

ELLEN WHITE'S TRINITARIAN STATEMENTS: WHAT DID SHE ACTUALLY WRITE?

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Introduction

Certain opponents of the church's second fundamental belief ("The Trinity") argue that Ellen White's supportive statements cannot be trusted as reflecting accurately what she wrote and taught. These persons claim to accept Ellen White's prophetic writings, but they question the authenticity of her statements that affirm the church's belief in three distinct, co-eternal, fully divine persons in the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This presentation will not attempt to fully define Ellen White's concept of the Godhead nor discuss the question of whether there was any development in her views. Its interest is in the authenticity of Ellen White's key statements in the light of available source documents. It should also be clearly stated that the church's fundamental belief in the Trinity is not based on Ellen White's writings, but on its understanding of biblical truth.

"Third Person of the Godhead"

For most Adventists, Ellen White's published statements are conclusive as to her teaching on this question. In *The Desire of Ages* she writes that "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" (p. 671). This is how the text has read since its first publication in 1898. So how do opponents escape its natural interpretation that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead?

First, by suggesting that the expression found its way into *The Desire of Ages* through the influence of Ellen White's assistants and/or Herbert Lacey or W. W. Prescott.¹ Second, by pointing out

that the words “third person” are not capitalized in the original 1898 printing, signifying to them that the word “person” is used in a more “general sense.”² **Third**, by suggesting that while there are in reality only two persons in the Godhead, “*the net effect for us* is that there are three divine beings,” since the Holy Spirit is called “*another* Comforter.” In this view, the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit (presence) of the Father and/or Christ,” and not in actuality a distinct third divine person.³

We will not pursue the third interpretation, except to look later at a further Ellen White statement that speaks of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as “three *distinct* agencies” working together on behalf of humanity. But the first two observations are aimed at the authenticity of the text—our interest in this presentation.

Can this passage in *The Desire of Ages* be trusted as representing what Ellen White actually penned? What does the original manuscript say?

The White Estate often receives this type of inquiry from persons who question the reading or teaching of a published statement. Some are surprised when we tell them that Ellen White did not write out her chapters by longhand as they appear in books like *Steps to Christ* and those in the *Conflict of the Ages* Series. She was certainly the author of the text, but most of the material comprising the chapters as we have them was compiled from her many earlier works, including her sermons, letters, and articles.⁴ So to find the original manuscript for any given passage in a book like *The Desire of Ages*, we must determine the source document and whether a handwritten draft of that document is extant.

What, then, is the source for this sentence on page 671 of *The Desire of Ages*? We find it in a letter Ellen White addressed to “My Brethren in America,” dated February 6, 1896. She wrote, “Evil had been accumulating for centuries, and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.”⁵ This letter was copied and sent from Australia to church leaders in Battle Creek, where the General Conference president, O. A. Olsen, published it the next year in a pamphlet circulated among church leaders

and ministers (*Special Testimonies*, No. 10, pp. 25-33). This contemporary publication provides another evidence—beyond the obvious copyright date—that this passage in *The Desire of Ages* reads as it did when first published in 1898.

Exhibit 1 is a scan of the first page of this letter, showing the key sentence in the second paragraph. The skeptic will ask how we know that this letter actually came from Ellen White. What does the handwritten original say? Unfortunately for us who live in 2006, Ellen White rarely preserved original drafts of her letters once they had been transcribed and received her approval. We will see that, in certain other instances, we are fortunate to have her original drafts, but for this letter the handwritten original is not known to be extant. But we do have other evidences of its authenticity. Pages 5, 6, and 7 contain Ellen White's handwritten interlineations, which she often added after further reading of a document. Exhibit 2 is a scan of page 6, showing these interlineations and providing the evidence that this letter was indeed reviewed by Ellen White herself. So we are on sure ground in concluding that this key sentence in *The Desire of Ages* was not slipped past Ellen White's eye into the manuscript of the book either by her assistants or other church leaders.

What should we make of the second argument, that the words "third person" were not capitalized in the earliest printings? As we saw in Exhibit 1, the phrase was also not capitalized in the original letter. Further comparison between Ellen White's letters and her published articles and books indicates that editorial style, not theological intent, governed such matters as to whether pronouns referring to deity should be capitalized. If the argument is to be made that the use of lower case characters in "third person" shows that Ellen White was not attributing deity-status to the Holy Spirit, then one has to explain why, in the same earliest printings, the personal pronoun "He" (referring to the Holy Spirit) is twice capitalized in the immediately preceding paragraph (671:1), and elsewhere in the same chapter.

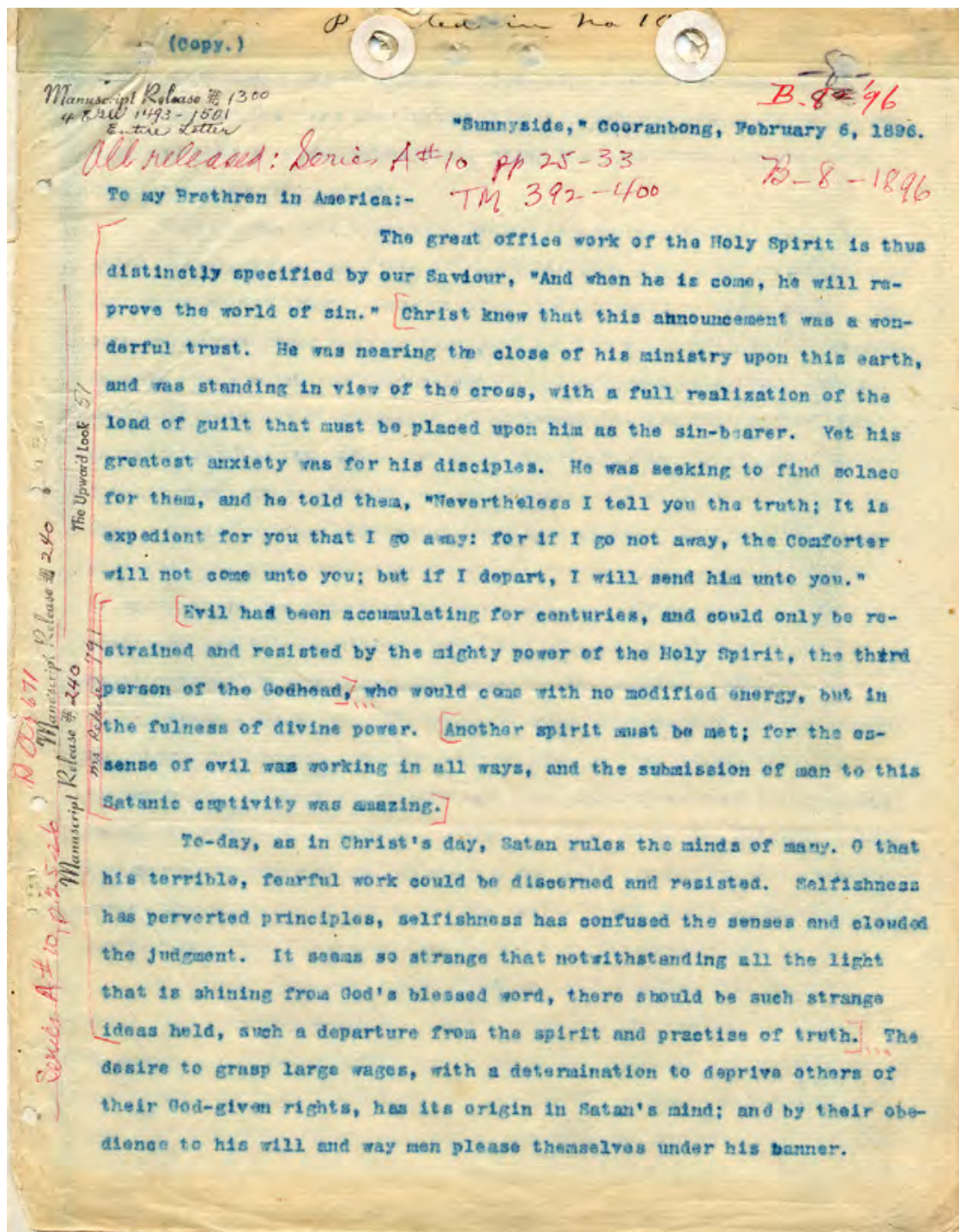


Exhibit 1. Letter 8, 1896, p.1.

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bidden to communicate the light from the burning lamps to others, that the regions of darkness may have opportunity to hear the saving message, doing their duty? *It seems to me I must call to you across the Giza of the matter cut away every evil from among you, Wake up Brethren and Sisters*

What are we doing? Do you believe that this is the period in which we are to labor as never before for the salvation of sinners? How much better you would have been employed in doing this class of work than in taking up lines of work which the Lord never set you to do. Who, I ask, in your councils, in your Foreign Missionary Board, are Christians, in heart and soul? O that every one of you could serve for a time in *taking the work into places where it has never yet been* foreign countries. Then you would know, much better than you now do, what self-denial and self-sacrifice mean. And if you were permitted to return, you would work much more intelligently. Your yea and your nay would be spoken with a much graver burden, and with a sense of the responsibility involved. But as yet, you have not touched even the border. The indifference with which decisions are made in regard to these things, is an offense to God.

Where you are, you have every facility for the work, and you know nothing about the hardship of starting the work in new fields, among a people that have scarcely any knowledge of missionary work. Workers are appointed as missionaries to these foreign fields, and there they are left to get along as best they can, while those at the heart of the work think it very important to do something that had better be left undone. O if some could only once have a sense of how the Lord looks upon their course for several years past, they would hide *their head* themselves for shame. They would labor, they would deny self, that they might send all they could possibly gather, to foreign fields. If you only knew what you should know in your position, ~~that~~ the calls of missionaries would stir every fiber of your being. How intensely you would labor; how self-denying you would be, that you might send facilities to those who must have them. Missionaries must have facilities, or else it is their duty to

There is a deep-scaled missionary work to be done in every place where the opening should be given

Exhibit 2. Letter 8, 1896, p.6.

“Three living persons”

We will look next at a significant statement published in the book *Evangelism*. *Evangelism* is a compilation published in 1946, a decade before the Adventist-evangelical dialogues that resulted in *Questions on Doctrine*. Nevertheless, the cloud associated with that period has caused some to cast a skeptical backward shadow on this clearly Trinitarian statement:

There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.⁶

Does this statement accurately represent what Ellen White penned?

Exhibit 3 is a scan of the title page for the source of the quotation in *Evangelism*—*Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7. Of particular interest is the note at the bottom, “Published for the Author.” Exhibit 4 is a scan of the page containing the key sentence. So whatever alleged “conspiracies” led to the wording that appears in *Evangelism*, they could not have originated with the brethren in the 1940s. The passage appeared in print in 1906, published for the author—Ellen G. White.

Tracing the source of this material, we find that it comes from Manuscript 21, 1906, written in November 1905 and bearing the transcription date of January 9, 1906. Exhibit 5 is a scan of page 4 on which this key statement appears. The sentence is identical to what was published in Series B, except that in the printed version a semi-colon is substituted for the comma after “heavenly trio.” Exhibit 6 is a scan of the first page of this manuscript showing Ellen White’s handwritten interlineations—evidence that she had personally reviewed the typescript. So we see that what is published in *Evangelism* accurately reprints what is published in *Series B*, which, in turn, accurately reproduces Ellen White’s manuscript, as reviewed by her.

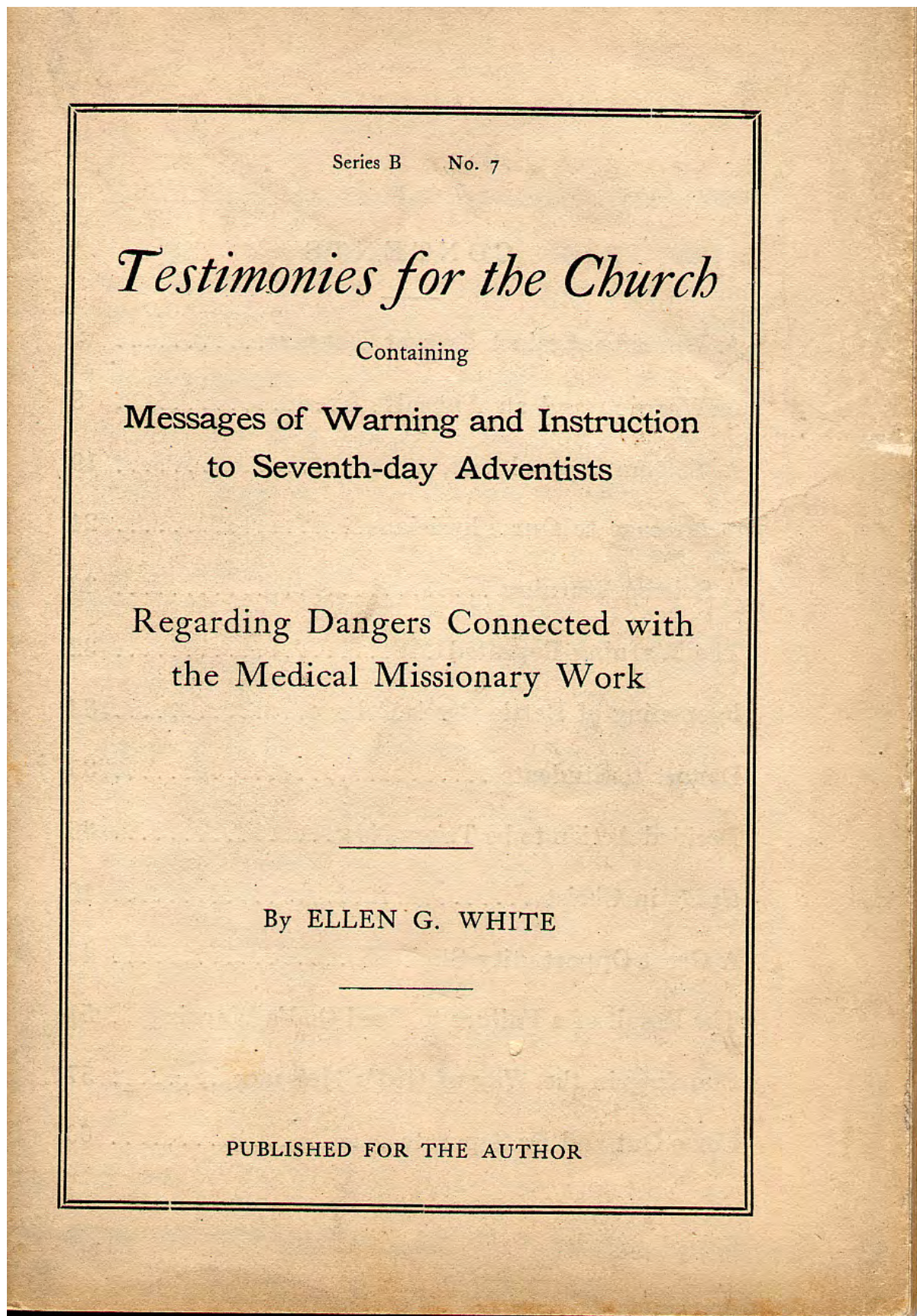


Exhibit 3. Special Testimonies, Series B., No.7 (1906), title page.

Come Out and be Separate

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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 co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ. . . .

There will have to be a second conversion in the hearts of some of our leading medical fraternity, and a cutting away from the men who are trying to guide the medical ship into the harbor, else they themselves will never reach the haven of rest. Christ calls, Come out from among them, and be ye separate.

I write this because any moment my life may be ended. Unless there is a breaking away from the influence that Satan has prepared, and a reviving of the testimonies that God has given, souls will perish in their delusion. They will accept fallacy after fallacy, and will thus keep up a disunion that will always exist until those who have been deceived take their stand on the right platform. All this higher education that is being planned will be extinguished; for it is spurious. The more simple the education of our workers, the less connection they have with the men whom God is not leading, the more will be accomplished. Work will be done in the simplicity of true godliness, and the old, old times will be back

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MS 21-106

the things of earth. The Father is all the fullness of the God-head bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight.

Personality of God

The Son is all the fullness of the God-head 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 fullness of the God-head, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Savior. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio, in the name of these three great powers,--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.

Holy Spirit

What is the sinner to do? Believe in Christ. He is Christ's property, bought with the blood of the Son of God. Through test and trial the Saviour redeemed human beings from the slavery of sin. What then must we do to be saved from sin?-- Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the sin-pardoning Savior. He who confesses his sin and humbles his heart will receive forgiveness. Jesus is the sin-pardoning Saviour as well as the only begotten Son of the infinite God. The pardoned sinner is reconciled to God through Jesus Christ our Deliverer from sin. Keeping in the path of holiness, he is a subject of the grace of God. There is brought to him full salvation, joy, and peace, and the true wisdom that comes from God.

Exhibit 5. Manuscript 21, 1906, p.4.

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Two copies for Kellogg Jan. 9, 1906. FILE

Jan. 9, 1906.

Published in Series B, No. 7, pp. 6-64.

Diary

MS-21-1906

Banitarian Cal., Nov. 1905

COME OUT AND BE SEPARATE.

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I have not been able to sleep during the past night.

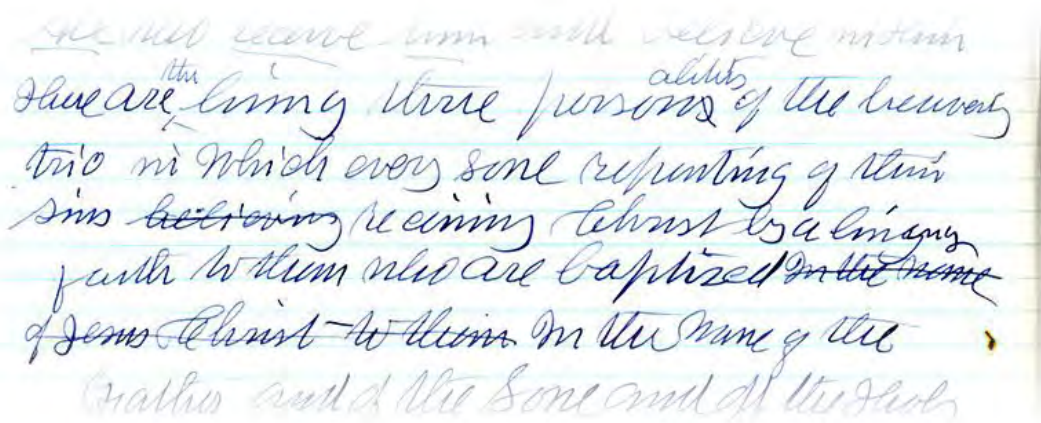
Letters have come to me with statements made by men who claimed to have asked Dr. Kellogg if he believes the ^{testimonies} statements that Sister White bears. He declares that he does, but he does not. ^{The Lord saith he does not believe to} He sent ^{down} a sensible letter to me while I was at Melrose, Massachusetts, saying, "I have surrendered." I responded to it, but not another line has he written. ^{to show by what he has surrendered} He has not spoken or acted as a man who has surrendered. He has felt bitterness of soul against the Lord's appointed agencies who have occupied the position of President of the General Conference. He has hated them. Has he surrendered that gall of bitterness? The Lord will not accept anything that he affirms which is false. ^{When self has surrendered his first work will be to in all his words and works to make the same known and by works of righteousness} The whole of the matter is not revealed. I have been waiting to see the least evidence of surrender. The word of the Lord to me is, "He is only gathering his forces for another display to magnify himself. The ministers of God are being drawn in and deceived by his science. He is doing all in his power to create a division between the medical work and the ministry of the word. He has his messenger going forth to test the pulse of

^{give the word of the Lord of the word}

Exhibit 6. Manuscript 21, 1906, p.1, showing Ellen White's handwritten interlineations.

We can go one step further, however, in this instance. Exhibit 7 is scanned from a page in one of Ellen White's diary/journals where is found the original unedited handwritten draft for Manuscript 21, 1906. This is what was transcribed by Ellen

White's secretaries. The key passage, as originally penned by Ellen White, reads: "Here are the living three personalities of the heavenly trio in which every soul repenting of their sins, receiving Christ by a living faith, to them who are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...."



The image shows a handwritten draft of Manuscript 21, dated 1906. The text is written in cursive on lined paper. The original text, as transcribed in the previous block, is visible with some corrections. For example, "three personalities" is written, with "three persons" crossed out and "three" written above it. The text continues: "of the heavenly trio in which every soul repenting of their sins, receiving Christ by a living faith, to them who are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ - to them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." There are several other corrections and additions in the original handwriting.

Exhibit 7. Excerpt from handwritten draft of Manuscript 21, 1906.

Now we encounter an interesting question. Putting aside the routine grammatical improvements Ellen White's assistants were instructed to make when transcribing her first draft manuscripts, what are we to make of her changing "three persons" to "three personalities"? Here is evidence, non-Trinitarian promoters argue, that Ellen White was seeking to make a distinction between "personalities" and "persons," as the sentence finally reads in the transcribed manuscript.

Should we read something substantive into this change from "persons" to "personalities"? A comprehensive study of Ellen White's usage of these terms is outside the parameters of our interest in this presentation, but suffice it to say that, as its first definition, Webster defines "personality" as "the quality or state of being a person"; and in its theological usage, "quality or state of consisting of distinct persons, said of the Godhead."⁷ My own study of Ellen White's usage is that she used the two terms interchangeably, which is no doubt why she was quite satisfied with the final reading of the transcription, as we saw in Exhibits 5 and 6.

Furthermore, if by writing “three *personalities*” Ellen White meant to steer clear of referencing three *persons* in the Godhead, we are hard pressed to explain why she clearly wrote “three persons” in an earlier document, Manuscript 57, 1900, published in the *SDA Bible Commentary*:

The work is laid out before every soul that has acknowledged his faith in Jesus Christ by baptism, and has become a receiver of the pledge from *the three persons*—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.⁸

Exhibit 8 is a scan of this manuscript, and as in the previous example, we are fortunate to have the original handwritten draft that was transcribed by Ellen White’s secretaries. As we see in Exhibit 9, there is no question that Ellen White wrote “the three persons—the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.”

upon the plan of multiplication. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." The work is laid out before every soul that has acknowledged his faith in Jesus Christ by baptism, and has become a receiver of the pledge from the three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. <

Exhibit 8. Excerpt from Manuscript 57, 1900.

his faith by baptism and by becoming recipient of the pledge from the three persons the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost Peter 2:24 But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see

Exhibit 9. Excerpt from handwritten draft of Manuscript 57, 1900.

Ellen White's use of "third person" and "three persons in the heavenly trio" plainly indicates her belief that not only are there three beings in the Godhead, but that they are "persons." Another statement published in *Evangelism* says it in no uncertain terms:

The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.⁹

Again we are asked, what did Ellen White actually pen? Exhibit 10 is a scan of the source quoted in *Evangelism*—Manuscript 20, 1906, p. 9. Not only does this manuscript bear Ellen White's approval at the top of its first page—"I have read this carefully and accept it"—(Exhibit 11), but we also have the original handwritten draft that was transcribed by her secretaries. Exhibit 12 is a scan of the key sentence, "The Holy Spirit is a person for He beareth witness with our spirit. . . ."

But, say non-Trinitarian promoters, the Father and the Son are persons. "The reference does *not* say, "the Holy Spirit is a person, separate and distinct from God the Father."¹⁰

No, this reference does not. But Ellen White has more to say on the subject elsewhere. Manuscript 93, 1893 reads:

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, in Christ's name. He personifies Christ, *yet is a distinct personality*.¹¹

Exhibit 13 is a scan of Ellen White's original handwritten draft, backing up the transcription. Manuscript 27a, 1900 adds this description:

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, *powers infinite and omniscient*, receive those who truly enter into covenant relation with God.¹²

Note how the attributes of deity are applied to each person. This is followed by the statement:

Three distinct agencies, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, work together for human beings.¹³

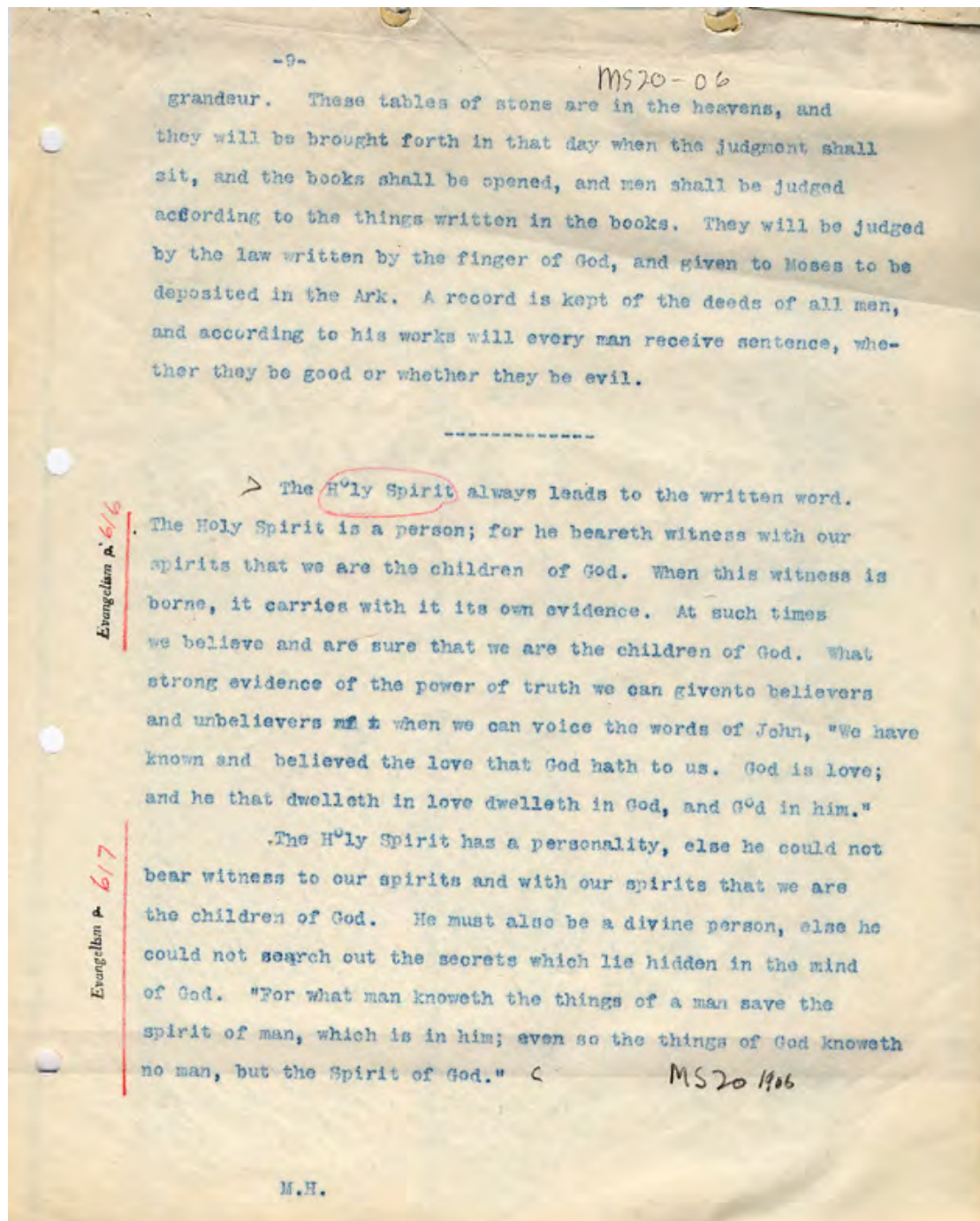
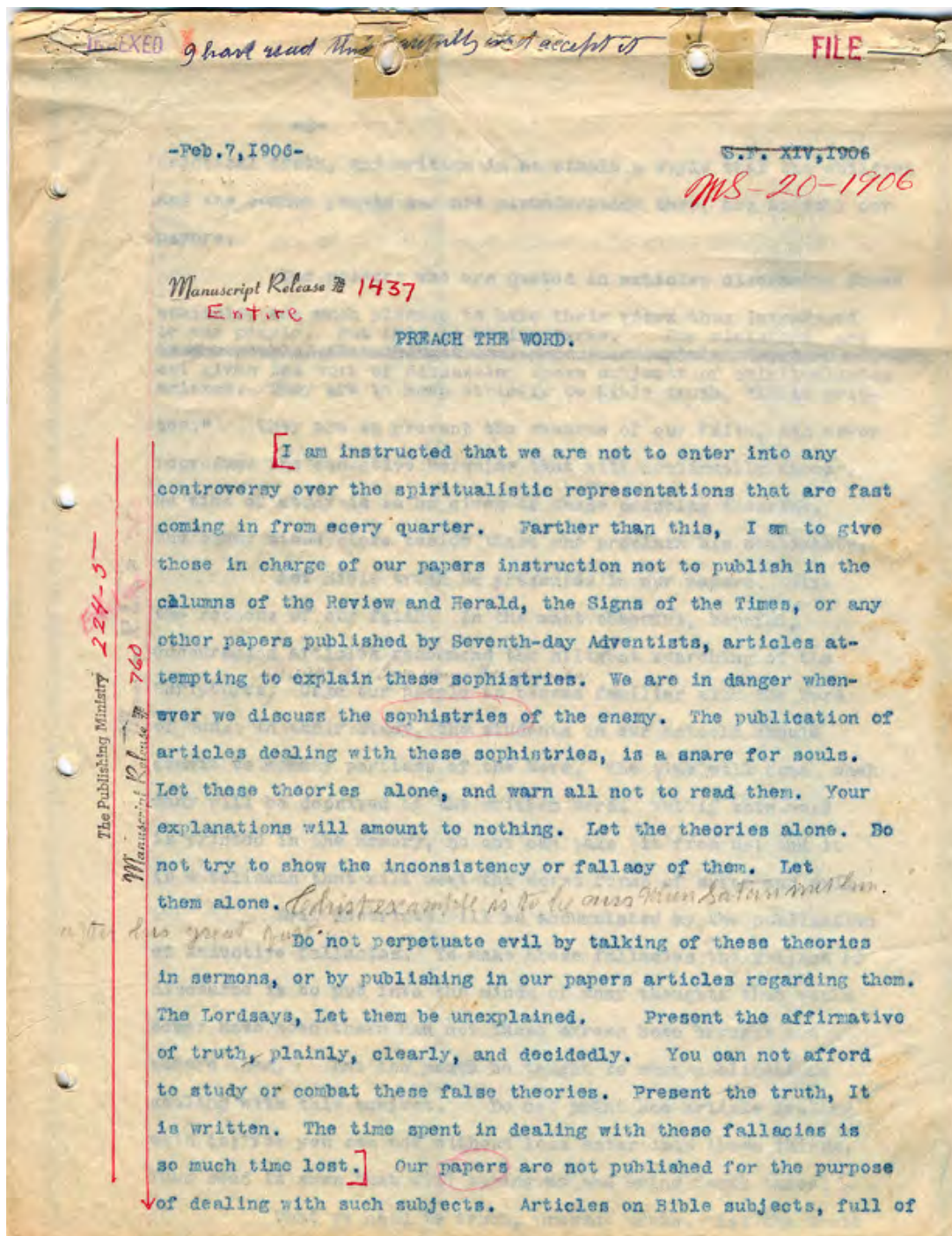
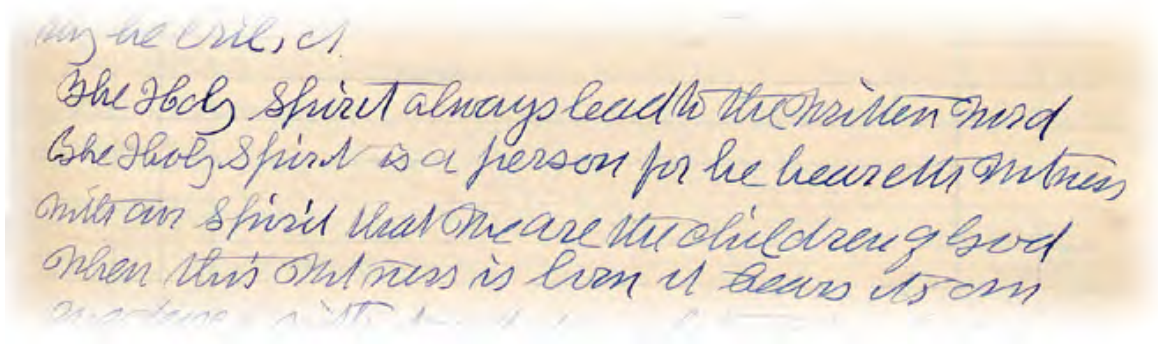


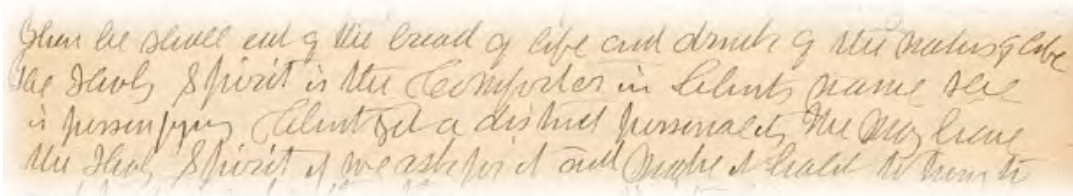
Exhibit 10. Manuscript 20, 1906, p.9.





may be said, etc.
 The Holy Spirit always leads to the written word
 The Holy Spirit is a person for he hears the witness
 within our spirit that we are the children of God
 when this witness is even if it bears its own
 witness.

Exhibit 12. Excerpt from handwritten draft of Manuscript 20, 1906.



When he shall eat of the bread of life and drink of the water of life
 The Holy Spirit is the Comforter in Christ's name. He
 is personifying Christ yet a distinct personality. The Holy Spirit
 The Holy Spirit is one who is sent and speaks of Christ to them.

Exhibit 13. Handwritten original of Manuscript 93, 1893.

The original handwritten draft for this manuscript is not extant, but the transcription not only bears Ellen White's signature but also her interlineations throughout, as seen in Exhibits 14 and 15.

*Is the Holy Spirit "Christ's representative"
 or Christ "himself"?*

With Ellen White's unambiguous statements about the "heavenly trio" in mind, let us examine another passage relating to the nature of the Holy Spirit that non-Trinitarian promoters look to for support. It appears on page 669 of *The Desire of Ages*:

The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour

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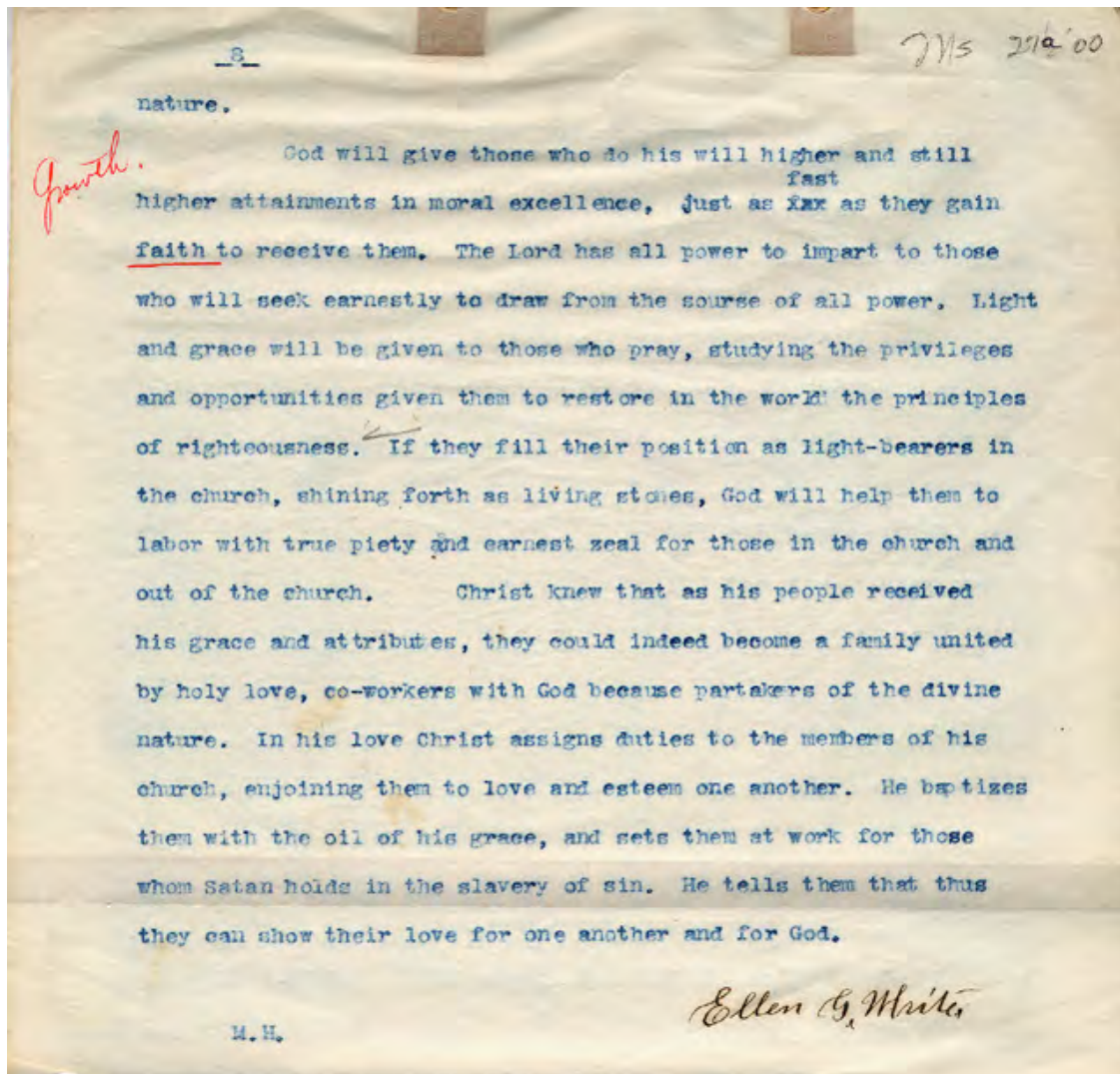
they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Wonderful, gracious words!

* Love for God is cultivated and developed by beholding Him who has bought us with his own life. Learn to serve him, not under an oppressive restraint but with cheerful obedience. Thus you may represent him to the world. We are to strive daily to increase in knowledge, multiplying our powers through the grace given. *He that will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.* We are to grow in usefulness. Thus we may testify to the world that God has sent his Son ~~into the~~ to this earth to save men and women from sin. > As God's followers manifest the mighty power of his grace to transform the heart, they show that they bear the true imprint of his name.

> Three distinct agencies, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, work together for human beings. They are united in the work of making the church on earth like the church in heaven. They place the resources of heaven at the disposal of those who will appreciate and impart these spiritual treasures, multiplying them by using them to the glory of God. Every diligent effort to improve adds to the gifts we have. The powers of heaven work with human beings on the plan of multiplication. <

+ > Christ came to the earth to set in operation a vast missionary work. Those who compose his church are to co-operate with him by revealing his attributes. *Self is to be buried in Christ* They are to act under the dictation of the Holy Spirit. ~~The~~ Heavenly angels co-operate with those who seek to give to humanity the impress of the divine.

Exhibit 14. Manuscript 27a, 1900, p.7.



*Exhibit 15. Manuscript 27a, 1900, p.8,
 showing Ellen White's signature.*

would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.

The focus of this passage is the presence of Christ through His representative—the Holy Spirit. The personal distinction between Christ and the Holy Spirit is carefully expressed in the text, but non-Trinitarian promoters point to the manuscript source for this passage. We find it in a letter to Edson White and his wife, dated February 18, 1895.¹⁴ How does it read in the original letter?

Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that he should leave them, go to his Father, and send the Holy Spirit to be his successor on earth. The Holy Spirit is himself, divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. He would represent himself as present in all places by his Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.¹⁵

What is of particular significance to non-Trinitarians is that where *The Desire of Ages* reads “the Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative,” the original letter reads “The Holy Spirit is himself.”

The handwritten original is not known to be extant, but the letter as transcribed by Ellen White’s secretary bears her signature and other interlineations, signifying her approval of the letter. See Exhibit 16.

Does the wording of the original letter establish that Ellen White believed the Holy Spirit and Christ are not distinct persons?

We have already looked at several Ellen White statements affirming that there are “three persons” in the Godhead, and that the Holy Spirit is a “distinct personality.” As these statements chronologically both *precede* and *follow* the writing of this letter, consistency would lead us to expect that she is not interjecting a new understanding of the Spirit in this passage. Indeed, we find the same language of “representation” used in this letter as we find in *The Desire of Ages*. The paragraph in the letter where this sentence appears begins with the statement: “Although our Lord ascended from earth to heaven, the Holy Spirit was appointed *as his representative* among men.”

Ellen White further explains the meaning of her words “the Holy Spirit is himself” by adding that “Christ would *represent himself as present* in all places by his Holy Spirit.”

In the mysterious union that exists between the members of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit’s presence is synonymous with the personal presence of Jesus, yet their distinct identities are

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"Norfolk Villa", Prospect St.,
Granville, N.S.W., ~~XXXXXX~~ Feb. 18 '95.

Dear children Edson and Emma

We have just sent off a large mail, and I am very, very tired. Eld. McCullagh and Bro. McCann came in this forenoon and took dinner with us. I was too weary to go to the diningroom, and a tray was brought to my room, but I ate very lightly. After dinner Bro. McCullagh presented several important matters before me for consideration. Among others was the urgent ^{request} for me to speak next Sabbath at Ashfield, and next Sunday evening in the tent at Petersham. It is considered necessary for me to speak there quite frequently now. My prayer is that the Lord will strengthen me and imbue me with his Holy Spirit that his name may be glorified by my work. The Lord is very good to me, and I praise his Holy name. Although the work seems to have only just begun in Ashfield, they have pitched the tent at Petersham, two miles nearer Sydney, and hold meetings in it every evening except Saturday. The tent is full every evening. Last Sunday, the collection in Ashfield was \$8, and the collection in Petersham was something over \$6. This will go far toward defraying the expenses of these meetings.

Bro. McCullagh and his co-laborer, Bro. Hare, are much encouraged. Several of the most influential men are much interested in the meetings. Bro. Collins and Pallant are visiting and giving Bible readings, which creates some interest, and brings the people to the tent to hear the truth. There are many more calls for this kind of labor than can be filled. Bro. McCullagh and Hare think they will be

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gives them no license to be unkind or unco~~o~~rteous, ^{no} license to be oppressive, and to let their tongues, which should be sanctified, speak words which will open a door of temptation, and help the great adversary in his work of discouraging souls. God has given us a work to do in saving souls from the companionship of Satan.

(M.W.H. 7 copies)
(Mar. 17, '95.)

Ellen G. White.

Exhibit 16. Letter 119, 1895, pp1,5, showing Ellen White's handwriting.

preserved.

The same idea is found in other Ellen White passages, such as:

When you come to receive Christ as your personal Saviour, there will be a marked change in you; you will be converted, and the Lord Jesus by His Holy Spirit will stand by you.¹⁶

and

I testify to my brethren and sisters that the church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard. While He extends to all the world His invitation to come to Him and be saved, . . . He comes personally by His Holy Spirit into the midst of His church.¹⁷

How do we account for the change in wording in *The Desire of Ages*? We have only the 1895 letter, no working drafts for the finished chapter, leaving us with the conclusion that what was published in 1898 represents the edited reading approved by the author.¹⁸ The language adopted by Ellen White in *The Desire of Ages* helps the reader to avoid a misinterpretation that arises when the sentence as first constructed is isolated from the entire paragraph of its original context.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we cannot approach the subject of the Godhead without acknowledging the limitations of human conception and language. It is one thing to examine what an inspired author has written, it is quite another to say that we have fully understood it.

Our interest in this presentation, however, has not been the mystery of the Godhead but the trustworthiness of certain descriptive statements found in Ellen White's books. We have found that the original handwritten manuscripts, her approved

transcriptions, and/or the first editions of her published works support the Trinitarian expressions found today in her writings.

Addendum (added May 2012)

Further evidence that Ellen White believed that the Godhead consists of three beings may be found in a Sabbath sermon she delivered on October 20, 1906. The full sermon is reproduced in *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, pp. 360-383. The key statement is found on p. 367: "You are born unto God, and you stand under the sanction and the power of the three holiest Beings in heaven, who are able to keep you from falling." Some have questioned the authenticity of the statement because it was not published in Ellen White's lifetime. How do we know that we can trust the reading in *Sermons and Talks*? The source of the sermon is Ellen White's Manuscript 95, 1906, which was a part of Ellen White's file ever since the sermon was transcribed in 1906 as evidenced by other portions of the sermon which Ellen White published in the December 13, 1906, *Review and Herald*.

Exhibit 17 is a photograph of Ellen White's 1906 letter book which contains Ms 95, 1906, on pages 19-42. Exhibit 18 is scan of the manuscript's first page, identifying the document, and Exhibit 19 is a scan of the page containing the "three holiest beings" statement (in the second paragraph).

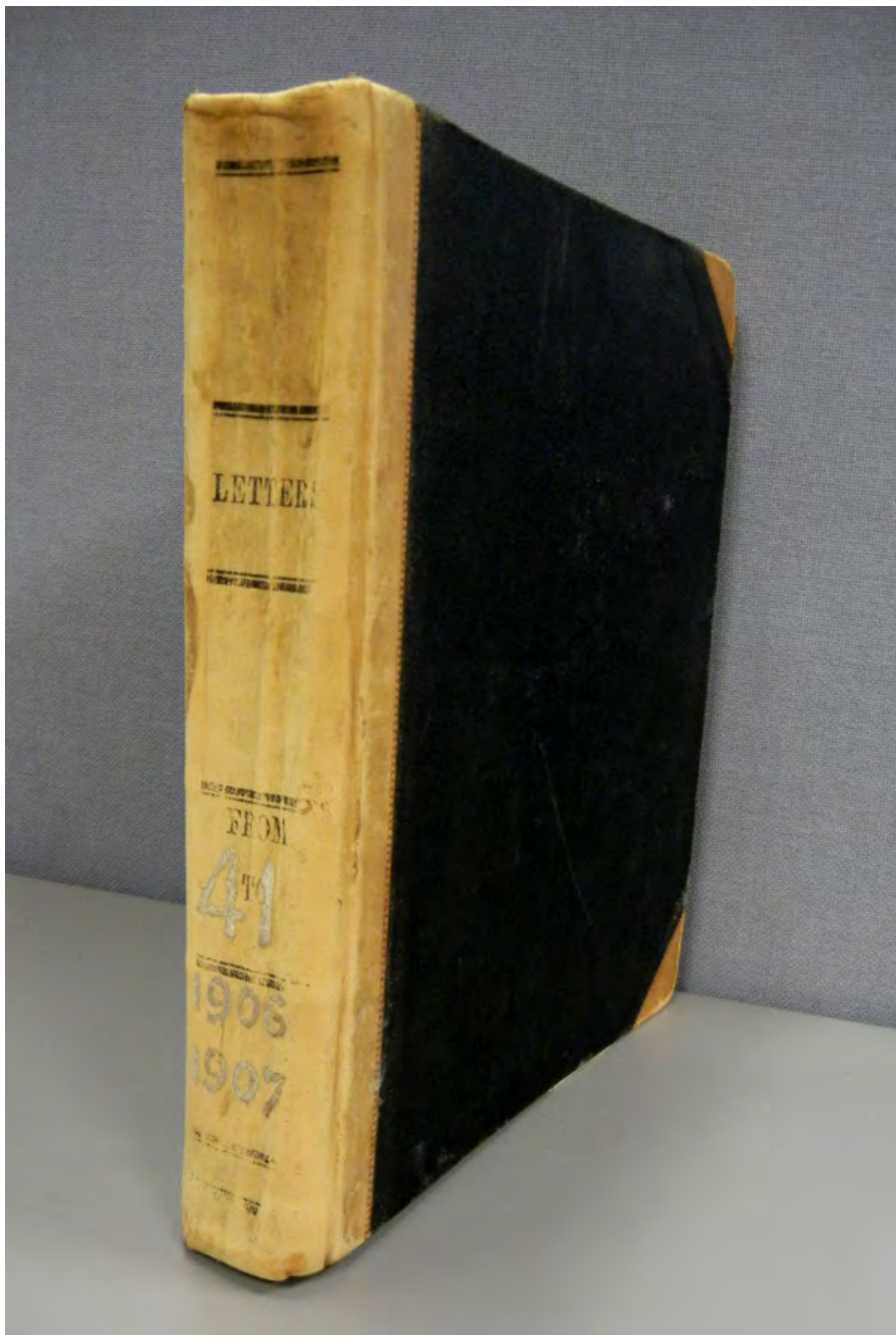
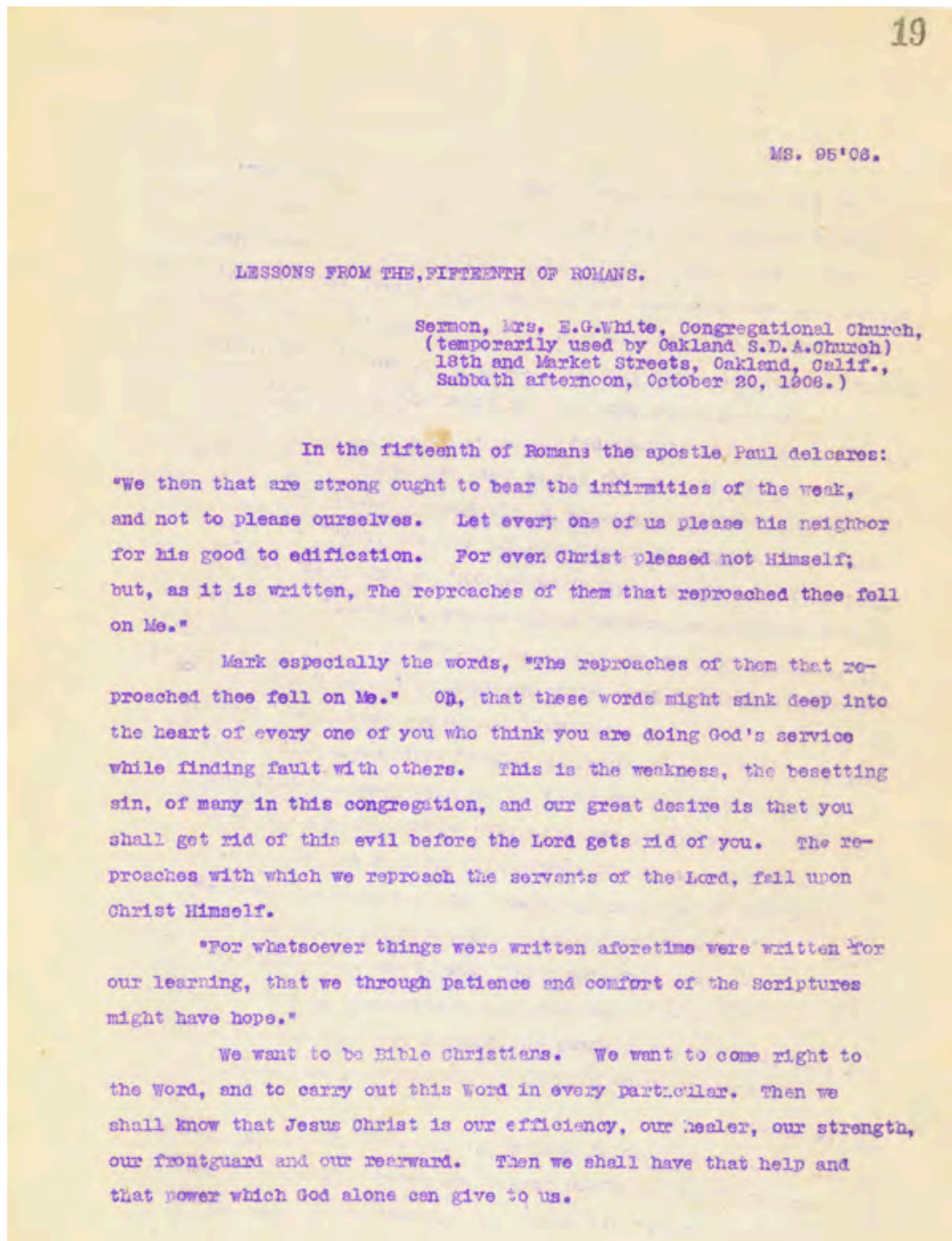


Exhibit 17. Photograph of Ellen White's 1906 letter book which contains Ms 95, 1906, on pages 19-42.



*Exhibit 18. Scan of the manuscript's first page,
identifying the document.*

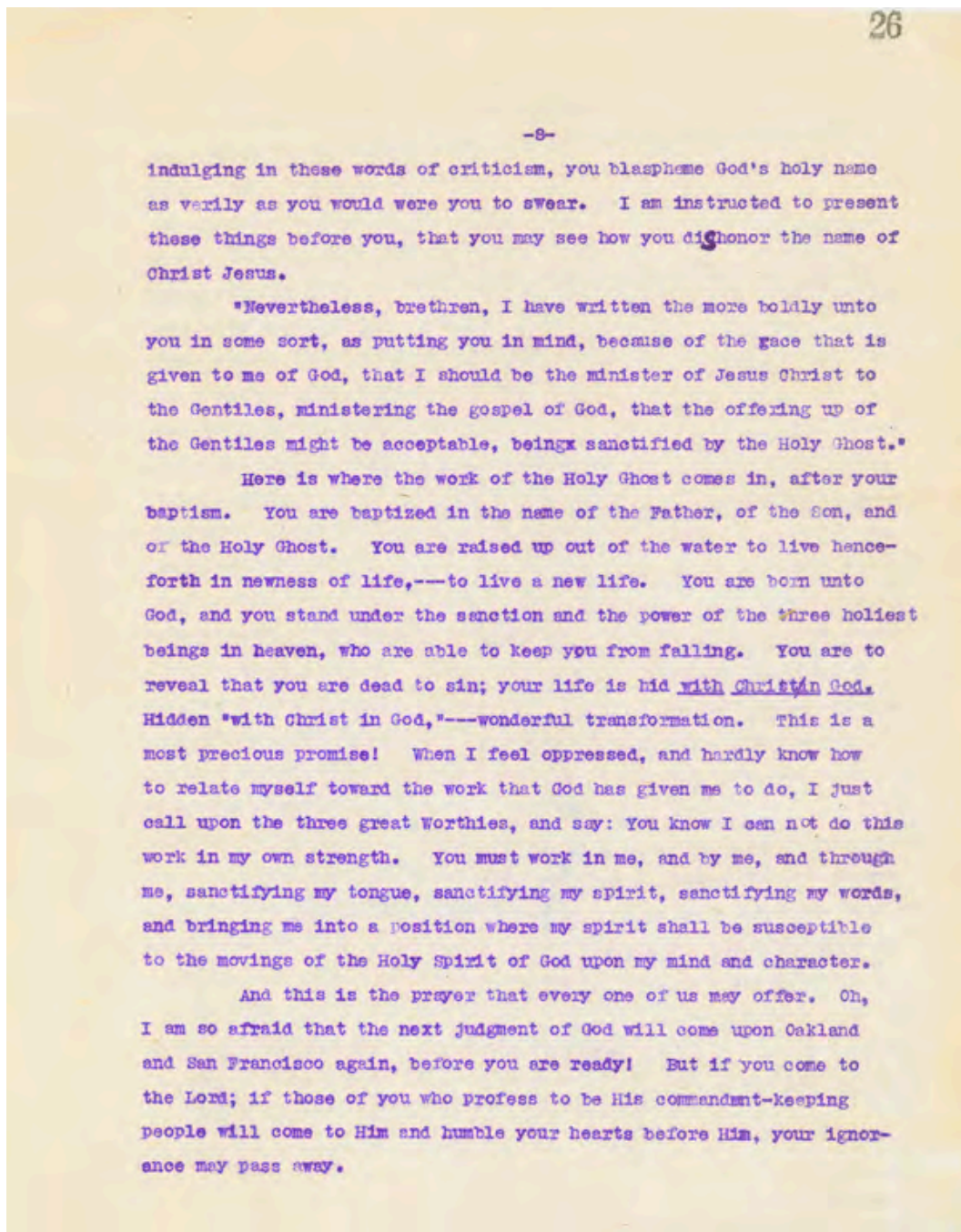


Exhibit 19. Scan of the page containing the "three holiest beings" statement (in the second paragraph).

¹For example, see Rachel Cory-Kuehl, *The Persons of God* (n.p.: Aggelia Publications, 1996), pp. 159-188.

²www.creation-seventh-day-adventist-church.org/Binary/Essays/ePioneer.html (accessed 11/14/2005).

³Cory-Kuehl, pp. 187, 177.

⁴For *The Desire of Ages*, this process is described in Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Australian Years, 1891-1900* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1983), chapter 32, and in greater detail in Robert W. Olson, *How The Desire of Ages Was Written* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1979), and Fred Veltman, *Full Report of the Life of Christ Research Project* (n.p.: Life of Christ Research Project Review Committee, 1988).

⁵E. G. White, Letter 8, 1896.

⁶E. G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), p. 615, from *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, published in 1906.

⁷*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th Edition (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2003); *Webster's New International Dictionary*, 2nd Edition, Unabridged (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam, 1954).

⁸E. G. White, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1074, emphasis supplied.

⁹*Evangelism*, pp. 616, 617.

¹⁰Cory-Kuehl, p. 177.

¹¹E. G. White, Manuscript 93, 1893, published in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, pp. 323-325, emphasis supplied.

¹²E. G. White, Manuscript 27a, 1900, published in *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1075, emphasis supplied.

¹³E. G. White, Manuscript 27a, 1900, p. 7. This portion is not published in the *SDA Bible Commentary*.

¹⁴E. G. White, Letter 119, 1895.

¹⁵Published in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p. 93.

¹⁶E. G. White Manuscript 13, 1897, published in *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, pp. 124, 125.

¹⁷E. G. White, Letter 2d, 1892, published in *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 15.

¹⁸Against the claim that the published reading does not reflect Ellen White's teaching is the fact that the text remained unchanged by her for the next 17 years prior to her death, and that the passage was repeated in

an article she supplied for the Week of Prayer Readings published in the *Review and Herald*, November 19, 1908.