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

All these spiritualistic representations are simply nothingness. They are imperfect, untrue. They weaken and diminish the Majesty which no earthly likeness can be compared to. God cannot be compared with the things His hands have made. These are mere earthly things, suffering under the curse of God because of the sins of man. The Father can not be described by the things of earth. The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight.

The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be "the express image of His person." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is shown the personality of the Father.

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

- "the three persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit"
- "the eternal heavenly dignitaries--God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit"
- "the threefold powers in the heavenly world" and "the three great and glorious heavenly characters"
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Introductory Thoughts

The study of Christ (Christology) in Seventh-day Adventist history is vitally important to understand. The divinity of Jesus is of as much importance to us as is His humanity. Both have been fruitful areas for research and application. Neither realm has been processed corporately without continuing difficulty. Understanding what has been revealed to us of each aspect of His nature has challenged, and continues to challenge, all who believe the Bible. Both areas are sacred, holy ground.

When we approach the subject of Christ's divinity clothed with the garb of humanity, we may appropriately heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." We must come to the study of this subject with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, and will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth.

"The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; He gave proof of His humility in becoming a man. Yet He was God in the flesh. When we approach this subject, we would do well to heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground' (Exodus 3:5). We should come to this study with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, which will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth."

As noted, both subjects must be approached in humility of spirit--with a deepening realization of their importance, of how both reveal His humility, and of the limits of the creature understanding the Creator. Yet the door is wide open to explore what has been revealed.

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

In Seventh-day Adventist history, the principles of interpretation the early pioneers adopted led them to a literal view of Scripture (other than when it is obviously symbolic) that enabled

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6 7BC 904.11 (Ms 67, 1898, c. June 9, 1898, "Search the Scriptures")
7 1SM 244.1 (YI, October 13, 1898 par. 6, "Search the Scriptures," Part 1 of a 3-part series)
8 Deuteronomy 29:29
them to move into areas of understanding truth far in advance of others who stop searching and growing. In rejecting the views of the trinity adopted during the great apostasy, it would be logical they would view the Bible statements on the son-ship of Jesus in some literal fashion. (See the section of pioneer statements.)

The issue of what has been revealed to us about the nature of God, and particularly the nature of Jesus pre-existent to His humanity, did not occupy the early years of the Advent movement. However, Ellen White addressed it in her publication of *Desire of Ages* (1898) and in her writings meeting the ideas of J. H. Kellogg on the nature of God (especially 1904 and following). It is from these years we draw the clear and precise statements dealing with our topic. It is the humility of God that tends to obscure what has been revealed, as we take the lowly *position* He assumed, and mistakenly apply it to His *nature*.

The key to understanding the difficult terms can be seen in the counsel (1) that the nature of God has not been revealed to us (in contrast to aspects of Him that have been revealed), and (2) that God is not to be compared to anything He has made (this obviously referring to His nature, not the revealed aspects of who He is). The clear conclusion is that the human terms used to describe Jesus cannot refer to His nature as God. Rather they must be labels for those aspects of Him that have been revealed, expressions of His character, all of which must be understood in the context of the One who is "meek and lowly in heart."

It appears this key God gave to Seventh-day Adventists in their history will also be of assistance as one explains to Muslims the sense in which the Bible uses the term "Son" to describe Jesus. They particularly object to this term applying to His nature. A clear

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9 Some thoughts on the humility of Jesus in this regard are address in a paper entitled "'Better Than the Angels' - Hebrews 1" in the section entitled "In What Sense a Son?" The paper is available online: <www.ScriptureFirst.net/Hebrews1.pdf>.
understanding of it in our own history is vital to describing both His divinity and His humanity in a biblical way that will avoid the pitfalls on all sides.

**Divine Nature and Godhead in Scripture**

Even though God's nature has not been revealed to us, we find two comments on it in Scripture, both from the Greek word *phusis*.\(^{10}\)

> Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by *nature* are no gods.\(^{11}\)

Apparently created beings have a different nature than God's.

> Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the *divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.\(^{12}\)

Though the divine nature has not been revealed to us, we may partake of it by the promises He gives us. But even then, we should not speculate about it, rather accept it and be thankful.

The word "divine" in the last verse is *theios*,\(^ {13}\) which occurs two other times, once in Acts and once in the verse previous to last one quoted.

> Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the *Godhead* is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.\(^ {14}\)

Our position as "offspring of God" means that, whatever His nature is like as the divine, as the Godhead, it can't be like the inanimate elements and manmade creations.

> According as his *divine* power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.\(^ {15}\)

Life and godliness come to us through His divine power (*dunamis*, energy).

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\(^{10}\) Strong's #5449

\(^{11}\) Galatians 4:8

\(^{12}\) 2 Peter 1:4

\(^{13}\) Strong's #2304, an adjective, which can be used with an article to mean "the divine", "the divinity"

\(^{14}\) Acts 17:29

\(^{15}\) 2 Peter 1:3
The two other words translated "Godhead" in the KJV are the following nouns, which occur only once each.

*theiotes*\(^16\)
For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and **Godhead**; so that they are without excuse.\(^17\)

*theotes*\(^18\)
For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the **Godhead** bodily.\(^19\)

Notice how Ellen White used variations on this last verse in the 1905 statement on the title page to describe each member of the Godhead, not in their revealed nature, but in their unrevealed nature and especially in their function.

These last three words\(^20\) are all derived from the word *theos* translated "God."

**Key Statements of EGW in Chronological Order, 1893-1911**

**1893**

With what firmness and power he uttered these words. The Jews had never before heard such words from human lips, and a convicting influence attended them; for it seemed that divinity flashed through humanity as Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." The words of Christ were full of deep meaning as he put forth the claim that he and the Father were of **one substance**, possessing the same attributes. The Jews understood his meaning, there was no reason why they should misunderstand, and they took up stones to stone him. Jesus looked upon them calmly and unshrinkingly, and said, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?"\(^21\)

**1898**

\(^{16}\) Strong's #2305  
\(^{17}\) Romans 1:20  
\(^{18}\) Strong's #2320  
\(^{19}\) Colossians 2:9  
\(^{20}\) #2304 theios, #2305 theiotes, and #2320 theotes  
\(^{21}\) ST, November 27, 1893 par. 5
With solemn dignity Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity."[Micah 5:2, margin.]

Still seeking to give a true direction to her faith, Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life." In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. "He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life. "He that believeth in Me," said Jesus, "though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Christ here looks forward to the time of His second coming. Then the righteous dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living righteous shall be translated to heaven without seeing death. The miracle which Christ was about to perform, in raising Lazarus from the dead, would represent the resurrection of all the righteous dead. By His word and His works He declared Himself the Author of the resurrection. He who Himself was soon to die upon the cross stood with the keys of death, a conqueror of the grave, and asserted His right and power to give eternal life.

1900

"Before Abraham was, I am." Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. The message He gave to Moses to give to the children of Israel was, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you." The prophet Micah writes of Him, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, tho thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of Thee shall He

22 DA 469.4&5
23 DA 530.3
come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."…

[Paragraph 14 quotes Prov. 8:22-25, 29, 30.]
In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him. 24

1901

The Lord Jesus described the difficulties they ["every one who is a Seventh-day Adventist" 25] should meet. Having called their minds to rise to an eminence, He bids them behold the vast confederacy of evil arrayed against God, against Christ, against all who unite with these holy powers. Christ tells them they were to fight in fellowship with all the children of light; that satanic agencies would combine their forces to extinguish the light of the life of Christ out of their ranks. But they were not left to fight the battles in their own human strength. The angelic host coming as ministers of God would be in that battle. Also there would be the eternal heavenly dignitaries--God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit--arming them with more than mortal energy, and would advance with them to the work, and convince the world of sin. 26

1904

The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. [268.1]

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all
things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?" Hebrews 1:1-5. [268.2]

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. [268.3]

Jesus said to the Jews: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. . . . 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. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." John 5:17-20. [268.4]

Here again is brought to view the personality of the Father and the Son, showing the unity that exists between them. [269.1]

This unity is expressed also in the seventeenth chapter of John, in the prayer of Christ for His disciples: [269.2]

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." John 17:20-23. [269.3]
Wonderful statement! The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the **personality** of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are **one**, [269.4]

"Those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever;" but "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God." Deuteronomy 29:29. The revelation of Himself that God has given in His word is for our study. This we may seek to understand. But beyond this we are not to penetrate. The highest intellect may tax itself until it is wearied out in conjectures regarding the **nature of God**; but the effort will be **fruitless**. This problem has not been given us to **solve**. No human mind can **comprehend** God. Let not finite man attempt to **interpret** Him. Let none indulge in **speculation** regarding His nature. Here silence is eloquence. The Omniscient One is **above discussion**. [279.1]

Even the angels were not permitted to share the counsels between the Father and the Son when the plan of salvation was laid. Those human beings who seek to intrude into the **secrets of the Most High** show their ignorance of spiritual and eternal things. Far better might they, while mercy's voice is still heard, **humble** themselves in the dust and plead with God to teach them **His ways**. [279.2]

We are as ignorant of God as little children, but as little children we may love and obey Him. Instead of **speculating in regard to His nature or His prerogatives**, let us give heed to the word He has spoken: "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. [Job 11:7-9 and 28:12-28 quoted.] [279.3]

Neither by searching the recesses of the earth nor in **vain** endeavors to penetrate the **mysteries of God's being** is wisdom found. It is found, rather, in **humbly receiving** the revelation that He has been pleased to give, and in **conforming** the life to His will. [280.1]

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[27] 8T 268.1 to 269.4
As we learn more and more of what God is, and of what we ourselves are in His sight, we shall fear and tremble before Him.  

Man cannot by searching find out God. Let none seek with presumptuous hand to lift the veil that conceals His glory. "Unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

Romans 11:33. It is a proof of His mercy that there is the hiding of His power; for to lift the veil that conceals the divine presence is death. No mortal mind can penetrate the secrecy in which the Mighty One dwells and works. Only that which He sees fit to reveal can we comprehend of Him. Reason must acknowledge an authority superior to itself. Heart and intellect must bow to the great I AM.

All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son.

1905

[This quote from SpTB07 62.2 - 63.2 is found on the title page.]

Note from this quote, that God the Father:
— no earthly likeness can be compared to
— cannot be compared with the things His hands have made
— cannot be described by the things of earth.

Father — all the fullness of the Godhead bodily
— invisible to mortal sight
Son — all the fullness of the Godhead manifested
— shown the personality of the Father
Spirit — all the fullness of the Godhead
— making manifest the power of divine grace

1906

But while God's Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding his pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal

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28 Ibid., 279.1 to 280.1
29 Ibid., 283.1
30 Ibid., 285.2, 286.1 (compare EW 54.2)
Son of God, in union and oneness with his Father. From everlasting he was the Mediator of the covenant, the one in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted him, were to be blessed. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God. [par. 5]

The world was made by him, "and without him was not anything made that was made." If Christ made all things, he existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. [par. 6]

The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by him as his right. This was no robbery of God. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way," he declares, "before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth." [Prov. 8:22-27] [par. 7]

There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible.31 [par. 8]

31 RH, April 5, 1906 par. 5-8
It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Spirit is the Comforter, "the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father." It is plainly declared regarding the Holy Spirit that, in His work of guiding men into all truth, "He shall not speak of Himself." John 15:26; 16:13. [51.3]

The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.32 [51.4]

Note the contrasting items in all the above quotes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can't Know</th>
<th>Can Know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature (8T279)</td>
<td>Relation (8T268, 269)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerogatives (8T279)</td>
<td>Personality (8T268, 269; SpTB07 62, 63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secrecy (8T285, 286)</td>
<td>Individuality (8T268, 269)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unity/Oneness (8T268, 269; RH04/05/06)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Position (8T268, 269; PP36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glory of Father (8T285, 286)</td>
<td>Glory of Christ (RH04/05/06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power of Father (8T285, 286)</td>
<td>Power of Spirit (SpTB07 62, 63)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence (8T285, 286)</td>
<td>Presence expressed in Name (DA469, 470)</td>
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Some thoughts on these:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The above items appear to describe the</td>
<td>The above items include the character of the</td>
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<tr>
<td>substance of the Godhead members; this</td>
<td>Godhead members, in their relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would appear to include the details of their</td>
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<tr>
<td>past in &quot;eternity,&quot; &quot;in the beginning.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>The things of nature, the created things</td>
<td>The created things (especially man in the</td>
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<td>cannot show these; we should not attempt to</td>
<td>image of God) can show these; God's nature</td>
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<tr>
<td>make them do so; God's nature as His</td>
<td>as His character (even His physical form, but</td>
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<td>substance or origin is not revealed in</td>
<td>not substance) is revealed in what He made.</td>
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<td>created things (such as a son's being</td>
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<td>begotten and born).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Revealed Knowledge, therefore involves</td>
<td>&quot;The Essential Knowledge&quot; (very name of</td>
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<tr>
<td>speculation. Silence is eloquence, is golden.</td>
<td>sections in 8T255-335 and MH409-466)</td>
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32 AA 51.3, 52.1
It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded on the principles of restoring in the fallen race the divine image. The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out his plan, it was decided that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, should give himself an offering for sin. And in giving Christ, God gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing might be wanting for the work of man's uplifting. What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that he could have done more.\footnote{RH05/02/12, par. 3}
**Reflections on the Statements in Regards "Nature" as Being or Relation**

First consider some definitions and observations on the two dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>&quot;Nature&quot; in Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;The essence, essential qualities or attributes of a thing, which constitute it what it is&quot; (definition #3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sort; species; kind; particular character&quot; (definition #10)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nature of being</td>
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<tr>
<td>nature or way in which two are connected</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deals with:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>substance, origin, person(ality), individuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpersonal: character, personality, individuality, relationship</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflections</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Defining Being and Relation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being (ontology) = who He is in Himself; limited revelations of His existence described; vast majority is secret; nature of His being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation = who He is in relation to others (both to Others in Godhead, and to His creatures); extensive revelations of gospel; how He relates to others; nature of His character</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature as...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature as being: mostly secret with only a few details revealed; forever distinct from His creatures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature as character: vital; what makes His creatures like Him; image of God in man being restored</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regarding &quot;Son&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The origin of the Being who came forth as the Son is not told us. To speculate on it is to attempt to describe His nature. Since He &quot;existed from eternity&quot; it makes no sense to probe His origin. To apply &quot;only begotten&quot; or &quot;Son&quot; to the origin of His nature is to &quot;put a human construction&quot; on these words, and steps over the line in taking these terms that we understand in the light of &quot;the things His hands have made&quot; and using them to describe an aspect of Him that &quot;cannot be compared&quot; to those created things. (A similar danger is noted in AA52 above about the nature of the Spirit.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The origin of the &quot;Son&quot; is revealed in that He came from the Father (in that relation was &quot;Son&quot;), and was the only One who did so (in that relation at least the only Son, the only begotten). This is the origin of the &quot;Son,&quot; as pertains to His relation, personality, etc., after that point &quot;in the beginning&quot; when the humility of the Godhead was expressed through this Being coming out and coming down to His creation. Thus the terms &quot;Son&quot; and &quot;only begotten&quot; speak of this member of the Godhead in His new relation between the Father and the created beings. These are only terms of &quot;relation,&quot; &quot;personality,&quot; &quot;individuality,&quot; &quot;unity,&quot; &quot;oneness,&quot; and &quot;position.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<th>Comparing God to creation:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In regards to His nature of being, God cannot be compared to anything He has made; the Creator is totally unlike, apart from, His creation; there is an unbridgeable gulf between the Creator's being and the created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In regards to the nature of His character, God can be compared to everything He has made; He is revealed in His creation; as an artist He shows what He is like in what He made; He is connected intimately with everything He has made, sustaining it</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Danger of taking this approach:</strong></td>
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<td>-----------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scripture:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Immensity and intricacy of creation:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personhood of humans:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scriptural word examples:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Examples in EGW**

"Those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever;" but "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God." Deuteronomy 29:29. The revelation of Himself that God has given in His word is for our study. This we may seek to understand. But beyond this we are not to penetrate. The highest intellect may tax itself until it is wearied out in conjectures regarding the nature of God; but the effort will be fruitless. This problem has not been given us to solve. No human mind can comprehend God. Let not finite man attempt to interpret Him. Let none indulge in speculation regarding His nature. Here silence is eloquence. The Omniscient One is above discussion. {8T 279.1} Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2} The law of God is a transcript of his character; it portrays the nature of God. {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 2}

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34 Some descriptions of the Trinity clearly get into trying to describe the nature of their Being in ways that are not revealed. For example, "the three persons of the Trinity are of one being or ousia" (Grudem, Wayne A. 1994. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan. Page 226; quoted on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity; accessed on 11/2/12)

35 See under Uriah Smith in the section on "Sample of SDA Pioneers' Statements"
Now let us review the statements we observed above in light of these two dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements Previously Quoted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The introductory quotes on title page are place in the chronological order. Inserted words are in brackets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST, Nov. 27, 1893 par. 5</td>
<td>He and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same attributes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 469.5 (1898)</td>
<td>Jesus: eternal presence, the self-existent One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 530.5 (1898)</td>
<td>-in Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived -divinity of Christ &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6BC 1074.9 (8/12/1900)</td>
<td>three persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST, Aug. 29, 1900 par. 13</td>
<td>Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST, Aug. 29, 1900 par. 15</td>
<td>eternal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16MR 204.4 (11/27/1901)</td>
<td>eternal heavenly dignitaries--God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6MR 389.2&amp;3 (5/14/1904)</td>
<td>the threefold powers in the heavenly world the three great and glorious heavenly characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UL 148.4 (5/14/1904)</td>
<td>eternal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8T 268.1 (1904)</td>
<td>the personality and individuality of each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8T 268.3 (1904)</td>
<td>[God/Christ] the relation between God and Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8T 269.1 (1904)</td>
<td>the personality of the Father and the Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8T 269.4 (1904)</td>
<td>[Divine/human] The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^36]: Webster, 1828, Definition #1. In a general sense, being; something existing by itself
[^37]: Webster, 1828, Definition #2. That which is attributed; that which is considered as belonging to, or inherent in
the personality of either [Divine/human] not [one] in person

not destroy
<
They are one in purpose, in mind, in character
<
[God/Christ] It is thus that God and Christ are one.

8T 279.1 (1904) -revelation of Himself that God has given in His word is for our study -may seek to understand -beyond this we are not to penetrate -conjectures regarding the nature of God -[can't] comprehend God -[do not] attempt to interpret Him -[no] speculation regarding His nature -silence -above discussion

-humble themselves -teach them His ways

8T 279.3 (1904) -as ignorant of God as little children -speculating in regard to His nature or His prerogatives

-as little children we may love and obey Him -be still and know

vain endeavors to penetrate the mysteries of God's being [≠ wisdom]

humbly receiving the revelation that He has been pleased to give, and in conforming the life to His will [= wisdom]

8T 283.1 (1904) learn more and more of what God is, and of what we ourselves are in His sight, we shall fear and tremble before Him

8T 285.2 (1904) -the veil that conceals His glory -hiding of His power -to lift the veil that conceals the divine presence is death -the secrecy in which the Mighty One dwells and works -only that which He sees fit to reveal can we comprehend of Him

8T 286.1 (1904) All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son.

SpTB07 62.3 (1905) -the Majesty -no earthly likeness can be compared -can not be compared with the things His hands have made -Father: can not be described by the things of earth -all the fulness of the Godhead bodily -invisible to mortal sight

[can be compared; Father]

[can be described]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SpTB07 63.1 (1905) | Son: all the fulness of the Godhead manifested  
express image of His person  
personality of the Father  
[Father/Son] He gave His only begotten Son  
[GOAL "that ..."]  
[< giving showed separate beings] |
| SpTB07 63.2 (1905) | Spirit: all the fulness of the Godhead  
three living persons  
heavenly trio  
three great powers  
[Divine/human] making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour  
[Divine/human] co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven  
[GOAL "to live ..."] |
| RH, April 5, 1906 par. 5 | -divine being; the Word was God  
-from everlasting  
[Father/Son] union and oneness  
-the Word was with God  
[Divine/human] the Mediator of the covenant |
| RH, April 5, 1906 par. 6 | -Christ ... existed before all things  
-was God essentially, and in the highest sense  
-God over all  
[Divine/created] world was made by Him  
[God/Christ] Christ ... was with God from all eternity |
| RH, April 5, 1906 par. 7 | divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person >  
-yet one with the Father  
-the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way  
-light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world [=]  
-the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory  
-this truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is |
| AA 51.3 (1911) | not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is  
-in His work of guiding men into all truth, "He shall not speak of Himself"  
-acceptance of these views not strengthen the church |
| AA 51.4 (1911) | -the nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery  
-cannot explain it  
-not revealed  
-fanciful views  
-passages of Scripture and put human construction >  
-such mysteries, too deep for human understanding  
-mysteries ... too deep  
-silence is golden  
-<
Connections Between Being and Relation--Soteriological and Eschatalogical

Consider:

Could it be that the essential but mysterious and unrevealed divine nature (His being) that forever separates God from His creation, and regarding which silence is eloquence, is inextricably connected with the essential and revealed divine nature (His character) that all intelligent creatures must partake of to spend eternity with Him?

Consider the following as evidence of such a connection--

Christ condescended to assume human nature, but the dwarfed powers of man were unable through ignorance to comprehend or distinguish the divine. Jesus was not spared the necessity of defining and defending His divine nature, because the minds of men were so thoroughly human they could not discern the divine beneath the assumption of humanity. In order to make His lessons forceful, He was compelled, when these impressions hindered His usefulness, to refer to His mysterious and divine character, leading their minds into a train of thought that was favorable to the transforming power of truth.38

His humility confuses us, because our powers are dwarfed by pride. The "transforming power of truth" functions when the proud heart of man encounters the reality that the One who possessed "mysterious and divine character" had "condescended to assume human nature." We must better grasp the height and the depth shown here, as the distance between the two helps to measure the magnitude of how humble He is. This unequaled humility rebukes the pride of sin, and the human heart is changed by beholding such humility, into that likeness.

He used the natural things with which they were familiar to make divine instruction clear to their understanding, thus preparing the way for the seeds of truth to be dropped into the prepared soil of the heart. He made them feel that He was identified with their nature and their interest. At the same time they were favored with opportunities of contrasting His superior excellencies with the most honored and acceptable rabbinical teachers. His excellence in all His teachings was revealed in a simplicity, dignity, and power that had an attraction for all who listened to His words, with the exception of the priests and rulers, who hated Him for the very graces which influenced the people to leave them and go to Jesus to hear His teachings.39

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38 1888 260.3 (Ms 16, 1889, "The Discernment of Truth," c. Jan. 1889). The implications are astounding of what is here for understanding the experience of Adventism surrounding Minneapolis.

39 Ibid., 261.1
His "divine instruction" and "superior excellencies" had power in proportion to the reality of His humility and the degree to which His hearers grasped that. In His attitudes, words, and actions He gave witness to the fact of His humility, which "made them feel that He was identified with their nature and their interest." The power of "all His teachings" was seen in the "simplicity" and "dignity" of humility, which powerfully drew "all who listened to His words" unless they in their pride did not accept a love of humility (what Scripture calls "a love of the truth"\(^\text{40}\)).

Christ could have done nothing during His earthly ministry in saving fallen man if the divine had not been blended with the human. The limited capacity of man cannot define this wonderful mystery--the blending the two natures, the divine and the human. It can never be explained. Man must wonder and be silent. And yet man is privileged to be a partaker of the divine nature, and in this way he can to some degree enter into the mystery. This wonderful exhibition of God's love was made on the cross of Calvary. Divinity took the nature of humanity, and for what purpose?--That through the righteousness of Christ humanity might partake of the divine nature. This union of divinity and humanity, which was possible with Christ, is incomprehensible to human minds. The wonderful things to take place in our world--the greatest events of all ages--are incomprehensible to worldly minds; they cannot be explained by human sciences. The powers of heaven shall be shaken. Christ is coming in power and great glory, but His coming is not such a mystery as the things to take place before that event. Man must be a partaker of the divine nature in order to stand in this evil time, when the mysteries of satanic agencies are at work. Only by the divine power united with the human can souls endure through these times of trial. Says Christ, "Without me ye can do nothing." Then there must be far less of self and more of Jesus.\(^\text{41}\)

Observe what is beyond us: "this wonderful mystery--the blending of the two natures, the divine and the human", "this wonderful exhibition of God's love", "this union of divinity and humanity." The impossibility is stated repeatedly: "man cannot define", "can never be explained", "is incomprehensible to human minds." But out of this blending, this union, flows a privilege that is also a necessity. The privilege is for humanity "to be a partaker of the divine nature," "in this way ... to some degree enter into the mystery", "through the righteousness of Christ." In an amazing connection of salvation with end-time events, as the union is a mystery

\(^{40}\) 2 Thessalonians 2:10
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 332.1 (Let 5, 1889, To Howard Miller, June 2, 1889)
incomprehensible but able to be entered into to some degree, so "the wonderful things" that are coming--"the greatest events of all ages", "the things to take place before that event" of Christ's "coming in power and great glory", in which "the powers of heaven shall be shaken", "when the mysteries of satanic agencies are at work" in ways likewise "incomprehensible to worldly minds" and which "cannot be explained by human sciences", but can be experienced in the right way--cannot be grasped but can be endured. We can "stand in this evil time", we can "endure through these times of trial", but only by being "a partaker of the divine nature", "only by the divine power united with the human", only by there being "far less of self and more of Jesus." Observe the parallels in the following table that focuses not on the incomprehensible nature of the mystery, but on its necessity.
"This Wonderful Mystery":

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incarnation of Jesus:</th>
<th>His &quot;divine&quot; nature &quot;blended with&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;human&quot; nature [John 5:30 &quot;of mine own self&quot;]</th>
<th>&quot;During His earthly ministry&quot;:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;possible with Christ&quot;:</td>
<td>&quot;union of divinity&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;and humanity&quot;</td>
<td>with only the human nature that He took He &quot;could have done nothing&quot;... [John 5:30 &quot;I can ... do nothing&quot;] in saving fallen man from:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Wonderful exhibition of God's love was made on the cross&quot;:</td>
<td>Divinity&gt;</td>
<td>combined with sins of the world placed on humanity = death</td>
<td>his fallen nature,&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"For what purpose?"

"Through the righteousness of Christ"--

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;To Some Degree Enter into the Mystery&quot;:</th>
<th>Necessity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;to be a partaker of the divine nature&quot;</td>
<td>During &quot;the wonderful things to take place in our world--the greatest events of all ages&quot;, &quot;the things to take place before&quot; Christ's coming, &quot;in this evil time&quot;, &quot;these times of trial&quot;, to face:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;partake of the divine nature&quot;</td>
<td>our fallen nature, &quot;self&quot;&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;by the divine power united with&quot;&gt;</td>
<td>&quot;the human&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further observations on these parallels:

1. Jesus' union of humanity and divinity was both ontological and soteriological. Our partaking of the divine nature is not only soteriological but also ontological, but only in a creaturely way. This is why we "enter into the mystery" only "to some degree." That degree appears to be the soteriological dimension, in which we are restored to the image of God and not to being God, to the nature of God's character and not to the nature of His being. But the
connection to Him, to the nature of His being, does transform not only our characters but also the nature of our creaturely beings.  

2. Jesus' victory over sin was based on His soteriological experience of dependence on divine powers outside Himself, not His own ontological divine powers, His ontological reality of being God as well as man. The evidence points to His having laid those powers down at His incarnation.

3. The necessity of this union of humanity with divinity is why, in spite of the impossibility of its being defined or explained by human minds, that the following statement is vital:

   The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; he gave proof of his humility in becoming a man. Yet he was God in the flesh. When we approach this subject, we would do well to heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." We should come to this study with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, which will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth.

Sample of SDA Pioneers' Statements Chronological

J. N. Andrews

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42 This transformation is a process. Our beings (bodies) are kept alive by the first, unconditional provisions of salvation (Acts 17:28). Our bodies begin to be changed when we submit to being temples for the Spirit. Consider this statement regarding the ontological nature of this change. "The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part--the brain, the heart, the nerves--it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy,--joy in the Holy Spirit,--health-giving, life-giving joy." (MH 115.3; 1905). And the nature of our beings will be finally and fully changed at the Second Coming (1 Corinthians 15:51-54). It should become clear to us that the struggle to understand these dimensions, and their practical implications, bridges from Martin Luther to John Harvey Kellogg. Note that Luther overstated the reality in these words, "Just as the word of God became flesh, so it is certainly necessary that the flesh may become word. In other words: God becomes man so that man may become God." (Union with Christ, the New Finnish Interpretation of Luther, editors Carl E. Braaten, Robert W. Jenson, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1998, p. 11). Seventh-day Adventism since Kellogg continues to struggle with the ontological implications of salvation, and has at times chosen a dualistic (spiritualistic) solution. (For example, see Perfect in Christ: The Mediation of Christ in the Writings of Ellen G. White, Helmut Ott, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1987.)

43 Hebrews 5:7 uses sodzo for this part of His mission.

44 See the author's paper "The Humanity of Jesus in Light of Romans 7" for more exploration of reality of His humanity and its dependence on powers outside of Himself.

45 YI, October 13, 1898 par. 6
The doctrine of the Trinity which was established in the church by the council of Nice, a. d. 325. This doctrine destroys the personality of God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The infamous measures by which it was forced upon the church, which appear upon the pages of ecclesiastical history might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush.\textsuperscript{46}

| Trinity [as being] destroys personality [individual being that has been revealed]; > | [and if personality is destroyed, relation is also destroyed] |

Joseph Bates

1868

Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was an impossibility for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same being. I said to my father, "If you can convince me that we are one in this sense, that you are my father, and I your son; and also that I am your father, and you my son, then I can believe in the trinity."\textsuperscript{47}

| one and the same being, trinity [as being destroys] > | relation |

Uriah Smith

1898

God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be, - a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity, - appeared the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1. This uncreated Word was the Being, who, in the fulness of time, was made flesh, and dwelt among us. His beginning was not like that of any other being in the universe. It is set forth in the mysterious expressions, "his [God's] only begotten Son" (John 3:16; 1John 4:9), "the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14), and, "I proceeded forth and came from God." John 8:42. Thus it appears that by some divine impulse or process, not creation, known only to Omniscience, and possible only to Omnipotence, the Son of God appeared. And then the Holy Spirit (by an infirmity of translation called "the Holy Ghost"), the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the divine afflatus and medium of their power, representative of them both (Ps.139:7), was in existence also.\textsuperscript{48}

With the Son, the evolution of deity, as deity, ceased. All else, of things animate or inanimate, has come in by creation of the Father and the Son - the Father the antecedent cause, the Son the acting agent through whom all has been wrought.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{46} Andrews, J. N., The Three Angels of Revelation 14:6-12, 1855, p. 54.3
\textsuperscript{47} Bates, Joseph, The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates, 1868, p. 204.2
\textsuperscript{48} Smith, Uriah, Looking Unto Jesus, 1898, p. 10.1
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, p. 13.1
M. L. Andreasen
1910

M. L. Andreasen visited Ellen White at Elmshaven in 1910 to clear up questions he had on her ministry and writings. He had a list of items he desired to explore, and was given access to look at all the documents he needed, and then some. Here was one paragraph of his important conclusions:

When I was done, I was both amazed and perplexed. Here I saw before my eyes that which I believed could not be done. I verified many of the quotations I had brought with me. I saw in her own handwriting some of the statements that I was sure she had not written--could not have written. Especially was I struck with the now-familiar quotation in *The Desire of Ages*, page 530: 'In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.' This statement at that time was revolutionary and compelled a complete revision of my former view--and that of the denomination--on the deity of Christ.50

*Dealing with the Muslim Ideas*

Muslims object to the term "Son of God" at least in part because of its implications of God's taking a wife and having sexual relations with her. When this term is understood in Jesus' humanity in the simple way in which the Bible explains it, that Mary was Jesus' human mother, and that she conceived Him in a miraculous way, it avoids any of those implications. And more importantly, when this term is seen in Jesus' divinity in the way explained above, speaking of His relation / position (to the Father), personality / individuality (distinct from the Father), and unity / oneness (with the Father), rather than nature (originated from the Father), then the fundamental question of the objection they hold is answered.

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50 Steinweg, Virginia, *Without Fear or Favor*, 1979, p. 76.2. This is from the chapter entitled, "Visiting in Ellen White's Home," most of which is Andreasen's personal account of that 1910 visit. A document of that chapter can be found at <www.ScriptureFirst.net/MLAndreasenVisitEGW.pdf>.
Thought Questions:

(1) Does Hebrews 1:2 show that Christ's position of being Heir was not through birth but through appointment?

(2) Does the term "Son" describe God in a human term, or does it in reality describe a human relationship (plus origin?) from a divine perspective?

(3) Does Hebrews 1:5 ("I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son") imply that They were something else to each other before the time ("in the beginning") that was said? That is, does it not seem that if He had meant to say, "I am His Father," He would have said that?

(4) Does the ST 08/29/00 quote ("as one brought up with Him") mean not "as one brought up by Him", which would be true of Son and Father in a nature/origin sense?

(5) Does the phrase "made equal with the Father" (8T 268.3) imply there was a time when He was not?