

# Early Adventist Anti-Trinitarian Statements And Early Adventist Statements Regarding the Doctrine of the “Godhead.”

Compiled, with limited comment, by

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**Ellen G. White:**  
**“Our Religion Would Be Changed.”**  
**“Books of a New Order Would Be Written.”**

In the book, *Selected Messages, Vol. 1*, pages 204-5, Ellen White makes the following statement:

“The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. **Our religion would be changed.** The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. **Books of a new order would be written.** A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.” Originally published in *Special Testimonies, Series B, Vol. 2*, pages 54, 55.

## Adventism Admits Theological “Changes.”

Elder William Johnson, editor of the *Adventist Review* made the following statement regarding “change” in our doctrinal view of the G-dhead:

**“Some Adventists today think that our beliefs have remained unchanged over the years,** or they seek to turn back the clock to some point when we had everything just right. But all attempts to recover such “historic Adventism” fail in view of the facts of our heritage. **Adventist beliefs have changed over the years** under the impact of “present truth.” **Most startling is the teaching regarding Jesus Christ,** our Saviour and Lord. **Many of the pioneers, including James White, J. N. Andrews, Uriah Smith, and J. H. Waggoner, held to an Arian or semi-Arian view—that is, the Son at some point in time before the Creation of our world was generated by the Father. Likewise, the Trinitarian understanding of God, now part of our fundamental beliefs, was not generally held by the early Adventists.** Even today a few do not subscribe to it.” William Johnson, *Adventist Review*, January 6, 1994, page 10, 11.

George Knight, professor of church history at Andrews University wrote in *Ministry Magazine*:

**“Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denominations Fundamental Beliefs. More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the Trinity.** For Joseph Bates the Trinity was an unscriptural doctrine, for James White it was that old Trinitarian absurdity, and for M. E. Cornell it was a fruit of the great apostasy, along with such false doctrines as Sunday keeping and the immortality of the soul.” George Knight, *Ministry*, October 1993, p. 10.

The most significant area of changes to the doctrines of the Seventh-Day Adventist church is the doctrine of the Godhead. The majority of early Seventh-day Adventism believed in the semi-Arian view of the Dual Godhead, where the Father is the one, true, "God," and, the Son, as the pre-incarnate Divine Son, begotten of the Father in eternity past, prior to the creation of any thing in the universe, is "Lord". The "Spirit" was believed to be the "spirit" of the Father and Son and was the power and intimate presence of both the Father and the Son. It was believed that the Spirit was not a separate, distinct, person or personality.

As members of the Seventh-Day Adventist church, that now requires assent to the 28 fundamental beliefs of the denomination, at least four of which pertain to the doctrine of the G-dhead, viz. Trinity, it behooves us to have respect to the beliefs of the founders of Adventism to at least know what they believed and why they objected to the doctrine of the Trinity and, why, if Scripturally supportable, the current Trinitarian position is superior to the beliefs of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism.

As you read the following, dear reader, you have a choice of two roads of faith:

### **1. The Semi-Arian View of Early Adventism is a "Pillar of Faith" Not to be Removed:**

**"Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid.** My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, We can do nothing more, the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. **Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me,** and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me." Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, pages 56, 57.

**"As a people we are to stand firm on the platform of eternal truth that has withstood test and trial. We are to hold to the sure pillars of our faith.** The principles of truth that God has revealed to us are our only true foundation. They have made us what we are. The lapse of time has not lessened their value." Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, page 201.

**"We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith.** They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are Gods word, and are to be respected, the application of them, **if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake.**" Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, page 161.

### **Or, 2. The Semi-Arian view of the G-dhead is an exposition of Scripture having error:**

**"There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible.** Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly; *neither can we afford to reject anything that bears the fruits of the Spirit of God; but we should be teachable, meek and lowly of heart. There are those who oppose everything that is not in accordance with their own ideas, and by so doing they endanger their eternal interest as verily as did the Jewish nation in their rejection of Christ.* The Lord designs that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the living oracles to see whether or not we are in the faith." Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, December 20, 1892.

**The Historical Record of the Semi-Arian Dual Godhead View  
Of the Founders of Seventh-day Adventism,  
That the Godhead Consisted of a Dual Godhead  
Of the Father and His Pre-Incarnate Son.**

Introduction.

Because I discovered that the founders of Seventh-day Adventism specifically rejected the doctrine of the Trinity; and, because in the study of their faith and their reasons why they rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, I came to believe as they did; and, because (despite what it seems from the surface regarding my belief in the Divine Family, believing that the Holy Spirit is a person or persons) I still essentially believe in the Semi-Arian, Dual Godhead view, I now turn your attention to statements from the founders of Seventh-day Adventism that document their belief and reasons for it. For me, stepping away from blind adherence to the doctrine of the Trinity was an essential stepping stone that enabled me to eventually comprehend the doctrine of the Divine Family.

A very strong and grateful “thank-you” goes to the brethren at [www.smvrna.org](http://www.smvrna.org). A great amount of the quotations found in this paper are sourced from the on-line papers published at [www.smvrna.org](http://www.smvrna.org).

The Definitions of Arianism and Semi-Arianism.

Before listing the historical record of the faith of the founders of Adventism, there is a need to examine what the difference is between an “Arian” and a “Semi-Arian” view of the Godhead. The doctrine of Arianism is defined below by the Church historian, Philip Schaff:

“[p.644] The doctrine of the Arians...[p.645] is in substance as follows:

“The Father alone is God; therefore he alone is unbegotten, eternal, and he is separated by an infinite chasm from the world. He cannot create the world directly, but only through an agent, the Logos. The Son of God is pre-existent, before all creatures, and above all creatures, a middle being between God and the world, the creator of the world, the perfect image of the Father, and executor of his thoughts, and thus capable of being called in a metaphysical sense God, and Logos, and Wisdom. But on the other hand, he himself is a creature, that is to say, the first creation of God, through whom the Father called other creatures into existence; he was created out of nothing (not out of the essence of God) by the will of the Father before all conceivable time; he is therefore eternal, but had a beginning, and there was a time when he was not.” Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 3 (5<sup>th</sup> ed.; New York: Scribner, 1902), pp. 644-646, as quoted in the *Seventh-day Adventist Student Source Book*, Vol. 9 of the Commentary Reference Series, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, MD, copyright 1962, page 52.

“In the Arian view, the pre-incarnate Son was ‘created.’ In the Arian view, the incarnated Son was viewed by Arius as having ‘a human body, but not a rational soul.’” Ibid., page 52.

In the Semi-Arian view, the pre-incarnate Son was “begotten” of the Father, rather than “created” of the Father. The pre-incarnate Son was Divine by inheritance, being fully of His Father’s nature. The Semi-Arian view was similar to the Arian view in that the Semi-Arian view also believed in a “time,” prior to the existence of any other created being or thing, when the Son was “begotten.” Thus, there was a starting, or beginning point for the pre-incarnate Son. (In a later chapter, I shall explain how that the Hebrew concept of son-ship does allow for the contemporary existence of the son “in” his father. This is a concern of Trinitarianism.) Relative to the incarnation of the Son, the Semi-Arian view is that though the Son divested Himself of “the form of G-d,” it was the fulness of the personality of the second person of the G-dhead that was given a “body” in which to “tabernacle,” “the form of a servant,” “the likeness of men.” Hebrews 10:5; John 1:14; Philippians 2:6, 7. In the concept of “tabernacling,” the fulness of the Divine nature, not just of the Son, but of the Father also, dwelt in that body. Thus, the Semi-Arian view

holds that in the Messiah there were two separate and distinct natures that were inseparably joined together, the Divine and the human.

## Statements From the Founders of Seventh-day Adventism Regarding Their Anti-Trinitarian Convictions.

In the quotations that follow are statements that document the Anti-Trinitarian convictions of the Founders of Seventh-day Adventism.<sup>1</sup>

### **James White:**

"The way spiritualizers this way have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural trinitarian creed, viz. that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain scripture testimony in abundance that he is the Son of the eternal God." (*The Day Star*, Jan. 24, 1846, commenting on Jude 3, 4.)

"To assert that the sayings of the Son and his apostles are the commandments of the Father, is as wide from the truth as the old trinitarian absurdity that Jesus Christ is the very and Eternal God." (*The Review and Herald*, August 5, 1852)

In 1856, Elder White wrote the following statement in reply to a communication ... from an esteemed friend.

"The mystery of iniquity began to work in the church in Paul's day. It finally crowded out the simplicity of the gospel, and corrupted the doctrine of Christ, and the church went into the wilderness. Martin Luther, and other reformers, arose in the strength of God, and with the Word and Spirit, made mighty strides in the Reformation. The greatest fault we can find in the Reformation is, the Reformers stopped reforming. Had they gone on, and onward, till they had left the last vestige of Papacy behind, such as natural immortality, sprinkling, the trinity, and Sunday-keeping, the church would now be free from her unscriptural errors." James White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, February 7, 1856.

"Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one as he was one with his Father. This prayer did not contemplate one disciple with twelve heads, but twelve disciples, made one in object and effort in the cause of their master. Neither are the Father and the Son parts of the three-one God. They are two distinct beings, yet one in the design and accomplishment of redemption. The redeemed, from the first who shares in the great redemption, to the last, all ascribe the honor, and glory, and praise, of their salvation, to both God and the Lamb." James White, *Life Incidents*, p. 343.

### **James White, as Editor of the Review was responsible for the publishing of the following statements:**

"That three are one, and one are three,  
Is an idea that puzzles me;  
By many a learned sage 'tis said  
That three are one in the Godhead.  
"The Father then may be the Son,  
For both together make but one;  
The Son may likewise be the Father,  
Without the smallest change of either.

"Yea, and the blessed Spirit be  
The Father, Son and trinity;  
This is the creed of Christian folks,  
Who style themselves true orthodox,  
All which against plain common sense,  
We must believe or give offense." J. B. F.

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<sup>1</sup>The first set of quotations is from an e-mailed article titled, "POSITION OF SDA PIONEERS ON "THE TRINITY" and "GODHEAD." It appears that the editor of this series of quotations was Arthur L. White.

"NOT long since, during an interview with a Papist, he made a statement of what he regarded as being the true definition of the word, soul, and of what he believed would be its condition after death, and after the judgment. These views did not differ materially from the popular theology of the day. In vindication of which, he added, "And if you have read Butler's Catechism, you have found it there." I remarked that the Bible did not endorse such sentiments. "I know that" said he, "neither can you prove the Trinity from the Bible." *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 8-15-1854.

"As fundamental errors, we might class with this counterfeit sabbath other errors which Protestants have brought away from the Catholic church, such as sprinkling for baptism, the Trinity, the consciousness of the dead and eternal life in misery. This class, who live just prior to the second advent, will not be keeping the traditions of men, neither will they be holding fundamental errors relative to the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ." *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 9-12-1854.

"Here we might mention the Trinity, which does away the personality of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and of sprinkling or pouring instead of being "buried with Christ in baptism," "planted in the likeness of his death:" but we pass from these fables to notice one that is held sacred by nearly all professed Christians, both Catholic and Protestant" *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 12-11-1855.

"Martin Luther, and other reformers, arose in the strength of God, and with the Word and Spirit, made mighty strides in the Reformation. The greatest fault we can find in the Reformation is, the Reformers stopped reforming. Had they gone on, and onward, till they had left the last vestige of Papacy behind, such as natural immortality, sprinkling, the trinity, and Sunday-keeping, the church would now be free from her unscriptural errors." *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 2-7-1856.

"BRO. WHITE: The following questions I would like to have you give, or send, to Bro. Loughborough for explanation. --W. W. GILES, Toledo, Ohio.

"QUESTION 1. What serious objection is there to the doctrine of the Trinity?

"ANSWER. There are many objections which we might urge, but on account of our limited space we shall reduce them to the three following: 1. It is contrary to common sense. 2. It is contrary to scripture. 3. Its origin is Pagan and fabulous." James White, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 11-5-1861.

## **R. F. Cottrell:**

"[This article written by R. F. Cottrell published in the Review of June 1, 1896, sets forth well the attitude of the pioneers and believers on the question of the trinity. - A. L. White.]

"This has been a popular doctrine and regarded as orthodox ever since the bishop of Rome was elevated to the popedom on the strength of it. It is accounted dangerous heresy to reject it; but each person is permitted to explain the doctrine in his own way. All seem to think they must hold it, but each has perfect liberty to take his own way to reconcile its contradictory propositions; and hence a multitude of views are held concerning it by its friends, all of them orthodox, I suppose, as long as they nominally assent to the doctrine.

"For myself, I have never felt called upon to explain it, nor to adopt and defend it, neither have I ever preached against it. But I probably put as high an estimation on the Lord Jesus Christ as those who call themselves Trinitarians. This is the first time I have ever taken the pen to say anything concerning the doctrine.

"My reasons for not adopting and defending it, are[:]

1. Its name is unscriptural the Trinity, or the triune God, is unknown to the Bible; and I have entertained the idea that doctrines which require words coined in the human mind to express them, are coined doctrines.

2. I have never felt called upon to adopt and explain that which is contrary to all the sense and reason that God has given me. All my attempts at an explanation of such a subject would make it no clearer to my friends.

"But if I am asked what I think of Jesus Christ, my reply is, I believe all that the Scriptures say of him. If the testimony represents him as being in glory with the Father before the world was, I believe it. If it is said that he was in the beginning with God, that he was God, that all things were made by him and for him, and that without him was not anything made that was made, I believe it. If the Scriptures say he is the Son of God, I believe it. If it is declared that the Father sent his Son into the world, I believe he had a Son to send. If the testimony says he is the beginning of the creation of God, I believe it. If he is said to be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, I believe it. And when Jesus says, I and my Father are one, I believe it; and when he says, My Father is greater than I, I believe that too; it is the word of the Son of God, and besides this it is perfectly reasonable and seemingly self-evident.

"If I be asked how I believe the Father and Son are one, I reply, They are one in a sense not contrary

to sense. If the and in the sentence means anything, the Father and the Son are two beings. They are one in the same sense in which Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one. He asked his Father that his disciples might be one. His language is, that they may be one, even as we are one.

"It may be objected, If the Father and the Son are two distinct beings, do you not, in worshipping the Son and calling him God, break the first commandment of the Decalogue?

"No; it is the Fathers will That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. We cannot break the commandment and dishonor God by obeying him. The Father says of the Son, Let all the angels of God worship him. Should angels refuse to worship the Son, they would rebel against the Father. Children inherit the name of their father. The Son of God hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than the angels. That name is the name of his Father. The Father says to the Son, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. Heb. 1:8. The Son is called The mighty God. Isa. 9:6. And when he comes again to earth his waiting people will exclaim, This is our God. Isa. 25:9. It is the will of the Father that we should thus honor the Son. In doing so we render supreme honor to the Father. If we dishonor the Son we dishonor the Father; for he requires us to honor his Son.

"But though the Son is called God yet there is a God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 1:3. Though the Father says to the Son, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, yet, that throne is given him of his Father; and because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, he further says, Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee. Heb. 1:9. God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ. Acts. 2:36. The Son is the everlasting Father, not of himself, nor of his Father, but of his children. His language is. I and the children which God hath given me. Heb. 2:13." R. F. Cottrell, from an article published in the Review and Herald of June 1, 1896.

Other pioneers also expressed their understanding of the Godhead and dangers of the Trinitarian belief.

### **J. N. Loughborough:**

"In the *Review and Herald*, Nov.5,1861, p. 184 appears a column under the title "Questions for Bro. Loughborough." The question is posed: "What serious objection is there to the doctrine of the Trinity?" Elder Loughborough answered:

"There are many objections which we might urge, but on account of our limited space we shall reduce them to the three following:

"1. It is not very consonant with common sense to talk of three being one, and one being three. Or as some express it calling God the Triune God, or the three-one-God. If Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each God, it would be three Gods; for three times one is not one, but three. There is a sense in which they are one, but not one person, as claimed by Trinitarians.

"2. It is contrary to Scripture. . . . The seventeenth chapter of John is alone sufficient to refer the doctrine of the Trinity. Over forty times in that one chapter Christ speaks of His Father as a person distinct from Himself. . . . And in this very testimony He shows us in what consists the oneness of the Father and the Son. It is the same as the oneness of Christ's church. "That. . . they may be one, even as we are one. Of one heart and mind. Of one purpose in all the plan devised for man's salvation. . . ."

"3. Its origin is Pagan and fabulous. . . . We are pointed to the Trident of the Persians, with the assertion that "by this they designed to teach the idea of a Trinity, and if they had the doctrine of the Trinity, they must have received it by tradition from the people of God.

"Moreover, he is the beginning of the creation of God. . . .The language does not necessarily imply that he was created; for the words. . . may simply signify that the work of creation, strictly speaking, was begun by him. Without him was not anything made. Others, however, and more properly we think, take the word (for beginning in Greek) to mean the agent or efficient cause,. . . understanding that Christ is the agent through whom God has created all things, but that he himself came into existence in a different manner, as he is called the only begotten of the Father." J. N. Loughborough, a column under the title "Questions for Bro. Loughborough," *The Review and Herald*, November 5,1861, p. 184.

"This doctrine of the trinity was brought into the church about the same time with image worship, and keeping the day of the sun, and is but Persian doctrine remodeled. It occupied about three hundred years from its introduction to bring the doctrine to what it is now. It was commenced about 325 A. D., and was not completed till 681. See Milman's Gibbon's Rome, vol. iv, p.422. It was adopted in Spain in 589, in England in 596, in Africa in 534. - Gib. vol. iv, pp.114,345; Milner, vol. i, p.519. J. N. Loughborough. Ibid.

## J.M. Stephenson:

J.M. Stephenson was one of the earliest commentators on the topic of the Trinity doctrine and its effect upon the sacrificial atonement on the cross. Stephenson wrote:

“The Trinitarian view, I think is equally exceptionable. They claim that the Son of God had three distinct natures at the same time; viz., a human body, a human soul, united with his Divine nature: the body being mortal, the soul immortal, the Divinity co-equal, co-existent, and co-eternal with the everlasting Father. Now, none of the advocates of this theory, claim that either his soul or Divinity died, that the body was the only part of this triple being which actually died the death of the cross; hence, according to this view (which makes the death of Christ the grand atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world) we only have the sacrifice of the most inferior part - the human body - of the Son of God.” (*Review and Herald*, Nov. 21, 1854)

Stephenson was influenced by the writings of Henry Grew. In the *Review and Herald*, December 5, 1854, James White (as editor of the *Review and Herald*) published an article by J.M. Stephenson that included the following comparison by Henry Grew:

### Jesus Christ and His Apostles

To us there is but one God, the Father. 1 Cor. 8:6

My Father is greater than I. John 14:28

Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. Col. 1:15

But of that day, &c., knoweth no man, no not the angels, &c., neither the Son, but the Father. Mark 13:32.

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Matthew 28:18 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. John 17:2

God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. Eph. 3:9 By whom also he made the worlds. Heb. 1:2

The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him. Rev. 1:1

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

Denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 4

Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and signs, and wonders which God did by him. Acts 2:22

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

I live by the Father. John 6:57

This is my beloved Son. Matt. 3:17

That they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. John 17:3

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:11

### Trinitarians

To us there is but one God, the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost.

The son is as great as the Father.

Who is the invisible God, the uncreated Jehovah.

The Son is omniscient, and knew of that day as well as the Father.

No given power can qualify the Son of God to give eternal life to his people.

Jesus Christ created all things by his own independent power.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ from his own omniscience.

There is one Mediator between God and man; who is also supreme God and man in one person.

Denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also the only Lord God, and a distinct person.

Jesus performed his miracles by his own omnipotence.

The son is self-existent.

The son lives by himself.

This is the only true God, the same numerical essence as the Father.

That they might know thee, who art not the only true God, in distinction from the Word whom thou hast sent.

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to his own glory. (*Review & Herald*, Dec. 5, 1854)

**Joseph Bates:**

"Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was an impossibility for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same being. I said to my father, **If you can convince me that we are one in this sense, that you are my father, and I your son; and also that I am your father, and you my son, then I can believe in the trinity.**" *Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates*, page 205.

**M.E. Cornell:**

"Protestants and Catholics are so nearly united in sentiment, that it is not difficult to conceive how Protestants may make an image to the Beast. The mass of Protestants believe with Catholics in the Trinity, immortality of the soul, consciousness of the dead, rewards and punishments at death, the endless torture of the wicked, inheritance of the saints beyond the skies, sprinkling for baptism, and the PAGAN SUNDAY for the Sabbath; all of which is contrary to the spirit and letter of the new testament. Surely there is between the mother and daughters, a striking family resemblance." *Extracts from the Writings of Eminent Authors, Ancient and Modern.* By M. E. Cornell, published by the author, Battle Creek, Michigan, 1858.

**J. H. Waggoner (father of E.J. Waggoner):**

DOCTRINE OF A TRINITY SUBVERSIVE OF THE ATONEMENT.

"Trinitarians do not believe that the divine nature died--Their sacrifice only human--Distinctive being of the Father and the Son--Self-contradictions of Trinitarians--"The mystery of godliness"--Incarnation of Son of God beyond comprehension," Elder J. H. Waggoner, *The Atonement: An Examination of a Remedial System in the Light of Nature and Revelation*.

"Many theologians really think that the Atonement, in respect to its dignity and efficacy, rests upon the doctrine of a trinity. But we fail to see any connection between the two. To the contrary, the advocates of that doctrine really fall into the difficulty which they seem anxious to avoid. Their difficulty consists in this: They take the denial of a trinity to be equivalent to a denial of the divinity of Christ. Were that the case, we should cling to the doctrine of a trinity as tenaciously as any can; but it is not the case. They who have read our remarks on the death of the Son of God know that we firmly believe in the divinity of Christ; but we cannot accept the idea of a trinity, as it is held by Trinitarians, without giving up our claim on the dignity of the sacrifice made for our redemption." J. H. Waggoner, *Ibid.*, page 165.

"Trinitarians hold that the term "Christ" comprehends two distinct and separate natures: one that was merely human; the other, the second person in the trinity, who dwelt in the flesh for a brief period, but could not possibly suffer, or die; that the Christ that died was only the human nature in which the divinity had dwelt. Both classes have a human offering, and nothing more. No matter how exalted the pre-existent Son was; no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even eternal; if the manhood only died, the sacrifice was only human. And so far as the vicarious death of Christ is concerned, this is Socinianism. Thus the remark is just, that the doctrine of a trinity degrades the Atonement, resting it solely on a human offering as a basis." J. H. Waggoner, *Ibid.*, page 166.

"The great mistake of Trinitarians, in arguing this subject, seems to be this: They make no distinction between a denial of a Trinity and a denial of the divinity of Christ. They see only the two extremes, between which the truth lies; and take every expression referring to the pre-existence of Christ as evidence of a Trinity. The Scriptures abundantly teach the pre-existence of Christ and his divinity; but they are entirely silent in regard to a Trinity." J.H. Waggoner, *The Atonement*, 1872, chapter 4, "Doctrine of A Trinity Subversive of The Atonement," page 165.

**A.T. Jones:**

"Now what more was ever required by the papacy, and all phases of the old order of things, than is thus brought within the meaning of the national Constitution by this decision? What more was ever required by the papacy itself than that "the Christian religion" should be the national religion; that the discipline of the Church should be maintained by the civil power; that the religious test oath should be applied to all; that the public should be



taxed for the support of religion and religious worship; that there should be required a belief in the doctrine of the TRINITY, and the inspiration of the "Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament;" that the guilt of "blasphemy" should be visited upon everyone who should speak or act "in contempt of the religion professed by almost the whole community;" and that everybody should be required by law to observe Sunday? Indeed, what more than this could be required or even desired by the most absolute religious despotism that could be imagined?" A.T. Jones, *Ecclesiastical Empire*, page 835.

"If the form of the syllogism could be applied to divine things, we should know the article of the Holy Trinity, and should not believe it." A.T. Jones, *Ibid.*

"This decree was subscribed by all present, even by the priors of monasteries and some monks. The two papal legates added to their subscription the remark, that they received all who had been converted from the impious heresy of the enemies of images." -- Hefele. 55

"The council was not content with this formal and solemn subscription. With one voice they broke out into a long acclamation,

'We all believe, we all assent, we all subscribe. This is the faith of the apostles, this is the faith of the Church, this is the faith of the orthodox, this is the faith of all the world. We, who adore the TRINITY, worship images. Whoever does not the like, anathema upon him! Anathema on all who call images idols! Anathema on all who communicate with them who do not worship images! Anathema upon Theodorus, falsely called bishop of Ephesus; against Sisinnius, of Perga, against Basilus with the ill omened name! Anathema against the new Arius Nestorius and Dioscorus, Anastasius; against Constantine and Nicetas (the iconoclast patriarchs of Constantinople)! Everlasting glory to the orthodox Germanus, to John of Damascus! To Gregory of Rome everlasting glory! Everlasting glory to the preachers of truth!'"

A.T. Jones, *Ibid.*, page 245.

"There is another verse that we can read. Now note: there are affairs of this divine family, there are secrets of this family, that date from away back yonder, long before the time when we ever entered the family. We were strangers to the family. We had no connection with the family at all. But the Lord called and we came, and now He has adopted us into the family and brings us into that close relationship to Himself in which He proposes to make known to us all the family secrets. In order to do that, as we found awhile ago, we need a long time in which to be there, and He needs a long time to do it, any way, because our capacity is so small in comparison with the great wealth of this, that it will take a great while for Him to do it.

"More than that: we need one to tell us this who is thoroughly acquainted with all the family affairs from the beginning. Is there any one in the family that is acquainted with all the family affairs from the beginning and who will undertake to show us around and tell to us what we are to know? Turn to Proverbs 8, beginning with verse 22:

'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; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he had prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him.'

"Now He is the one who has said to you and me, I call you not servants, but friends, for the servant does not know what the Lord doeth, but all things that the Father has made known to me, I make known to you. And He is there as one brought up with Him from the days of eternity He was there. Now He says, I call you friends, because all that the Father hath told me, I tell you. He not only gives us time in which to have Him tell it, but He is one who is qualified to tell it, because He has been there from the beginning. He knows all these affairs and He says that nothing does He propose to keep back from you." A.T. Jones, 1895 G.C. Sermon #21.

### **E.J. Waggoner:**

"The Word was in the beginning. . . It is not given to men to know when or how the Son was begotten; but we know that He was the Divine Word, not simply before He came to this earth to die, but even

before the world was created. . . . And more than seven hundred years before His first advent, His coming was thus foretold by the word of inspiration: But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity. Micah 5:2, margin. We know that Christ proceeded forth and came from God (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man." E.J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, facsimile production of 1890, original, page 9.

**Regarding Brother Cottrell (father of Roswell F. Cottrell) James White wrote:**

"Bro. Cottrell is nearly eighty years of age, remembers the dark day of 1780, and has been a Sabbath-keeper more than thirty years. He was formerly united with the Seventh-Day Baptists, but on some points of doctrine has differed from that body. He REJECTED THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, also the doctrine of man's consciousness between death and the resurrection, and the punishment of the wicked in eternal consciousness. He believed that the wicked would be destroyed. Bro. Cottrell buried his wife not long since, who, it is said, was one of the excellent of the earth. Not long since, this aged pilgrim received a letter from friends in Wisconsin, purporting to be from M. Cottrell, his wife, who sleeps in Jesus. But he, believing that the dead know not anything, was prepared to reject at once the heresy that the spirits of the dead, knowing everything, come back and converse with the living. Thus truth is a staff in his old age. He has three sons in Mill Grove, who, with their families are Sabbath-keepers." *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, September 5, 1853.

**A.J. Dennis:**

"What a contradiction of terms is found in the language of a Trinitarian creed: 'In unity of this Godhead are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' There are many things that are mysterious, written in the word of God, but we may safely presume the Lord never calls upon us to believe impossibilities. But, creeds often do." A.J. Dennis, *The Signs of the Times*, May 22, 1879.

**Uriah Smith:**

Uriah Smith, writing in the *Review and Herald* of March 27, 1888, responded to an article from the *Free Methodist* of Chicago. The article writer, C. E. Harroun Jr., had scouted the idea that Christ was not possessed of a dual nature while here upon the earth. To this Smith responded:

"At the same time he fails to answer the point made by S. D. Adventists, that if his nature can be separated into human and divine, and only the *human* part died, then the world is furnished with only a *human* sacrifice, not a divine sacrifice, as we contend." Uriah Smith, *The Review and Herald*, March 27, 1888.

The common view of the Trinitarian doctrine, (teaching that the Son is "co-immortal" with the Father and thus as the Divine immortal Son could not die), provided only a human sacrifice! The early pioneers sought to uplift the sacrifice of Christ to a higher level, to that of the divine.

**Hampton W. Cottrell (1852-1940):**

In the following statements, from a letter from Hampton W. Cottrell to LeRoy Froom, brother Cottrell explains the early Adventist belief regarding the Holy Spirit.

"The conclusion drawn at that time [the time of the pioneers] was that the Holy Spirit was not a person in the sense that God and Christ are persons, if so, the same difficulty would be encountered with the Holy Spirit being everywhere present as is held by the Trinitarians concerning God and Christ as persons being everywhere present, and if it should be so conceded Christ would be the son of the Holy Spirit, rather than of God as the Bible declares him to be." Letter of H. W. Cottrell to LeRoy Froom, September 16, 1931.

"It was taught and presumably believed to be true that the terms God, Christ, Holy Spirit and Comforter were expressions frequently used in the Bible interchangeably as follows:

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” 2Corinthians 3:17.

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

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Romans 8:9-12.

“I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” Phillippians 1:19.

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2Peter 1:21.”

Cottrell, *Ibid*.

For myself (Stephen W. Kraner), it was 1Corinthians 2:11 that helped me to understand “who” or, “what” the Holy Spirit is.

“11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of G-d knoweth no man, but the Spirit of G-d.” 1Corinthians 2:11.

The “spirit of a man which is in him” is a person’s own inner thoughts. This is further brought out by the following comparison:

“16 For **who hath known the *mind* [Strong’s G3563, nous] of the L-rd**, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” 1Cor. 2:16.

“34 For **who hath known the *mind* [Strong’s G3563, nous] of the L-rd?** or who hath been his counsellor?” Romans 11:34.

Because 1Corinthians 2:16 and Romans 11:34 are quoting Isaiah 40:13, these texts reveal that the “Spirit of YHWH” is the “Mind of YHWH”:

“13 **Who hath directed the *Spirit* [Strong’s H7307, ruach] of YHWH**, or [being] His counsellor hath taught him?” Isaiah 40:13.

***“Spirit of YHWH” = “Mind of the L-rd.”***

The concept that the “spirit” is the mind or thoughts is supported by the following Hebrew Scriptures:

“13 That thou turnest thy *spirit* [ruach] against El, and lettest [such] *words* go out of thy mouth?” Job 15:13.

“23 Turn you at My reproof: behold, I will pour out My *spirit* [ruach] unto you, I will make known My *words* unto you.” Proverbs 1:23.

In English, we have this saying, “I’m going to give him a piece of my mind.” And then, we “speak” to the person about what is on/in our mind. Our spoken words, then, are the revelation of what is in our mind. In order to make the spoken word(s), we must exhale “breath” from our lungs, past our vocal cords to make sounds (“voice”), which are then given shape by the combination of our tongue, our throat, our teeth, and our lips, becoming fully formed “words”. The Spirit is also represented in Scripture by “breath,” “voice” and, “word(s).” All of these are an extension or, revelation of the “mind”.

It was thus that I finally comprehended the early Adventist concern that the “Spirit” is not a separate “person” but, rather, the inner mind or thoughts of the Father and/or His Son.

A Few Statements from Ellen White  
That Show Both Her Agreement and Disagreement  
With the Founding Fathers of Adventism's View.

Unless the following statements can be shown to NOT BE FROM ELLEN WHITE'S OWN HAND (and there is concern on the part of some that these statements are not unmolested, unchanged or even inserted apart from Ellen White's knowledge), the following statements seem to indicate that Ellen White differed with her brethren in respect to the "person"-hood of the Spirit. Pay close attention to Ellen White's usage of the words, "person" and "personality," in the following quotations.

**THE GODHEAD - by E. G. White**

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

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

"The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be The express image of His person. [Quotes John 3:16.] Here is shown the personality of the Father.

"The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. **There are three living persons of the holy trio, in the name of these three great powers the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit** those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ." Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies, Series B*, No. 7, pp. 62, 63. (1905), quoted in *Evangelism*, pp. 614, 615.

"**The Holy Spirit is a person**, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. . . . **The Holy Spirit has a personality**, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. . . . The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." -Manuscript 20, 1906, quoted in *Evangelism*, pp. 616, 617.

"The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, in Christ's name. **He personifies Christ, yet is a distinct personality.** We may have the Holy Spirit if we ask for *it* and make it [a] habit to turn to and trust in God rather than in any finite human agent who may make mistakes." Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 20, p. 324.

"Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. **The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity** and independent thereof. He would represent *Himself* as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent." Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p. 23.

"The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. **He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter**, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, and he can strengthen the wavering, and set right the erring. He can inspire with confidence, with hope in God; and confidence in God always results in creating confidence in one another. Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, August 26, 1890.

“Again and again we shall be called to meet the influence of men who are studying sciences of satanic origin, through which Satan is working to make a non-entity of God and of Christ. **The Father and the Son each have a personality.** Christ declared, I and my Father are one. Yet it was the Son of God who came to the world in human form. Laying aside His royal robe and kingly crown, He clothed His divinity with humanity, that humanity through His infinite sacrifice might become partakers of the divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 68, (1909) (quoted in *Evangelism*, p. 614.)

[Quotes John 17:20-23.] “Wonderful statement! The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one.” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, p. 269. [See also Zech. 6:12, 13.]

### **“Behold the Lamb of God”:**

#### **The Sacrificial System – the “Ceremonial Law”– and the “Personality of Christ.”**

“Christ was the foundation of the whole system of Jewish worship, and in it was shadowed forth the living reality,--the manifestation of God in Christ. **Through the sacrificial system men could see Christ's personality** and look forward to their divine Saviour. But when he stood before them, representing the invisible God,--for in him dwelt “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,--they were not able to discern his divine character because of their want of spirituality.” Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 23, 1895, Christ, The Light of the World, Uncomprehended.

Under the Old Covenant was “the ministration of death” (2Corinthians 3:7), particularly the animal sacrifices. Under the Old Covenant, even the High Priests died. (Hebrews 7:8) While, with the coming of a “better sacrifice,” there was a change in the law respecting the ever-living High Priest after the order of Melchisadek (Hebrews 7:12) and a consequent cessation of the animal sacrificial system, (“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice” 1Samuel 15:22), **to abolish the sacrificial laws in every respect is to take away the very personality of Christ.**

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

## Summary, Review and, Concluding Thoughts.

In respect to the beliefs of early Seventh-day Adventism regarding the doctrine of the G-dhead, there were two primary issues:

1. In respect to the nature of Christ, **Who died for you and me?** Was it only a man who died on Calvary's cross? Or, did "God" die on the cross? Since, 1Timothy 6:16 states that the Father is immortal and cannot die, the pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism took the position that though the pre-incarnate Son was Divine, in nature, the Father begot (rather than "created") the Son so as to be able to die.
2. The Holy Spirit is not a separate and distinct "person" but, rather the "mind" and "presence" of both the Father and Son.

The texts that helped me to comprehend the position that the pre-incarnate Son was able to die are:

**"8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending,** saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8.

"Alpha" is the first letter of the Greek alphabet. "Omega" is the last letter of the Greek alphabet. (Which then corresponds to the Hebrew "alef," the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and "tov," the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Drawing upon this first and last aspect of "alpha" and "omega" or, "alef" and "tov," Yahushua says to John in Revelation 1:17-18:

"17 ...And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:  
**18 I [am] he that liveth, and was dead;** and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Revelation 1:17, 18.

**"8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead,** and is alive;" Revelation 2:8.

Drawing upon Revelation 1:8's reference to "Alpha and Omega" as being "the beginning and the ending", in Revelation 2:8, **Yahushua ha'Messhiach** (KJV: "Jesus Christ") **states that He, "the first and the last,"** i.e., Alpha and Omega (which are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which then compare to "alef, tov" the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet) **was DEAD!** The letters, "alef-tov" occur hundreds of times in the Hebrew Scriptures, nearly always untranslated. Jews understand that these untranslated letters point to the subject of a sentence. But, there are thousands of sentences in the Hebrew scriptures that do not have "alef-tov" to point out the subject of the sentence. While the concept that "alef-tov" is an untranslated pointer to the subject of some Hebrew sentences, Revelation's reference to "Alpha" and "Omega" is a revelation that these occurrences of "alef-tov" in the Hebrew Scriptures are actually pointers to Messianic prophecies! Interestingly, Jews refer to the untranslated "word," "alef-tov" as "the word." The letters, "aleph" and "tov" can be an abbreviation for all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Hence, "alef-tov" can stand for all the letters in all the words that YHWH, the Father "spoke" to create all of the universe. Here is the pre-incarnate "Word" that John says was in the beginning with G-d and through Whom all things were created. (John 1:1, 3) An example can be found in the very first words of the Hebrew Scriptures:

"In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth..."

"B'reshit alef-tov Elohim bara ..."

The letters, "alef-tov" are untranslated. They point to the word, "b'reshit" as the subject of the sentence. But, as John points out in John 1:1, 3, "B'reshit" is actually the Father's firstborn/only begotten Son who is the Beginner of creation.

Comprehending that Revelation 2:8's words, "the first and the last" is a reference to "Alpha and Omega" or to the Hebrew, "Alef-Tov," Yahushua states that it was He, the Alef-Tov, the pre-incarnate Word, through whom all things were created, who "was dead". Here, to me was the confirmation of the early Adventist teaching that the Divine Son of the Father was able to die. This teaching is further comprehended by Yahushua's instruction to the disciples:

"11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God." Luke 8:11.

"24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John 12:24.

Should it have been true that “Alef-Tov”, the pre-incarnate Word could not have died, no one could ever have disobeyed the Father. Disobedience occurs because the Father ordained that His Son, the Word, could be trampled upon, dis-obeyed.

In respect to the second concern of the early Adventists regarding the non-personality of the Holy Spirit, Ellen White seems to have differed with them. She describes the Holy Spirit as a “person.” Though she does not use the word, “Trinity,” in her writings, she does use the words, “three” and “trio” in reference to “heavenly powers.”

After taking more than one look at the Scriptural issue as to the “personhood” of the Spirit, I have concluded that the Spirit is indeed a distinct “person.” But, I hold that this perspective must be held within the Semi-Arian concern that the “Spirit” is likened to the “spirit that is within a man.” (1Corinthian 2:11)

Ellen White predicted a change in the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist church. This change commenced in the reversal of the corrections to church organizational structure made under the counsel of Ellen White in the 1901 General Conference during the 1903 General Conference. She stated that “books of a new order would be written” and that “our religion would be changed.” Ellen White referred to Dr. John Harvey Kellogg’s pantheism in his book, *The Living Temple*, as the “alpha of apostasy.”

“Be not deceived; many will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. We have now before us the alpha of this danger. *The omega will be of a **MOST STARTLING** nature.*” Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 2, p. 16.

She stated that the omega of apostasy would be most startling. Then comes William Johnson, who uses the very words, “most startling” in the following statement:

**“Some Adventists today think that our beliefs have remained unchanged over the years, or they seek to turn back the clock to some point when we had everything just right. But all attempts to recover such “historic Adventism” fail in view of the facts of our heritage. Adventist beliefs have changed over the years under the impact of “present truth.” MOST STARTLING is the teaching regarding Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Many of the pioneers, including James White, J. N. Andrews, Uriah Smith, and J. H. Waggoner, held to an Arian or semi-Arian view—that is, the Son at some point in time before the Creation of our world was generated by the Father. Likewise, the Trinitarian understanding of God, now part of our fundamental beliefs, was not generally held by the early Adventists. Even today a few do not subscribe to it.”** William Johnson, *Adventist Review*, January 6, 1994, page 10, 11.

The current Seventh-day Adventist view of the doctrine of the G-dhead is that each member of the Trinity has their divine nature self-inherently, unborrowed and underived from the other members of the G-dhead. Further, because of this separate, distinctness of each person of the G-dhead, in order to save fallen man, the first person of the G-dhead took upon Himself the “role” of “Father.” And, the second person of the G-dhead took upon Himself the “role” of Son, and that only in respect to the incarnation.

“It may be inferred from the Scriptures that when the Godhead laid out the plan of salvation at some point in eternity past, They took certain *positions* or *roles* to carry out the provisions of the plan.” *Signs of the Times*, July, 1985.

An example of this “role” play teaching is found in the book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*:

“In the New Testament, Jesus used *Father* to bring us into a close and personal relationship with God.” *Seventh-day Adventists Believe ...* page 20.

These teachings deny the Scripture’s teaching that the Father gave His only begotten Son to save the human race. The Adventist Trinitarian teaching disregards the subjection of the Son to the Father. It disregards that there is a “YHWH Most High” and a “G-d Most High,” implying that there is at least one other who is also named with the Father’s name who is not a s “high” as He who is “Most High.” See Psalm 7:17; Psalm 47:2; and, Genesis 14:18, 19, 20; Psalm 57:2; 78:56.

In closing, during his editorship of the *Review*, Elder White published the following quotations from the Catholic *Doctrinal Catechism* which showed that Protestants were not guided by Scripture alone.

“Q. Have you any other proofs that they [Protestants] are not guided by the Scriptures?

A. Yes; so many that we cannot admit more than a mere specimen into this small work. They reject much that is clearly contained in Scripture, and profess more that is nowhere discoverable in that Divine Book.

Q. Give some examples of both?

A. They should, if the Scripture were their only rule, wash the feet of one another, according to the command of Christ, in the 13th chap. of St. John; - they should keep, not the Sunday, but the Saturday, according to the commandment, Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath-day; for this commandment has not, in Scripture, been changed or abrogated.

**Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?**

A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; - she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.

Q. Do you observe other necessary truths as taught by the Church, not clearly laid down in Scripture?

A. The doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine the knowledge of which is certainly necessary to salvation, is not explicitly and evidently laid down in Scripture, in the Protestant sense of private interpretation.”

Excerpted from the Catholic *Doctrinal Catechism*, as published in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 22, 1854, James White, editor.

I find it quite interesting that the Catholic church associates their unscriptural teaching of the establishment of Sunday and other “festivals of precept” to their doctrine of the Trinity as signs of Catholic authority.