of my Beloved speak to me. Quietly came the questions, "Are you okay Adrian? Is this really what you want to be like?" At the critical point where the tempter was harvesting a crop of rebellion from me, my Beloved was able to ask me if I liked the taste or whether I desired something better. In the depths of darkness I was enabled to distinguish the difference in the voices. The dark, sullen, revengeful spirit that had taken control of me was now contrasted with the tender, sweet and gentle voice of my Beloved.

The referee banned me from the competition. The tempter suggested retaliation; my Beloved suggested I consider carefully my path. The voices were widening, and the great controversy over my soul was in earnest. This was a pivotal point in my life—an eternal moment where a decision was made that would set the course of my path. My Beloved called to me in such a manner as to evoke in me a deep desire to change. I did not want to be nasty, aggressive or violent; I wanted peace, joy and love. A doorway began to take shape in my mind; the choice was starting to take focus. This desire had to be strengthened by more baleful harvest from the tempter's suggestions.

The all-wise Ancient of Days was not mocked by my foolishness. Providence allowed that a series of events placed together in quick

succession caused me to want to leave the pig pen and return to the Father's house. As the opposing tectonic plates of my desires collided, I was afforded brief snapshots of my sinful character that I could not hide. With each harvest that the tempter was gaining from me, the greater the call from my Beloved to turn my feet towards salvation's highway and find freedom from the tyranny of self.

The seemingly innocent desire for acceptance by my skill and effort left me with the reality that:

From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Isaiah 1:6.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: (11) There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (12) They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Romans 3:10-12.

My Beloved displayed such skill and wisdom in dealing with me. He knew the pain I would suffer, yet allowed me to choose the path I desired. He placed no restrictions upon me and walked with me through the painful harvest that I had gleaned from the tempter. Each time I fell, He did not berate me, He did not condemn me, and He did not display a spirit of irritation. He simply asked me if I wanted something better; He let me taste a little of His love by wooing my heart. The door now stood fully open before me. I discerned the chains around my arms, my feet, and my neck. I could now see I was bound for certain destruction, yet hope from my Beloved flickered deep in my soul.

Then said Evangelist, "Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils?" The man answered, "Because, I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall fall into Tophet. Isa. 30:33. And Sir, if I be not fit to go to prison, I am not fit to go to judgment, and from thence to execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry."

Then said Evangelist, "If this be thy condition, why standest thou still?" He answered, "Because I know not whither to go." Then he gave him a parchment

roll, and there was written within, "Fly from the wrath to come." Matt. 3:7.

The man therefore read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said, "Whither must I fly?" Then said Evangelist, (pointing with his finger over a very wide field,) "Do you see yonder wicket-gate?" Matt. 7:13,14. The man said, "No." Then said the other, "Do you see yonder shining light?" Psalm 119:105; 2 Pet. 1:19. He said, "I think I do." Then said Evangelist, "Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do. *Pilgrim's Progress* Stage One.

5. The Altar



I now knew that I needed a Saviour. The turbulence stirring within my soul caused me to long for the haven of rest. Through careful management, my Beloved had helped me to discern more clearly the voice of the tempter. I was now fleeing from the city of destruction, yet was uncertain which way to travel. My heart was drawn to consider Jesus. For the first time in my life I felt the desire to really know Him. I had been taught that Jesus was a loving Saviour throughout the seventeen years of my life, yet till now, I had not discerned exactly from what I needed saving.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life:
no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6.

The way to freedom was through Christ, yet how? At twelve, I had accepted Jesus as my Saviour, I had confessed what sins I understood and I believed that He would come again for me. Yet, something was missing. As I had no idea of the depth of my slavery, I had no appreciation of the gift of my Saviour.

...but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.
Luke 7:47.

The book *Steps to Christ* came to mind and I thought “This is exactly the book that I need.” No longer reading with the aim of displaying

religious fervour and no longer seeking to show God I was thankful, the words I read began to penetrate my soul.

Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love. Our Father in heaven is the source of life, of wisdom, and of joy. *Steps to Christ*, page 9.

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. *Ibid*, page 10.

The Son of God came from heaven to make manifest the Father. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." *Ibid*, page 11.

The words found a chord in my soul. A tinge of joy came to me as I thought of Jesus coming to reveal the love of the Father to us. Then it began to describe Him.

He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick. His work gave evidence of His divine anointing. Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men. He took man's nature, that He might reach man's wants. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Even little children were attracted to Him. They loved to climb upon His knees and gaze into the pensive face, benignant with love.

Jesus did not suppress one word of truth, but He uttered it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He spoke the truth, but always in love. He denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity; but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes. He wept over Jerusalem, the city He loved, which refused to receive Him, the way, the truth, and the life. *Ibid*, page 11, 12

I felt my heart open to my Beloved. He was someone who did not censure human weakness, was full of compassion, and exercised tact. Little children loved to climb on His knee! As I thought about Him in comparison to myself, I felt the darkness of shame seek to block the streams of light coming into my soul. He is so holy, pure and righteous and I am so unholy, impure and selfish. "It's no use," whispers the tempter. "Keep reading, Adrian," replies My Beloved.

Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save. Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God "manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16. Ibid, page 12.

Was I truly precious in His eyes? Could it really be true?

Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. Song of Solomon 1:6.

The tempter must have sensed that hope was rising in my heart. If I should dare believe that God loved me and sent His Son to save me, then His work of destruction in my life would be made very hard. "Think of your sins, Adrian!"

Wherefore Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone; but still he endeavoured to struggle to that side of the slough that was farthest from his own house, and next to the wicket-gate; the which he did, but could not get out because of the burden that was upon his back: but I beheld in my dream, that a man came to him, whose name was Help. *Pilgrim's Progress* Stage One

"Keep reading Adrian." beckons My Beloved.

"Yes, I want to keep reading."

It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suffered and died. He became "a Man of Sorrows," that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. God permitted His beloved

Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory, to a world marred and blighted with sin, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted Him to leave the bosom of His love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5. Behold Him in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, upon the cross! The spotless Son of God took upon Himself the burden of sin. He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man. This wrung from His lips the anguished cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matthew 27:46. It was the burden of sin, the sense of its terrible enormity, of its separation of the soul from God--it was this that broke the heart of the Son of God. Ibid, page 13.

I sat transfixed. With the words "Behold Him on the cross," my mind pictured the scene. There upon the cross hung the Son of God, beaten, whipped and bruised and why, for me? A great struggle was going on in my mind.

"I am not worth this kind of love..."

"Christ has died for your sins, only believe..."

I then read the words:

The spotless Son of God took upon Himself the burden of sin. He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man. This wrung from His lips the anguished cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matthew 27:46. Ibid, 13.

I can't explain how it all came to me, but I was impressed that Jesus had hung upon the cross because of my sins and that it was my sins along with the whole world that caused Jesus to cry, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me." As I pictured the scene, I looked into the face of Jesus and He turned and looked at me without one trace of anger, frustration or disappointment. I saw only love and acceptance.

"I believe. Lord I ask you to come into my heart and take control of my life. I thank you for loving me and saving me..."

At that moment a burst of peace came over my soul. I felt the chains around my neck, feet and hands fall away. Then a torrent of tears flooded from my soul. I knelt and just wept and wept. All my guilt, my hypocrisy, my defiance, my sharp and cutting words, my impure thoughts were all forgiven. I tasted of the love of Jesus.

Even now as I write and recall this event, my heart grows warm and my eyes moist. I can't put into words for you how I felt about my Saviour at that moment. The separation, oh, the separation! He was willing to endure a separation from His Father for me. That struck deeply into my heart. If He was willing to do this for me, I must be worth something, and if God was willing to give His Son— I pause and let the swelling tide of gratitude wash over my soul. If indeed God was willing to give up His Son for me, then I believed that God loved me.

Now I saw in my dream, that the highway up which Christian was to go, was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall was called Salvation. Isaiah 26:1. Up this way, therefore, did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. *Pilgrim's Progress* Stage Three.

Interlude I

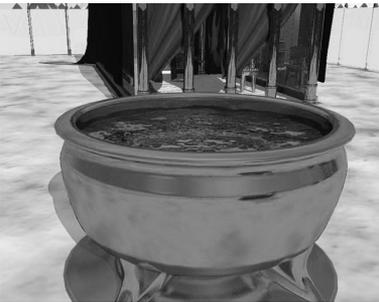
As I gaze into the eyes of my Beloved, I am lost to all my surroundings. I feel His acceptance; I know I am loved. Oh child of Adam, to what do I owe this privilege? I attempt to turn my eyes from His gaze, but His loving look reassures me. This is real! It really is happening and to me! He really loves me, and it pleases the Father that we should be together. My heart thrills with joy, the sunlight dances across my soul as the fragrance of salvation perfumes every corner of my dwelling.

My Beloved is mighty, He is fearless. He took my sin to the grave. He braved separation from His Father's embrace. All this for me! Oh most noble Prince, You have captured my heart. I cannot resist Your charms. Forgiven? Yes, I believe that I am forgiven, and all my sins removed. A garment of fine linen is given me, woven in the loom of heaven without one thread of human devising.

Dear Father, Your Son is a gift beyond comprehension, and yet, You gave Him willingly. I understand why Your Son is so beautiful; all He has comes from You. I do not understand why You would do this, but as a little child I squeal with delight "Abba, Abba." I am not forsaken, I have a Father and His Son is my Beloved.

Oh son of Adam, my heart races for joy. Who could know that salvation would come to my house through beholding the uplifted Son? I believe. Yes, I believe. My Beloved is mine and I am His.

6. The Laver



Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (26) That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Ephesians 5:25-26.

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

(2) The same was in the beginning with God. John 1:1-2.

The impact of what Jesus had done for me on the cross transformed every aspect of my life. I wanted to be with Him always. I loved to think about Him, copy Him, and bring everything in my life under His Lordship. When I allowed my mind to be absorbed in other matters for several hours, I would begin to feel the loss of His presence and my thoughts returned to Jesus. The thrill of knowing my sins were forgiven caused me to float for weeks. Such is the joy of first love.

This joy changed the Bible completely. I could not put it down. I suddenly had an incredible thirst to understand Jesus in the Bible. There were many things to learn as well as things to unlearn. The Spirit of Christ began to convict me through what I read. I saw several things needed to change. The Word of God began to cleanse and renew my mind. Now the Word was a person, not just a collection of writings. Now it was Jesus speaking to me directly, lovingly and personally.

I became convicted on several habits I needed to change. I no longer could bear watching movies with swearing, violence and immorality. The Spirit moved me to approach several people and ask their forgiveness for my bad behaviour. Some people struggled to understand why I needed forgiving, citing that we are all human. Yet by gazing intently into the eyes of my Beloved through the Word, these actions seemed obvious. Righteousness and sin became like day and night and my conscience became tender, focused and alert.

Some aspects of this washing process were joyful and freeing while on other occasions the cutting of the Word into my soul was painful, confronting and humiliating. As I look back, I see the mercy of my Beloved in not presenting too many character flaws and sinful habits at once. If all the cleansing power of the Word had been unleashed, I would have given up in despair. Yet at each hurdle, the love of Jesus carried me.

How I wish that I could report “and they lived happily ever after,” but the reality of the world, the flesh and the devil makes that outcome very difficult. Through years of listening to the tempter’s suggestions and cultivating a desire for recognition through achievement, my mind had been set in a pattern of thought diametrically opposed to the kingdom of God. For the first few months after my conversion, the tempter’s voice was muted in comparison to my Beloved, yet he was still there. Enraged by my new found love in Christ, he bided his time, looking for entry points to regain control and rule my heart once again.

The profound changes in my lifestyle and habits attracted comments of scorn from some of my former associates. The tempter would press me with their comments. I became engulfed in a feeling of isolation and discouragement. I did not discern the tempter in these things. I knew little of his tactics and therefore gave him the advantage. Through the door of self-pity, my adversary found entrance to my soul. At the same time, some of my life style changes became hard to maintain. Sometimes I would forget and fall back into old habits. At other times, in despair I would just knowingly slide into them and let the blackness engulf me.

I had reached the hill of difficulty. The desire for ease, lack of patience, and unwillingness to cheerfully dwell in isolation as long as was needed allowed the tempter the access he was waiting for. Beyond

this, I lacked skill in the Word and how to confront temptations that exalted themselves against the knowledge of God. The Spirit of Christ taught me to memorise the Word.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Psalm 119:11.

I learned that when I repeated the Word of God in faith that it could cut down the arguments, reasoning and feelings that the tempter would press into my soul.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12.

If my Beloved had simply shielded me from all the tempter's suggestions I would not have developed in character. I also had to learn the true nature and severity of my fallen condition. Through these early conflicts with my flesh, I began to discern the depravity of my heart.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9.

The light of the Word illumined my path and allowed me to begin to see where I had been and why certain destruction would have been my lot if I had not heeded the call of my Beloved.

I was taught to wrestle in prayer. Sometimes as I prayed, my heart felt like a stone and the heavens were brass over my head. The more I tried to pray the more despondent I became. "Claim the Word, Adrian," came the voice. "Believe what the Word says. Be not faithless but believing."

My Beloved taught me the science of waiting in the gap between claiming and experiencing the promise. At times I yielded to frustration and gave up, and this allowed my Beloved to show me my fickle, weak, impatient heart. At other times I whinged and whined about my difficulties to the Lord, forgetting to claim the promises of God, and I went away more discouraged than before. These were tough times, yet through them all my Beloved encouraged me, reminded me of His death on my behalf, and the promise of eternal fellowship

with Him and His Father. Slowly but surely, the Word of God became my sword, my faith and my shield.

I recall with fondness the joy of those first two years of my walk with my Beloved—such a faithful Saviour, Teacher and Friend. My one desire was to be like Jesus.

After about two years, the words of Scripture pressed themselves upon me.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
Acts 2:38.

Although as a child I was taught much about Jesus, I did not know Him and my baptism while acknowledged, meant little to me personally, for I knew so little about myself and almost nothing of my Beloved. Baptism is the sealing of a relationship between two people that have come to love each other. Jesus had always loved me, but now I loved Him and this friendship needed to be sealed in baptism.

As I went down into the waters of baptism, my heart was focused on Jesus. He was my joy and my song, and I rejoiced to be able to pledge my life to Him and call Him my Lord. The waters that covered my soul symbolised the washing by the Word that was taking place in my life. The work which had been begun held forth the promise that it would be completed.

7. More Confusion

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. James 1:8.

After more than a decade since my first love experience with Jesus, I became confused. My Christian life became circular; feeling like the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness. If someone had suggested that I was double-minded, I would have been horrified and offended. I loved Jesus deeply for dying on the cross for me, I desired to keep my Father's commandments faithfully and I prayed for grace and strength to overcome. I did have victories, yet consistency eluded me.

I grew in my knowledge of Scripture and enjoyed many wonderful Sabbaths fellowshiping with family and friends. Yet something was missing. Something was out of place and I could not find it. For much of this time, I didn't fully realise anything was missing.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Unbeknown to me, the Jesus I beheld in these years was a combination of two completely different worlds. On one side, I learned of the loving, caring, compassionate Jesus who revealed the wonderful love of His Father. I contemplated the struggle the Father endured to give up His Son for us. I meditated upon the prayer life of Jesus and His intercession on my behalf and these things touched my soul, melted my heart and gave me inspiration to live the Christian life. Yet there was an aspect to the person of Jesus, I assumed was in the Bible and this formed the foundation of all my efforts in the Christian Life. I

need to take a little time to describe what was taking place in my mind. There were several factors that led me to cry:

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth:
I sought him, but I found him not. Song of Solomon 3:1.

All through my childhood and youth, the voice of the tempter suggested a policy of self-reliance and hard work to gain respect. My conception of a good person was formed through the lens of my fallen nature combined with Satan's suggestions that honour could be earned through honesty, uprightness and faithfulness. You will recall that I mentioned that the tempter would suggest to me to do the very things my Beloved desired but for a very different purpose.

Since the voice of the tempter was louder than that of my Beloved during these formative years, my conception of a model person was one who did right and displayed a good character to others. This display of good living would then win the admiration of others and grant me acceptance within my social group.

Little did I realise that this model person I had conceived in my mind, which was in reality an idol, I had unwittingly merged with the person called Jesus. I saw in Jesus one who displayed all the traits of a model person, one who through acts of kindness and deeds of righteousness had won the admiration and worship of millions. Indeed Jesus was a person whom I could emulate, copy and desire to be like. Once again, the tempter enticed me to do all the right things for all the wrong reasons.

The really difficult part was that the real Jesus of the Bible was merged together with this false Jesus in my mind, so that I could not tell them apart.

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 2 Corinthians 5:16 (NIV).

It never occurred to me that I could regard Jesus from a worldly point of view. What made this whole experience much harder is the fact that our church had the opportunity to choose the real biblical Jesus, but actually chose the worldly minded one in 1888. Since that time, our church slowly perfected the view of Jesus as one who was to be revered and loved for His inherent power, abilities and talents. In the same manner that I had been tempted to conceive a model

person as one who receives praise through doing good deeds, my spiritual forefathers had also been subject to this process. Over the period of one life time, our church enshrined this new Jesus into church law with the words.

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is **immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing**, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. **He is forever worthy of worship**, adoration, and service by the whole creation. Fundamental 2 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

This new Jesus was part of a three person, One God, Trinity. The complexity of three persons existing within one God caused me to abandon efforts to understand exactly how they related to each other. I was encouraged to accept this as a mystery.

If you read carefully the description of God above, you will see that the reason God is worthy of worship, adoration and service is because He is immortal, powerful and all-knowing. This was the god of my childhood! When I thought about this god, it instinctively seemed right. What the description above allowed me to do was to take the model person I conceived as a child and enthrone him as my god.

It never occurred to me that this god that I pledged to serve was actually a codified expression of my childhood ambition to be a good person, worthy of praise, honour, and respect.

As I mentioned earlier, what made this god so hard to discern as false is that I had merged elements of the true biblical Jesus with this god. My baptism two years after my conversion perfectly reflected this merging of two mindsets about God.

My Baptismal Vow asked:

Do you believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit?

But the Fundamental statement indicated:

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension....

Many people will read these two statements and see no difference at all. As a young person, I certainly saw no difference. I could see the terms Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These terms appeared in the Bible and I saw evidence of these three entities at work, so I just assumed this statement was correct.

My baptismal vow simply expressed the belief in three entities where the relationship between Father and Son was expressed simply as *His*. This little word *His* contained the world of difference. The word *His*, gave real meaning to the words Father and Son. Jesus was *His* Son; the Son of the Father. The crucial thing to point out here was that it was the breaking of this relationship between Father and *His* Son that broke my heart. These are the words that struck me.

The spotless Son of God took upon Himself the burden of sin. He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man. This wrung from His lips the anguished cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matthew 27:46 *Steps to Christ*, page 13.

In these words I discerned the truth:

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

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

In the twelve years following my Baptism, I did not really understand that the nature of the relationship between the two persons called Father and Son held the key to what completely changed my life. The love of God was manifested in the giving of His Son. It was the act of the Father giving His Son, not simply the Son giving Himself, not simply the Son revealing His powerful, self-sacrificing character, not simply Jesus showing us His great acts and deeds. The Father sent His Son to reveal His character of love to us, and in giving us His Son we see the most attractive, beautiful, tender, courageous expression of the heart of God.

As I stated before, I did not realise that in accepting the three person in One God Trinity, I was led into confusion about the nature of the relationship between Father and Son. This problem was compounded by another suggestion that if I truly loved Jesus I would elevate Him to be exactly the same as the Father. The way I had learned sameness as a child was to compare quantities. I would check that the amount of lemonade in my sister's cup was no more than what was in my cup. I complained loud and long if my sister received five lollies or candy treats while I only received four. That is how one worked out that things were equal. So when it came to working out how Father and Son were equal, one simply had to ensure that They each had exactly the same qualities, same inherent power, same knowledge, same eternal existence. If one had received anything from the other, then the quality would be different; it would be like one having 100% lemonade and the other having 50% lemonade and 50% water.

This type of reasoning was taking place deep in the recesses of my mind; it was natural, instinctive, and therefore apparently logical. I had no idea that thinking of God in this way actually stole the meaning of the words *Father* and *Son* and their relationship with each other.

As I looked at the Sonship of Jesus from the Bible, I saw someone who trusted His Father implicitly and rested completely in His Will. I saw how He could sleep in a boat in the midst of a storm; He could face an angry crowd desiring His death with calmness; He could wait for 40 days without food trusting His Father to supply His needs at the right time. As these actions of trust and submission were placed upon a view of Jesus as the Second Person of the Godhead, possessing the same power as the Father in the same way as the Father, my mind became confused. This person did not owe the Father any gratitude for the power He possessed, rather He stood shoulder to shoulder with this person labelled the "Father," might for might, knowledge for knowledge, age for age, they were the same. Lovingly the same, of course, yet they were the same. The great tragedy for me is that in that perceived sameness was the corrosive element that eroded the meaning of the words *Father* and *Son* which in turn corroded my own sense of sonship. If Jesus was not really a Son in His Sphere then neither was I in mine.

So I worshipped a Jesus on earth Who was submissive, trusting and obedient and I merged this with a view of Jesus in heaven who was self-

reliant, possessing His own power without any inheritance from the Father. This “heavenly Jesus” revealed the method of how to perform what the “earthly Jesus” was doing. This self-reliant “heavenly Jesus” caused me to seek to emulate the works of the earthly Jesus by copying and emulating His heavenly self-reliance. Without realising it, my carnal nature figuratively erected an idolatrous Jesus in the heavenly Sanctuary, moved by the same carnal impulses that moved the Little Horn against the real Christ in heaven.

Let me give you some examples of how this worked in real life. Many times when I would be sitting and listening to a sermon, my Beloved would be convicting me to take these words to heart. At the same time the tempter was trying to get me to focus on the preacher as to how well he was preaching. If the sermon was presented well, I would begin to dream of presenting this subject before an audience and imagine their reaction. If the preacher presented poorly, the tempter flattered me that I could do a better job. When I did preach a sermon and people were moved by the truth, my Beloved encouraged me to rejoice, but the tempter encouraged me to draw praise from people at the door as they moved out of the sanctuary.

When I sat in a Bible study, my Beloved would seek to impress the words of Scripture upon my heart while the tempter impressed me to make sure I knew how to quote Scripture well and to quote several verses to reveal my authority on the subject. When I was in a circle of prayer, my Beloved encouraged me to rejoice in the privilege of having access to the Father through Him, the tempter pressed me with the thoughts that this person next to me prays too long and really has nothing that useful to say. My conscience would then be smitten and I would have this little war in my mind between the two sides and totally lose track of what was being prayed by those around me.

I read about Jesus praying all night and rather than focusing on how much He must have loved His Father, I thought more about the fact that He actually spent all night in prayer, and I entertained the idea of engaging this enterprise, but then my Beloved would convict me that this was wrong. As I said, this conflict of mind went on for over a decade. When my Saviour revealed to me the importance of diet and lifestyle issues, the tempter allured me into focusing on the proper procedure for diet, dress code, and entertainment. The tell-tale sign

that I was responding to the wrong voice came when I criticised others for incorrect behaviour. Correct Christian behaviour became the root rather than the fruit of my experience. It came because the god of my childhood became enthroned in my heart as the God of the universe.

This daily conflict within me brought much sorrow to my soul. This Jesus who performed all these wonderful deeds began to move further and further from my grasp. The joy of my first love had been taken away. I vainly sought for my Beloved, but I could not find Him. My life was filled with church activities, studies to the point that I had little time to simply reflect and commune with my Saviour. Even when I did have the time, I felt this drive to get into the day and do the deeds that Jesus did and be the helpful caring person that He was. No one would care much if I spent hours talking and sharing with Jesus alone, not unless of course I found an audience that would admire such isolation.

There was a constant conflict between my wanting to be a good Christian that loves God, His Word and those around me as opposed to my wanting the credit for doing those things. I knew that privately wanting credit was wrong, but I just imagined this was part of the Christian experience of warring against the flesh. I tried to deflect comments of praise after preaching a sermon, but I felt it was obvious that I was focusing on myself when I said "Don't thank me, thank the Lord." I didn't have to make "me" the focus. I could have simply said, "Thank the Lord," but the "don't thank me" came from the secret desire to want to be thanked and appreciated for doing a good job.

Once I had become an Adventist minister, I was placed at a vantage point that I had not seen before. I began to observe ministers, jostling for position; I saw many of the internal, private struggles I was having were being openly played out in some of the ministers around me. Since my struggles appeared internal to me I could act shocked at the behaviour of these ministers who were misleading the flock.

After a period of time in ministry, seeing the power plays and strategies being played out in church politics, I think I became a little disillusioned, and this is when the tempter encouraged me to take another path when pleasing those in authority lost its attraction. I began to immerse myself in documentary films, sports and diversional entertainment again. I told myself that I did not want to be a Pharisee,

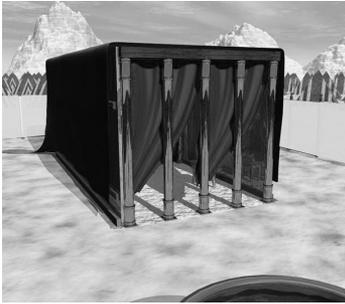
and I needed to lighten up and relax. I certainly needed to lighten up and relax but not through sports. They only further confirmed the belief that performing deeds and achievements is the path to acceptance, honour and respect.

It was in this state of mind that I halted in the Way of life. I could not move forward because my conception of God was confused with the idolatry of my childhood. This idolatry allowed the tempter to suggest things to me, often without my realising where it was coming from and why it was happening. My consequent disillusionment caused me to sleep on the hill called *difficulty*, and to lose my scroll that I was instructed to keep close to my chest as John Bunyan describes in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. (3) The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? Song of Solomon 3:2-3.

Section 2. Courtship

8. The First Veil



The tempter had deceived me through a confused picture of my Beloved. The combination of Christ revealed to men by His incarnation was fused together¹ with the “Second Person of the Godhead” who possessed power, strength and honour from His own resources. This person was presented to me as equal because of His power rather than because of His inheritance

as a Son. None of this was obvious to me; I simply lived out the predictable results of such a belief.

As I mentioned, I was further disillusioned by a number of events involving my fellow pastors. I saw favouritism, issues swept under the carpet and political manoeuvrings within church meetings.

With the loss of the closeness of my Beloved, sin did not appear so sinful, my conscience was not so tender, and self-pity allowed the tempter to take a stronger hold on my heart. Little self-indulgences grew into larger ones. As a religious leader, the exterior was carefully

1. This was my unwitting re-crafting of what Rome had done long ago in the doctrine of hypostatic union formalised at the council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. It is the dialectic welding together of two opposites. Rome needed this doctrine to deal with the reality that self-existent Deity cannot die. I desired a crude form of this teaching to weld together a submissive trusting earthly Jesus to a self-reliant, self-assured heavenly Jesus.

maintained, but in my private moments, I worried less about the language and violence of the movies I watched. I became more interested in sport where respect by achievement was constantly played out before me.

In this state of mind, I stepped over a personal line that I considered unacceptable. It was nothing external and only within my heart, but according to the Law of God, I felt condemned. This brought me to a critical point in my life. Based upon the principle of honour and respect by hard work, integrity and discipline, I felt that I had failed. The only option I initially saw was to leave it all behind and forget about professing to be a Christian with such a high standard. If what I was preaching was not a reality in my life then I should stop preaching it. The standard within the original Adventist message had been very high because of the teaching of the Heavenly Sanctuary. The Adventist message proclaimed that Jesus would cease His work of intercession within the most Holy place *before* He returned to earth. This means that Adventists believe that the righteousness of Christ can give them total victory in their life.

Any possibility of having this Most Holy Place experience was rendered impossible because of my double mindedness over who Jesus really was. I had not even experienced the Holy Place experience due to my confused ideas. We will cover this in greater detail later on, but suffice it to say that I was robbed of the ability to have consistent, sweet fellowship with Jesus because I unwittingly held conflicting ideas about His Sonship. I didn't even know the ideas were conflicting. I only experienced the conflict in my mind by my day to day dealing with life.

As I felt the weight of the Law upon me and as I considered my prospects, I found that through worshipping an idol of my imagination and the imagination of my immediate spiritual forefathers that:

...the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. (11) For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Romans 7:10-11.

The commandment that was ordained to life, I found to be unto death because of my sinful desire to be recognised by my achievements and enthroning such a god in my heart. I felt guilty before God. When I thought of guilt, I naturally thought of the Father, because

my earthly father had been God's agent to discipline me. So when I had to face my sins, it was the Heavenly Father I had to face. How could He forgive me? According to the law of respectable people, I felt unworthy of forgiveness. I also felt unworthy because part of me was disappointed that I could not continue the journey of winning adulation and praise for my services to God.

As I wrestled and prayed, my Beloved came to me and reminded me that the Father loves me. If I chose to cling to His sacrifice for my sin, then indeed I was truly forgiven.

As I searched through the confusing mist, I was seeking an assurance of the Father's love. The Word of God said, "Believe!" Yet there was a stumbling stone in my way. The biblical Father of Jesus was intimately involved in my life, yet the Father of the Trinity felt more distant because Jesus did all the actual work. The Father really just sat on the throne and approved and smiled at the works of His Son. I did not know these things logically then, but in my mind that is what placed a gulf between me and the Father. Could He really forgive me?

The Word told me, "Why not hold it fast, Adrian?" Still I struggled. And then the Word came to me:

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. Ephesians 1:6.

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

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Galatians 4:6.

Once again I was reminded that the separation of the Father and His Son is what revealed the Father's feelings for us. Only in seeing that God was the Father of Jesus could I begin to appreciate His love for me. If Jesus was not really God's Son then God was not giving up something that belonged to Him; He was watching "the Son" follow His convictions. We could say that the Father was giving up His relationship with the Son, but it was not a relationship that He owned, so this did not translate when I read "For God so loved the world." When I read *God* in that sentence, I partly thought about three members of the Godhead deciding Jesus should come and at the same time that the Father sent Him. This confusion placed God's

grace and forgiveness at arm's length. I stood like weary pilgrim in *Pilgrim's Progress* just before the two great lions in his way. I could see the safety of shelter just beyond, but first the test of faith.

In the moment of crisis, I reached for my real Father and chose to believe He forgave me. Joy flooded my soul as I clung to the assurance that I was accepted in the Beloved. Indeed He was my Beloved.

It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. (5) I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please. (6) Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? Song of Solomon 3:4-6.

All the joys of my first love returned. Once again the love of Christ perfumed every recess of my soul. I was forgiven, twice forgiven; first for the sinfulness of my childhood and youth and now again for my idolatry in early adult life.

Shortly after these events, our Father ensured that I would have time to thoroughly study about His Son and begin to understand why I had wandered for so many years in a state of confusion. I became quite ill and had to cease my work as a minister. We moved to a place where I would have time to heal, study and pray.

During my convalescent moments, I recalled a long conversation I had had seven years earlier. One of my friends tried to tell me that there were problems with the Trinity and that our pioneers had never believed in this teaching. I was shocked. I knew nothing about this. The implications this had for the church were too great for my mind to accept. Sadly I turned away from the subject and picked out a few choice inspired statements that appeared to support my belief. Nothing was going to make my Beloved appear to be any less than He deserved. I would not let any person diminish the divinity of Jesus. I, along with a number of other friends, considered this person as being deluded and side tracked from the real work of saving souls. This felt like the perfect argument for me to be able to demonstrate my faithfulness to God.

Now after seven years, I went to my friend and asked forgiveness for not being a Berean Bible student and proving all things. He kindly forgave me, and I then asked him for some materials to read on the subject. As I read, I felt myself drawn to the plain utterances of Scripture.

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

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

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; Mark 1:1.

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

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (3) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (4) Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Hebrews 1:1-4.

My Beloved spoke to me through these words. As I read the Bible simply, it seemed to indicate that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. I began to yield myself to the joy of these thoughts when the tempter quietly said, "How could Jesus really be equal with the Father and yet be brought forth at some point? Adrian, this diminishes the divinity of Christ. Are you sure you want to put everything on the line for something you are not absolutely certain about?"

I emailed a respected scholar about these issues and he presented to me an argument that Ellen White used the label *Christ* at times when speaking of Him in heaven before the fall. Jesus did not actually become the Christ until His anointing at the baptism, so the name was used in anticipation of what was to come. He suggested the same was true of the title of *Son*. This argument combined with my desire to see Jesus fully divine and equal with the Father caused me to step

back from fully embracing the truth that Jesus was the Son of God. Yet I had read enough Scripture and now knew enough Adventist history to know that there were two sides to the story. I decided to stay open on the subject, but sadly I clung to the Trinity.

I would like to tell you that the fear of losing many friends and my standing in the church did not influence my decision, but I can't say that. Some of my friends had been disfellowshipped for rejecting the Trinity, and I really did not want to get myself involved in those types of situations. I accepted my scholarly friend's argument against real Sonship without giving it proper consideration. Jesus was indeed the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and was the promise of what He would come to do. The term *Christ* was an office of the Son of God and therefore could be used in anticipation. The term *Son* was not an office but who He actually was. My friend's argument had turned the word *Son* from a *being* into an *office*. What is the difference? It's the difference between who you are and what you do. It is being known in a relational context rather than a work or job context. Is the difference important? As I found out later, it was the difference between worshipping God instead of Satan.

My heart was now open to more of the issues concerning my Beloved. Yet I was still halting between two opinions. My heart now leaned towards the truth that Jesus indeed was the Son of God, but there were things I could not resolve.

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Luke 24:25.

My loving Father took pity on me. He knew I needed more strength, eye salve and intercession from my Beloved to be prepared to face all the truth. All these things were to be found in the Holy Place. The bread of heaven, the light of the world and the mediation of Christ at the altar for me, would yield the answers I needed to be able to consider fully embracing my Beloved.

9 The Light of the World



Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalm 119:105.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. John 1:4.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth

me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8:12.

As my mind was opened to the reality that Jesus really is a Son, several passages of Scripture suddenly flooded with light. Since Jesus is the cornerstone, all our perceptions of truth are connected to how we perceive Him. As the “Second Person of the Trinity,” my perception of “the Son” was one who did great things from His own resources. As the Son of the Father, I began to see the Son as one who receives all things, who receives blessing and is loved for who He is rather than what He does. These perceptions were not apparent to me but were manifested in the way I read Scripture and related to those around me.

Even though I did not have all the answers about the Trinity, the truth about Sonship changed the cornerstone of my faith, and this new precious cornerstone slowly began to bring all my beliefs into line with it. The god I had enthroned from my childhood was facing a serious challenge. Although I still partly perceived Jesus as all powerful solely

from His own resources, the concept of true Sonship allowed me to begin to copy this principle in my life. I began to emulate one who receives, one who is blessed by His Father and this began to change everything.

One Sabbath as I walked through a beautiful rural setting near my home, I began to think about the birth of my son. As I replayed the moment of his birth, I recalled the thoughts that were in my heart. As I held my son, I had prayed “Lord, please don’t let anything come between me and my son, and I pray that he would come to know me for who I am.” Now that I was open to seeing Jesus as a real Son, I was also ready to hear this clear response that came to me from my heavenly Father as I walked on that calm Sabbath day.

“That’s how I feel about you”

I was stunned. My shift in understanding as to who Jesus was, allowed me to perceive the real power of this statement. God was saying to me that He did not want anything to come between Him and me, and He just wanted me to know Him for who He is. Now that I perceived Jesus was a Son, I could truly copy Him and believe that I also was a son in my own sphere. The Sonship of Jesus to the Father made certain my sonship to the Father. Only through the Son of God could I start to understand this.

...I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God,
and your God. John 20:17

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath
made us accepted in the beloved. Ephesians 1:6

Despite this new understanding, when I perceived what our heavenly Father was saying to me, I felt a wave of resistance wash over my soul. The tempter reminded me of my failures and the reasons why I was unworthy of sonship. This war went back and forth in my mind as to whether I could claim the title of sonship and that the almighty God of heaven and earth wanted us to be close with nothing between us. It seemed like a dream too hard to believe. My heavenly Father quietly spoke to me, “Will you really reject my offer?”

“What am I doing?” I said to myself. “No Lord, I choose to believe that you love me as a son. I don’t really understand it, but I believe.”

The Sonship of Jesus became the cornerstone of my own sonship. By beholding His Sonship I could claim mine. The light that was in the begotten Son flooded my soul. All of this was taking place within me without any understanding of how this related to the Trinity. It was a gradual process of rebuilding on the new cornerstone.

My new sense of sonship caused me to have a greater awareness of my dependence on my Father. One day as I was reading:

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: (5) For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. Genesis 3:4-5.

It suddenly hit me that contained within this lie was a principle of self-reliance and independence. In quick succession light dawned upon my mind that independence means loss of blessing which means loss of value and worth. These thoughts were the genesis of the *Identity Wars* series I presented soon after. This was then followed by the book *Identity Wars*.¹ Though I was unaware of how this shift in thinking was taking place, nonetheless the shift in understanding Jesus as a real Son led to a foundation of inheritance, which led to the principle of blessing, which led to the understanding of *value by relationship* as opposed to *value by achievement*.

I remember the first time that it hit me that Satan actually felt worthless due to this lie of self-reliance. If everything we are and do comes from God then we will only experience happiness, joy and peace when we acknowledge the One who gave it. The Son of God lives and breathes this perfectly. He does nothing of Himself, but acknowledges the Father as the great source of all. Yet Satan refused to acknowledge that all that he possessed came from God through Christ. This stripped him of the Father's blessing which in turn made him the originator of worthlessness. I then could see that the seeds of this worthlessness were attached to the lie given to Adam and Eve in the garden. Worthlessness was concealed in the lie of self-reliance.

How long, O you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood? Psalm 4:2 (NKJV).

1. See www.identitywars.org

Connecting Satan's lie to finding value by achievement tore away layers of deception that the tempter had practised on me. The need to be appreciated for my efforts at church, the need to be always busy, the criticism of others for their failures all began to be exposed to the light that value does not come from what we achieve but to Whom we belong.

From the same serpent's lie, I began to see more clearly that life is received from above. I had believed this in theory before, but as the cornerstone of my faith had been understood as a person of total self-reliance, my thoughts had become confused. I was then struck by these Bible passages:

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; (25) Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; Acts 17:24-25.

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: (16) For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (17) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Colossians 1:15-17.

He gives life and breath to all men. Through Jesus all things consist or hold together. These thoughts burst with new light in the face of the real Sonship of Jesus. I did not understand how all these things were connected, but the new building of Bible teaching was taking shape all in accord with the cornerstone of Sonship.

My Beloved became much more attractive as the light of His Sonship flooded the Scriptures. Within a few short years, my whole understanding of the great controversy between Christ and Satan and the plan of salvation were radically altered. As the Light of the World opened my mind, I was now ready for a real feast of the Word.

10. The Bread of Life



The concept that depression and worthlessness were connected to the lie of self-reliance began to add deeper meaning to the fall of man, the conflict between good and evil and the whole process of salvation. My eyes were opened to the reality that man's fall into sin was a fall into worthlessness and

shame. It is a state of living with the reality that we are doing things of which God does not approve. At the heart of this wretched state is the desire to rely upon yourself rather than upon God; it is a desire to be recognised for what you do rather than who gives you all things.

As I pondered these matters, the whole experience of Jesus hearing His Father's voice telling Him that He loved Him and accepted Him as His Son, now spoke directly to me.

And lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matthew 3:17.

In my previous worship of the self-reliant Jesus, I could not clearly hear my Father speaking to me in this text. Yet now that I perceived Jesus as really being the Son of God, these words struck my heart as a balm to my soul. In the arms of the begotten Son, beholding Him; loving Him and being transformed by Him, I now could stand where Jesus stood in my own sphere and actually hear my heavenly Father tell me that I was His beloved son who pleases Him. Yet only

through Christ, the Son of God, could I hear this voice. As I pondered these things I was led to this statement that confirmed the thrill I experienced.

The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:2. Our Redeemer has opened the way so that the most sinful, the most needy, the most oppressed and despised, may find access to the Father. *Desire of Ages*, page 113.

Here, right here in Matthew 3:17 was the secret to my heart’s yearning, my desire to know that I am loved by the supreme Creator of the universe and that I am pleasing to Him. Simply by beholding the Son of God in the embrace of His Father, I was able to see by faith myself in that same embrace and hear those same words extended to me. By beholding a Son that inherited all without having to prove to the Father that He was worthy, I was enabled to accept all the loving inheritance that the Father yearned to bestow upon me.

How I wish that at this point in my life I had fully understood the Sonship of Jesus. Our Father was allowing me to taste the bread of life and how sweet it was, yet the grip of the Trinitarian tentacles caused me to go back and forth for some time. I will cover this in more detail in the next section, but it is important to mention that although I tasted of the sweet love of the begotten Son, I could not see that I was still quite confused and had built upon a double minded platform.

Yet despite this, I now would have regular periods of sheer joy. I clung to the living reality that the Father delighted in me. I could see it now; I could claim it now. When I stumbled and fell, I could look in the Word of God. Did the Father still delight in His Son? Yes! Then I am accepted in the Beloved. He must surely delight in me. The promise of eternal life was not based upon anything I did of myself because more and more I was looking through the Bible to a Jesus who did not rely on Himself, but rested in His Father’s promises.

With these things in mind, I read the whole story of the conflict in the wilderness and the baptism as a war over sonship and how it is obtained. Satan kept pressing Jesus to demonstrate His Sonship

by performing miracles or showing the world His power. I saw the conflict of Jesus with Satan as a battle for how sonship is defined. Is it simple trust in the Word spoken by the Father or must it be proved by what the son does?

Once again, the war I read about with Christ in the wilderness was the cornerstone of my own internal battle. What role model do I emulate to hold my sonship? Do I attempt to do great things or do I trust in my Father's Word? Once again the confirmation came to me.

“Many look on this conflict between Christ and Satan [in the wilderness] as having no special bearing on their own life; and for them it has little interest. But within the domain of every human heart this controversy is repeated.” *Desire of Ages*, page 116.

The best part about this whole process is that rather than simply looking to Jesus and trying to copy what He did, the law of inheritance means that what He did is freely offered to me.

Let him who is struggling against the power of appetite look to the Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. See Him in His agony upon the cross, as He exclaimed, “I thirst.” He has endured all that it is possible for us to bear. His victory is ours. *Desire of Ages*, page 123.

This feasting in the Word of God almost made me burst. Such precious revelation! His victory is mine, by faith. I had tried many times before to cling to this truth, but the self-reliant Jesus I was worshipping kept washing me off the rock of truth not realising it all comes by inheritance!

Seeing worthlessness as a key part of the fall of man and the loss of sonship, I now saw the conflict of Jesus in the wilderness after His baptism as the cornerstone of the plan of salvation. Once again, inspiration confirmed this.

The scene of trial with Christ in the wilderness was the foundation of the plan of salvation, and gives to fallen man the key whereby he, in Christ's name, may overcome. *Confrontation*, page 63.

The key to victory is found in Christ's conflict in the wilderness and is the foundation of the plan of salvation. I remember the first time I read this and exclaimed *WHAT!* “The foundation of the plan of

salvation is in the wilderness of temptation!" But now it all made sense.

With this new understanding of how Jesus reclaimed our identity as sons and daughters of God, I now could begin to see this element in the message of Elijah.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5,6.

At the heart of the Elijah message is a turning of the hearts of children to fathers and fathers to children. This led me to this passage

Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers. Proverbs 17:6.

And all of this glory was realised with a value system that states:

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: (24) But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD. Jeremiah 9:23-24.

As a true son of God I did not need to glory in wisdom, might or riches; I only needed to glory in knowing my Father through Christ. I remember presenting these principles to an audience in Sydney, and seeing the joy that lit up the faces of the people as some began to catch a glimpse of the Father's kingdom.

Early next morning, I awoke to the sound of singing. I heard in my thoughts the famous Charles Wesley hymn.

And can it be that I should gain
 an interest in the Savior's blood?
 Died He for me, who caused His pain-
 for me, who Him to death pursued?
 Amazing love! How can it be,
 that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
 Amazing love! How can it be,
 that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

As I meditated on these words and the certainty of my sonship to the Father through Christ and that my Father in heaven was indeed my glory, I felt an overwhelming sense of love, joy and peace sweep over me. The sense of love I felt was so great that I could not speak as the tears of joy came forth. I really can't describe the experience fully. At that moment, I was impressed by a distinct thought:

“Take this message to the world”

Truly this was a message that everyone needed to hear. I did not challenge the thought, but just prayed for strength to share this precious message of what it means to be a son of God through Christ. As I sat there and recalled all the aspects of the message I had learned in such a short space and what a blessing they had brought to my life, I just worshipped our Father and our Lord Jesus for such wonderful things. All of this sweet knowledge was coming to light through the person of the Son of God.

From this point I eagerly desired to press forward and share the joy I had found. But even in this pressing forward there were some things I still needed to learn, things that would enable me to truly enter the Most Holy Place experience.

Interlude II

In the stillness of dawn, I wait for Him. My Beloved moves swiftly over the mountains, the crooked way He makes straight. Our fellowship is sweet. He whispers to me from His inherited treasures; His words fall like honey upon my lips. How sweet are His words to my taste.

Like a deep spring, my Beloved pours forth a crystal stream of living water for my soul. I rejoice to taste this living water and yet there are things that leave me puzzled. My dearly Beloved, forgive my slowness of heart to catch every drop of knowledge you impart to me. Please let me catch my breath and take time to come to terms with these delights.

If only they knew Beloved, if only my countrymen really knew you! Then would they know why I love you, why your fellowship is so sweet. I pour out my heart in thanksgiving for showing me the way to the Father through your Sonship. I feel the Father's love for You in my heart, I have the evidence of being a co-heir with you, my Beloved. You are altogether lovely.

Will you take me, my Beloved, to the Most Holy Place? I have longed to find entrance, yet have stumbled and fallen with shameful tears. As a son of the first Adam, I am blinded to how to find entrance. Will you take me, my Beloved? Will you take me to the secret place of the Most High? I know that I am unworthy, but I put my trust in you, my Beloved, for you are the Way to Life.

I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. (6) I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. Song of Solomon 5:5-6.

Section 3. Halting Between Two Opinions

11. War Between the Flesh and the Spirit

It was so frustrating! All this wonderful knowledge about my Beloved, and yet how easily could I be lured by the tempter through various means. The tempter had taken advantage of my childhood and youth and stamped into my soul the love of ease, entertainment and appetite. He had trained me in the spirit of self-reliance through my community, education and love of sport.

As my Beloved began to show me more of Himself and I fell more deeply in love with Him, my former lover tried to hold the ground he still had within me and tried to take back from my Beloved that which he had lost. Even though I loved Jesus dearly, I was unaware of how much of my carnal nature still claimed the supremacy. The worst part of the fallen nature is the well calculated trait of using logic combined with falsehood to conceal real motive and desire.

Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Psalm 19:12.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (10) I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. Jeremiah 17:9-10.

During my time of feasting on the Word in the Holy Place, I came face to face with several temptations from my former life. At times I would be pressed forcefully to sit down and watch some sporting event on television. Many times I gave in and watched, but within a

short period would find no satisfaction at all. I felt trapped and did not understand why. I had prayed for victory, but the desires would return. In my younger years I was motivated to appear righteous as were many in my peer group. This allowed me to appear to have victory over several temptations, but it was an illusion and the tempter knew it.

Many victories in my life were so hard to obtain. I stood before the Most Holy Place wishing to enter, but something was blocking my path and I did not understand what it was. My study of Daniel and Revelation convicted me that the work of intercession would soon cease, and only those who had made their garments white in the righteousness of Jesus would enter the city. I saw several of my peers yield their efforts to enter the Most Holy Place, and they taught that because of the great love of Jesus for sinners, He will forgive them and cover their sins right through until the Second Coming. The teaching concerning victory over sin became one of Christian maturity, as the law of God was no longer seen as possible to be fully kept.

What I read in Scripture contradicted what many of my peers were saying, yet my experience seemed to indicate that they were right. How could I profess to believe in victory over sin when I had such an inconsistent experience? What right did I have to offer hope of victory in the life when I myself was not able to experience it?

When I would fall to temptation, I knew that our Father loved me and that through Christ I obtained forgiveness, but I wanted to walk with my Saviour at all times and not wound Him with my careless words and thoughtless actions that were often selfish. Yes, God forgives us, but sin still causes pain in our relationships. The Bible promised me that I could stop hurting those around me, and yet how often I failed.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, Jude 24.

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 1 Peter 4:1.

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. (7) Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 1 John 3:6-7.

Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 1 John 4:17.

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:12.

My wise and loving Saviour let me experience the natural consequences of the false understanding of Him to which I still clung. These periods of conflict, temptation and idolatry intensified my search for the missing pieces. Each time I knelt before my Father and pled with Him for wisdom and understanding through Jesus, the closer I was brought to the light.

One could imagine that my knowledge of Jesus as the Saviour for the sins of the world would have been enough and that I should not have worried about other things. The point is that temptation still came every day, and expressions of carnal nature were still hurting people. The fact was that my knowledge of Jesus was still confused. The voice of my Beloved and the voice of the tempter were still converging in my mind in certain places.

In my efforts to worship and uplift my Saviour, I unwittingly included in this worship aspects that were not revealed in Scripture. I unwittingly perceived Christ in a highly self-reliance context. These extra things came from my spiritual forefathers and also held a natural resonance with me. The taste of self-reliance that I had fallen in love with as a child and had been fostered by the tempter had become embedded in the heart of the person of Jesus whom I claimed to worship.

My only knowledge of Jesus had come to me through what I have been taught as a child by my family and my church. I was taught that Jesus is God, and the Father is God, and the Spirit is God. I was taught they were all divine and therefore equal. My context for this equality seemed to naturally be that of self-reliance stemming from inherent power, ability, and knowledge. I therefore never questioned how Father, Son and Spirit were equal. I just assumed this meant they all had the same power and position. This is what equal means in the world, and so I thought this to be the case with God. It never dawned on me that if God was three beings that were all equal in power then the meanings of the words themselves would change. The words *Father* and *Son* particularly would cease to mean what

they said. If Father and Son were equal in power, age and position then it would be impossible for the second person to come from the first person because that would make the second person dependent or subordinate to the first.

The lie of the serpent to Eve stated that we are self-reliant beings; it is stamped into our very nature and is passed from generation to generation. The voice of the tempter groomed this spirit of self-reliance within me through my family, education and community experiences. When the person of Jesus was presented to me as one who is self-reliant and yet demonstrates submission and obedience for our benefit only, I fell for it. My perception of the Divine as the most powerful, most majestic, and most self-reliant being fitted perfectly with this doctrine of the Trinity that presented three powerful beings as a unity of one corporate divine family.

I could not see that through a cleverly laid plot, the real God and His Son had been merged with a false god that appealed to my carnal nature. At times I would focus on the Father and Son relationship and be drawn towards them. Then I would fall back onto the aspects of power and self-reliance, and this would drive me to be exactly the same.

This spirit of self-reliance struck a chord with many sports and movies. When I would watch an Olympic champion reveal his prowess, skill and agility to win a gold medal, I was drawn to this because part of the god I worshipped revealed power, prowess and ability in a display of self-reliance. When I watched a team of men force their way through another wall of men to place a ball on the line, I felt the power and applauded the display. It touched perfectly a chord in my flesh. Yet this spirit was at war with the meek and lowly Jesus who did always those things that pleased His Father. He did nothing of Himself but trusted all things into His Father's hands. This spirit was not natural for me, but through my encounters with my Beloved, I started to taste of this Spirit and so desired it also. This caused a tremendous conflict in me.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Galatians 5:17.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (25) I thank God through Jesus Christ

our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. Romans 7:24-25.

The war in my heart was between two different understandings of Christ whom I loved. My childhood love was essentially a projection of myself as a self-reliant, powerful person who won the admiration and respect of those around me. The second person was the meek and lowly Jesus who loved His Father and trusted all that He possessed came from Him. Without any consideration of His skills, talents or abilities, this Saviour was blessed and loved by the Father simply because He had come from Him.

I was locked in this struggle between these two views of Christ because the carefully expressed formula of the Trinity had made it very hard for me to tell them apart. There were a number of cultural elements that added to my difficulty of discerning the difference. It is to these issues we turn next.

12. The Drama of Transformed Identity



Christmas time was always fun for me as a child. I remember people dressing up as Santa Claus and giving gifts to children in the shopping centre where we did our shopping. I also remember the story of the Baby Jesus in the manger being faithfully played in living colour by a Sabbath School class.

As I grew older, I saw movie stars dress up and play the role of a western or urban hero saving the day. My childhood and youth had been saturated with drama. The whole idea of one person assuming the identity of another person for the purpose of making a moral point became part of the fabric of my life. After hundreds of hours of watching people assume the identities of other people in order to tell a story of meaning, I was brainwashed with the notion that this is how the universe works. I was not taught this, but rather I caught it through my culture.

This habit of watching people assume other identities also became a window of escape through which I could imagine myself in a more powerful existence than what I currently occupied. Watching movies became an addiction by which I could assume another identity for the purpose of imagining myself gaining the respect and attention I desired.

As my childhood turned to youth and my childish ambitions became harder to realise, the window of assumed identity became a vital factor in maintaining the lie of self-reliance and independence. The secret was to merge my identity with the person that I desired to emulate. Through the grooming of my childhood first love, the window into power came by the surrender of my identity. I never realised that this process would cost my identity, because the only thing that mattered was power. The use of drama and movies formed a core part of the tempter's methods of keeping me enslaved to the lie of self-reliance. It also completely blinded me to the idolatry of the Trinity.

The Trinity was the perfect expression of assumed identity for a moral purpose; three beings assuming the roles of Father, Son and Spirit for the purpose of making a highly moral statement about salvation. This fitted perfectly with my grooming through drama. Once again, the story resonated with me, because it was as natural as breathing.

Just as I never saw that an assumed identity causes the loss or confusion of who a person is, so I never saw that in believing that three divine beings assuming other identities actually caused the loss or confusion of who they were. This became the mystery of God! It all made perfect sense to my natural mind.

It should not be overlooked that the central lie spoken to Eve was presented through a being that had transformed himself into another completely different identity. Let us never forget that our human nature from Adam is stamped with a message of self-reliance conveyed through a medium of transformed identity.

This message was further stamped into my thinking by the watching of transformational super heroes such as Superman, Spiderman and others. These characters had inner powers that they could use when they transformed. These powers were usually used for moral purposes and for the good of the society. The key principle developed was to *reach for inner strength through transformed identity*. Over and over this lesson was repeated to me. Rather than falling on my knees and praying to my Heavenly Father, I was shown that real heroes called upon their inner powers by transforming themselves. Once again, I was imbibing a spirit of transformational self-reliance.

In my early teen years I was exposed to another method of transformational self-reliance. The Star Wars series written by George Lucas presented its best heroes as masters of meditation. Through the arts of concentration and following internal feelings, one could perform great feats in battle and win the praise of everyone who witnessed them. This was my subtle introduction to eastern mysticism.

So for all of these reasons I found myself often drawn to the television to engage in the practices of my childhood god and that was to foster the lie of self-reliance through a transformed identity. I would imagine myself as the central character of the movie and would feel the power that he displayed. As long as I continued to worship a god that engaged in self-reliant transformation, I could never truly lose my love of movies, sport and fictional stories.

Another dimension to my training from television was the philosophy that opposites attract. The whole black/white, yin/yang story played out through a love story, provided constant themes of opposites merging into one for greater power, pleasure and satisfaction. This training provided the perfect backdrop to merging the powerful, self-reliant heavenly Jesus with the submissive, humble and obedient earthly Jesus into one object of worship.

As I look back now I see that much of my exposure to society through my childhood formed a framework to prepare me to accept the Trinitarian god as something that was natural, obvious and unquestionable. The emphasis on looking within by a spirit of self-reliance matched perfectly the picture of these three great beings who transformed themselves into the characters of Father, Son and Spirit.

The character of my Beloved who trusted in His Father and always obeyed, trusted and looked to Him was merged and swallowed up by my multiple pictures of self-reliance, looking within and being transformed into the power of the Divine.

How simple things would have been if I could have understood these words:

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.
Hebrews 13:8.

Then again many things would have been simpler if I would have kept reading the Bible plainly. Yet once again, my upbringing and schooling placed scales over my eyes to prevent me from doing just that.

13. Mind Games



One day when playing with my friends at school, someone called out to me most earnestly, “Adrian! You have a split in your pants.” My heart began to race as I turned quickly to find where the split was. Then I heard a chorus of laughter with the words “Gotcha!” Welcome to the world of jest. Often my life became a game of dodging and firing these arrows of deceit.

As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death,
(19) So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith,
Am not I in sport? Proverbs 26:18-19.

It was embarrassing to be caught out and have a whole class of kids laughing at me. The peer class experience taught me never to be vulnerable, never trust anyone and most importantly, be careful not to take everything that people say seriously.

The most rudimental element of jest is stating the opposite of what is true and drawing the gullible, literal minded person into a state of confusion to gain a laugh. In my teen years, I was engulfed in this spirit of deception, confusion and entertainment by twisting words to mean something other than what they literally meant. However one of the first things my Beloved convicted me about after my conversion was the principle of saying what I meant.

But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Matthew 5:37.

These arrows of deceit played a part in trying to prevent my entrance via the wicket-gate¹ into the Sanctuary courtyard. I really became convicted on this subject when I learned that jesting was a form of bearing false witness and therefore a violation of the ninth commandment.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
Exodus 20:16.

I also learned one of the things that the followers of Jesus would stop doing was practicing guile.

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 1 Peter 2:21-22.

These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (5) And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. Revelation 14:4-5.

Guile is defined:

to decoy; compare G1185); a trick (bait), that is, (figuratively) wile: - craft, deceit, guile, subtilty.

What is very interesting to me is that the place where I experienced this spirit the most was in my seminary training for the ministry. I found it a constant battle not to be drawn into a spirit of laughter through the arts of jest. I had to pray earnestly for help not to engage in this practise. Whenever I would indicate my inclination to read a Bible passage in its plain meaning, laughter and scorn would often greet my ears.

1. "A little distance from this gate there is erected a strong castle, of which Beelzebub is the captain: from thence both he and they that are with him, shoot arrows at those that come up to this gate, if haply they may die before they can enter in. Then said Christian, I rejoice and tremble." *Pilgrim's Progress* Second Stage.

The tempter's indoctrination of jest taught me not to take words seriously and to look for a hidden meaning. Jest facilitated my appreciation of the key principles of the Alexandrian allegorical method of Bible study. The real meaning of words is not in the literal reading. Jest was only one mind game that affected my reading of the Bible and the true identity of my Beloved.

The simple story telling methods of television taught me the concept of parallel realities. At different times in my life I was exposed to television programs that depicted families doing fairly typical things. These programs were serial programs, meaning they would have weekly or daily episodes. Within a short period of time, I became familiar with the characters and began to identify with them. These characters became so much a part of my life that I would often imagine myself amongst them, become concerned about the things they were dealing with and sometimes would even dream about them as part of my world.

These serial programs allowed me to mentally step into a different reality from my own. Yet at any time I could step out of that reality. For instance, when watching something that was frightening, I would tell myself, "It's only a movie." This practice allowed me to experience all the feelings of a parallel reality, and yet I could jump out of it when it became uncomfortable. While this process was most powerful in serial programs, it was the same for any movie. The use of visuals and sounds of people engaged in real life activities created a virtual world that drew me out of my own.

Regardless of the content, the process of living in a parallel or virtual reality affected the way I read the Bible. It laid a perfect framework for allowing Jesus to move into a parallel reality as a man on earth. What He performed on earth was not really who He was. He was not a dependant, trusting Son in reality, He had simply stepped into this alternate reality for the purpose of making a moral statement. This was the same as the movies I watched. Many of them tried to make some kind of moral statement through a parallel reality to my own.

One of the most common expressions of this parallel reality has been "This was only during the incarnation." The diabolical combination of parallel reality and identity transformation made this type of thinking very easy. I could read Bible expressions like the following and place them in a parallel reality that was essentially fiction.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. John 5:19.

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

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

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (3) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (4) Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Hebrews 1:1-4.

Whenever my mind became convicted that these verses should be read literally, my understanding that Jesus was equal with the Father by His self-reliant power would place these texts into a parallel fictional reality for the purpose of making a moral statement. I did it automatically without even realising it. My mind had been programmed this way for years, and all this training worked perfectly to prevent my escape from the three-in-one god called the Trinity.

Any time that we watch a movie or serial story of any type, regardless of the content, we are being programmed for parallel reality that can be accessed or abandoned at any time. Even true stories presented in a movie format can create this effect, because the movement of actors and the interaction observed automatically creates this parallel reality and allows us to enter into it.

This is very different from reading Bible stories and allowing the Spirit of God to impress us as to what they mean. When we are taught to read the Bible literally and not to go beyond the bounds of Scripture, we can draw lessons from the stories, but we do not enter into a parallel reality that causes us to leave our own. Many times after watching a movie, the tell-tale sign that I had entered a different

reality was that I would often have a period of confusion as to where I was, what time it was, and what I should be doing next.

I remember one movie in particular that left me in that state for nearly three days. I just kept living the parallel reality and could not get out of it. The scenes would play over and over in my mind, and I would go through all the emotions again and again. This process is very different from reading the Bible plainly and simply. Never do we lose track of our current reality and circumstances. Our mind is not being bombarded with twenty-five to thirty images a second, causing an overload of information and forcing the mind to let go of everything else around it. This is the work of the destroyer.

Those who can't break away from the desire for movies, TV soaps, serial programs and so called reality TV will find it almost impossible to read the Bible in a literal way without becoming subjected to parallel realities. The worst of these movies are those depicting Jesus Himself. The level of confusion created from this type of parallel reality, let alone the error that is revealed in the scripts and the often sensual lifestyles of the actors, is incalculable.

You would think that these factors alone would be enough, but I also encountered this parallel reality phenomenon with various computer games such as treasure hunting, quest or task based games and especially car racing games that involved passing through levels which would bring me into a parallel reality similar to the way movies did. After spending hours playing games, I would get that brief feeling of confusion as to what was reality. I remember well the feeling after conquering a game and completing all its levels. I experienced a feeling of elation which then gave way to a kind of sadness that it was over. The principles of jest,² combined with the indoctrination of movies, games and television based stories drew me out of my existing reality into another.

These became key tools in aiding the great Deceiver in keeping me out of the Most Holy Place experience with my Beloved. All of these things were designed to turn the realities of the gospel into a house of cards built on a foundation of sand. Each part of my upbringing had been carefully calculated to program my thinking away from what my Beloved was urgently trying to tell me in the Bible.

2. These principles being where the literal meaning of words are scorned and often an opposite meaning is favoured.

14. A House of Cards



I remember one of the first times the light came on in my mind, and I started to see how theologians could make such absurd statements. For years it puzzled me how people who professed the Bible could deny a literal six day creation, deny the Sabbath or believe that people went straight to heaven when they died. Worse still, were the statements from Adventist scholars denying the investigative work of Jesus in the Most Holy Place and the cleansing from sin before He came back to earth.

I was sitting in a lecture on the books of Daniel and Revelation. It was not stated as a fact but was only suggested that what Daniel saw in vision in chapter 7 was a metaphor. A metaphor means:

a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to **which it is not literally applicable** in order to suggest a resemblance,...¹

As I picked up this thought of the imagery of Daniel 7 being a metaphor, I sensed the ground opening up, and the entire Adventist system of faith was being swept away.

1. www.dictionary.reference.com

The suggestion was that Daniel and Revelation were full of symbols and that what Daniel saw concerning the Son of Man coming to the Ancient of Days was also a symbol. There was logic to this argument. It sounded reasonable, but from the research I had done, this would turn the doctrines of Adventism (to use a metaphor) into a deck of cards on a sandy foundation right next to a fault line.

The use of metaphor exists in many places in the Bible. The question is when do we consider something as a metaphor where the meaning is not to be literally taken, and when do we read the text plainly with a literal meaning?

The bedrock of pioneer Adventist thinking hinged on a few simple rules and the one that addresses this issue states:

RULE XI. How to know when a word is used figuratively. If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally, if not, figuratively.²

A metaphor only has power when it is attached to a literal reality. If you take the foundation and apply a figurative understanding to it, then the whole system will collapse, because there is nothing solid for the metaphor to build on. The Bible rule to accept the literal wording first if it “does no violence to the simple laws of nature” is our safeguard against turning our foundations to sand.

The natural effect of applying a metaphor to something that can be literally understood is an opposite meaning. This little device of applying metaphors to literally understood passages ignited all my childhood enjoyment for jesting and training in opposites attracting. These deadly metaphors provided a door for me to enter parallel realities with opposite meanings. I recall one lecturer describing that the Bible came alive when he understood the power of metaphor.

One of the simplest examples of how a metaphor can be used to make something appear opposite from what is stated concerns the Sabbath.

The Bible says:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Exodus 20:8.

2. William Miller’s “Rules for Bible Interpretation”

If we take the word Sabbath and give it the meaning of rest, we can show how Jesus gives us rest by quoting:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28.

The conclusion is presented that as Jesus is our rest, He fulfils the requirement to rest. We rest in Christ, and as we rest in Him we are fulfilling this command spiritually. This process turns the literal word *Sabbath* into a metaphor for resting in the salvation of Jesus. Yet if we use the rule for literal interpretation first we find it makes perfect sense as written, so we prevent the metaphorical meaning that would make the statement appear to be saying the opposite of what was commanded.

If we turn to Daniel 7 we are introduced to many symbols. Instead of speculating about the meaning of these symbols, we follow another important rule and that is:

RULE V. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound it to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed or wisdom is my rule, not the Bible.³

There is no need to speculate about the meaning of the lion, the bear, the leopard and beast, the Bible tells us what they mean.

These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. Daniel 7:17.

At the centre of this vision given to Daniel is the observation of a great judgment and two key figures described as the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man. Here is the narrative:

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. (10) A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. (11) I beheld then because of the

3. William Miller's "Rules for Bible Interpretation"

voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. (12) As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. (13) I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. (14) And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:9-14.

The descriptions of the beasts and little horn are clearly symbols and find their explanation in other parts of this chapter as well as the rest of Daniel. Everything else in this story can be read literally without any violence being done to the laws of nature.

This judgment scene involving the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man is the foundational narrative of the Adventist faith. While sitting in my theology lecture, the suggestion that Daniel's vision was only a symbol of God's justice and reflected His ability to bring sin to an end, made the entire narrative state the opposite of what is meant. The failure to first apply the rule for literal interpretation, allows the foundational reality of the Son of Man actually coming to the Ancient of Days to receive a kingdom turn to dust. Why? Because it didn't actually take place; it is just a symbol. This is the result of ignoring the rule for literal interpretation first.

It is on this very point that I was seduced concerning the Bible teaching of the Father and His Son. I am amazed at how I could believe that Jesus was God's Son and yet believe in the Trinity at the same time. This process becomes very easy when you present the terms *Father* and *Son* as metaphors for the love of God to the universe.

If we understand that the bedrock reality of the whole universe revolves around God and His Son and then these terms are turned into metaphors, the entire Christian economy becomes a house of cards on shifting sand. Note carefully this statement:

“Another important point involves how we interpret the Bible. Here the issue pertains to whether we should interpret some passages literally or whether we may

treat them more figuratively. Maybe we could illustrate this way. While we often refer to Jesus as the Son and frequently call the first person of the Godhead the Father, do we really want to take such expressions in a totally literal way? Or would it be more appropriate to interpret them in a more metaphorical way that draws on selective aspects of sonship and fatherhood” *The Trinity* by Whidden, Moon and Reeve, page 94.

Once the terms *Father* and *Son* are no longer literal, the backbone of Scripture can be twisted and shaped according to whatever we wish it to be. It becomes a simple thing to make God in our image. The whole notion of God taking on roles using terms Father and Son as symbols presents to us the idea that God has made Himself into man’s image. God, as it were, enters a parallel reality to make a moral statement. The true meaning of all the statements revealing the love of the Father for His Son are not to be literally taken, because according to the Adventist Church, Jesus is not actually the Son of God; this is a role He assumed for salvational purposes.⁴

As I look back over my life and I see the convergence of all the jesting, movies, parallel realities, transformed identities and deadly use of metaphors, I also see that these things were aimed at one key objective, and that was to destroy my ability to enter into a sweet fellowship with God and His Son in the Most Holy Place in heaven. Until I could begin to understand these deceptions and move away from them, it would be impossible for me to find entrance into the Most Holy Place and be with my Beloved. The Most Holy Place is where the marriage takes place, and it would be impossible for me to be part of the bride if I really did not know my prospective Husband. The only possible way to have continued sweet fellowship is to know the truth about who God and His Son really are.

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

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.

4. or in other words to make a moral statement

I wanted this fellowship with the Father and Son so badly, and yet my knowledge of Jesus was confused by the voice and training of the tempter. My training in movies, jest and metaphorical theology allowed me to let these two separate lovers walk with me as one person. The principles of self-reliance, transformed Identities and winning respect through achievement were subtly being worshipped in a parallel reality to the meek and lowly Saviour of the world. My Beloved could not let me into the secret place of the Most High while I still had affection for my childhood lover. There had to be a way of escape from this war in my mind.

Interlude III

Song of Solomon 5:7-9 The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. (8) I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love. (9) What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

Romans 7:21-24 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Revelation 3:17-20 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: (18) I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. (19) As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. (20) Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Section 4. Rescued by My beloved

15. Elijah

As I mentioned in Chapter 9, the idea that Jesus truly was the Son of God brought to view a being that received everything from His Father and that His Father loved Him simply because He was His Son and not because of the gifts of power and position He possessed. This reality opened up two clear kingdoms.¹

	God's Kingdom	Satan's/Wordly Kingdom
Government	Family	Strongest
Currency	Loving Relationships	Assets
Citizenship	Children of God	Performance and achievement as successfully rated by yourself and others

Despite the fact that I had been schooled in the arts of jest, metaphor, and drama, which in turn influenced me to avoid the literal reading of the Bible and desire to escape into different realities, the Word of my Beloved concerning what makes us valuable was slowly developing in my mind. I began to see the truth that:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. (9) For as the heavens

1. See my book Identity Wars chapter eight for an expansion of these kingdoms.

are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9.

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: (24) But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD. Jeremiah 9:23-24.

This new cornerstone began to reveal the teachings I believed in a completely new light.²

	God's Kingdom	Satan's/Wordly Kingdom
Law	Gift to protect us	Tool to display good deeds
Sabbath	A blessed gift to spend time together	Time to recover from hard work or a tool demonstrate righteousness
Judgment	A time to draw close to God, trusting His grace	Time to work harder to make the grade

The dawning of my perception that Jesus inherited all things as a gift of love and blessing caused the growth of understanding that many doctrines are also gifts of love from the Father through Christ. The power to keep the law and the Sabbath or to face the judgment does not come from within but from above. Even though I mentally understood this previously, I had held to a self-reliant Jesus as my Saviour, and therefore I unwittingly gravitated to that method of dealing with the law, Sabbath and Judgment. But each time I would mediate on these words: "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3:17) the more I could see that the ability to do what God required came from Him as a gift. As I moved from Bible teaching to Bible teaching I saw the love of the Father for me through His Son.

2. See my presentation "Doctrinal Implications of the Two Kingdoms" for more detail. <http://vimeo.com/24396148>

One day the thought struck me. *What about the Trinity? Shouldn't we study the Scriptures in light of what you have learnt about the two kingdoms?* The thought immediately came to me. *You don't want to go there!* Then another thought more penetrating — *Would a true Protestant reject a call to study the Scriptures to prove all things?* The very fact that I felt a fear to examine this subject told me that I needed to study it. I knew that any belief that pandered to fear was not a solid foundation. So I began to study the subject.

For some reason the words of John 5:26 jumped out at me.

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

I had not been able to read this text literally before because doing so would have destroyed the principle of self-reliance. If self-reliance is the essence of divinity then it was impossible to read this text as meaning that the Father gave His Son to have life in Himself, suggesting self-existent life. Now it was so easy to read plainly. The second reason I could believe that God gave this to His Son is because Christ's value as the Divine Son did not exist in His inherent qualities but in His relationship with His Father. This flash of light fully exposed the false amalgamation of Jesus I had held in my mind for so long. Suddenly the false Christ that had been preached to me, loved by me and worshipped by me was exposed. Jesus was not an expression of total self-reliance, He was a Son who loved His Father and received everything from Him.

Suddenly passages everywhere burst with light.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. John 1:18.

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

For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. John 17:8.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; Mark 1:1.

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

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

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. (23) I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. (24) When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Proverbs 8:22-24.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (3) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (4) Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Hebrews 1:1-4.

Ignited by the words declared at the baptism of Christ and fanned by the significance of the conflict with Satan over His Sonship, my mind exploded into an accelerated writing experience that became the book *The Return of Elijah*. Several streams of thought converged and came to rest upon that one and only true cornerstone of the begotten Son—the blessed Son, the Son in whom the Father delights, the Son to whom was given everything the Father had, a Son of trusting, loving obedience to His Father’s absolute benevolent authority. I felt like Isaac Newton grasping the true significance of an apple falling to the ground.

At the completion of writing that book, I vividly remember lifting my head into the starry heavens and crying like the disciples:

We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. John 1:41

The tears streamed from my eyes as I came to grips with the reality that I had found Him! I had truly found Him! The truth is that He found me, and how glad I was to be found. The begotten Son of God stood as a mighty Rock before me, and I determined there and then to build my house upon this precious cornerstone. The tempter's dark mists that had bound up my Beloved and locked Him away from me were stripped away by the glorious light of this Son of Inheritance. The voice of Elijah called deeply into my soul:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: (6) And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5-6.

Indeed the spirit of Elijah had come and turned my heart towards the Father and His Son. My longing search for freedom from endless measurement and performance found its conclusion in the begotten Son of the Father who stands before Him as His delight without any reliance upon power, wisdom or wealth, but simply His blessed word of acceptance, love and delight.

As the true character and person of my Beloved took shape in the light of the plain testament of Scripture, so grew the sense of shame from the recognition of my love and illicit relations with the self-reliant imposter that had been courting me all my life. Caught in the grip of the three-in-One construction called the Trinity, I had unwittingly chosen Barabbas over my Beloved. I took the stinging shame of this idolatry to our Father and asked for forgiveness through the shed blood of my Beloved. Peace, joy and love flooded my soul, yet I was impressed to remember where I have come from in order that I might be gracious to others who have suffered the same fate as I had.

These days felt like my first love experience all over again when I stood before the altar of sacrifice and beheld my Beloved dying there for me. Now the context of that sacrifice presented to me as the real gift of the Father to win back His erring children. My learning experiences in the Holy Place with the lamp and the shewbread combined with the continual intercession of my Beloved prepared the way for Elijah to make a straight path for my feet and find the loving embrace of my Beloved.

I longed to enter the Most Holy Place with my Beloved but there were more obstacles that needed removing and more awareness of how much my idolatry had affected me.

LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? (2) He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. (3) He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. (4) In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. (5) He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved. Psalms 15:1-5.

For so many years I had tried to build my house on my Beloved as well as the self-reliant tempter. There were wood and stubble in my foundation that needed cleansing so that I might walk uprightly, work righteousness and speak the truth in my heart. These tests would be the natural outworking of my willingness to confess my love for my Beloved before my brethren. Yet before I share with you some of these tests, I want to share with you some of the reasons I delight in my Beloved.

16. Altogether Lovely

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. (11) His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. (12) His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. (13) His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. (14) His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. (15) His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. (16) His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. Song of Solomon 5:10-16.

It comes as a surprise to think that it would be impossible for God our Father to directly create the universe. Pardon? God can do anything, comes the response. The law of life for the universe dictates that the one who directly gives us life, is the one we aspire to be like.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

If the government of the universe rested upon the shoulders of the Father, what would be the result? All the angelic host and created worlds would seek to emulate the Father. Yes, we can seek to be like Him in character, but at the deeper level of wanting to be like Him, we would stumble and fall. How so? The Father submits to no-one, obeys no-one, neither is taught nor instructed by anyone.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (36) For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. Romans 11:33-36.

If the Father was presented before us as the cornerstone of how to live, we would seek to copy Him and become one who does not submit, obey or receive instruction. In our efforts to be like Him, we would naturally become the opposite and such is proved in the life of Satan who sought to be like the Most High.

The solution to this was for the Father to lay a cornerstone for the universe that He could build upon—One that the entire universe could look to as the example of how to live.

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Isaiah 28:16.

In infinite wisdom, God brought forth a Son in His express image. He is God's thoughts made audible. All the fullness of the Father's divinity dwells in Him. He is given to have life in Himself as the Father does.

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. (23) I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. (24) When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Proverbs 8:22-24.

Although the Son of God possessed all the power of His Father, yet we note of Him:

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. John 5:19.

The fact that the Son of God can look to His Father in submissive, loving obedience without the desire to emulate His position is one of the highest evidences of His divinity. If the Son were a created being and there were no other submissive example to follow, He would

naturally seek to be like the Most High in power and position as well as character. His eternal devotion to His Father is evidence enough that He is God's thoughts made audible and that all the fullness of the Father dwells in Him.

Upon this cornerstone, God could build the universe. Every creature that came forth from the hand of His Son would be filled with the same submissive, obedient and trusting spirit as the One who made them.

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life. *Desire of Ages*, page 21.

The begotten Son is the key to the whole universe holding together. It is the submissive, trusting Spirit of the Son that the Father sends forth into the hearts of all created beings.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6.

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Galatians 4:6.

It is the Spirit of the begotten Son that turns the hearts of all creation to the Father who is the great source of all. This is one of the most precious things about my Beloved. His character is one of trusting, loving submission to the Father.

As I allow my Beloved to take possession of my life, I am drawn to the Father. I feel my constant need for Him. All of this is a treasure, a gift

from my Beloved. This is why the Father exalts His Son and gives Him a name above every name. This is why my Beloved is the everlasting Father of all those who submit to the One true God. This is the living water that He offers us to drink. In that water is a Spirit that trusts the Father under all circumstances and it is that Spirit that holds the universe together under God.

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: (16) For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (17) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. (18) And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. (19) For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; Colossians 1:15-19.

As I meditate on these things, my heart grows warm and I cannot help but smile. The treasures of my Beloved are sweet. He keeps my heart safely trusting in His Father and fills me with contentment and peace.

The second treasure I have found in my Beloved is His blessing. The Father has blessed His Son and in the heart of my Beloved dwells the certainty that the Father delights in Him. How much would we be willing to pay for this spirit of resting in the Father's delight?

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matthew 3:17.

The delight of the Father becomes mine through my betrothal to His Son.

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. Ephesians 1:6.

I do not need to strive, nor achieve, nor display to the Father anything to win His approval. In having my Beloved, I have the Father's delight. I sense God's love for His Son in my heart.

Oh child of Adam, how do I find myself thus loved? There are no words that could be offered to express the feelings of my heart. The Father delights in me! Yes, He delights in me, and I am acceptable to Him because His Son is acceptable to Him.

The question is asked me:

What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? Song of Solomon 5:9.

My Beloved is more than any other because He shares with me the Father's delight in Him. My childhood lover could not give me this treasure. He could only promise me the freedom to do whatever I pleased without any limits, yet all these have been proved to be lies. He has no treasure at all, and the god he presents to me is as solid as the shifting desert sands.

Like the woman at the well I was seeking for things that could not satisfy and then I heard my Saviour speaking "draw from My well that never shall run dry."¹

In these two things I find the sweetest treasures in my Beloved. The first is the submissive, trusting and obedient Spirit that comes as a natural inheritance to one who is begotten. The second is the delight and blessing of the Father upon His Son that my Beloved shares with me. This also is a natural consequence of His inheritance from the Father. The secret of both these treasures resides in the inheritance of my Beloved from the Father as His only begotten Son from eternity.

What price can you put on these treasures? They are worth more than all the gold and silver in the universe. This is the pearl of great price. Is He not worth selling all to obtain?

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. (6) Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. (7) Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? Psalm 139:5-7.

His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. Song of Solomon 5:16.

1. Hymn 493 Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

17. Refiner's Fire

When a person is in love, it's impossible to hide. Even though I was aware that sharing my thoughts about my Beloved with my church would have serious consequences, yet to not share news of my Beloved had even greater consequences.

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Matthew 10:32,33.

I was also impressed that I needed to submit my findings to my church both in love to them as well as testing whether I had possibly missed something. There were moments when the tempter would assail me with the taunting words "Who do you think you are to take this position? None of the leading men or even the non-leading men believe on this Son of God you adore. What if you have missed something? What if it's all a mistake?"

I needed to allow my understanding to be challenged through a process of submitting myself to my elders. I needed to listen to whatever they would say and compare it with Scripture, then search my conscience as to whether I could still love my Beloved or whether He was a treasure only in my mind. I wanted to be sure. The human experience is vulnerable to many temptations and errors.

I was confident these thoughts came from my Beloved. He knew that I was setting my feet on a path that few men travel. I needed to be tested as to whether I was truly willing to walk with Him through this dark valley of separation, misunderstanding and contention.

I took my book, *The Return of Elijah*, to the church leaders and asked them to examine it. I remember the day well; it was the day before my fortieth birthday. I had served the Trinity for forty years, and in submitting this document I was declaring my love and affection for my Beloved. He was worth the consequence of exposing myself to my brethren.

Shortly after submitting the document, I received word that other sources were reporting that I had rejected the Trinity and some reports indicated that I no longer believed in the Holy Spirit. Some were approaching my friends and informing them of my "apostasy." I felt really torn. I loved my friends, yet to try and explain to them would appear that I was trying to undermine the church. I told a few of my close friends and explained the situation. Two or three other friends rang me to learn what was going on.

This was a real test for me. I knew that false reports were circulating about my beliefs and motives, yet I could not ring my friends to tell them what was happening. I knelt before the Lord and said, "All my friends I give to you, and if they truly are my friends they will seek me out at some time in the future." I had to pray this prayer often especially when I received reports of statements apparently made against me.

Slowly but surely, it became apparent that my reputation and standing in the church had been shredded. The silence cut deep into my heart. As day after day passed without word, contact or enquiry, I had time to ponder the cost of falling in love with the Son of God. Again I would ponder, *What if you are wrong?* I went to the Scriptures, to the Spirit of Prophecy, and to historical articles and the conviction came back more firmly than before. I know this is right, the evidence is overwhelming. My conscience held fast to what the Bible plainly taught. I knew I could only be happy in following my conscience and doing what I was convicted was right.

Just under twelve months after I submitted my book, I received a reply. I had two face to face meetings with one church leader, and the main question related to whether I believed there was a time that the Son did not exist. I replied, that the Bible tells me that Jesus is both begotten and eternal. I accept both as facts; I don't seek to penetrate the mystery of eternity in order to reject the clarity of the inheritance of the Son of God. From the type and amount of questions I received,

I knew the heart of my presentation was either not important to the leaders or not understood.

When I received the formal reply to my submission, I was told that the committee found no light in what I suggested. I scanned the reply for any biblical references that I could study and meditate upon. I could not find one Bible text, no quotation from my writings to indicate where I might have erred, only pronouncements about my work.

I had fully set my heart to study any biblical guidance that was offered to me, yet there was nothing, nothing at all. Although I was not naïve to this probable outcome, like childbirth, when the event came, it hit with great intensity. I felt several emotions bubble up all at once in my soul. I prayed for peace, grace and love in my heart. Finally the peace came and the joy of my Beloved returned. I prayed “Father, I am willing to study anything from the Bible that those in authority would give me, but if I have made a mistake, the answer must come from the Bible.”

Again the question came to my mind, *What if it's all a mistake, what if you are wrong?* I thought of my time in ministry and the loss of contact with my former colleagues. Part of me wanted to just forget what I was reading in the Bible and just admit I was wrong. Yet, I knew this was not the path to freedom. I could not deny my Beloved. He willingly went to the cross for me. He faced the most humiliating, shameful treatment for me, could I not endure a little humiliation for Him?

I took some time to meditate and pray. I wrote back to the church leaders asking them for a biblical response to my work. I prayed earnestly for a gracious and submissive spirit. I prayed that I would not write in any way to cause offense.

My mountain top experience of finding my Beloved, now presented the realities of my descent back into the valleys of life.

Then he began to go forward; but Discretion, Piety, Charity, and Prudence would accompany him down to the foot of the hill. So they went on together, reiterating their former discourses, till they came to go down the hill. Then said Christian, As it was difficult coming up, so, so far as I can see, it is dangerous going down. Yes, said Prudence, so it is; for it is a hard matter for a

man to go down into the valley of Humiliation, as thou art now, and to catch no slip by the way; therefore, said they, we are come out to accompany thee down the hill. So he began to go down, but very warily; yet he caught a slip or two. *Pilgrim's Progress Part One Stage 4.*

Six months later, I received a reply to my request for a biblical reply. In that reply were presented to me a list of texts apparently meaning that Jesus is not a Son by inheritance and that "Begotten" means unique. I was also presented with some quotes from Ellen White. As I pondered and prayed over this reply, I was faced with this pronouncement:

...it is a deep conviction of the members of the committee that the Seventh day Adventist understanding of the Godhead as expressed in the Trinitarian statements of our fundamental beliefs and supported with many biblical references, is in accordance with biblical truth. Your summary appeal regarding these fundamental beliefs in your latest edition has not convinced us, and the Ellen White quotes you use as a reference for change do in our view simply not say what you imply they are saying. SPD Biblical Research Committee, Letter to Adrian Ebens, April 3, 2009.

The question was also put to me that I might be displaying an independent spirit. How does one respond to such a claim? Had not I challenged all my leaders and mentors? Is this not simply a desire for notoriety? *Who do you think you are Adrian to manifest such audacity, cause so much pain and conflict, not only for yourself, but your family and friends? Is this Jesus you love real enough to be worth all this?*

These thoughts swirled around in my mind back and forth, back and forth. I often found myself dreaming of my childhood and dwelling on carefree days when life had been so much easier. Our family actually moved to the home of my childhood for a period, partly for the benefits of mountain air, but partly so that I could dream of happier times and try and escape from my emotional conflict.

If I cared little for my church and my brethren, my soul would not have been tortured with thoughts of indecision over the correctness of my path. Was this Son, this Son by inheritance, really worth it? I had been wrong about other things, why not this thing? Part of me

desired to be wrong, to go to sleep and wake up as I had been two or three years earlier, remembering nothing of the current trials and conflicts.

I then thought of my wife and children and how they would be affected by the path I walk. As I thought of them, I remembered that:

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:32.

I thought of my Beloved and all He had done for me. As I walked and talked with Him, I knew that I could never deny Him. He was confessing me before the Father day and night, and how could I show such base ingratitude to Him by refusing to accept the shame that follows those who confess the begotten Son?

I laboured in vain to see the biblical soundness of the arguments put to me. I could not with clear conscience deny what I had found and to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. I determined to follow the path of truth as I understood it for the sake of my Lord Jesus and for the sake of my family who would suffer terribly if I took the path of popularity and convenience. I determined with Paul:

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

I wrote a month later in my response to the church:

I have tried my best to be open to whatever my brethren have presented to me and prayerfully consider it. Try as I might, I am unable to be reconciled to it...My understanding of the Father and Son in real terms is now the very centre of my theology and permeates every aspect of my belief system and therefore will underlay everything I present...I ask you both to pray for me ... remembering that my conscience is the most precious commodity that I possess and I can't violate it under any circumstances. Adrian Ebens to SPD Biblical Research Committee, May 3 2009.

While I could not submit my conscience to any other man, my standing and reputation in the church was wholly in the hands of the church leadership. I was convicted that the safest path to follow

was to submit myself to the church for whatever discipline they felt I needed. I loved my church and trusted that our Father who overrules all things would allow matters to occur precisely as He determined. My Beloved submitted Himself to those in authority over Him with meekness, gentleness and grace. I felt impressed that I should do likewise.

Towards the end of 2009 I received word that the church would be considering the removal of my credentials. Once again I went to my knees and prayed earnestly about my path. I read again the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy and historical articles, and my mind was more certain than ever that I had chosen the true Son of Scripture. As I prayed, I asked the Lord that if it were possible that I might have my credentials retained as I considered it a great privilege to be a minister of the remnant church. Yet if this was required to be surrendered, I would do it cheerfully and without complaint. The Word came to me:

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. (3) And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. John 16:2-3.

If only they could know my heavenly Father and my Beloved, then they would know why I must walk this path, but they knew them not. Therefore I received the word in late December 2009 that I was no longer a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. When the news came I felt no pain, no sorrow, and there were no tears. All this had been dealt with previously. Through this descent into humiliation and the fires of affliction there remained my Beloved and my Father in Heaven only. How sweet was their communion, how joyful I felt to know the things that I now understood.

I had firmly set my course despite trials and conflicts. I had faced my friends and my church and confessed my Lord Jesus. This process had revealed several character flaws and traits that needed consuming in the Refiner's fire. Yet having set my path firmly towards the begotten Son, the love of my childhood and youth would not simply yield this decision without a protest.

18. Apollyon

APOLLYON: Whence came you, and whither are you bound?

CHRISTIAN: I am come from the city of Destruction, which is the place of all evil, and I am going to the city of Zion.

APOLLYON: By this I perceive thou art one of my subjects; for all that country is mine, and I am the prince and god of it. How is it, then, that thou hast run away from thy king? Were it not that I hope thou mayest do me more service, I would strike thee now at one blow to the ground.

CHRISTIAN: I was, indeed, born in your dominions, but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on; for the wages of sin is death, Rom. 6:23; therefore, when I was come to years, I did, as other considerate persons do, look out if perhaps I might mend myself.

APOLLYON: There is no prince that will thus lightly lose his subjects, neither will I as yet lose thee;
Pilgrim's Progress Stage Four.

After I received word that my credentials were removed, I determined to remain quiet. I did not trust myself to resist the possibility of expressing self-pity and trying to draw attention to my self-created plight. In this mode I continued for about a month, but then one morning I came under deep conviction that the public nature of my office required a public apology from me for my sin of believing and

promoting the Trinity. In the light of my Beloved and my Father, this sin appeared very grievous to me and I determined to do whatever was necessary to rectify my course. I wrote out a letter of apology and my confession concerning my Beloved. I sent it to all my subscribers from my Maranatha Media website. I felt I owed them an apology. I also wrote to the churches I had pastored and asked them to accept my apology for teaching false doctrine.

With a wider public knowledge of my position, I felt the need to write several articles explaining my decision for my Beloved. A number welcomed my decision and praised the Lord until I explained that I still believed that the Adventist Church was God's covenant church. My decision for my Beloved caused the loss of most of my friends in the church, and my decision in favour of His covenant church caused the alienation of many who confessed a belief in the begotten Son.

Several times I questioned myself as to the necessity of alienating just about everybody. Surely there must be some secret motive that was even unknown to me! For a man who desired peace, love and friendship, why did I appear to be going in the opposite direction to all these people? I felt I could completely understand those observing my case who were passing judgment and concluding that I was simply a divisive trouble maker with nothing better to do with myself. I would be hard pressed not to come to that conclusion under different circumstances. Yet, this was consequential to the sweet joy, peace and love I experienced with my Beloved. I did not seek a path of combat; I only desired to follow the melodious call of my Beloved.

Around this time, our younger son's challenges with Autism appeared to be increasing. He became increasingly agitated and aggressive. At the same time I began to find it harder and harder to remain calm in the face of pressing situations. Without knowing it, our whole family had picked up a parasite from tank water and it was having a particularly severe impact on my younger son and me. At the same time we discovered that the house we were renting had a mould problem. This caused several issues for us as a family. We decided to move to a drier climate, still unaware of the parasite. The stress of dealing with the church combined with the effect of the parasite completely dismantled my nervous system. While in that state, my younger son was so overwhelmed with the same issue that

his frustration and pain boiled over into rage which led to several aggressive displays of anger.

In my state of health and with the multiple layers of complexity involved in dealing with the church's response to my love for my Beloved, I entered a very dark period for over a year. During this time, I was forced to pray earnestly for strength to just get through another day. I clung to the Psalms and pleaded with the Lord to help me. Just about everything seemed to collapse in on me, and I reached the place where I felt life was pointless. Yet still amidst all this tremendous conflict, the sweet comforting Spirit of Jesus would come, especially on Sabbath to help us. Oh how precious is the comfort of Jesus. He is my sweet Comforter in times of trial.

Every time I tried to write an article or share anything about what I had learned, it seemed our house would be turned upside down. We would fall to our knees and plead for help, and then relief would come.

After many months of this crushing situation, I felt myself sink into a deep despair from which I thought I would not be able to escape. In that darkened state of mind, I heard the voice of the tempter speak to me. He suggested that God had forsaken me, and therefore why not forsake Him? I immediately discerned the voice, claimed the Scriptures and clung to Jesus. I would rather die than give up my Love for my Beloved. Apollyon, seeing my weakened state, now suggested that I forsake my Beloved. My weight had dropped to a point lower than my wife's, yet still I clung to the mercies of my God, and I clung to the promise:

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. (2) He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. (3) And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.
Psalm 40:1-3.

My wife and I were both tested well beyond what we thought possible, and yet we were still in love with the Son of God. Shortly after these events, we discovered the parasite, received the appropriate treatment and began to regain health. Each day became a little easier and a little better. We learned by experience that if we

possessed anything in our home that did not honour God, we would have difficulty in the home. We prayerfully examined everything we owned and removed everything that would in any way reflect the spirit of the world.

Although this time was extremely challenging, we found many elements of dross were burned from our lives. Though the enemy sought to turn us out of the way of truth, our Beloved Saviour made our circumstances work together for good.

For every day that we have peace now, we know that the angels of our Heavenly Father are protecting and shielding us from harm. Our trials made us acutely aware of this loving protection. Never do we take these things for granted as we once did.

Had we foreseen the path before us and the conflicts to be endured, our hearts would have fainted in anguish of spirit. Mercifully we were carried through these fiery trials without knowing what lay ahead of us. Taking one day at a time, we clung to our dear Father and His Son, trusting, believing and willing that at the time appointed, deliverance would come.

Then Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now: and with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life. But, as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise, Mic. 7:8; and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian perceiving that, made at him again, saying, Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. Rom. 8:37. And with that Apollyon spread forth his dragon wings, and sped him away, that Christian saw him no more. James 4:7.

In this combat no man can imagine, unless he had seen and heard, as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight; he

spake like a dragon: and on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from Christian's heart. I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword; then, indeed, he did smile, and look upward! But it was the dreadfulest sight that ever I saw.

So when the battle was over, Christian said, I will here give thanks to him that hath delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, to him that did help me against Apollyon. *Pilgrim's Progress*, Stage Four.

19. The Comforter

As we walk this pilgrim path and face various trials, there is one consolation above all others that give comfort.

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. (18) For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Hebrews 2:17-18.

The Bible tells us that because Jesus has suffered being tempted He is able to succour (meaning aid or relieve) those who are tempted. Yet if Jesus is now in heaven interceding for us, how can He be the one to succour us? Jesus explained this very carefully to the disciples when He told them that He had to go away.

Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. John 13:36,37.

Peter loved his Lord and did not want to be separated from Him. He sorrowfully asked Jesus why he could not follow Him. In the following chapters of John, Jesus explains to them how He will still be with them even though He must physically leave them.

Jesus tells the disciples not to be troubled in heart; He was going to prepare a home for them and would return. Then from John 14:4-11,

Jesus explains His relationship to His Father and how He is the express image of Him.

In verse 6 Jesus makes a very important statement that most are familiar with. He states that He is the way, the truth and the life. The fact that Jesus refers to Himself as the truth is very important in the coming verses.

As Jesus explains the closeness of His relationship to His Father He then tells the disciples to ask the Father in His name for anything they might need.

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. John 14:14.

Let us remember that this whole discussion between Jesus and His disciples is taking place because they are troubled about His leaving them. It is upon this point that Jesus wishes to relieve their minds. He then states:

If ye love me, keep my commandments. (16) And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; (17) Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (18) I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. John 14:15-18.

Jesus spoke of another Comforter that would come from the Father. Note carefully what Jesus said:

1. The Comforter is the Spirit of Truth
2. The world does not know Him
3. The disciples already know Him
4. He now dwells with them
5. He shall be in them
6. Jesus would not leave them comfortless
7. He Himself would come to them.

If Jesus is the truth then the Spirit of truth is the Spirit of Jesus. Jesus has not mentioned the Comforter before and yet He states that the disciples already know Him because He dwells with them. Who was the one who was dwelling with them? It was Jesus! Then Jesus makes it plain. He states that He would not leave them comfortless but rather He Himself would come to them.

Later in the chapter, Jesus calls the Comforter, the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26.

Why does Jesus sometimes speak as if He is coming to comfort them and then at other times seem to indicate that He is sending someone else? Jesus often spoke of Himself in the third person. Notice these verses:

Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. John 13:31.

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? Luke 18:8.

In these verses Jesus calls the Son of Man “he” and “him” yet He is referring to Himself. This was a common practice for Jesus.

What else can we learn about the Holy Spirit? Notice these parallel verses.

For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. Matthew 10:20.

But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. Mark 13:11.

Notice how the Holy Ghost in Mark 13:11 is called the Spirit of our Father in Matthew 10:20. Jesus explained further to the disciples:

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: John 15:26.

The Holy Spirit proceeds forth from the Father and brings the personal presence of the Father and His Son. It is through the agency of the Holy Spirit that Jesus personally comes to us and comforts us. Notice how the Bible uses the words Spirit and presence in parallel.

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

It is for this reason that Paul uses several terms interchangeably.

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. (10) And if **Christ** be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the **Spirit** is life because of righteousness. Romans 8:9-10.

Notice the connections:

Spirit = Spirit of God = Spirit of Christ = Christ = Spirit

All these things tell us that through the Holy Spirit, Jesus can comfort and succour us directly. This wonderful gift flows forth from the throne of God like a mighty river and flows down into the hearts of all those who thirst for Christ.

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Revelation 22:1.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. (38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (39) (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) John 7:37-39.

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. John 4:14.

The living water that Jesus spoke about to the woman at the well was the special gift of His presence through the agency of the Spirit of God.

Do we understand how this works?

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. John 3:8.

We do not know how Jesus comforts us through the Holy Spirit; we just know that He is the one who comes to us. Why is Jesus our comforter? The Bible tells us:

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Hebrews 2:18.

This simple truth has been so precious to me. This is how I could truly come to know my Beloved. Without the Spirit of Truth I could not know Him who is the Truth. If the Spirit were a separate being as claimed in the Trinity then all the work of the Spirit would be a process of learning to know and love that being. Then it is not Jesus comforting us but another. Yet only Jesus knows how I feel so only He can truly comfort me.

The Trinity makes this whole process very complicated. Jesus said:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. John 16:13.

The Spirit does not speak of Himself, meaning that however the Spirit works, it is not our focus as a person separate from Christ, Christ is our focus, and Christ is our comforter.

I recall the first time that it hit me that Jesus was the one really present with me rather than some formless mysterious person that never walked in my flesh nor understood my temptations. I wept for joy at the simplicity of it. Just as Jesus had told the disciples not to allow their hearts to be troubled because He would come to them and comfort them, so also Christ now comes to us and comforts us in order that we might sup with Him and fellowship with Him.

Through my refining trial when confessing my Beloved and when facing Apollyon, my sweetest comfort was in knowing that Jesus was with me, encouraging me, supporting me, aiding me, strengthening me, loving me and blessing me. Oh what precious thoughts. Oh what glorious truth.

The coming of Elijah pointed out the two lovers seeking my hand, and thanks to the refining fiery trials, the barriers to my journey into the Most Holy were removed. Jesus says:

I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.
Revelation 3:8.

For those who do not deny the name of the Son of God, the door to the Most Holy stands open.

Interlude IV

My heart shall sing, my Beloved, for granting me understanding for why I kept losing you. My inheritance from Adam and the deceptive courtship practices of the tempter seduced me, confused me and saddened my heart. Though I had lost you, still I hoped.

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee. (2) My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. (3) I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies. Song of Solomon 6:1-3.

In the refiner's fire my heart is changed, my mind is renewed. By faith I hear your words to me.

My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her. (10) Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners? (11) I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded. (12) Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib. (13) Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies. Song of Solomon 6:9-13.

I have returned, my Beloved, trusting that my garden of character has flourished and that you delight in me. The moon is a witness under

my feet and the light of the Sun is my garment; upon my head rests a crown of twelve stars. The dragon sought to devour me, yet your staff and your rod they comfort me in the valley of the shadow of death. I sat at your banqueting table in the presence of mine enemies and your "banner over me was love." "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

Through the flames of affliction, my deep inward fear of your Father surfaced. I wondered if He would accept me, would He bless the love I feel for you? I knew you wished to take me to see Your Father in the holiest place of all, yet my fears overwhelmed me and carried me away.

When I heard the steps of Your Father moving towards the judgment seat, my heart sank within me. I feared He would separate us because of my sins! Yet by the comforting words of the voice in the wilderness, I have learned that Your Father is just like You; for You inherited all things from Him.

Now the steps of your Father towards judgment are not the steps of condemnation, but the steps towards His prodigal. His arms are open wide for me, my Beloved! Your Father loves me, my Beloved! Your Father accepts me, my Beloved! Truly He will bless our love for each other; surely He will betroth me to you.

I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me. (11) Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. (12) Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves. Song of Solomon 7:10-12.

Section 5. The Most Holy Place

20. Betrothed by the Ancient of Days



My ability to rest fully in the love of my Saviour depended not only upon His promises to me, but also upon the acceptance and approval of His Father. Through my years of studying the Scriptures, I had learned that it is in the judgment that I must stand before God and really meet the Father of my

Beloved in the Most Holy Place.

My uneasiness about meeting my Beloved's Father was often hidden from others and even from myself, yet manifested itself in various ways. Each time I would fall into sin, I would repent, but also sometimes I began to float into a state of denial. My deep-seated fear drove me more forcibly towards entertainment, indulgence and self-pity.

As I began to study the Bible and appreciate my Saviour, the path to the Most Holy started to take shape. I then realised that since 1844 my Beloved had taken up a special work of intercession and judgment in the Most Holy Place.

I would take comfort in the thought that Jesus represented me to the Father. I could even see evidence that the Father loved me. Yet the seed sown by the tempter concerning the need for respect and

approval through my achievement clashed head-on with the reality of this Being on the throne who gives life and breath to all.

As long as there was any trace of affection in my heart for the tempter's idol, I would never be able to stand before the Source of all being and the Fountain of all law and feel able to rest. This is why the majority of the Christian world completely denies the work of judgment begun in 1844. Many Christians emotionally do not want to meet the Father; they only wish to have their image of whom they think Jesus to be.

The only reason we would want to go into the Most Holy Place is because we truly love our Saviour. Like Esther we can say:

...I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. Esther 4:16.

Our sweet Beloved braces us to face whatever must be faced in order to hold onto Him. The other amazing thing about our ability to approach the Father in the Most Holy Place is that only when we truly love Jesus will we truly know the heart of the Father and His love for us. The whole process is fool proof.

When Elijah¹ came to me and showed me the clear difference between the Trinity and the Father and Son, I saw that the figure called the Father within the Trinity was actually unreachable with my heart. He was not truly the Father of Jesus, and therefore He did not truly give His Son. When He spoke the words, "You are my beloved Son," part of me rejoiced, but another unspoken part sensed that this was not the deepest reality.

As I beheld the real Son of God, He opened for me a path of approach to the Father; His approach to the Father became the cornerstone of my approach. The Father's love for His Son became the cornerstone of His love for me. Only in this real Father and Son relationship could I know the Father truly loved and accepted me.

Only through the principle of inheritance could I take comfort in the words:

he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; John 14:9.

1. By Elijah coming to me, I mean the message of Elijah that makes a clear distinction between the Father and Son and the Trinity.

As I beheld the exact likeness of my Beloved to His Father, my heart took courage in the promise:

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. Ephesians 1:6.

So many times I had read these words, told myself to believe them, and clung to them. Yet I found myself often sliding away from the path to the Most Holy Place into another path. If Elijah had not revealed my secret love for self through the perversion of the Trinity, I would never have felt confident to approach the Father of my Beloved.

Many church members have already abandoned this process. They proclaim that "Jesus took my judgment" or that 1844 is simply a meaningful little ceremony to apply the benefits of the atonement and to reveal to the universe what God already knew. All of this belies the reality that such human hearts will not surrender the seed of the serpent which refuses the truth that the Father is the great source of all.

None of these theological devices remove the reality that we need a true sense of acceptance from the Father of the Groom. Only the reality of a Father yielding up His Son for our sins can grip the soul enough to endure the Most Holy Place experience.

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

In the face of the great judge of the universe, any parallel reality switching into a notion that God is actually three co-eternal beings will kill the bedrock reality that God gave His Son because He loves us. A metaphorical gift means a metaphorical acceptance which is completely exposed under the scrutiny of judgment.

For the soul who has found joy in the begotten Son, the footsteps of the Father towards the judgment seat in heaven are real footsteps. For the lover of self, these are yet another metaphor of the great love of the Trinitarian god projected onto the souls of humanity to provide us a source of hope. The Trinitarian mind often is required to make the footsteps of the Father towards the Most Holy metaphorical because actual steps towards judgment are too frightening to contemplate.

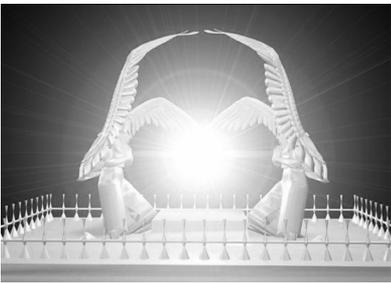
For those who have gazed long into the eyes of our Saviour, the footsteps of the Father reveal His eagerness to betroth His Son to the bride. The judgment process reveals who truly loves His Son and therefore whom He can seal to live forever with Him. Only those who truly know the Father through His Son can find the secret place of the Most High.

We do not need to fear the judgment of God. He yearns to reveal His loving acceptance of us. The key is simply in acknowledging who He and His Son are, and in that acknowledgment we have eternal life.

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

Shall we not approach the throne of mercy with confidence and boldness knowing that all our needs will be met and that the Father truly does approve of our love for His Son?

21. Before the Ark of the Covenant



The reality of the Father's love through Christ empowers the soul to approach the judgment seat. As we approach the judgment seat, the presence of the law causes us to feel our great need. Our great need causes us to ask for strength to overcome; the life is moulded more by prayer and less by talk.

The work of the mediator takes centre stage for the sinner. Our belief that our petitions are heard rests firmly on our confidence in Christ as our mediator.

If we were planning a trip into the jungles of Africa to meet the king of a certain country, would we feel safe in asking our next door neighbour who has borrowed a book about that country from the library to act as interpreter? Obviously, our neighbour's qualifications to understand the manners and court of the foreign king would not instil in us any sense of confidence.

If we travelled to this far country and trusted in one of the king's officials to act as interpreter, would we feel any more confident? No, because this man who knows the king's ways very well, knows nothing of our country, customs or needs. Our confidence that this interpreter can understand our requests will be very low.

When we come to the throne of God, we have an urgent need to know that our intercessor really understands both the ways of God and man. The message of Hebrews one and two are especially given for the purpose of revealing Jesus as a mediator that can truly mediate.

Let us note carefully:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (3) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (4) Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Hebrews 1:1-4.

In the passage above, can we have confidence that Jesus knows the mind and heart of God? When we realise that Jesus is the express image of His Father and that His inheritance from the Father makes Him so much more qualified than the angels, we can say, "Praise God!" We can be confident that Jesus will be able to represent the Father to us and speak exactly what is on His mind.

Then when we turn to chapter two of Hebrews we read:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; (15) And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (16) For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. (17) Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. (18) For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Hebrews 2:14-18.

In these words we learn that Jesus took our very nature upon Himself. He was made like us in all things. He knows what it is like to feel very tired and be pressed by many angry people. He knows what it

is like to feel abandoned. He was tempted in all points like we are yet without sin. When we understand that Jesus is truly the Son of Man and truly the Son of God, we can have full confidence that He will deliver our prayers to the Father and in return deliver strength, comfort and encouragement to us from the Father.

Most Protestant churches teach that Jesus intercedes for us in heaven. Yet since there is no belief that Jesus moves to the Most Holy Place to do a work of final atonement, there is no need to afflict the soul and put away all sin. This might be likened to leisurely walking across the Golden Gate Bridge. If we believe that Jesus will continue to intercede for sin without ever ceasing this work, then we can indulge ourselves with the thought that we try to live a good life, but we need not be zealous because we can always ask for forgiveness; it will never end.

However, the need to put away all sin comes when we see that mediation for sin will cease before the Second Coming of Christ. The need for the Most Holy Place ministry can be explained in this way. This might be likened to traveling across the Niagara Falls on a wire. Once we understand that intercession for sin will cease before the Second Coming, we are like the man who willingly hopped into a wheel barrow and allowed the tightrope walker, Charles Blondin, to carry him across Niagara Falls Gorge. As the story is told, the wire began to sway as they were part way across. Blondin told the man to stand up in the wheel barrow. This required implicit trust, yet the man stood up. Having sat in the wheel barrow for a little time, he had been close enough to Blondin to observe his skill first hand. Blondin manoeuvred the man carefully onto his back and carried him the rest of the way.

If you believe the path to heaven is simply a walk across the Golden Gate Bridge, would you need to cling to the back of your mediator for dear life? No! You could walk at 30 feet from him and still suffer no harm. You would not need to get so close to your Saviour, so you would not have such an awareness of your sins or learn more about the Father through the Son. The Most Holy Place experience places before us a wire upon which our Saviour will carry us if we are willing. The Most Holy Place experience will not allow any of self through to the heavenly Canaan. The Most Holy Place experience requires us to rest ourselves fully upon our mediator, trusting Him to intercede for us and give us the strength we need to overcome. As the Bible says:

And I will come near to you to judgment; Malachi 3:5.

God will come near to those in judgment to help the true seekers and to discover the false professions of those who despise the way of salvation. The Bible tells us:

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

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 1 Timothy 2:5.

We see that there is one God, the Father, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. If I accept the doctrine of the Trinity, then I am forced to believe that there is one God comprised of Father, Son and Spirit and One Mediator Jesus Christ. This makes the man Jesus both the mediator and one for whom mediation is taking place. Would it be possible for someone to truly mediate when they are also one of the parties in need of mediation? Would not this situation be subject to the charge of bias?

If Jesus is God in the same way as the Father, then why does the Father need mediation any more than the Son? How can Jesus truly represent the Father if He does not come from the Father? The mediation can only be symbolic because there is no difference between Father and Son except for the title.

A true and effective mediator needs a position of clearly identified distinction from the two parties requiring mediation. The inheritance that Christ received from the Father makes clear the distinction between them. It also allows Christ to fully represent God by nature. He is distinct from God, yet is with God and therefore is truly God by inheritance. As the Son of God who took upon Himself our flesh, He is distinct from us, yet one of us by His inheritance. It is the distinctness of Christ through His dual inheritance from God and man that qualifies Him to be a true mediator between God and man.

Once we know these things about our Saviour, we can rest our full weight upon Him and trust that He will give us the aid we need to cross the narrow wire. A real mediator provides real mediation for real salvation. The symbolic mediator of the Trinity provides symbolic representation for the symbolic Father Who provides symbolic power and symbolic salvation which equal death.

This is another critical reason why I have chosen my Beloved over the Trinity. Only the begotten Son of the Father can provide true mediation by true representation. My confidence in my sweet mediator strengthens my faith to come before the Father in judgment.

The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged. Psalm 37:33.

Only my Beloved whom I have chosen has allowed me to walk the whole path through the Sanctuary for He indeed is the only Way to the Father.

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee. (6) Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. (7) Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. Song of Solomon 8:5-7.

22. The Joy of My Beloved

There are many other thoughts that I could share with you as to why I delight in my Beloved but there would not be room enough in many volumes to express such things as John stated:

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen. John 21:25

Yet there is something that I need to share with you as to why I have chosen my Beloved and why He is sweeter than all the world.

There are many Christians today who subscribe to the following idea when they speak of the love of God.

“Love is of some one that loves, and with love something is loved.” Augustine. De Trinitate “On the Trinity” Book VIII

Springing from this notion of love that is understood to exist within the Trinity, we find the following:

If God is truly—in His very essence—the God of “love” (John 3:16 and 1 John 4:8), then we need to consider the following implications. Could one who has existed from all eternity past and who made us in His loving image—could this God truly be called love if He existed only as a solitary being? Is not love especially divine love, possible only if the one

who made our universe was a plural being who was exercising “love” within His divine plurality from all eternity past?...[now quotes from Bruce Metzger] “The Unitarian professes to agree with the statement that ‘God is love.’ But these words ‘God is love,’ have no real meaning unless God is at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God were a single person, then before the universe was made, he was not love. **For, if love be of the essence of God, he must have possessed an eternal object of love. Furthermore, perfect love is possible only between equals.** Just as a man cannot satisfy or realize his powers of love by loving the lower animals, **so God cannot satisfy or realize his love by loving man or any creature. Being infinite, he must have eternally possessed an infinite object of his love,** some *alter ego*, or, to use the language of traditional Christian theology, a consubstantial, co-eternal, and co-equal Son. *The Trinity*, Whidden, Moon and Reeve, page 115,116.

The first point to note is the reference to 1 John 4:8 which tells us that “God is love.” Those who support the Trinity would have us believe that this reference “God is love” refers to three persons of equal status that love each other, yet if we read this verse in its immediate context we find something different.

1 John 4:7-12 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. (8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for **God is love. (9) In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** (11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (12) **No man hath seen God at any time.** If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

As I understand this passage, John defines the love of God in the giving of His Son to die for us. So at the end of verse 8 he defines God as love and then expands this definition into the manifestation of God sending His Son. Would not consistency of usage in this passage

point to the fact that the God mentioned in verse 8 is the same God in verse 9-12? Does this not suggest that the God in verse 8 is the Father and that His love is revealed in the giving of His Son?

The second thing I would like to mention is that the Greek word for *love* in 1 John 4:8 is *agape*. . My understanding from my studies is that *agape* is a love that invests value rather than seeks it. God giving His Son to us invests value in us and is indeed *agape*. Yet when we look at the love describing the Trinity, we see that this God needs an object equal to Himself for His full powers of love to be expressed. This type of love is seeking value and fulfilling a need. These are not descriptions of *agape* but of another type of love.

Agape is often contrasted with eros, which is not found in the New Testament though it is prominent in Greek philosophy. Eros can refer to a vulgar, carnal love, but in the context of Hellenic thought it takes the form of spiritual love that aspires to procure the highest good. **Eros is the desire to possess and enjoy** [the need or desire for another]; **agape is the willingness to serve without reservations.... Eros is attracted to that which has the greatest value** [the need for equal status or co-equality]; **agape goes out to the least worthy. Eros discovers value** [seeks equal] **whereas[sic] agape creates value.** [makes equal] **Agape is a gift love whereas eros is a need love. Eros springs from a deficiency that must be satisfied. Agape is the overflowing abundance of divine grace.** *God the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness and Love*, Donald Bloesch, 2006, page 147.¹

While it might come as a surprise for many Adventists to think anyone would connect eros with the love of God, this is well understood in the Roman Catholic Church.

God is the absolute and ultimate source of all being; but this universal principle of creation—the Logos, primordial reason—is at the same time a lover with all the passion of a true love. **Eros is thus supremely ennobled, yet at the same time it is so purified as to become one with agape.** Pope Benedict IX Encyclical Letter, 2005, *Deus Caritas Est* “God is Love.”

1. comments in square brackets are supplied

Here is one of the vital differences between the Trinity and the Father and His Son and I really want to underscore this pivotal point.

The Trinity seeks equal while the Father makes equal.

The unspeakably sad reality of the Trinity is that if perfect love can only be found in seeking one who is equal then anyone less than equal to God can never be the recipient of perfect love. If our conception of God is three persons of equal power that love each other then we can never be worthy of their perfect love. With this notion of God, we become susceptible to seeking pathways for our eyes to be opened and become like gods (Gen 3:5) in order to be worthy of God's perfect love. The Trinity places me on a platform that forces me to try and be like the Most High that I might win that perfect love.

The sweet reality of my Beloved is that all things were given into His hands by the Father.

For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; John 5:26

If God gave His Son to have Life in Himself, then is this not an expression of agape? God the Father invests value in His Son and makes Him equal. Is this not what 1 John 4:8 indicates? Is this not what Ellen White indicates?

“God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. **To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father.** All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” *Testimonies Volume Eight*, page 268.

Since my Beloved was given everything by His Father, when I behold the Son of God, I am beholding One who has had everything invested in Him. I no longer behold a picture of one who finds acceptance by being equal, but rather, I behold one that was made equal because He was accepted.

I know that my Lord Jesus Christ inherited all that the Father has and is fully divine through that inheritance, and in that inheritance I am able to hear the loving words of a real Father who spoke to His Son. The words Father and Son only find meaning through inheritance which agape allows and eros denies.

In these precious words of the Father to His only begotten Son, I find my assurance of sonship. The *agape* of God flows through His Son and speaks to me.

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved [agapētos] Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matt 3:17

And the word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” Ephesians 1:6. The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us. It tells us of the power of prayer,—how the human voice may reach the ear of God, and our petitions find acceptance in the courts of heaven. By sin, earth was cut off from heaven, and alienated from its communion; but Jesus has connected it again with the sphere of glory. His love has encircled man, and reached the highest heaven. The light which fell from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. **The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.** “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:2. *Desire of Ages*, page 113.

It is the complete inheritance of Christ that reveals that the Father has *agape* for His Son. If Christ did not receive an inheritance, then we can not be certain that God has *agape* for His Son. If the Son possessed all power from Himself and simply gave Himself then the Father in recognition of what the Son already has, would *phileo*² the Son. Yet the Father said that He had *agape* for His Son. This can only become reality through the inheritance of Christ. Only in giving all to His Son, could the Father truly *agape* Him, for only then can we be certain that the love of God is not based upon any inherent quality of the Son, and it is this love that sets us free.

Through the *agape* given to Christ, I can take hold of these words in Matthew 3:17 because *agape* invests value in me and allows me to

2. “phileos’: the love of the fellowship of the friends which we enjoy being with. It is based upon the principle of water finding its own level - we are attracted to people we admire, like, and share commonalities with.” Kym Jones, www.agapetruth.com

believe that I am His son through Christ, while *Eros* condemns me because it seeks value for which I have none. *Agape* speaks to me with full of assurance when I read:

...but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.
John 20:17

The Father of Jesus is my Father, and the God of Jesus is my God. All this I possess through Christ, the unique Son of God, who is the greatest demonstration of *agape* the universe can ever behold. This is why the Father exalts His Son and gives Him a name above all names. Christ Jesus is the highest revelation of God's *agape* love.

For years the Trinity subtly denied me the joy of knowing I could be truly loved by God. The co-equal, co-eternal status of its members etched into my mind the sad lie that God is seeking value and desires those who are already equal. Now with fullness of joy, I can proclaim to you that my knowledge of the only begotten Son has set me free from this terrible lie, and now I can see my heavenly Father as having perfect love for me and that He has invested in me all the riches of heaven, for He gave His Son to die for me. I no longer need to seek to be "like the Most High." His perfect *agape* love is all I need to remain content in the sphere for which I was created.

So in Christ Jesus, my joy is complete. As I behold my mighty prince and see Him clothed in His Father's *agape* love, I am overcome with delight. I am finding rest for my soul and indeed found His yoke easy and His burden light.

Postlude

Dear Father in Heaven, how I praise You, honour You and worship You for Your tender mercies and boundless love in providing Your Son as my propitiation, Priest and Prince. I thank you for saving me from certain death and revealing to me the dangers and wiles of the tempter. You showed me clearly that his promises were empty and his foundation like shifting sand.

I thank You for leading me step by step towards Your Most Holy Place. Now I see upon these sacred walls, the beauty of the open flowers and the palm tree (1 Kings 6:20). You fed me with heavenly bread and lighted my path with pure light. You sent Elijah to confront me, and You allowed fiery trials to purify me. Yet through all these things, You sent the Spirit of your Son into my heart crying, "Abba Father."

Dear Father, I cling to the assurances of Your Word. My emotions overwhelm me at the thought of these things. Therefore I am anchored to the surety of your words. Who could imagine that a poor, weak and foolish man as I am, could obtain the favour of my LORD and the gift of His Son?

Your throne is ruled in righteousness, justice and truth. Yet above all these You are crowned with mercy, patience and love – Agape love that invests and creates worth rather than seeks worth for itself.

Father, let me stay with you in this Most Holy Place; let all my dross be taken away. Let the Spirit of Your Son abide always with me and teach me Your Commandments. I want Your Law written in my heart and desire it to be my mediation day and night.

I trust that my Beloved is preparing a room for me in your large house. I am moved to tears that You would welcome me so lovingly into your home and desire me to be there.

These things from my heart I present to you in the name of my Beloved, Your only begotten Son. Amen.

