

THESIS ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

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This thesis provides a study on the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. In order to accomplish this, the historical-theological method of research was employed.

In order to have an understanding of the historical facts on the subject, a historical study on the deity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit was carried out. The main purpose was to have an understanding of the basis for the current belief on the Trinity, which holds that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are equal with the Father. The historical development of this subject in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church were also examined.

Eventually, a biblical study was carried out on the ontological and economic relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It should be stated that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are two different and distinguished persons of the Deity who, together with the Father, form the Triune God.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JESUS
CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

A thesis

presented in partial fulfillment

for the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

by

Irvine Fusire

June 2017

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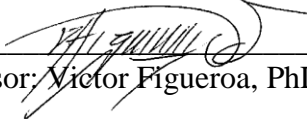
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To my wife, Josephine, and my three kids,
Kudzaishe, Kudakwashe and Mutsawashe.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is commonly understood as one God who exists as three equally divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This concept has been understood in various ways. The guiding principle to this doctrine has been the creedal declaration that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are consubstantial, they are of the same substance or essence. Because of the shared essence, which is a divine one, all three members of the Godhead are divine.¹

This doctrine of the Trinity is central to the Christian understanding of the Godhead. An understanding of the relationship between the persons of the Godhead helps the Christian truly understand what he/she believes in. However, this doctrine has been under attack from various quarters.

Who is Jesus Christ in the Trinity? What role does he play? Are all questions that are being asked? Alister E. McGrath acknowledges that Christian theology accords a central role to Jesus Christ.² In this sense, as Erickson rightly puts it, the study of what is to be believed about the person of Jesus Christ is of the greatest

¹For the Constantinople Creed see John H. Leith (ed.), *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to Present* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1982), 33. For the Chalcedon Creed see, *Creeds of the Church*. The Ages Digital Library: Theology (CD ROM) (Albany, GA: Ages Software, 1997).

²Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell, 1997), 322.

importance, as well as of the utmost significance.³ Christ is worshipped because of how people understood him to be. The view of Christ that worshippers have will determine how they worship him. In history, there has been a tendency to swing from one extreme to the other as far as the understanding of Christ's nature is concerned. Some have posited that Christ is not God.⁴ If he is not God then he becomes one of us, equal to us then he cannot be worshipped, he is just a brother. On the other hand, if Christ be God and is like God, then he would be worthy to be worshipped by all. Seeing that Christ is at the heart of Christianity, a clear understanding of who he is, is very important to all Christendom.

On the other hand, for the large majority of Christians, The Holy Spirit is the third divine person of The Trinity: The Triune God manifested as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; each one of them being God. But, others have been asking the question, who is this Holy Spirit? Some have argued that the Holy Spirit is not a distinct person of the Trinity. Many arguments have been raised concerning His personhood.⁵ Others have posited that the Holy Spirit is a personal force that emanates from the Father. Others have argued that the Holy Spirit is the same as Jesus Christ but in different modes of existence.⁶

³Millard J. Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991), 9.

⁴Lynnford Beachy believes and teaches that Jesus is not equal with God. He is a creature; therefore the Trinity is none existent. Lynnford Beachy, "The Formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity," accessed 28 February, 2017. <http://www.BibleTruth.org>.

⁵Wolfhart Pannenberg views God as infinite, timeless, omnipotent and omnipresent. The three persons of the Godhead are viewed as modes of God's existence. He describes the Spirit as the essence of God. Thus, the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force of life. He denies the personhood of the Holy Spirit. Roger Eugene Olson, "Trinity and Eschatology: The Historical Being of God in the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg," (PhD diss., Rice University, 1984), accessed 2 March 2016, Rice University Electronic Theses and Dissertations.

⁶Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God: Prolegomena to the Church Dogmatic Part I* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. and T. Clark, 1975), 1:348.

At the heart of the debate in today's theological circles is the relationship that exists between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Is Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit two distinct beings or they are one person? Our response to this question determines the way we approach the Trinity. It also affects our understanding of the Trinity. If Christ is not different from the Holy Spirit, then the Trinity does not exist. However, taking that course also implies that Christendom may need to revisit what have believed for years.

On the other hand if Jesus is the Holy Spirit, how do we account for their appearances at the same time? How do they manage to be in different places when they are one? If Jesus is the same with the Holy Spirit, how then are we to measure their complementary efforts?

These and many other questions have dragged discussions on the Trinity into unprecedented Chaos. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has not been excluded in the debates on the subject. Within the Church, books have been written and literature has been published following the same lines of arguments as outlined above.

Although there are many arguments that have been adduced concerning the Trinity, it is the intention of the researcher to carry out a systematic research specifically on the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Statement of the Problem

Regarding the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, are they the same person or two distinguished persons in the Godhead?

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to Study the relationship that exists between the two persons of the Godhead, namely Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Literature on both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit will be consulted.

The historical developments of the deity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are going to be studied by this research. The purpose is to understand the basis of the doctrine and the arguments that led to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. How did the church fathers come to the conclusion that God is three persons in one? This doctrine implies that Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God as well.

Significance of the Study

A lot of research has been done on the Trinity. A lot has also been written on the nature of Jesus Christ; did He have a human nature or a divine nature. However, current debates continue to raise issues on the relationship between the two members of the Godhead, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Although it is clear from previous works that the members of the Godhead are equal in terms of their functions and contributions to the creation and salvation of the universe, it is the intention of this study to also focus on their ontological relationship.

This study is very important in that it is focusing on one of the key theological understandings of the Seventh–Day Adventist Church. Thus, the findings of the research will have a bearing on what the church has believed for ages. It will either confirm or contradict what the church has held as a basic belief for many years.

In the event that the research contradicts what the church has believed for years, it will then imply that the church was mistaken for years. However, if the research confirms the position of the church, it then implies that the church is doctrinally sound.

In short, this is the beginning of a theological discourse between the church's position and the movements that are opposed to the Trinity both within and without Adventism.

Definition of Terms

- a. Deity - A deity is a supernatural being, God who is worshipped by people who believe he controls or exerts force over the world. *Deity* comes from the Latin word for "God": *Deus*.
- b. Trinity - The existence of God as a unity of three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each of the persons is distinct from the other yet identical in essence.
- c. Trinitarian-a person, group, school, or church that confesses the doctrine of the Trinity.
- d. God - the creator and ruler of the universe and source of all moral authority; the Supreme Being.
- e. Jesus Christ - the Son of God, who was both God and man, the Messiah sent by God to save the human race from sin.
- f. Holy Spirit- the third person of the Trinity; God as spiritually active in the world.
- g. Godhead-a theological term often used to refer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It can be used in either a Trinitarian or non-Trinitarian sense, depending on whether the person employing the term is Trinitarian or not.
- h. Arianism-the theological emphasis that supports the basic teachings of Arius and his followers.
- i. Pre-existent-the key issue that this term addresses is whether Jesus existed before He took on human nature, or became incarnate.

- j. Self-existent- term to describe any being who is divine and whose existence is understood not to be dependent on any other divine being.

Limitations of the Study

There are many theological debates that surround the Trinity. However, this study is limited to the study of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Methodology

This research follows the historical-theological method of research. A lot of literature is going to be considered. The historical development of the Doctrine of the Trinity will also be considered. This is to help the researcher and the reader on the key issues considered in the development of the doctrine.

The writings of E. G. White will be consulted. These will help develop an understanding of her position on the subject as her writings have great influence in the formulation of the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

After reviewing the literature, the researcher will then move into developing his position. At this stage, the researcher will do some biblical studies, focusing on texts that discuss the nature of Jesus Christ and that of the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, the researcher will carry out a biblical study on the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. At this stage, a summary and conclusion of the research will be drawn.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses at what has already been written by other authors on the subject under study. In considering the historical data available, the chapter will be divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the historical developments of the deity of Jesus Christ and the second section will focus on the developments of the Deity of the Holy Spirit.

Historical Developments of the Deity of Jesus Christ

The Deity of Christ in the Patristic Era

A lot of debates went on during this period on the Deity of Jesus Christ with different views being raised from different philosophers and scholars of the time as will be discussed in this section. One such view was held by the *Gnostics* who had many variations in terms of teachings. The *Gnostics* held that Jesus had a *pneumatic* spirit component within Him which makes him the savior. They also taught that there are two Gods; the Jewish creator God and a far higher superior, transcendent and hidden God who, fundamentally, has nothing to do with the material world.⁷ This is the God that Jesus came to represent.

Similar to the teachings of the *Gnostics* was the teaching of Marcion of Sinope (AD 85–160).⁸ He taught that there was a complete distinction between the Old

⁷Franz Dunzl. *A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: T. and T. Clark, 2007), 9.

⁸Larry W. Hutardo states that, Marcion of Sinope came from the Roman province of Pontus. He was born towards the end of the first century. His views were so controversial that he was expelled

Testament Deity and the “greater” God whom Jesus came to reveal. Thus, Jesus is presented as the highest and fullest revelation of the true God.⁹

Different from the previous two teachings was the position of the *Ebionites* who taught that Jesus was begotten as the Son of God on the day of His baptism, when the Spirit entered into him and qualified him to be the Son of God. Thus, they denied the pre-existence of Christ and regarded him as a mere human being who was imbued with the Holy Spirit at his baptism. It is because of this emphasis that the church regarded the gospel of the *Ebionites* as heretical.¹⁰ Franz Dunzil acknowledges that “the gospel according to the Ebionites is based on the Gospel according to Mark which begins its account with the baptism at Jordan. Thus, other traditions like the miraculous birth and his pre-existence are not put into account. The history of Church Doctrine classifies this gospel of the Ebionites’ Christology as adoptionism. Adoptionism posits that Jesus is a mere man who was adopted by God. He was then given more grace.”¹¹

While the teachings of the previous groups may have died a natural death, the teachings of the *Ebionites* is very important for us today in that their teachings

from the Roman church in AD 144. After his excommunicated, he established his own churches starting in Rome then spreading to other areas. His teachings attracted a good number of Christians of that time. Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus Christ in Earliest Christianity*, 549.

⁹According to this view, Jesus fulfilled and superseded the prior revelations of God that are witnessed to in the Old Testament. Marcion insisted that the Old Testament testified accurately to the activity of an inferior deity who was the creator of the world. However, this was not the highest God whom Jesus came to disclose. He believed that this figure was merely inferior to the true God. Legge, Francis, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity from 330 BC to 330 AD* (New York, NY: University Books, 1964), 68.

¹⁰“At the close of the second and beginning of the third centuries, Theodotus and Artemon taught in Rome the doctrine of the mere manhood of our Lord and were successively excommunicated by Bishops Victor and Zephyrinus. One of its greatest proponents was the man called Paul of Samosata.” William P. Du Bose, *Ten Epochs of Church History: The Ecumenical Councils* (New York: The Christian Literature Company), 57.

¹¹Franz Dunzl, *A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Church*, 8.

continue to reappear in other forms which may be different in appearance, but very identical with it in principle and connected with it in origin.

However, contrary to the teachings of all the previous groups was Origen (AD 185- 254). While he affirmed that the *logos* or Word was God's eternal emanation, he also affirmed a subordination of the *logos* to the Father, to account for his mediatorship between the immutable divine nature of God and the corrupt world of nature and history.¹² This teaching however furnished a starting point for the Arian heresy. Although Origen accepted eternity and other divine attributes of Christ, he however tried to explain some personal distinctions in the Godhead, teaching that there was a separation of essence between the Father and the Son.

Another person of note was Paul of Samosata (AD 200-275) who denied the pre-existence of Christ and regarded him as a person with more wisdom than any other creature. Samosata believed that Christ's divinity, which grew by gradual progress out of the humanity,¹³ was not in the sense that he was God who became man but a man who became as God.

The Arian Controversy

Arius¹⁴ expanded on the teachings of Origen. He taught that the Father alone is God, unbegotten, eternal, wise, good, and unchangeable. However, this God did not

¹²Henry Chadwick, *The Early Christian Thought and Classical Tradition: Studies in Justin Clement, and Origen* (Oxford NY: Oxford University Press, 1966), 80. See also Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1999), 143.

¹³He was of the metropolitan of Antioch. He was deposed and excommunicated in the year AD 269. *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁴James B. Walker, "Arianism" *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, ed. Trevor A. Hart (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 29. khaled Anatolios comments that "in general Arianism was much more inclined to the spirit of the Antiochian school. Arius is described as an expert logician who initiated investigations into hitherto unexamined questions and thus came up with a novel doctrine which no one before him had ever suggested." Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 6.

create the world directly, but He created the world through an agent, Jesus Christ (the *Logos*).¹⁵ Thus, he regards Jesus as the creator of the world. He is the perfect image of the Father, and this Jesus executes the thoughts of the Father. He is thus “capable of being called in a metaphorical sense God, and *Logos*, and Wisdom.”¹⁶ However, according to Arius, while this Word, Jesus Christ, was a creature and a work of the Father, he is different from the Father in substance.

Arius teachings created a conflict in the Church around AD 318 over the interpretation of Proverbs 8:22-25.¹⁷ For him, the *Logos* was set up, created and begotten, implying that the *Logos*, Jesus Christ has a beginning. This puts Jesus in the realm of the created. However, Arius is quick to point out that even though Jesus was created by God He is not equal with other creatures because He then created everything after being created.

While Arius was teaching his doctrine, Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt taught that God the Father was the Father because the Son always existed without any beginning thereby making his divinity indisputable. Thus according to Alexander, the teachings of Arius were heresy and a direct attack on Christ.

However, Arius got the support of Eusebius, the bishop of *Nicodemia* and Eusebius of Caesarea of Maritina in Palestine. In AD 320 they wrote to their home bishop explaining their position and trying to distinguish their teachings from other heresies.

¹⁵Gordon H. Clark, *The Trinity* (Maryland: The Trinity Foundation, 1985), 22.

¹⁶Phillip Schaff, *History of Christian Church: Nicene and Post Nicene Christianity AD 311-600* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian classics Ethereal Library, 2002), 3: 376.

¹⁷“The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, 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?”

Arius wrote,

We know one God who as the only unbegotten, as the only one is eternal, as the only one is without beginning/cause (*anarchos*), as the only one is true (God) ... immutable and unchangeable ... before eternal times he begot the only-begotten Son. ... He did not beget him by appearance but in truth, by calling him into being by his own will ... as the perfect creature of God- but not as one of the other creatures. ... He is not an emanation of (the Gnostics) Valentinus taught, nor is he a part of the father of the same substance (*homoousion meros*) as (the Persian) Mani declared ... Nor (do we believe) that he who already was begotten or created later as the Son; you yourself, holy father (papa), have constantly reprimanded in church and in assembly those who introduce such a thing. ... Thus there are three hypostases; God, in so far as he is the author of all, is the most only one (sic) without beginning/cause (*arnachoi*); the Son was begotten by the Father outside time and created and set up before the ages (cf. Prov.8:22-25); He was not there before He was begotten ... and came into being as the only one by the Father. Nor is he eternal or co-eternal with the Father or equally unbegotten, and He does not possess being at the same time with the Father, as some claim, introducing two unbegotten principles of origin (*archai*). ... Now if the word of scripture ... 'I came forth from my Father and have come ...' (John 16:28) is understood by some to mean that (the Son) is part of him (God) who is of the same substance ... the Father would be composite, divisible, changeable and a body." ¹⁸

On the other hand, Alexander was dismissing the claims of Arius hence it is called the Arian controversy. This was the time that Constantine came onto the scene and called for the first Ecumenical Council of the Church known as the Council of Nicaea to solve the controversy.

The Council of Nicaea, AD 325

The deliberations of the council mainly centered on the contradicting views of Arius and those of Alexander. However, at the end of the Council, the following position was agreed;

We believe in one God, Father, Almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of the Father uniquely, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things were made, both things in heaven and those in earth, who for us men

¹⁸Quoted in Dunzi Franzl. *A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Church*, 46.

and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, [and] became man; He suffered and rose on the third day, ascended into heaven, and is coming to judge living and dead, and in the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

The phrase “the Son is consubstantial with the Father” was used to indicate that the Son of God is in every way, made like the Father who begot him.²⁰ He does not have a different essence, but the same as the Father’s. In short, the creed states that Christ is the same as the Father in essence.

The creed used the term *homoousios* referring to the fact that the Son was of the same substance with the Father. The term *homoousios* was recognized as the hallmark of orthodoxy. It was the one that was further developed into the formula of three persons in one being.

The council of Nicaea did not manage to bring an end to the controversy. The debate continued. Arianism continued to flourish in the East. This led to another council which was called at Constantinople in AD 381.

However, it can be noted that though the controversy did not come to an end, Athanasius (AD 296-373) continued to defend the Nicaea position. He had been influential in the framing of the Nicæan creed and defended it to great lengths.²¹ This may be so because Athanasius was educated and worked under the influence of Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria. Athanasius eventually succeeded Alexander as

¹⁹Edward R. Hardy, ed., *Christology of the Later Fathers* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2006), 335. In a letter written, by Eusebius to one of his churches soon after the Council, cited by Hardy, he tries to explain the meaning of the creed that was passed at the Council of Nicaea. He states that, the phrase “begotten” was used instead of “made,” since “made” is a term shared with the other creatures of God which came into being through the Son. The Son is different from any other creature, since he is not a work of God. He is of a nature superior to everything made. He was begotten by the Father. The manner of his generation being ineffable and indescribable for every nature that came into being. Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., 337.

²¹Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopaedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academy, 2007), 22.

Bishop at Alexandria. He had also attended the Council of Nicaea as secretary to Alexander hence; he had great interest in the proceedings of Nicaea.²²

Council of Constantinople, AD 381

The First Council of Constantinople, which is of interest to this study, met in May 381. This council was convened by the invitation of the Roman Emperor Theodosius I.²³ The work of Constantinople was mainly focused on putting an end in the East to the Arian heresy hence, it confirmed the decisions that had been made at Nicaea.

At the end of the council, a conclusion was reached and, in part, it read:

We believe in one God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten before all worlds [*aiones*, Gnostic *acons*?], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom [the Son] all things were made²⁴

After this council, the attention shifted from the Deity of Jesus to his nature. Even though debates were brewing behind the scenes and many groups remained against this position, there were not much public debates.

The Deity of Jesus Christ in the Reformation Era

During this period, the church had defined the doctrine of the Trinity as a dogma (something required to be believed by all the faithful), and had thus placed

²²Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopaedia of Christian Apologetics*, 22.

²³P. J. Heather and John Matthews, *Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool, England: Liverpool University Press, 1991), 36. Yves Lacoste acknowledges that this Council was first “chaired by Meletius of Antioch until his death, then by Gregory of Nazianzus until he tendered his resignation, and finally by Nectarius, the new archbishop of Constantinople.” Yves Lacoste, *Encyclopaedia of Christian Theology* (Abingdon, NY: Routledge, 2005), 76.

²⁴Gordon H. Clark, *The Trinity*, 19.

some legitimacy on the philosophical pre-suppositions of Aristotle and Plato that the church used to interpret Scripture. Thus, the deity of Jesus was the point of reference for all the Reformers. However, their beliefs on the subject can be inferred in their discussions and writings.

One of the greatest reformers of all time was Martin Luther (AD 1483-1546). He is well known for setting Scripture above Popes, Church Councils, and tradition. Luther posited that Christ was not a mere creature, but that he was God and man in one person whose two natures were joined personally in the unity of the person.²⁵ In those areas where Martin Luther did not see any problems, he concluded that the church had developed under God's guidance and thus he tended to interpret Scripture in ways that affirmed traditional views. Martin Luther's discussions were more centered on the nature of Jesus Christ. He had no problem with the deity of Jesus. He regarded him to be equal with God the Father.

Another reformer, John Calvin (AD 1509-1564) criticized the theory of Eternal Generation of the Son. His argument was that since all the fullness of the Deity dwelt in Christ, there would be no God apart from him. Christ was true God from the beginning. He is the same essence with the Father."²⁶

Contrary to the views of Calvin and Luther was Michael Servetus (AD 1511-1553) who was grieved by the persecution and banishment or death meted out to his Jewish and Islamic countrymen for rejecting the Trinity. Having failed to find the word "Trinity" or any reference to one substance or three persons in Scripture

²⁵Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 187.

²⁶Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (London: John Knox Press, 2008), 149.

Servetus viewed the Doctrine of the Trinity as belief in three Gods and thus a denial of their faith in one God.²⁷

Closely related to the teachings of Michael Servetus was Faustus Socinus (AD 1539-1604) who lumped together the Trinity and the theory of the eternal generation of the Son and rejected them both as irrational and unscriptural.²⁸ His followers did not accept the pre-existence of the Son, believing that Jesus Christ was simply a man who was filled with the Spirit, and that He had special knowledge of God and that at His ascension, He received dominion over all things.²⁹

Contrary to the *socinians* were the Anabaptists who also rejected the authority of tradition and appealed to Scripture as a final source of appeal on religious matters. They retained belief in the Trinity. The first Anabaptist theologian, Balthasar Hubmaier (AD 1480-1528), affirmed the Apostles' Creed, and used the term Trinity, but did not elaborate on it.³⁰

Another Anabaptist writer, Menno Simons (AD 1496-1561), avoided the use of the word Trinity because of his intense desire to use only Scriptural language;³¹ however, he managed to prove the basic concept of one God in three persons from the Scriptures.

²⁷Roland H. Bainton, *Early Christianity* (Malabar FL: Robert E. Krieger, 1960), 15.

²⁸Louis Berkhof, *History of Christian Doctrine* (London, United Kingdom: Banner of Truth, 1969), 96.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Woodrow Whidden, Jerry A. Moon, and John Reeve, *The Trinity*, 173.

³¹Justo L. Gonzalez, *History of Christian Thought*, 3: 87.

The Deity of Jesus Christ in the Modern Day Era

The enlightenment period has had a great impact on the way theological issues are interpreted. The very issues that were raised Arius and other early fathers are now finding their way back into theological interpretations. However, it is important to note that, in the re-emergence of these thoughts and ways of interpretation, there are still some other theologians who still hold on to the reformation way of understanding the Godhead.

One of the scholars who fall under this group was Friedrich Schleiermacher (AD 1768-1834), who viewed God as timeless, immutable and simple hence there is no place for distinctions within him.³² This line of thought led him to deny the doctrine of the Trinity because it contradicts divine simplicity.³³

Contrary to Schleiermacher was the teaching of Karl Barth (AD 1886-1968), who viewed God as having one personhood which is identical to his essence. His belief in a Trinitarian God was different from the traditional one, viewing God as having three modes of existence;³⁴ however, he refused to accept the idea of three independent personalities in the Deity in a bid to avoid a belief in three gods.

Closely related to the teachings of Karl Barth was the teaching of Wolfhart Pannenberg (AD 1928- 2014) who also believed that the three persons of the Godhead were modes of God's existence, describing the Spirit as the essence of God, and an impersonal force of life. He exercised considerable reservation with regard to the

³²Fernando Canale L., "The Doctrine of God," *Handbook of Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2000), 12:146.

³³Ibid., 147.

³⁴Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God: Prolegomena to the Church Dogmatics Part 1*, 2: 348.

three-in-oneness of God and reduced the Trinitarian distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to temporal distinctions.³⁵

The Deity of Jesus Christ in the SDA Church

The Seventh-day Adventist church was not spared from the debates that were going on during the time of its inception because its leaders were coming from various Christian backgrounds which affected their views on the deity of Jesus Christ.

One of the notable leaders was Joseph Bates (AD 1792-1872). Joseph Bates was born of Congregationalist parents. However, when he was grown up and having gone through some experiences of life, turned his back on the belief of his parents. He acknowledged that his parents held some points in their faith which he could not understand. These included their mode of baptism and Doctrine of the Trinity. Joseph Bates denied the Trinitarian teaching because it did not make sense. He argued that, “it was impossible for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same being.”³⁶ However, Erwin Roy Gane³⁷ notes that there were no indications in his narration of the events of his life that his view had changed at the time of his death.

³⁵R. Olson, “Wolfhart Pannenberg's Doctrine of the Trinity,” *Scottish Journal of Theology*, accessed 3 March 2016, <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?FromPage=online&aid=3358784>.

³⁶George R. Knight, *Autobiography of Joseph Bates* (Berrien Spring, MI: Andrews University Press, 2004), 93.

³⁷Erwin Roy Gane, “The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer,” accessed 6 February 2016, <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/gane-thesis/index.htm>.

Another pioneer who denied the Trinity was Joshua V. Himes (AD 1805-1895) who rejected the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity as unscriptural. He regarded the Trinity as one of those doctrines Christianity adopted during the middle ages as a product of the great apostasy from Scripture.³⁸

James White (AD 1821-1881) had a similar background to that of Himes,³⁹ however, James white believed in the three powers that exist in heaven, with Christ being equal to the Father. He is quoted by Burt as stating that, “The inexplicable Trinity that makes the Godhead three in one and one in three, is bad enough; but that ultra-Unitarianism that makes Christ inferior to the Father is worse,”⁴⁰ implying that even though James did not believe in the Trinity, he also did not subscribe to the position taken by the Christian Connection.

Contrary to the other pioneers was William Miller (AD 1782-1849), whose Baptist background helped him appreciate the Trinitarian position. William Miller wrote, “I believe in one living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead. ... The three persons of the Triune God are connected.”⁴¹ He was one of the few in the Advent Movement who held the Trinitarian position right from the beginning. Erwin Gane also quotes Miller in a separate incident, “I believe in one living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead as there is in

³⁸George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, WA: Review and Herald, 2000), 32.

³⁹Merlin Burt notes that two of the principal founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Joseph Bates and James White, like Himes, had been members of the Christian Connection which rejected the doctrine of the Trinity. Merlin D. Burt, “The Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist History,” accessed 6 February 2016, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2009/02/the-trinity.html>.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Merlin D. Burt, “The Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist History,” accessed on 6 February 2016, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2009/02/the-trinity.html>.

man, the body, soul, and spirit. And if anyone will tell me how these exist, I will tell him how the three persons of the Triune God are connected.”⁴²

Uriah Smith (AD 1832-1903) differed from the rest of the pioneers. He held the Arian view of the Godhead. Commenting on Hebrews 1: 6, Uriah argued that the fact that Christ is an object of worship equally with the Father does not prove that He holds an eternity of past existence with him.⁴³ Hence, he argued that Christ had a beginning and thus He was inferior to the Father. In the same vein, Gerhard Pfandl noted that, “during the first decades of this century there were many who held on to the view that in some way Christ came forth from the Father, that is to say, he had a beginning and was therefore inferior to Him.”⁴⁴

While by 1890 Waggoner (AD 1855-1916) had not yet fully grasped Christ's eternal preexistence, he argued convincingly that Christ was not created but He has life in himself,⁴⁵ possessing immortality in His own right. Waggoner emphasized on the Divine unity of the Father and the Son and insisted that Christ is by nature of the very substance of God. However, Knight makes a contrary observation about Waggoner's belief. He observes that there were some areas where Waggoner was not very clear. When it comes to the beginnings of Christ, his position left a lot to be desired. Knight observes that Waggoner's understanding of the eternity of Christ was

⁴²Merlin D. Burt, “The Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist History,” accessed 6 February 2016, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2009/02/the-trinity.html>.

⁴³Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation* (Hagerstown, WA: Review and Herald, 1912), 430. Gerhard Pfandl notes that “Uriah did not believe until his death in 1903.” Gerhard Pfandl, “The Doctrine of the Trinity among Seventh-day Adventists” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 17/1 (Spring 2006), accessed 13 February 2016, http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file.php?pub_id=242&journal=1&type=pdf.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Jerry A. Moon, “The Adventist Trinity Debate,” accessed 6 February 2016, <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/moon/moon-trinity1.htm>.

not different from that of Smith. He held that “Even Christ himself proceeded and came forth from the Father. However, that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning.”⁴⁶ From this position, it can then be concluded that Waggoner believed that Christ was equal with the father in all aspects except for his beginning. This puts Waggoner in the semi Arian group

The Transition

It can be observed clearly from the above discussions that the Adventist pioneers held divergent views on the deity of Jesus Christ. However, the Minneapolis General Conference (1888) proved to be one of the major turning points in the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology. After the 1900s, when A. T. Johns was working as editor of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, he published a number of articles on the personhood and eternal nature of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Later at the 1919 Bible Conference, he presented a series of eight devotionals for the conference titled the Person of Christ that expressed his view.⁴⁷ However, there were varying opinions on the subject. Thus, the matter could not be discussed to finality at this Conference.

In preparation for the 1980 General Conference Session, a proposed statement of 27 Fundamental Beliefs was sent to the world Divisions for their input. At the Dallas session the proposed fundamental beliefs were voted and the second one read;

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

⁴⁶George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs*, 112.

⁴⁷Merlin D. Burt, “The Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist History,” accessed 6 February 2016, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2009/02/the-trinity.html>.

His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation.⁴⁸

The fundamental belief has remained as it is until today. However, like in the days of old, it is still under challenge from certain quarters of the church. The church still remains on the word.

The Deity of Jesus in the Writings of Ellen G. White (AD 1827-1915)

Ellen White wrote a lot, indirectly though, on the subject under study. Some of Ellen White's statements were written prior to 1898. However, the significance of these statements was not immediately appreciated, as is evidenced by the continued presentation of contrary views in Denominational Periodicals and books.⁴⁹ Thus, from the time the debates started, Ellen White has been writing but people were taking her counsels seriously. It is important to note that in her writings, Ellen white did not deal with this subject as a topic. We only understand her position on the subject through various statements which she made in her writings.

Describing the events at Pentecost, Ellen White states that "The Spirit came upon the disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The infinite one revealed himself in power to the church."⁵⁰ From this passage, it can be deducted that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was an act of God's self-revelation, thus, it suffices to conclude that the Holy Spirit reveals God.

On the same account, she states that when Christ passed within the heavenly gates, "As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the

⁴⁸Quoted in, *Lawrence Geraty* "A New Statement of Fundamental Beliefs (1980)," accessed 13 January 2016, <http://spectrummagazine.org/node/1681>.

⁴⁹Erwin Roy Gane, "The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer," accessed 6 February 2016, <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/gane-thesis/index.htm>.

⁵⁰Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 38.

Disciples in rich currents and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity.”⁵¹ The statement implies that, from all eternity, Christ used to share the same glory with the father. However, upon his incarnation, he had to leave his glory in heaven, which he had to assume after his resurrection.

Some of the sharpest arguments that Christ had with the rulers of the synagogue of his times was after his claims to be equal with God. Commenting on statement, “Before Abraham was I AM”, Ellen White states that “the name of God . . . 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 . . . whose goings forth has been from of old, from the days of eternity.”⁵² The question then is, was Christ aware of whom He was? Yes He knew. “Before Abraham was, I am.” The rabbis knew exactly what he meant. No wonder they charged him with blasphemy.

She made similar claims when she said, “Christ, the One equal with the Father, came to live heaven before men, that they might learn to know what it is to have heaven in the heart. He illustrated what man must be to be worthy of the precious blood of the life that measures with the life of God.”⁵³

In her *Counsels to Parents Teachers and Students*, Ellen White encourages the reading of the word of God. She clearly lays down her claim on Jesus’ equality with

⁵¹Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 39.

⁵²Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 469.

⁵³Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950), 179.

the Father. She states that “in it [God's Word] we may learn what our redemption has cost Him who from the beginning was equal with the Father.”⁵⁴

In another case, in her discussions on why sin was permitted to enter into the world, Ellen White makes claims that may need a whole research, carrying out an exegesis to explain. She claims,

Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was One with the eternal Father, —one in nature, in character, in purpose,—the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (Micah 5:2).⁵⁵

In short, White’s understanding of Christ is that, He is the same with the Father, He is called the Mighty God, and He has been there from everlasting and He will be there until everlasting.

She goes on to explain what went on in the courts of heaven before Lucifer fell. As the Father tried to put the record straight before Lucifer, she states that “The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son, and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both.”⁵⁶

In her book *Evangelism*, she also states that, “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

⁵⁴Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1943), 13.

⁵⁵Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press. 1958), 34.

⁵⁶Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 36.

powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.”⁵⁷

The greatest statement on the subject, the one that silenced the debate during her time on the deity of Jesus Christ is found in Ellen White’s comment on the story of the raising of Lazarus. She refers to Jesus declaring, “I am the resurrection, and the life.’ In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.”⁵⁸ She silenced the anti-Trinitarians of her time. Indeed, according to Ellen White, Christ did not borrow his life from the Father; neither did he derive it from anyone. He is self-existent. He was with the Father from time immemorial.

It can be concluded from the above discussions that Ellen White believed in the Trinity. She made her beliefs very clear in her writings.

Historical Developments on the Deity of the Holy Spirit

The deity of the Holy Spirit did not raise a lot of debates as did the deity of Jesus Christ. As a result, there is not much that has been written on the subject directly. However, different views of different people can be drawn from their discussions of other subjects.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit in the Pre - Nicaea Era (AD 325)

The council of Nicaea (AD 325) was focused more on the nature of the person of Jesus Christ. However, some allusions can be drawn which may help us understand what the philosophers and theologians of the day believed about the Holy Spirit.

One of the early people to talk about the Godhead was Origen (AD 185- 254) who held that the Father is greater than the Son and the Holy Spirit is less than the

⁵⁷Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1946), 615.

⁵⁸Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 530.

Son and He dwells within the saints alone,⁵⁹ bringing to a conclusion that for Origen, the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Jesus, both in creation and in nature.

Another form of Ani-Trinitarianism was taught by Sabellianism which held that, “the Heavenly Father, Resurrected Son, and Holy Spirit are three different modes or aspects of one monadic God.”⁶⁰ These modes have not been revealed simultaneously, but successively. At one moment God presents himself as Creator or Father, at another moment, as Redeemer or Son and then again, as Revealer or Holy Spirit. Robert A. Morey further notes that Sabellianism is “viewed as being derived from the Platonic doctrine that God was an indivisible Monad and could not be divided into three separate Persons.”⁶¹ As a result, James White comments that Modern theologians see no difference between Sabellianism and the present Oneness doctrine held by the Pentecostals. This is based on the denial by Oneness Pentecostals of the Trinity because they fail to recognize the distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁶²

Another school of thought was brought about by Tertullian (AD 155 – 240) who believed that God is a spirit.⁶³ He posits that in the beginning, God created the Son into existence, and then the Son, using a portion of the divine matter shared with him by the Father, He brought the Holy Spirit into existence. And these two are used

⁵⁹Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform*, 143.

⁶⁰G. T. Stokes, “Sabellianism,” *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines*, ed. William Smith and Henry Wace (London, England: John Murray, 1877), 567.

⁶¹Robert A. Morey, *The Trinity: Evidence and Issues* (Iowa Falls, IA: World, 1996), 502.

⁶²James R. White, *The Forgotten Trinity* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1998), 153.

⁶³Tertullian quoted in Nathan Busenitz, “Did Constantine Invent the Trinity?: The Doctrine Of The Trinity In The Writings Of The Early Church Fathers,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal Vol. 24, number 2*, (Fall 2013), 73.

by God as his instruments and agents in the creation and governance of the world.⁶⁴ He then concludes that “He is made a second in manner of existence, in position, not in nature . . . as it was always foretold in ancient times, descending into a certain virgin and made flesh in her womb, is in His birth God and man united.”⁶⁵

Thus the Holy Spirit, according to Tertullian is a creation of the Son.

Contrary to Tertullian’s teaching was Augustine of Hippo (AD 354 – 430) who held the traditional view of God. For him, the Father was the beginning of all Divinity. Hence, the term Father is used to speak of their relationship not their substance. Augustine also believed in the eternal generation of the Son.⁶⁶ He taught that the persons of the Trinity are one essence with three substances. Thus, since they are all divine, there is none who is greater than the other.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit in the Post Nicaea Era (AD 325)

As it has been alluded to, the Holy Spirit was not a subject of discussion before the Council of Nicaea (325). Events leading to the Council were focused on the deity of Jesus Christ. This is why the Nicæan creed did not make any detailed discussions on the Holy Spirit. A statement was just appended at the end of the creed without any qualification or explanation as if it was an afterthought. It was from there that a debate started on the deity of the Holy Spirit.

A group called the *Pneumatomachi* was very visible after the Council of Nicaea. *Pneumatomachi* beliefs were distinct from, but in some areas showed signs

⁶⁴Tertullian quoted in Nathan Busenitz, “Did Constantine Invent the Trinity?: The Doctrine Of The Trinity In The Writings Of The Early Church Fathers,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal Vol. 24, number 2*, (Fall 2013), 73.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: God as Trinity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2011), 118.

of, Arianism. They denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit, positing that the Holy Spirit was the substance of Jesus Christ. They were prepared to accept the deity of the Son and the Creed of Nicaea, but denied that the Holy Spirit belonged to the Divine Being; hence they were referred to as the Spirit fighters.⁶⁷

For Athanasius (AD 299–373), the Holy Spirit took part in the divine plan of salvation; He inspired the prophets, cooperated in the incarnation of the *Logos*, filled the apostles and hallowed believers.⁶⁸ Hence, for him, the Holy Spirit could not be a creature. He acknowledged that without the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the saints would be complete. For him, the Holy Spirit is a partner with Jesus in the unfolding plan of salvation.

This was also the view held by Basil of Caesarea (AD 330-379) who emphasized much on the equality of rank within the Trinity. His argument was based on the great commission command (Matt 28: 19). According to Basil, the communion of the three follows from the same activity in the plan of salvation history, at creation, in the time of the Old Testament, at the sending of Jesus, the founding of the church and even in the judgment in which the fullness of the Holy Spirit will represent the reward, and the loss of the Spirit one of the punishments.⁶⁹ Basil observed that the Spirit gives life just as the Father and the Son. Thus, it can be deduced from Basil's arguments that he regards the Holy Spirit to be equal with Jesus Christ and God in all aspects.

⁶⁷Stuart G. Hall, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church* (London, Great Britain: Biddies, 1994), 153.

⁶⁸The name Holy Spirit is not used everywhere in reference to it in scripture. The term *pneuma* which literally means wind, breeze, breath or spirit often occurs several times. His most notable contribution was his acknowledgement of the role of the Holy Spirit in the unfolding of the plan of Salvation. Franz Dunzill, *A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Church*, 120.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 121. He influenced the conclusions of the Council of Constantinople.

He states that the Spirit fills the earth, thereby demonstrating His unlimited greatness and divinity. He therefore argues that the Spirit should be worshiped together with the Father and the Son and there is no subordination among the three.⁷⁰ However, on the concept of subordination, Fernando Canale makes an interesting observation. He comments that in scripture, there are passages where Jesus acted in subordination to the Father. Thus, for Canale, “the subordination expressed in these texts should not be understood in an ontological sense. It should rather be understood in the sphere of the accomplishment of the plan of salvation.”⁷¹ Therefore, the implication of the subordination of the Son to the Father should be understood in the context of the incarnation. Without this subordination, the incarnation itself would have not reached its salvific purpose.⁷²

The Council of Constantinople (AD 381)

Besides confirming the decisions of Nicaea, this council also focused on proclaiming the divinity of the Holy Spirit, which had been challenged since AD 360 by many currents which included *Arianism* and the *pneumatomachians*. The council attempted to reconcile them, but in vain.

At the end of the council, a conclusion was reached and, in part, it read:

We believe in one God, the Father All Governing . . . creator . . . of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all time . . . Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created . . . of the same essence [reality] as the Father . . . through Whom all things came into being,

⁷⁰Franz Dunzill, *A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Church*, 121.

⁷¹Fernando L. Canale, “Doctrine of God,” *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 105-159.

⁷²*Ibid.*

Who for us men and because of our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human . . . He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and ascended to heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father, and will come again with glory to judge the living and dead. His Kingdom shall have no end [*telos*]. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father, Who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and Son, Who spoke through the prophets; and in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.⁷³

The decisions of Constantinople were expressed in a symbol. The symbol was then received in all the Churches as a liturgical symbol and often called the symbol of Nicaea-Constantinople. One of the articles comprises the new sequence on the Holy Spirit which is made up of five formulas.

The first formula states the divine character of the Holy Spirit. It emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is Holy in nature.⁷⁴ Thus He is like God. He is also sanctifying; He is not sanctified the way creatures are. If the Holy Spirit is Holy just like the Father, it then implies that He shares the same essence with the Father.

The second formula calls the Holy Spirit “Lord.” This is a divine name given Him by Scripture (2 Cor 3:17). The function of the Holy Spirit is defined as divine since He gives new life as stated in John 6:63 and 1 Corinthians 15:45.⁷⁵ This clearly defines His creative and deifying role.

The next formula states that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. This formula calls on the only New Testament text regarding the origin of the

⁷³John H Leith, *Creeeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Knox Press, 1963), 32.

⁷⁴Jean-Yves Lacoste, ed., *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, 345.

⁷⁵Ibid.

Spirit (John 15:26). The council gave the meaning of an eternal procession of the Spirit within the Trinity. The Spirit proceeds, in the same way that the Son is begotten.⁷⁶ Therefore, He is not a creature. The procession expresses His hypostatic property.⁷⁷ It is a way of expressing the Spirit's consubstantiality with the Father and the Son. The Spirit's link to the Son is left undetermined, and thus it opens the way to the future controversy.

The council had another by-product of paramount importance to this study. The council produced the first Trinitarian formula. It read that one sole divinity, power, and substance of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, all equal in honor and in coeternal royalty, in three perfect hypostases, or still in three perfect Persons.⁷⁸ This formula was used again by the Second Council of Constantinople. The statement implies, in short, that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal. Their divinity, their substance and their power are equal. Hence, the Trinitarian concept was coined around this position taken by the council. Even though debates were brewing behind the scenes and many groups remained against this position, there were not much public debates on the subject until in the rise of the reformation where some positions can also be inferred.

The *Athanasian Creed* (AD 430-500) which is also known as *Quicumque*, is considered to be an expression of Catholic belief on the Trinity. It explicitly expresses the simultaneous plurality and oneness of God, The

⁷⁶Jean-Yves Lacoste, ed., *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, 345. It is important to also note that the Son was begotten to fulfill his salvific mission; in the same way the Spirit proceeds from the Deity to fulfill his salvific mission.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; and nevertheless there are not three gods, but there is one God.⁷⁹ It makes a clear distinction between the three different persons of the Trinity. According to this creed, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. However, the oneness of the Trinity is explained on the basis of its divine substance or nature: The divine nature of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is considered to be one.

On the other hand, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son created another controversy. This is referred to as the Filioque.⁸⁰ It implied that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as it does from the Father. The eastern orthodox could not accept that the Spirit proceeds from the Son and was regarded as an insertion which was not in the original statement from the Council of Nicaea.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit in the Reformation Era

It should be noted that the issue of the Trinity was not an issue of conflict between the Catholic Church and the Reformers. Therefore, the reformers did not address this subject directly. Their views can be deduced from their address of different issues. There were no much discussions on the subject as it was not the centre of the reformation.

⁷⁹Fernando L. Canale, "The Doctrine of God" *Handbook of Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, WA: Review and Herald, 2000), 144.

⁸⁰Wayne Grudem observes that, this insertion caused a split between the western Christianity and the Eastern in 1054 AD. "It was not included in the Nicene Creed either in the first version of AD 325, nor the second version of AD 381. Those versions simply said that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father." But in AD 589, at the regional church council in Toledo, the phrase "and the Son" was added, so that the creed then said that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father *and the Son (filioque)*." Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 246.

One of the first people to discuss the subject during this period was Michael Servetus (AD 1511-1553) who was one of the most articulate exponents of the anti-Nicene position. His underlying thesis was that the fall of the Church dated from the disastrous intervention by Constantine into the affairs of Christian doctrines at Nicaea.⁸¹ He held that the Holy Spirit is the power and personality of God which was extended to creation, denying the argument that the Holy Spirit was a distinct person of the Godhead.

On the contrary, Martin Luther (AD 1483-1546) taught that God himself was the comforter who could bring rest to the human soul which was burdened by sin and grief through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Holy Spirit is God as well.⁸² For Martin Luther, everything that God is attributed to have done has been done by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who leads to Jesus for salvation, makes a person Holy, forgive sins, will come back, resurrect the dead and take them to heaven and give them eternal life. From this article, Martin Luther ascribes to the divinity to the Holy Spirit. In his small Catechism, Martin Luther states that,

I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Christ in the one common true faith. Daily in this Christian church the Holy Spirit abundantly forgives all sins – mine and those of all believers. On the last day the Holy Spirit will raise me and all the dead and will give me *and* all believers, eternal life. This is most certainly true.⁸³

⁸¹Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting, *The Doctrine of The Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound* (Cambridge, NY: International Scholars, 1998), 248.

⁸²James Hastings, ed., *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, vol. 2* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2004), 861.

⁸³Martin Luther, "Small Catechism," *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed., Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 355-356.

Another reformer worthy of consideration is Ulrich Zwingli (AD 1484-1531) who stressed more on the central role of the Spirit, the Word and the sacrament. Thus, Zwingli is often thought of as a spiritualist. He distinguishes the Spirit from the Word. Two elements are thought to contribute to this: the freedom of the Spirit, and a Platonist opposition of spirit and flesh in his understanding of man.⁸⁴ For Zwingli, when the Word is lively, powerful and transforming, it is intimately associated with the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who gives the gift of faith and calls believers into the church, allowing them to hear the gospel truly. Thus, for Zwingli, the Spirit is distinct and different from the Word (Jesus).

However, contrary to the above thought was John Calvin (AD 1509-1564), who on his part, held the New Testament view that the Holy Spirit generally acted behind the scenes, as an agent of the Trinity. But it was chiefly Calvin's rediscovery of the biblical doctrine of sovereign grace that demanded a heavy emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Thus Calvin stressed on the total depravity of man and unconditional election, implying that if God were to implement his sovereign election, then the Holy Spirit must work powerfully in the lives of the elect.⁸⁵ Thus, for Calvin, the Holy Spirit is a Partner in the Trinity in the salvation of man. Without the Holy Spirit, the plan of salvation is incomplete.

Contrary to the other reformers were the teachings of Faustus Socinus (AD 1539-1604). He believed that God the father is the one God. The Holy Spirit is regarded as an aspect or power of God. He did not regard the Holy

⁸⁴Ulrich Zwingli, "Of the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God," in *Zwingli and Bullinger*, ed. G. W. Bromiley (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1953), 71.

⁸⁵Eifion Evans, "John Calvin: Theologian of the Holy Spirit," *Reformation and Revival: A Journal of for Church Leadership* Volume 10, Number 4, (2001): 93, accessed on 1 May 2016, http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ref-rev/10-4/10-4_evans.pdf.

Spirit as a divine person. Unfortunately, He ignored those passages that ascribe personality to the Holy Spirit.⁸⁶

The Deity of the Holy Spirit in the Modern Day Era

During this period, most debates are not focused on the individual members of the Godhead. They revolved around the Trinity as a whole. So, most of the discussions done on the Deity of Jesus Christ in this period apply to the Holy Spirit.

Friedrich Schleiermacher (AD 1768-1834), who viewed God as timeless, immutable and simple hence there is no place for distinctions within him.⁸⁷ This line of thought led him to deny the doctrine of the Trinity because it contradicts divine simplicity.⁸⁸ However, Schleiermacher emphasized more on the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of people giving less attention to the issues to do with his nature.

Karl Barth (AD 1886-1968) held views contrary to those of Schleiermacher. He viewed God as having one personhood which is identical to his essence. He was Trinitarian but his version of the Trinity was different from the traditional one. He viewed God as having three modes of existence;⁸⁹ however, he refused to accept the idea of three independent personalities in the Deity in a bid to avoid a belief in three gods. Thus, for him, the Holy Spirit was a way of self-revelation on the part of God. God can reveal himself as the Son, or as the Holy Spirit. Thus, Barth runs the risk of being interpreted as considering the Holy Spirit and Jesus as the same person.

⁸⁶Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John Reeve, *The Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation and Christian Relationships*, 184. Such passages include Eph 4:30; Rom. 8:27; 2Cor 13:14; Acts 15:22-28; John 16:13-15.

⁸⁷Fernando Canale L., "The Doctrine of God," *Handbook of Adventist Theology*, 12:146.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 147.

⁸⁹Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God: Prolegomena to the Church Dogmatics Part 1*, 2: 348.

You must provide a source the Holy Spirit and Jesus is the same person.

Closely related to the teachings of Karl Barth were Wolfhart Pannenberg (AD 1928- 2014) who also believed that the three persons of the Godhead were modes of God's existence, describing the Spirit as the essence of God, and an impersonal force of life. He exercised considerable reservation with regard to the three-in-oneness of God and reduced the Trinitarian distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to temporal distinctions.⁹⁰ Thus, for Pannenberg, the Holy Spirit is God.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit in the early SDA Church

One of the early fathers, 1875, J. H. Waggoner (AD 1820-1889), deduced that from the word of God we learn that the Spirit of God is that awful and mysterious power which proceeds from the throne of the universe, and which is the efficient actor in the work of creation and redemption.⁹¹ Thus according to Waggoner, the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force that proceeds from the throne of God.

In a similar manner, D. M. Canright also denied the personality of the Holy Spirit. He argued that all Trinitarian creeds make the Holy Ghost a person, equal in substance, power and eternity, and glory with the Father and the Son, thereby claiming three persons in the Trinity, each one equal with both the others. If this be so, then the Holy Spirit is just as truly an individual, intelligent person as is the Father or the Son. Thus for him, the Holy Spirit cannot be a person.⁹²

⁹⁰R. Olson, "Wolfhart Pannenberg's Doctrine of the Trinity," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, accessed 3 March 2016, <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?FromPage=online&aid=3358784>.

⁹¹Joseph H. Waggoner, "The Spirit of God: Its Offices and Manifestations," *Review and Herald*, September 23, 1875.

⁹²D. M. Canright, "The Holy Spirit," *Signs of the Times*, July 25, 1878.

In agreement with Waggoner was Uriah Smith (AD 1832–1903) who held that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God; it is also the Spirit of Christ, divine, mysterious emanation through which they carry forward their great and infinite work.⁹³ For Smith, the Holy Spirit is eternal, omniscient and omnipresent, He had a hand in creation, and He can be grieved and quenched. But it is not a person, He is an influence. He is a mysterious emanation. Thus, the personhood of the Holy Spirit is denied.

Also denying the personality of the Holy Spirit was M. C. Wilcox who argued that the presence of God is His Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is the life of God.⁹⁴ Thus, for Wilcox, the Holy Spirit is the breath of God. He is not an independent person in the Godhead.

Deity of the Holy Spirit in the Writings of Ellen G. White

There is not much that was written by Ellen G. White (AD 1827-1915) on the Deity of the Holy Spirit. It must also be pointed out that she did not address the subject directly. The statements on the Holy Spirit can only be inferred as she discussed other issues.

Ellen White believed and stated that the Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person; else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God.⁹⁵ From this it is clear that she believed in both the Deity and the personality of the Holy Spirit.

⁹³See Erwin Roy Gane, "The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer," accessed 6 February 2016, <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/gane-thesis/index.htm>.

⁹⁴M. C. Wilcox, "The Spirit of Life," *Signs of the Times*, June 1898, 2.

⁹⁵E. G. White, *Evangelism*, 616.

She also presents the Holy Spirit as God, not an inferior emanation from the Deity, but in every sense God, as are Christ and the Father. She states, “The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.”⁹⁶ Thus, according to her, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He is not an impersonal force as held by some of her contemporaries.

Commenting on the sending of another Comforter by Jesus Christ, Ellen White states that, “The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead. . . There are three living persons in the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers . . . those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and those powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their effort to live the new life of Christ.”⁹⁷ Here, Ellen white is not only confirming the deity of the Holy Spirit but that of Jesus as well. In so doing, she is confirming the existence of the Holy Trinity.

Summary and Conclusion

It is observed that down through the annals of history, the subject has drawn a lot of debate. In the patristic era, a lot of debate was going on the subject. Different views were held by different theology scholars and philosophers. The council of Nicaea was the starting point in the settling of disputes on the deity of Jesus Christ. The council of Constantinople confirmed the decisions of Nicaea and clarified the Deity of the Holy Spirit. From there, the subject did not rise to levels of official discussions.

⁹⁶E. G. White, *Evangelism*, 617.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 615.

During the reformation period, the subject was not directly discussed. However, most reformers held the deity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Most of the reformers did not disagree with the Catholic Church on the subject. However, the coming of the modern day theologians brought about a different view on the Trinity. Different views of the Trinity started coming up. With Friedrich Schleiermacher completely denying the Trinity, Karl Barth talked about the modes of God's existence.

As has been studied, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was also not spared from the controversy on the subject. Most Adventist pioneers did not believe in the Trinity. They were affected by the churches that they were coming from. However, as they grew in their knowledge and understanding of God, the doctrine was accepted, but it was not without a lot of disagreements.

The greatest question out of all this is: What is the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It has been noted from the related literature that there were differing opinions on this question. Some were of the position that the Holy Spirit is the power of both God and Jesus Christ; others posited that the Holy Spirit is an independent person of the Godhead standing equally to Christ. Still others posited that the Holy Spirit was God in a different mode of existence while others were positing that Christ and the Holy Spirit are one. To answer the question, the researcher is now going to carry out a biblical study on the relationship of the two, Christ and the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUE

This section will focus on the biblical study of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. However, before focusing on their relationship, the research will study how these two are distinct and independent beings. Then the study will focus on the nature of Christ, the Holy Spirit and ontological relationship between the two. Lastly, the research will study their relation to the Father.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit as Core Workers with God the Father

Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are core workers with the Father in all their activities. There is no rank or hierarchy in the Godhead. They together form the True God. One of the most important passages of the Old Testament regarding this concept is Deuteronomy 6:4. It is called the *Shema* and points to the oneness of God. Moses used the Hebrew word *echad* (one) to refer to God.

E. H. Merrill notes that verse 4 can be translated in two ways. The first would be to translate it as, “The LORD our God, the LORD is one” or alternatively it can be translated as “The LORD our God is one LORD.” The first translation focuses on “the uniqueness or exclusivity of Yahweh as Israel’s God” it can therefore be paraphrased as “Yahweh our God is the one and only Yahweh.” This translation uses the noun *’ehād* (“one”) to mean “unique” or “solitary.” The second translation focuses more on the unity or wholeness of the Lord. This does not stand in opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity but it stands as a witness to the self-consistency of the Lord, who is not ambivalent and who has a single purpose or objective for creation and history. Thus,

Merill concludes that, “the ideas clearly overlap to provide an unmistakable basis for monotheistic faith. The Lord is indeed a unity, but beyond that he is the only God. For this reason the exhortation of v. 5 has practical significance.”⁹⁸

In most cases when *echad* is used in the Bible, it implied oneness in plurality. Thus, *echad* may be used to refer to two or more people. For instance, in the institution of the marriage, God said, “For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one [*echad*] flesh,” (Gen 2:24). The term “one flesh” is translated here as a compound. Thus, the man and woman shall become one flesh. The fact that Adam and Eve are one does not remove their being male and female. On the other hand, human beings were created in the image of God; this implies the concept of plurality. Thus, as the Deity is a plurality in oneness, so man and woman were created to be one flesh. Two distinguished persons being one.

Another example of the concept of oneness in plurality is found in Genesis 11:6, it states, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language.” They were one *echad* people. The use of the term *echad* implies that all the people were one. Although those who built the tower of Babel were many, they were as one, with one goal.

Another example is found in Judges 20:8, where the people of Israel “arose as one [*echad*] man” to fight against their enemy (Judges 20:8). The use of the term *echad* in this context implies that the people of Israel, who were many, acted “united together as one man” (Judges 20:11). A. C. Henry comments that “with the emphatic

⁹⁸E. H. Merrill, *Vol. 4: Deuteronomy*, Logos Library System, The New American Commentary [CD ROM] (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 163.

meaning of *the whole people of Israel, the assembly of the people of God*, as in v. 2 as one man. There was but one resolve, and one sentiment, and one expression of opinion, in that vast multitude.”⁹⁹ There was no one who was ready to go home until the enemy had been defeated. K. A. Mathews further comments that “by virtue of their common language they are ‘one people’ (*am ’echad*). . . The ‘one people’ is the concern of God. Communication . . . has left them as a single people rather than the diversity of peoples the blessing had portended.”¹⁰⁰

From the prior examples, it is clear that the term *echad* implies the oneness of God in plurality. This same concept is found in the creation account. According to Genesis 1:1, the expression “God made” [*barah Elohim*] reveals that the Hebrew verb *barah* is singular; while the noun *Elohim* is plural. This implies that *Elohim*’s plurality is regarded as singular. The Deity as a whole did one thing, they *barah*. The same concept found in the term *echad*; a plurality with oneness of purpose.

A similar structure is found in Genesis 1:26 and 3:22. In the former, “God said; Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness.” In this text, God is in plural noun, and the Hebrew verb translated “said” is singular. It is also worth noting that “us” and “our image” goes with *Elohim*, which is a plurality. The latter, refers to God speaking to himself, implying that He is a plurality. God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us.” The pronoun “Us” refers to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, it cannot be applied to angels because if they knew evil, they could have been expelled from heaven. The only one who knows good and evil and

⁹⁹A. C. Henry, *The Pulpit Commentary: Judges*, ed. H. D. M. Spence-Jones (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2004), 199.

¹⁰⁰K. A. Mathews, *Vol. 1A: Genesis 1-11:26* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 483.

remains sinless is God. Thus, implies that one of the members of the Deity is speaking to the other persons of the Godhead.

The same Trinitarian formula continues to feature even in the New Testament. In the Matthean account of Jesus' baptism, Jesus went up from the water, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove. A voice speaks out of the heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matt 3:16 -17). This was the voice of the Father to the Son whom he identifies as His "beloved Son." Thus each person of the Trinity is represented (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) at this formal entrance of Jesus upon his Messianic ministry. According to A. Robertson, "this was a momentous occasion for John and for Jesus and for the whole world. The words are similar to Psalms 2:7 and the voice at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5). The good pleasure of the Father is expressed by the timeless aorist (εὐδοκῆσα *eudokēsa*)."¹⁰¹ W. Hendriksen, and S. J. Kistemaker agrees to this idea by recognizing the presence of the three members of the Godhead. Here, the son requests to be baptized and is baptized, thereby confirming his willingness to carry away the sin of the world upon his own shoulders (John 1:29). He further states that, "*the Spirit's* descended upon him, qualifying him for a task. . . It is fitting that the voice of *the Father's* wholehearted approval and delight be added, so that it may become clear that in the work of saving sinners, as in *every* divine work, the three are one."¹⁰² They are co-workers in the salvation of sinners.

Another similar structure is evident in the great commission of Matthew 28:19. In this command, the Name (*onoma*) is expressed in a singular form.

¹⁰¹Robertson, A. *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Matt 3:17) (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997).

¹⁰²Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. *New Testament commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew. Vol. 9* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 215.

However, the singular *onoma* is referring to all the three persons of the Godhead, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, Matthew portrays the three to be one person, while at the same time singling them out by names. Campbell notes that baptism “is into one name (‘the name of’), but that one name is three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Aspects of the Trinity have already been introduced through this Gospel”¹⁰³ All the three are presented as one.

There are many more passages in the Bible that shows the Trinitarian concept, (Rom1:1; 1:4; 1Co 12:3; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph 1:3). However, the above passages prove that God worked with the other two members of the Godhead in the salvation of humanity. The Holy Spirit gave men the courage and conviction to preach and testify to the message and this message was Jesus himself, His ministry, death and resurrection. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are portrayed as distinguished members of the Godhead who independently worked with each other in all the divine activities. They, together with the father make up the Truine God.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit as two Distinct Persons

Based on 2 Corinthians 3:17,¹⁰⁴ some people within and without Adventism have argued that Christ and the Holy Spirit are the same person, while others have argued that God the Father and the Holy Spirit are one.¹⁰⁵ However, a study of the

¹⁰³I. D. Campbell, *Opening up Matthew* (Leominster, MA: Day One, 2008), 179.

¹⁰⁴An exegetical approach to this text will be carried out in this chapter to establish its proper meaning.

¹⁰⁵In objecting the teachings on the Trinity, Smyrna Gospel Ministries posits that the Trinity is not a Biblical concept. God and the Son may be worshiped but not the Spirit. They posit that the Holy Spirit is God’s personality. Accessed 16 February 2016. <http://presenttruth.info/the-personality-of-the-holy-spirit/>. On the other hand, Joe Harricharan teaches that “If Christ is the same as, or is, the Father, He could not die. The Bible says that “without [the] shedding of blood [there] is no remission” of sins. (Hebrews 9:22) The Bible would have to be rewritten, removing all the pages that would create conflicts! These are but a few of many such problems in denying the Father and Son relationship.” Joe Haricharan, *God’s Mystery Finally Understood* (Welch, WV: Smyrna Gospel Ministries), accessed 26 February 2017, <http://www.smyrna.org/Books/GM/GM.htm>. Lynnford Beachy also agrees to this idea.

context of this passage demonstrates that the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is not the subject under discussion hence this text cannot be employed to come with such a teaching. In this passage, Paul is addressing the challenge brought about by Judaizers. Judaizers had influenced the Corinthians to observe some Jewish ceremonial practices for them to be saved hence Paul emphasizes on the fact that no law keeping is possible outside a covenant relationship with Christ. The Judaizers' gospel replaced Christ with the keeping of the Law.¹⁰⁶

We should be quick to point out that Scripture is very clear that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are two distinct beings. In several cases, Scripture points out the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in different places at the same time and in some cases, they are seen working together at the same time.

An example of Scripture that differentiates the two is John 14:16, which states, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever." The word "another" as used by Jesus here has been used 17 times in the New Testament. We can refer to a few of these texts.

The first text is Mark 10:12, which talks about a woman being married to another man. Similarly, in Luke 7:19 John talks of another promised one. Similar to the above texts is Acts 2:12 which says, "And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" and lastly Revelation 10:1 refers to another strong angel coming down out of heaven."

It should be noted that the word "another" as used in the above texts is used to refer to something different but of the same nature and substance. The word cannot be

Lynnford Beachy, "The Personality of the Holy Spirit," accessed 26 February 2017, <http://presenttruth.info/the-personality-of-the-holy-spirit/>.

¹⁰⁶Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: God as Trinity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2011), 420. An exegetical study of this text was carried out in the following sections.

used to refer to things that are different in nature. Hence, when Jesus talks to his disciples he acknowledges that the comforter (another) who is to come is to be like him but independent from him. The Spirit is here promised as one who would supply Christ's own place in His absence. He was to be their patron and helper as Christ had been to them.¹⁰⁷ Thus, Jesus implies that He and the Holy Spirit are two independent equals of the same nature. The Holy Spirit can replace Jesus effectively both in authority and in effectiveness.

In another case that demonstrates that the two are different beings, the Angel talks to Joseph and said, "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 1:20). This implies that the conception of Jesus was a result of the action of the Holy Spirit on Mary. Therefore, if Jesus is the same with the Holy Spirit, this text becomes very difficult to comprehend and explain. How could Jesus act upon Mary for his own conception?

In a similar case, soon after His baptism, the Bible mentions "Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matt 4: 1). The biblical account gives us two distinct personalities in this occurrence. We have one, Jesus Christ, who is being led by another, the Holy Spirit. If Jesus and the Holy Spirit were the same, it would then imply that Jesus led himself. Matthew could not have run short of words to express the thought. The baptismal formula also gives us another demonstration and proof that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are two distinct persons. Jesus commands his disciples to baptize, "in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19). In this command, Jesus emphasizes the independence of the three persons of the Godhead. All the three are to be seen as actively involved

¹⁰⁷ David Brown, *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown New commentary, Vol.1: Matthew-Acts*, The Ages Digital Library: Commentary [CD ROM] (Albany, GA: The Ages Software, 1997), 625.

in the salvation of man in their individual capacities. Hence, Jesus is mentioned independently from the Holy Spirit.

In yet another incident, Jesus warns the Pharisees against the unpardonable sin, Jesus makes another clear distinction between himself and the Holy Spirit (Mat 12:32). While the sin against Jesus can be forgiven, the sin against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven. Thus, If Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the same; it becomes then difficult to define the unpardonable sin according to this text.

The account of the death of Stephen also makes clear the distinction between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. In this text, Stephen is on earth, imbued with the Holy Spirit and he sees Jesus standing at the right hand of God; (Acts 7:55). Seeing the two, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in two different places at the same time confirms that they are two distinct personalities.

In conclusion, it can be observed that Scripture is very clear when it comes to the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They are two distinct personalities. Thus, those who posit that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are the same do not have scriptural backing. We can now focus on those aspects that define their nature and operations.

The Economic Relationship

Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the Creation Act

The relationship between the two is also demonstrated in their unity of purpose in the creation of the universe. It can be observed that both of them are credited with the creation of the world and they still have that power to create.

There are a number of texts which identify Jesus as the Creator. He has the power to create and He worked with the Father in the creation of the universe. For instance, John 1:1-3 indicates that the Word was in existence from the beginning. The

OT background of John 1, concerning the Word is found in Psalms 33:6, 9 which identifies Jesus as the creative Word of God. The phrase ‘and the Word was with God’ implies that the word is distinct from the Father. They were existing alongside each other and “The word rendered ‘with’ denotes a perpetual tendency as it were of the Son to the Father, in unity of essence. He was with God alone; because nothing beside God had then any being. *And the Word was God* — Supreme, eternal, independent.”¹⁰⁸ It should also be observed that the text presents the Word as an agent in the creation of the universe. This act alone makes the Word to be part of the Deity because the act of creation could only be carried out by God.

Other examples are found in Colossians 1:15-16, and Hebrews 1:2, 10. Both texts credit Jesus with the creation of the world. The same credit is also ascribed to Jesus in Revelation 3:14, which described him as, the Beginning of God’s Creation. The Greek word (archē) can be translated “beginning,” “origin,” “first cause” or “ruler.”¹⁰⁹ It then implies that He is the first cause, the source and beginning of everything that is in existence.

On the other hand, the Holy Spirit was involved in the creation of the universe. An exegetical study of Genesis 1:1 reveals that God did not create alone. He was with the Son and the Holy Spirit. Verse 2 suggests that the Holy Spirit hovered above a formless and empty earth and participated in the creation. “God said; Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness.” In this text, God is in plural noun, and the Hebrew verb translated “said” is singular. It is also worth noting that “us” and “our image” goes with *Elohim*, which is a plurality. The latter, refers to God speaking

¹⁰⁸John Wesley, *John Wesley’s Notes On The Whole Bible: The New Testament*, The Ages Digital Library: Commentary [CD ROM] (Albany, GA: The Ages Software, 1996), 245.

¹⁰⁹William D. Mounce and Robert H. Mounce, *Greek and English Interlinear: New Testament (NASB/NIV)* Michigan: Zondervan, 2008), 1023.

to himself, implying that He is a plurality. God said “Behold, the man has become like one of us.” The pronoun “Us” refers to God, it cannot be applied to angels because if they knew evil, they could have been expelled from heaven. The only one who knows good and evil and remains sinless is God. Thus, implies that one of the members of the Deity is speaking to the other persons of the Godhead.

In the same vein, Psalms 104:30 also describes the Spirit of God as the Creator of the world. At the same time, in the New Testament, the Spirit as the Creator is revealed in His provision of life, in the conception and resurrection of Christ (Matt 1; Luke 1:35; Rom 1:4; 8:11), and the rebirth of sinners (John 3:5-8). Job also ascribes his creation to the acts of the Holy Spirit. Job 33:4 ascribes the creation of man to the acts of the Spirit of God.

In yet another passage, David ascribes the work of creation to the acts of the Holy Spirit. In this case, when God sends his Spirit, they are created and the face of the earth is renewed (Ps 104:29, 30).

Having looked at these passages, it can be concluded that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit took part in the creation act and has the power to create. They were not alone in the acts of creation but they were together with the father. Thus, their relationship dates back to the time when the created world was not yet.

The Two in Divine Missions

It is intriguing to note how Jesus and the Holy Spirit work in the implementation of divine actions. The nature of Jesus allowed him to carry out these divine responsibilities. An example of such a responsibility is evident in John 3:17, which states that Christ came into the world in order that the world might be saved through him (John 3:17). Such a responsibility as the work of salvation was a divine plan that needed divine agencies for implementation. Among the divine beings, it

was Jesus who could carry out the divine work of salvation. However, it should be noted that in this work, the Father and the Son were working together in the salvation of mankind. “The atonement takes place because God the Father loves us and in His Son makes provision for our salvation. Not alone did the Father conceive and initiate the plan of salvation; He was in Christ actually carrying it forward to completion.”¹¹⁰

Similarly, Jesus forgave sins, which was the prerogative of God alone. In the healing of the paralytic in Mark 2, Jesus declared to the paralytic that his “Sins are forgiven (Mark 2:5). Because such acts, according to the Jews, were the acts of God alone so they charged him with blasphemy.

Another divine action that Jesus undertook was the reception of worship. Examples of such actions are found in Matthew 2:11; 28:9; 28:17; Luke 24:52; John 9:38 and 20:28. In all these and other cases, Jesus never refused such an honor. Rather, He regarded their worship as well placed. Yet, this was an honor only due to God.

Jesus also taught that He would ultimately judge humanity (Matt 25:31-32). This is a prerogative of the Most High God. Thus, in all the discussed cases, Jesus demonstrated that he had the ability, authority and power to carry out divine work, which was a prerogative of the Most High God.

The same can also be said of the Holy Spirit. Scripture ascribes some divine work to the acts of the Holy Spirit. Examples of such cases include involvement of the Holy Spirit in the begetting of the Son of God (Matt 1:20). Humanity could not carry out the internal preparation for the incarnation of the Divine being. It called for a

¹¹⁰Raoul Dederen, “Christ: His Person and Work,” *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 175.

Divine Being to carry out the preparation for the incarnation. Thus, Christ could not be born out of the will of man but out of the will of the Divine.¹¹¹ Thus, the full divinity of the Son (Col 1:19) implies the full divinity of the Begetter who is the Holy Spirit.

In another example, the Spirit also gives new life to believers. When they are born of God (John 1:12), they are equally born of the Spirit hence Jesus declares that, “no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5). Thus, the Spirit gives eternal life.

Another divine work ascribed to the Holy Spirit is the sanctification of man. Paul identifies it as a duty of the Holy Spirit of God to present gentiles as sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:16). With his Old Testament background, Paul is aware that there are some sacrifices which were not acceptable before God and wants to distinguish these sacrifices from the sacrifices of the gentiles. Initially, these gentiles were not acceptable before God. However, Paul acknowledges that it is the Holy Spirit who carries out that responsibility of making the Gentiles Holy for presentation before the Lord. It is through this process, sanctification, that the Holy Spirit works in man and makes them Holy. Thus, it is the Holy Spirit who imparts holiness to man.¹¹²

In a similar text, Paul talks of the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood (1 Pet 1:2), and lastly, we are saved “through the sanctifying work of the Spirit” (2 Thess 2:13). In all these texts, it is clear that it is the responsibility of the Holy

¹¹¹ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed. *The Pulpit Commentary: St. Matthew Vol. I* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 6.

¹¹² Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1988), 511.

Spirit to sanctify and make Holy a people of God. Therefore, both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit carry out divine tasks because they are both divine.

Core Workers in the Salvation History

Like the Father, Jesus is the savior of humanity. The name “Jesus/Joshua” is built on the Hebrew stem *yasha* meaning, “Saved.” The first use of this verb in Scripture is also the embryonic first mention of the doctrine of salvation (Exod 14:30).¹¹³ In this case, the salvation of Israel was defined in terms of the destruction of the army of Egypt in the Red Sea. This miracle can be an anti-type of the salvation from sin provided by Jesus on the cross. The name in itself implies his willful salvation, His sacrifice for the sins of the world.

In another case, Paul is very clear that “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12), and similarly, John explains Christ’s mission on earth by saying, “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3: 17). Thus, the purpose of Christ’s incarnation was the salvation of mankind.

Similarly, it is important to note that the Holy Spirit plays an indispensable role in the plan to save man. According to Matthew 12:31-32, God may forgive all sins, however, the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit places one beyond salvation. Some scholars have argued that the Spirit here refers to the divine nature of Jesus Christ. In interpreting this text, Barnes argues that, the word “ghost” means “spirit,” and it refers to the “divine nature” of Christ. The divine nature is the one that enabled him to perform miracles. He argues that there is no evidence that the word

¹¹³Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Sermons on Christ's Names and Titles*, ed. Charles T. Cook. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1961), 96.

spirit refers to the third person of the Trinity. Thus he gives his own meaning of the passage as, “He that speaks against me as a man of Nazareth — that speaks contemptuously of my humble birth, etc., may be pardoned; but he that reproaches my divine nature, charging me with being in league with Satan, and blaspheming the power of God manifestly displayed “by me,” can never obtain forgiveness.”¹¹⁴

However, Barnes seems to hold on to the belief that the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ are one, the issue discussed previously in this paper. The text is explicitly clear that one can blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The blasphemy against this Holy Spirit makes one to lose their salvation because He is the only one whom we have been given by the father to lead us into salvation.

Another example is found in Jesus’ discussion with Nicodemus; Jesus made it clear that it is impossible to be saved without the role of the Holy Spirit. This implies that the baptism of the Spirit is indispensable, without which it becomes impossible for one to be saved.

The Ontological Relationship

Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit Share Same Title with God

John’s preamble to his Gospel gives us a clear understanding of how Jesus is God. John identifies Jesus as the Word that was in the beginning, creating the world and was not alone; He was with God and was God. In verse 14, this Word became flesh and dwelt among man. John identifies this Word as Jesus. Thus, according to John, Jesus was God from the beginning.¹¹⁵ A Barnes observes that this passage lays

¹¹⁴A. Barnes, *Barnes Notes on the Bible, Vol. 12: Matthew – John*, 272.

¹¹⁵Oscar Cullmann states that, “He who was 'in the beginning with God' is just the same one whose story the whole Gospel tells, whose life 'in the flesh' is the centre of the history of divine

the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity. This is so because Jesus is presented as a distinct person from the Father. Jesus, “is intimately united with the first person in essence, so that there are not two or more Gods . . . may be called by the same name; has the same attributes; performs the same works; and is entitled to the same honour with the first, and that therefore he is “the same in substance, and equal in power and glory,” with God.”¹¹⁶

Another example of Jesus being called God is found in Matthew 1:23. Here, Matthew posits that Jesus was not merely God's chosen one with us or God's Son with us but He was God manifested in the flesh. This same idea is perceived in 1Timothy 3:16. His name in itself implies that Jesus was God made man, God incarnated.

In a similar case, Thomas also called Jesus God. Seeing Jesus in a resurrected body, Thomas could not believe that it was true. It was only after he saw the scars in Jesus' hands that he believed and He called him God¹¹⁷ (John 20:28). Thomas' confession of Jesus as his Lord (*Kyrios*) and God (*Theos*) is probably one of the strongest arguments in the New Testament for the deity of Christ. James Grey comments that this is a “strong indirect evidence of the truth of the scriptures, as an impostor would not have told us of the unbelief of an apostle . . . And yet when

revelation and salvation.” Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1963), 249.

¹¹⁶A. Barnes, *Barnes Notes on the Bible, Vol. 12: Matthew – John*, The Ages Digital Library: Commentary [CD ROM] (Rio, WI: The Ages Software, 2000), 941.

¹¹⁷The Pulpit commentary further comments, “It was reserved for Thomas to say TO HIM, and to say unrebuked, uncondemned, by the risen Lord,” MY LORD AND MY GOD!” Herein is condensed into one burning utterance from the worried heart of humanity the slowly gathering conclusion which had been steadily inwrought in the mind of his disciples by all the teachings of the Savior. It was at last spontaneous and exultant. These words are the climax of the entire Gospel. Every narrative points on to this unchallenged utterance.” *The Pulpit Commentary: John*, The Ages Digital Library: Commentary [CD ROM] (Rio, WI: The Ages Software, 2001), John 20:28.

Thomas did express his faith, 'My Lord, and My God' became an unanswerable testimony to Christ's Deity."¹¹⁸

In another case, John identifies two persons of the Godhead, the one who has never been seen by human beings and the other who was begotten in the incarnation. He states that no man has seen God at any time; "the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him" (John 1:18, BGT). Thus, from this Johanne treatise, Jesus is God and he came to explain the unseen God, God the Father.

The above-discussed texts are sufficient to prove that indeed Jesus is God. However, we would have not done justice to this section if we do not consider the Pauline theology on the issue. On his part, Paul also discusses the divinity of Christ. In Hebrews 1:7, 8, Paul directly quotes Psalm 45:6, which calls Jesus God. It is one of the few texts in the New Testament that applies the Greek word for "God" (Theos) to Jesus.

Likewise, in one of his writings, Paul encourages Titus to teach and live while we wait for the appearing of our God, whom he identifies as Jesus Christ, (Titus 2:13). J. H. Thayer makes an analysis of this text and observes that the Greek rendering "our great God" has a definite article while "Savior Jesus Christ" does not have one. "Thus, when a conjunction such as "and" (kai) connects two nouns of the same grammatical case, and a definite article precedes the first noun and is not repeated before the second noun, the latter always refers to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun."¹¹⁹ Thus, from this analysis, it makes sense

¹¹⁸James Grey, *Concise Bible Commentary*, The Ages Digital Library: Commentary [CD ROM] (Albany, GA: The Ages Software, 1999), 726.

¹¹⁹J. H. Thayer, *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1981), 67.

to conclude that the expression can best be interpreted to mean “our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” This then follows that the great God is Jesus Christ.

Similarly, in another passage, Paul once more applies the title “God” to Jesus Christ. In his discussion concerning the salvation of the Jews, his brethren and countrymen according to the flesh he states that Christ, a Jew according to the flesh, came as “the eternally blessed God,” (Rom. 9:3). It is clear from the above discussion that Scripture refer to Jesus as God, and understood him to be God and that is who He is.

In the same vein, the Bible also brings the same idea about the Holy Spirit. He is also referred to as God. An example of such a case is in the story of Ananias. Peter told Ananias that he had lied to the Holy Spirit and then explained, “You have not lied to men but to God” (Acts 5:3, 4). Thus, the God he had lied to was God the Holy Spirit. In this case, Paul identifies the Holy Spirit as God.

In a different case, Paul writes that Christians are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 6:19), while in another text he states that Christians are God’s temple (1Cor 3:16). A temple is for the worship of a divine being, not an impersonal power. When Paul writes “temple of the Holy Spirit,” he implies that the Holy Spirit is God, He is a deity.

There are statements which were spoken by the Lord or Jehovah and the same statements are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. An example of such a statement is found in, Isaiah 6:8-10, where the Lord sought for a messenger. Similarly, in Acts 28:25-27 a reference to this statement in Isaiah is made by Paul. However, in his case, Paul attributes this statement to the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is identified as Jehovah.

In another case, Exodus 16:7, talks of the murmuring of the children of Israel against Jehovah. But in Hebrews 3:7-9 the murmurings are said to be against the Holy

Spirit. This leaves it beyond question that the Holy Spirit and Jehovah (or Deity) are one; hence they can exchange titles without any challenge. What has been done to Jehovah has also been done to the Holy Spirit, and hence it has been shown that both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit share the same titles with God the Father.

Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit Are Personal Beings

There is no question on the personality of Jesus Christ. It is almost universally agreed that Jesus Christ is a person. However, the same cannot be said about the Holy Spirit whose personality has been a source of debate for ages. Despite the debates surrounding the subject, the Scriptures present the Holy Spirit as a person in many ways. For instance, Paul explains that the Holy Spirit can be grieved (Eph 4:30). This emotion is peculiar to those with a personality.

In another sense, Romans 8:27 refers to the mindset of the Holy Spirit. “And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God”. The Greek word translated as mind, φρόνημα, refers to a way of thinking. Thus, the Holy Spirit thinks in a particular way like any other normal personal being.

In the same line of thought, the Holy Spirit is credited with having a personality from 2 Corinthians 13:14, which shows the ability of the Holy Spirit to fellowship with other beings whether they are human, angelic, or divine. Paul, in this text distinguishes the Holy Spirit from God and Jesus Christ, while God and Jesus are credited with personalities, it then defies logic to deny the Holy Spirit a personality when He is grouped with personalities.

Similarly, Acts 15:22-28, attributes a will to the Holy Spirit. In this case, the leaders, people and Holy Spirit made a collective decision. Just like the leaders and

the people, the Spirit is presented as one who can choose, and or decide to take an action. The Holy Spirit is again here grouped with personalities.

Another text that ascribes a personality to the Holy Spirit in John 16:13, 14, where he is presented as a unique Spirit Being. Here John uses the masculine pronouns, which emphasizes the personality of the Holy Spirit. While we refer to Him as “He,”¹²⁰ in actuality is a spirit and spirits do not have gender. However, Scripture does refer to Him with a personal pronoun because the Spirit is not an “it” but a person. In all languages, we have no way of referring to a being that is gender neutral. According to William Branson, all the things the Spirit is to do, which include testifying, reproofing the world of sin, guiding man into all truth, hearing and speaking, and showing the things to come cannot be done by a mere influence without personality and knowledge. It is only an intelligent personality who could accomplish these, for they are personal actions, not the work of non-intelligent influence.¹²¹

It is important to note that the Bible uses the Hebrew word *Rûach* or the Greek word *pneuma* when writing about the “spirit.” The meaning of these words is clear in the following passages. Psalms 104:29 states: “If you take away their spirit (*Rûach*), they die and return to the dust.” James 2:26 notes that, “the body without spirit (*pneuma*) is dead.” These texts imply that the word “spirit” refers to that which gives life to a body. Without spirit, the body is dead. Therefore, in the Bible the word *Rûach* does not only translate to “spirit” but also a “force,” or life force. “Spirit” thus refers

¹²⁰Hodge comments that, “with regard to the Holy Spirit, He is introduced as a person so often, not merely in poetic or excited discourse, but in simple narrative, and in didactic instructions; and his personality is sustained by so many collateral proofs.” Charles Hodge, *A Brief Discourse on the Holy Spirit*, The Ages Digital Library Commentary [CD ROM] (Albany, GA: The Ages Software, 1997).

¹²¹William Henry Branson, *The Holy Spirit: His Office And Work In The World* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1933), 5.

to an invisible force (the spark of life) that animates all living creatures.¹²² However, this one is different from the Holy Spirit who is qualified with qualities of a person. Of interest is John 14:26, which refer to the Spirit as “*to pneuma to hagion*” (the Holy Spirit). This classifies the Holy Spirit as a neuter gender.

While the Father and the Son are portrayed in personal terms, it may therefore imply that the spirit, being neuter, is an impersonal force rather than a person. However, if being referred to as “spirit” implies that the Holy Spirit is impersonal, then both angels and God the Father would have to be “forces” rather than persons as well since in John 4:24, Jesus says “God is *spirit (pneuma)* and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth,” and in Hebrews 1:14 angels are referred to as “ministering spirits (*pneumata*) sent forth to serve.” The key here is to examine the context and usage of a word in Scripture, rather than just its gender. If the context is to be considered, the very verse actually demonstrates the Holy Spirit to be a person. It can be concluded that the Holy Spirit has a personality. He is capable of interaction, making decisions and has emotions like any other beings.

The Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ Are Self-existent

The Holy Spirit is attributed with self-existence. His existence is not dependent on any other being. For instance, in Genesis 1:2 the Holy Spirit is shown to have been in existence before the creation works started. His existence is not dependent on any other source as He existed on his own. He is the first God to be mentioned in the scripture.

¹²²The term “spirit” translates Hebrew [ruach) and Greek [pneuma) words denoting "wind," "breath," and, by extension, a life-giving element. With the adjective "holy," the reference is to the divine spirit, i.e., the Spirit of God. Thomas R. W. Longstaff and Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1996), 432.

More evidence on the self-existence of the Holy Spirit is evident from Paul in Hebrews 9:14. In this case, Paul presents the Holy Spirit as an eternal being. His existence spans from eternity to eternity.

On the other hand, Jesus' existence was not dependent upon the Father or the Holy Spirit. He is self-existent. Commenting on the preamble to the Gospel of John, Oscar Cullman observes that this passage speaks of the relationship between the divine revelation in the life of Jesus and the pre-existence of Jesus. He differs from Mark who identifies the beginning of the history of Jesus with the His Baptist. Thus, for Cullman, "the beginning lies in the pre-existence of Jesus, which directs our attention to the absolute beginning of all things. . . He speaks of this beginning only in the closest connection with what he says of the further work of Christ."¹²³ He, who was, in the beginning with God, is just the same one whose story the whole Gospel tells, whose life in the flesh is the centre of the history of divine revelation and salvation.

Similarly, in John 8:58 Christ claimed that, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). It should be noted that this is the same name by which God identified himself to Pharaoh when he said, "I am who I am"¹²⁴ (Exod 3:14). This title demonstrated that God is self-existent and Christ here used the same title referring to himself to show that He is also self-existent.

Another reference is found in Romans 9:5 where Paul recognizes Christ as having existed from eternity. He is "the eternally blessed God." This is simply a

¹²³Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of The New Testament*, 249.

¹²⁴Whidden notes that, "It should be pointed out that if Jesus simply wished to say that He was in existence prior to Abraham, He could have said Ego En (I was). Instead He used the term "I Am" in the absolute sense. The expression is used with a clarifying noun in other places-for example: I am the good shepherd. But here Jesus abruptly said 'I Am' without any further clarification." Whidden, Moon, and Reeve, *The Trinity*, 29.

powerful testimony not only to the deity of Christ, but also to His nature as an eternally, ever-existing God.¹²⁵ He is not a creature but he is self-existent.

Similarly, Jesus is called the image of God (Col 1:15-20). This phrase, “ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ” (*hos eistin eikān tou theou*) if translated would mean, “who is the image of God.” It means that Jesus, in his own person shows us what God is like.¹²⁶ Being exactly like God, He is a visible, exact representation of what God is, self-existent.

Christ the Only Begotten

Some have argued that Christ is not self-existent but the Father begot him at the beginning. It is necessary to do an analysis of the biblical texts used to defend this position. Two of these passages are John 1:18 and 3:16. In both cases, Christ is referred to as the only begotten Son.

The Greek word for “only begotten” is *monogenēs*. It points to a literal begetting of Jesus by his father. In order to understand the real meaning of *monogenēs* a study of its use in other biblical passages is needed.

The word *monogenēs* has two main meanings. On the one hand, it can refer to the only child in a family; in the other, it can refer to a child who is unique, who is the only one of his kind.

Some example of *monogenēs* as the only child in a family is found in Luke 7:12, which refers to the single son of the widow of Nain who had died. It is also mentioned in Luke 8:42 in reference to the only daughter of Jairus. The same term is

¹²⁵Whidden, Moon, and Reeve, *The Trinity*, 37.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 47.

also used in chapter 9:38 to refer to the only child that the man had and now he was being troubled by evil spirits.

However, the same word *monogenēs* can also be used to mean a unique son or the only one of his kind. This meaning is applied to Isaac, who is Abraham's *monogenēs* (Heb 11:17). Why Isaac is called *monogenēs* if Abraham had Ishmael as his first born? The only possible answer is because Isaac was Abraham's unique "son of promise."

Thus, in the case of Christ, He is called the only begotten (*monogenēs*) because his birth was different and special. He was the only one of His kind. He was special in the sense that he did not have a biological father; He was born of the Holy Spirit. He was fully God and Fully Human. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez comments that, "When the title *monogenēs* refers to Jesus it designates the uniqueness of His nature, the uniqueness of His relationship with the Father, His uniqueness as the revelator of God, and His uniqueness as redeemer. There is no other like Him; He is the only one of His kind."¹²⁷ He further comments that "There is an enemy that claims to be like Him and who in heaven as well as throughout human history attempted and continues to attempt to usurp His uniqueness. The title *monogenēs* makes clear that there is no one like Christ in the totality of the cosmos. He is indeed the only one of His kind!"¹²⁸

Christ the First-born

Another text, which challenges the self-existence of Christ, is Colossians 1:15 which identify Christ as "the first-born (*prætotokos*) of all creation". This text is used

¹²⁷Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, "Christ as Monogenes: Proper Translation and Theological Significance," *Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* 15/1 (2003): 1-7, accessed 12 March 2017, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Christ%20as%20Monogenes.pdf>.

¹²⁸Ibid.

to imply that Jesus is the first Son of God, born of God. This is an old school of thought, which was called Arianism.

The word *prætotokos* has two basic meanings, firstly, it can refer to the first child to be born or secondly, the rights and privileges associated with the first-born. An example of when the word *prætotokos* was used to refer to the first child to be born is in Exodus 11:5. In this case, *prætotokos* refers to the first born of human beings and animals. In the New Testament, this word is used in Matthew 1:25 referring to Jesus.

With reference to the rights and privileges associated with the first-born, an example is Genesis 41 where Manasseh was the firstborn (Gen 41:51) and Ephraim was the second born of Joseph. However, Jeremiah 31:9 states that the second became the first-born.¹²⁹ Thus, though Ephraim was second in the order of birth, he was accorded the privileges of the first-born.

Other examples of the use of *prætotokos* with reference to the privileges and rights of the first born are found in 1 Chronicles 26:10 where Hosah, made Shimri the first born. Another example is that of David who was number eight among Jesse's sons (1 Sam 16:10-11), yet David was made the first born (Ps 89).

Thus, when the word *prætotokos* is used, it emphasizes more on the special honor, greatness, and authority of the firstborn than on the chronological order of being born first. Hence, when the term *prætotokos* is applied to Jesus as the firstborn among many brothers (Rom 8:29) and the firstborn of the dead (Rev 1:5), it is emphasizing more on the rights and privileges brought about by his birth and

¹²⁹Clarke comments that Ephraim, being the most considerable, is often put for the whole of the ten tribes. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary OT, Volume 4, Isaiah - Malachi*, The Ages Digital Library: Commentary [CD ROM] (Albany, GA: The Ages Software, 1997), 682.

resurrection.¹³⁰ Ekkehardt Mueller further comments that Jesus was first in the sense that “all resurrections whether past or future were and are dependent on His resurrection . . . it is associated with having supremacy . . . points to Christ’s exalted position as the supreme king and ruler of the universe and does not suggest that he has been created or has emanated from God in ages past.”¹³¹

Thus, *prætotokos* as used in Colossians 1:15 can best be translated to mean that Christ was in existence before all creation. He is ranked above all creation; hence, he is superior when compared with creation. It cannot be used to mean that Jesus was born of the Father in the beginning.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit Share the Same Attributes with the Father

It can be observed from the study of the Scriptures that both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are part of the Deity. They share the same divine attributes with the Father. Holiness is a basic characteristic of both the Spirit and Jesus Christ. In more than 90 places, the Bible calls the Spirit of God “the Holy Spirit.” The Spirit is so holy that blasphemy against Him cannot be forgiven, although blasphemy against Jesus could be (Matt 12:32). Paul also argues that insulting the Spirit is just as sinful as trampling the Son of God under foot (Heb10:29). This indicates that the Spirit is inherently holy, holy in essence, rather than having an assigned or secondary holiness such as the temple had.

¹³⁰Martin King, *An Exegetical Summary of Colossians* (Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1998), 47.

¹³¹Ekkehardt Mueller, “The Firstborn (Col 1:15),” *Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* (2004), accessed 26 March 2016, http://www.bibelschule.info/streaming/Ekkehardt-Mueller---The-Firstborn_21686.pdf.

Similarly, Jesus is portrayed to be a Holy Being. This is clear in the fact that Christ is equal with the Father as found in Colossians 1:9, and in chapter 2:9. The original word for "Godhead" is θεότητος. The word implies "divinity, deity, Godhead, divine nature, very face of God, His express image, the very transcript of His being."¹³² In these texts, Paul brings out the idea that in Jesus Christ we see the full deity of God, we see God himself, the transcript of his being. Thus, Christ shows the exact Glory that the Father has.

Another attribute shared by the two is eternity. Jesus acknowledges that the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, will be with man forever (John 14:16). At the same time, Paul also states that the Holy Spirit is eternal (Heb 9:14).

Similarly, Jesus existed from eternity. He was with the Father from the time immemorial. An example of such a text is found in Jesus' prayer when He asked to be glorified with the glory that he had before the world begun, (John 17:5). At this point, Jesus is facing crucifixion and having accomplished the work He had been sent to do, He prayed for His reinstatement to His original status as God, sharing the same glory with the father as before His incarnation.

A similar text is found in Matthew 26:64, after Jesus had been asked by the High Priest if he was the Son of the Most High, he responded by saying, ". . . you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt 26:64). The reason why the High Priest tore his cloths and charged Jesus with blasphemy was because he claimed to share the same throne and glory with the father, even in eternity.

Furthermore, Paul points out that Jesus existed in the "form of God" and "did not consider it robbery to be equal with God" (Phil 2:5-8). Some scholars observe that

¹³²Barbara, Friberg, and Timothy Friberg, *Analytical Greek New Testament*, 1356.

the word used here μορφή (form) refers to attributes and characteristics of God. They also state that “It also denotes of the nature of something, used of Christ's contrasting modes of being in his preexistent and human states form, nature.”¹³³ Thus, if Christ was the same as God the Father, it then follows that they both possess eternity as an attribute. However, it should be noted that for the sake of the plan of salvation plan, Christ allowed himself to be temporarily subordinated to the Father. Fernando L. Canale observes that “this subordination should not be understood in an ontological sense. . . . The biblical idea of the subordination . . . belongs not to the inner structure of divine reality, but rather to the sphere of the accomplishment of the plan of salvation.”¹³⁴

At the same time, names are a reflection of one's character. If Jesus shares the same titles with the Father, it then implies that He is the same with the Father as far character and attributes are concerned. Such titles include “the first and the last” (Isai 44:6), “I am” and “Jehovah” (Isa 43:10; 41:4; 48:12) and also “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev 1:8). These titles refer to God's eternal existence, the beginning of everything and He knows no end.

However, in Revelation 1:17, the same title is also ascribed to Jesus Christ. He calls himself, “the First and the Last” (vs. 10-20), “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last” (Rev 22:13). All three titles combine to form a compound, showing that they have the same meaning.

Another title that Jesus shares with the Father is *YHWH*, the formal name of God in the Old Testament. God claims, “They will look on me, the one they have

¹³³Barbara, Friberg, and Timothy Friberg, *Analytical Greek New Testament*, 1872.

¹³⁴Fernando L. Canale, “Doctrine of God,” *The Handbook of Adventist Theology*, 126.

pierced.” (Zech 12:10), however, in the New Testament the text is applied to Jesus’ crucifixion (John 19:37)). If it is *YHWH* who is pierced and looked on, and Jesus was the one pierced and looked upon, then it implies that Jesus is *YHWH*.

A similar exchange of titles between Jesus Christ and God the Father is found in John 8:58 which clearly refers the title “Lord” of Exodus 3:14, 15 to Jesus Christ, however, on the other hand, Revelation 4:8 regards the “Lord God Almighty” of Isaiah 6:3 as the Father “who was and is and is to come.” With this interchanging use of the title, the Lord (*YHWH*) can be used to refer to both the Father and the Son. They share the same title because they possess the same attributes.

Like God, the Father, the Holy Spirit is also all knowing. “The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God” (1 Cor 2:10). The Spirit of God “knows the thoughts of God” (verse 11). The Spirit therefore knows all things, and is able to teach all things (John 14:26). This reveals the interpersonal relationship within the Godhead. The Spirit searches everything and nothing escapes his attention. The verb *to search* is rendered in the present tense to indicate that the work of searching never ceases.

The Holy Spirit is also omnipresent an attribute ascribed to God. David, in Psalm 139:7, 8 asks a question, “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend into heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, you are there.” A closer look at the passage will also bring out the thought that here, David equates the presence of the Holy Spirit to the presence of God and to go from God’s Spirit is to go from his presence.¹³⁵

¹³⁵Whidden, Moon, and Reeve, *The Trinity*, 74.

2 Corinthians 3:17 -The Ontological Relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit

2 Corinthians 3:17 has been used to argue that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are the same person in different modes of existence. However, an exegetical approach to this text seems to prove the opposite, it actually demonstrates the ontological relationship between the two. However, it should be observed that, in this passage, Paul is not addressing issues to do with the person of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Paul addresses the subject that was based on the response of the Corinthians to the Gospel. Judaizers has influenced the Corinthians to observe some Jewish ceremonial practices (the law of the letter) for them to be saved hence Paul emphasizes on the fact that no law keeping is possible outside a covenant relationship with Christ. The Judaizers' gospel replaced Christ with the keeping of the Law.¹³⁶ Below is a comparison of the two covenants as presented by Paul:

OLD COVENANT	NEW COVENANT
Called the covenant of the Letter (v. 6)	Called the covenant of the Spirit (v. 6)
Written on tablets of stone (v. 3)	Written on the hearts of believers (v. 3)
Covered with a veil (v. 13)	Veil removed by accepting Christ (v. 14)
The law kills (v. 6)	The law gives life (v. 6)

However, when it comes to verse 17, Paul makes a statement concerning Christ and the Spirit of this new covenant. In Greek, the text is rendered, ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστίν· οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία. (*ho de kyrios to pneuma eistin*

¹³⁶Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: God as Trinity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2011), 420.

ou de to pneuma kyrou eleutheria) Straight transliteration would render it as follows, ὁ (the) δὲ (but) κύριος (Lord) τὸ (the) πνεῦμά Spirit) ἐστίν· (He/she, it is) οὗ (who, which) δὲ (but) τὸ (the) πνεῦμα (spirit) κυρίου, (of Christ) ἐλευθερία.(freedom). Of interest in this passage is the first phrase, ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστίν. In this phrase, τὸ πνεῦμά is a predicate to ὁ δὲ κύριος. In this case, ἐστίν is used as a copula which joins the subject with the predicate.

According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, “εἰμί, as a copula, indicates that the subject is to be compared to the thing expressed by the predicate.”¹³⁷ In this case, the predicate is similar to the subject. This being the case, the translation should then show that the predicate is an exact replacement resembles the subject. The best translation would then read, “But Christ is, as it were, that Spirit...” or “Christ is, like, that Spirit”

This implies that Christ is like the Spirit of the covenant which was better than the covenant of the Letter. Here, Paul is referring to the sameness in terms of nature and the unity that exists between Christ and the Spirit. The two enjoy a unity of purpose and function. Their mission is the same. They can easily represent each other. In John 14:16-20, the indwelling of Christ is equivalent to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. John 14:17, 18 demonstrate that the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is the fellowship of Christ. In John 7: 37-39, the Spirit is shown as an agent of Christ in the work of redemption and the Spirit ministers the wisdom, truth and righteousness of

¹³⁷Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament in Bible Works* 8 [CD-ROM] (Norfolk, VA: Bible Works, 2009), v. s. “eimi”

Christ.¹³⁸ Alfred Plummer further points out that, “at any rate Christ and the Spirit work in the same way and produce the same effects.”¹³⁹

It can be deducted from the above discussion that 2 Corinthians 3:17 demonstrates that Christ and the Holy Spirit are one in purpose, mission and nature. The use of εἶμι as a copula also indicates that these are two distinct persons these two are the same as far as their makeup is concerned, having the same substance; hence they can represent each other well. Charles Hodge points out that these two are, “one . . . in the same sense in which our Lord says, ‘I and the Father are one.’ It is an identity of essence and of power. Christ is the Holy Spirit because, being the same in substance, where Christ is, there the Spirit is, and where the Spirit is, there is Christ.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸“That Spirit” (2 Cor 3:17), *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (SDABC), rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 6: 850.

¹³⁹Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (New York: Scribner, 1915), 102.

¹⁴⁰Charles Hodge, *2 Corinthians* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995), 2 Co 3:17.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

It was observed from the literature that different groups and individuals held differing views and positions on the deity of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit. For instance, in the Patristic era, Gnostics as well as Marcion held that Jesus was different from the Jewish God. He was only a representative of the creator God. *Ebionites* believed that Jesus was begotten by the father at baptism. Origen taught that there were differences in the essence of the persons of the Godhead. He argued that they were not equal. Thus, the Father had more power, followed by Jesus Christ and lastly the Holy Spirit. Tertullian also held a similar view. Contrary to this view was Augustine of Hippo. He taught that the persons of the Trinity are one essence with three different substances. There is no one greater than the other. Paul of Samosata emphasized on the humanity of Christ, viewing Christ as a man became God. On the other hand, Sabellius held that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were three modes of one monadic God.

Later on, Arianism emphasized more on the idea that the father alone is God. Thus, Jesus was begotten by God before everything else was created. He was then invested with the authority to create other things. On the contrary, Alexandria emphasized the point that Jesus existed as long as the father existed. The differing views of these two men are referred to as the Arian controversy.

The Arian controversy led to the convening of the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. The council condemned Arius' position and confirmed the deity of Jesus Christ. Another council was called at Constantinople and it confirmed the decisions of the Council at Nicaea.

After the Council of Nicaea rose the *Pneumatomachi* who argued that the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ were of the same essence. However, their essence is different from that of the Father. The Macedonians differed. They held that the Holy Spirit was a creation of the Son. On the other hand, Athanasius and Basil of Caesarea argued that the Holy Spirit could not be a creature but is equal with God the Father and the Son.

It was also discovered from this research that during the reformation era, there was not much discussion as it was not the focal point of the reformation. However, there were also differing positions on the subject. Luther's position did not differ from that of the Catholic Church. He held a belief in The Trinity. Calvin insisted on the eternal generation of the Son. However, he still regarded Jesus as divine. He viewed the Holy Spirit as an agent of the Trinity who always worked behind the scenes. Servetus and Socinus rejected the doctrine of the trinity. They regarded it as a doctrine of three Gods. This was the same view held by the Unitarians.

It was discovered from the related literature that modern day theologians were affected by the enlightenment. Schleiermacher denies the deity of Jesus thus denying the doctrine of the trinity. Pannenburg and Karl Barth held to the three modes of existence of God. They denied the concept of three independent personalities.

As initially planned, the research also studied the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist church. It was interesting to note that the majority of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were not Trinitarians.

The likes of Joseph Bates, Joshua V. Himes, Uriah Smith and James White were all anti-Trinitarian. On the other hand, there were a few who held to the Trinitarian position. Waggoner was Trinitarian and so was William Miller. Although he swung from one position to the other as he grew up, he eventually became a Trinitarian. Before 1888, Ellen G. White did not speak publicly on the subject. However, in her writings, she showed and supported the divinity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Her writings had a great influence in the organization's adoption of the Trinitarian doctrine.

The transition came after the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference. It was at this conference that the divinity of Christ was focused on and an interest on the subject was aroused. In 1931, the first official statement on the Trinity was accepted in the Seventh-day Adventist Church which recognized both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as Holy and distinct persons.

Conclusions

From the study carried out in chapter 3 on the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The Trinity is a biblical concept. It runs as a thread throughout the whole Bible. A number of texts subscribe to this concept. A close study of words such as *echad*, (Deut 6:4) and "Elohim," (Gen 1:1; 1:26 and 3:22), testify to the plurality in oneness of the Godhead. Jesus is equally called God. He is referred to as "our great God" (Heb 1:7-8), "Our God and Savior" (Titus 2:13). He is equal with the Father (Phil 2:5-8). Christ is, the one in whom dwells all the "fullness of all Godhead bodily. Jesus is God. He is an express representation of who God is. Thus, Christ is God incarnate. He is a divine being.

From the study, it can also be concluded that the names and titles ascribed to Jesus confirm his divinity. Emmanuel implies God with us, (Matt 1:23). Thus the name impresses the presence of God among man. Such titles like Lord, *YHWH* were specifically used to refer to God but they were also used to refer to Christ in some instances. Names, being a reflection of who an individual is, and then Christ is God by virtue of him sharing the same names with God.

As revealed from the study, it can be concluded that Jesus is self-existent, (Luke 8:58; Rom 9:23; Col 1:15). His existence is not dependent on the Father. He shared the same glory with God the father. (John 17:5; Phil 2: 5-8; Col 1:19, 2:9). He has the power to save man, a responsibility that belongs to the deity, (Exod 14:30; Acts 4:12). He carried out divine work, (John 3: 17; Mark 2:5; Matt 2:11; 25:31-32) and He is also ascribed to have created the universe (John 1:3; Ps 33:6-9; Col 1:15-16).

Similarly, it can be concluded of the nature of the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit has a personality (Eph 4:30; Rom. 8:27; 2Cor 13:14; Acts 15:22-28; John 16:13-15). He is referred to as a He. He can make decisions (Acts 15:22-28), Thus, He thinks and reasons just like any other being. He is capable of fellowshiping and interacting with other beings (2 Cor13:14). The Holy Spirit shares the same attributes with God: He is divine. He is also equally called God (Acts 5:3-4; 1Cor 3:16). He is holy as the name suggests. He is self-existent (Heb 9:14; Gen. 1:2); he also has power to save (Matt 12:31-32; John 3) and is also ascribed to have creative powers (Ps 104:29-30; Job 33:4).

It can also be concluded from the study of this research that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are two distinct beings, (John 14:16; Matt 1:20; 4:1; 28:19; 12:32; Acts 7:55; Rev 22:17). They are distinct from each other and are also distinct from the

Father. Thus, there are three distinct beings of the Deity; The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Having reached these conclusions about Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, as far as their nature is concerned, it then becomes easier to make a conclusion on their relationship. Having concluded that Jesus Christ is divine and Holy Spirit is also divine; Jesus is equal to the Father and so is the Holy Spirit; they are both called God; They were both involved in the creation of the universe; they both carry out divine work and they both have the power to save, it can then be concluded that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are two distinct and equal members of the Deity, who share the same essence. No one is greater than the other among themselves. They, together with the Father make up the Triune God. Raoul Dederen agrees to this conclusion when he comments that the three are distinguished only by their mutual relations as they endeavor to show the Deity to humanity. “God the Father stresses the infinity, eternity, and power of the Deity, the primacy and finality of God. Jesus Christ affirms the character of the divine nature. The Holy Spirit testifies of the intimacy of omnipotent Power of God, This is why the Trinity is a relationship, not a separation.”¹⁴¹

An exegetical study of 2 Corinthians 3:17 supported this conclusion by showing that Christ and the Holy Spirit are of the same substance, they share the same mission as far as the salvation of mankind is concerned.

Implications

The findings of this research imply that the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the Trinity are biblically true and correct. Jesus Christ and the

¹⁴¹ Raoul Dederen, “Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity,” accessed 20 February 2016, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Doctrine%20of%20the%20Trinity.pdf>.

Holy Spirit are two equal and distinct divine beings who share the same essence. Although the Bible does not employ the term “Trinity,” the presence of a triune God in the Bible is a fact that cannot be denied by any theologically sound person. The strand of a triune God runs clearly from the first book of the Bible to the last one. Any objective study of the Bible will bring out the same conclusion.

Recommendations

This research was focusing more on the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is the recommendation of this researcher that another detailed research can be carried out on the relationships that exist between all the members of the Trinity. Of great interest would be the issues of subordination among the members of the Godhead. The greatest being, how can they be said to be equal when Jesus depended on the Father for his ministry and at the same time the Holy Spirit had to be sent by Jesus to take his place.

It is also the recommendation of this researcher that a detailed study be carried out on the active role of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. It needs to be clear how God worked with the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament to avoid viewing the members of the Godhead as modes of God’s existence.

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