

Series: Theological Treatises

The Godhead

A respectful study of the Divine as a basis for understanding His majesty, omnipresence, eternity, and omniscience along with His justice, mercy, and love.



Federico Salvador Wadsworth





0. Content

0. Content..... 2

1. General Introduction..... 3

2. Structure of the Theological Treatise..... 3

3. General Treatise Map..... 5

4. Treatise Map 6

5. Purpose of the Treatise 7

6. Development of the theme 7

 6.1. Introduction 7

 6.2. The Nature of God 7

 6.3. His participation in the plan of salvation 11

 6.4. Characteristics of the Godhead..... 13

7. Complementary Material 17

 7.1. The Name of God..... 17

 7.2. The Names of God..... 18

 7.3. History of the Trinity in the Christian Church..... 20

 7.3.1. Pre-Nicene position..... 21

 7.3.2. Emergence of anti-Trinitarianism 24

 7.3.3. The Catholic dogma..... 26

 7.4. Challenges to Trinity in the SDA Church..... 28

 7.5. The worship of images 33



1. General Introduction

The search for God’s knowledge and his purpose for man constitutes the most exciting of all the adventures that the human mind can propose. The challenge of finding in the Holy Book the golden thread of the plan of salvation will reward the scholar, who will be able to understand the majesty of the effort of the One who “**who did not spare His own Son**” (**Romans 8: 32**).

The set of Bible tracts, of which you have in your hands one of the studies, has been prepared to provide the lay member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the knowledge required to teach others about how to grow “**in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (**2 Peter 3: 18**) as well as for “**be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope in you**” (**1 Peter 3: 15**).

The author is a regular member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1977, a church elder since 1979, a husband, father, and grandfather, with the joy of having his entire family in “**the faith once delivered to the saints**” (**Jude 1: 3**) and a full subscriber to the 28 official doctrines of the church.



I reiterate that these tracts have been prepared for the church member, so he must graduate the dose of knowledge that he must transmit to those who are interested in knowing Jesus, whom the prophet calls the “**Desire of all nations**” (**Haggai 2: 7**).

That's why, at the same time, we also wanted to include supplementary material to the Bible study that we hope will allow you to expand your current knowledge, as well as to be prepared to deepen on “**things the angels desire to look into**” (**1 Peter 1: 12**). Your ability to introduce these subthemes in harmony with the central concepts is key to the transfer of knowledge that you and I intend to pursue.

Since the knowledge of our God and His purposes will, by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit, always be in full swing, you will be able to find regular updates of each treatise (see the date yy.mm.dd that accompanies the name of the file). These updates, of course, will also correct some of the human flaws that may have gone unnoticed by the author. On the other hand, your well-meaning intention to help us improve these issues will always be welcome. These treatises were originally written in Spanish, my mother language, but translated to English by the author to reach more people, as the latter is considered

world-wide as the commercial and technical language.

2. Structure of the Theological Treatise

At the beginning of each treatise, we will present the general structure of the set of these using a numbered block diagram, called the General Treatise Map. This chart (shown on one of the following pages) will allow you to see where the tract you have in your hands fits concerning the other topics. To make it easier to locate, in addition to the numbering, it will be marked in a different color than the others. Collect the topics, update them, and arrange them in this sequence if you find it useful to your knowledge development.

The numbers in each block simultaneously establish the order of creation of these treatises and the logical dependence between them as well. The blocks from number 70 onwards represent, in turn, a set of special treatises. I have grouped them into 6 major themes:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------|
| a. | Comparative Religions | Series 70.nn |
| b. | Chronologies | Series 75.nn |
| c. | Gospel Harmonies | Series 80.nn |
| d. | Genealogies | Series 85.nn |
| e. | Bible biographies | Series 90.nn |

The reading of these topics will give you the frame of reference to understand the most thematic treatises. These other topics have their own structure that will be related to the one mentioned here.

After the diagram of the whole, you will find a block diagram of the study itself, called the Treatise Map, where you will be able to notice the following:

- Each block of the diagram indicates the reference verse(s) at the bottom and a short phrase that corresponds to the logic of its inclusion in the topic.
- You will notice that there are some blocks, with different colored verses, that refer to parables that help to understand the central theme.



- c. Other blocks, which do not contain verses, expose issues that you might touch on when presenting the study; issues that have historical, geographical, scientific, technical, and other backgrounds. You will find in this study some information that will help you expose these concepts.
- d. These two types of blocks are not necessarily included in all studies.
- e. The arrows indicate the logical sequence in which the author thinks these topics should be presented. The sequence is set from left to right and from top to bottom. However, your initiative and the knowledge about your listeners' needs may point you in a different direction. Let yourself be guided in prayer by the One who cannot err.

At the end of this graphic phase, you will find the study in detail, which will follow, as far as possible, the structure of the block diagram. Some complementary materials to the study will be included at the end. I recommend that you read them in advance to find the exact moment to include them in your presentation.

To the extent possible, I have presented the source of some of these topics so that you can extend your understanding by reviewing them. I do not pretend to know everything these sources deal with, so I encourage you to go deeper and tell me how to improve this content. I have included some images found on the Internet to make your reading more enjoyable, I hope you like them.

The written phase of the study will contain:

- a. Headings for the main subtopics.
- b. Bible quotes (in red).
- c. Quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy (in green).
- d. Quotations from books or articles by various authors, aimed at expanding your knowledge on the subject (in blue).
- e. Comments on the mentioned quotations; in some cases, these will be presented before the quotation, as an anticipation of the statement, while in others they will be placed after it as a confirmation of the concept being held (in black).
- f. Maps, chronograms, genealogies, and other diagrams where appropriate to the subject matter.
- g. Complementary material grouped in a section that helps to understand some of the aspects that could arise when dealing with the central theme with other people. Not all topics necessarily contain this material.

Unless otherwise indicated, the quotes from the Holy Bible are from the King James Modern Version, my favorite in English. Sometime I will include other versions to compare or expand the understanding of a text.

When you develop a Bible study on this subject with non-church people, I recommend that you use the section corresponding to the study (with the verses included in the block diagram) without presenting the statements of the Spirit of Prophecy. Discuss the accompanying materials as they come up in the exposition, as well as in the question and answer phase.

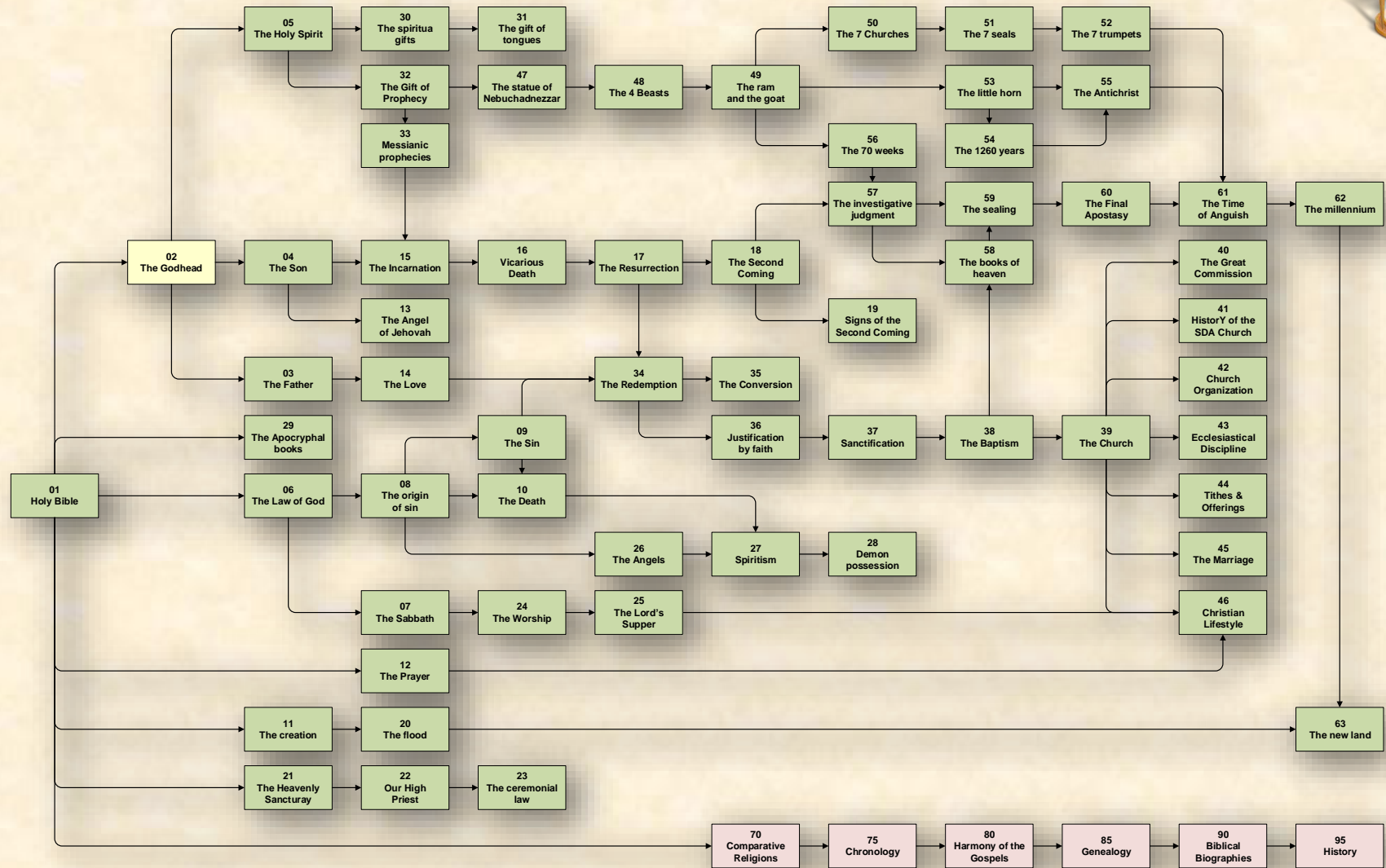
I have also prepared a file that includes all the block diagrams from the tracts so that they will be helpful to your memory when presenting the topic. I have also created a file with a copy of all the contents of the treatises so that you can review them without opening each of the documents, in case you are looking for a specific subtopic.

Allow me, as I have done so far, to address you personally during the study. I believe that this is how our Savior spoke to those He loved and wanted to save. Surely you will do the same with those who listen to you for this purpose.

This is a free material that has surely come to you from someone who appreciates you and wants you to know even more about Jesus and His wonderful plan of salvation. Spread the word in the same way, as you " **have received freely, freely give** " (**Matthew 10: 8**).

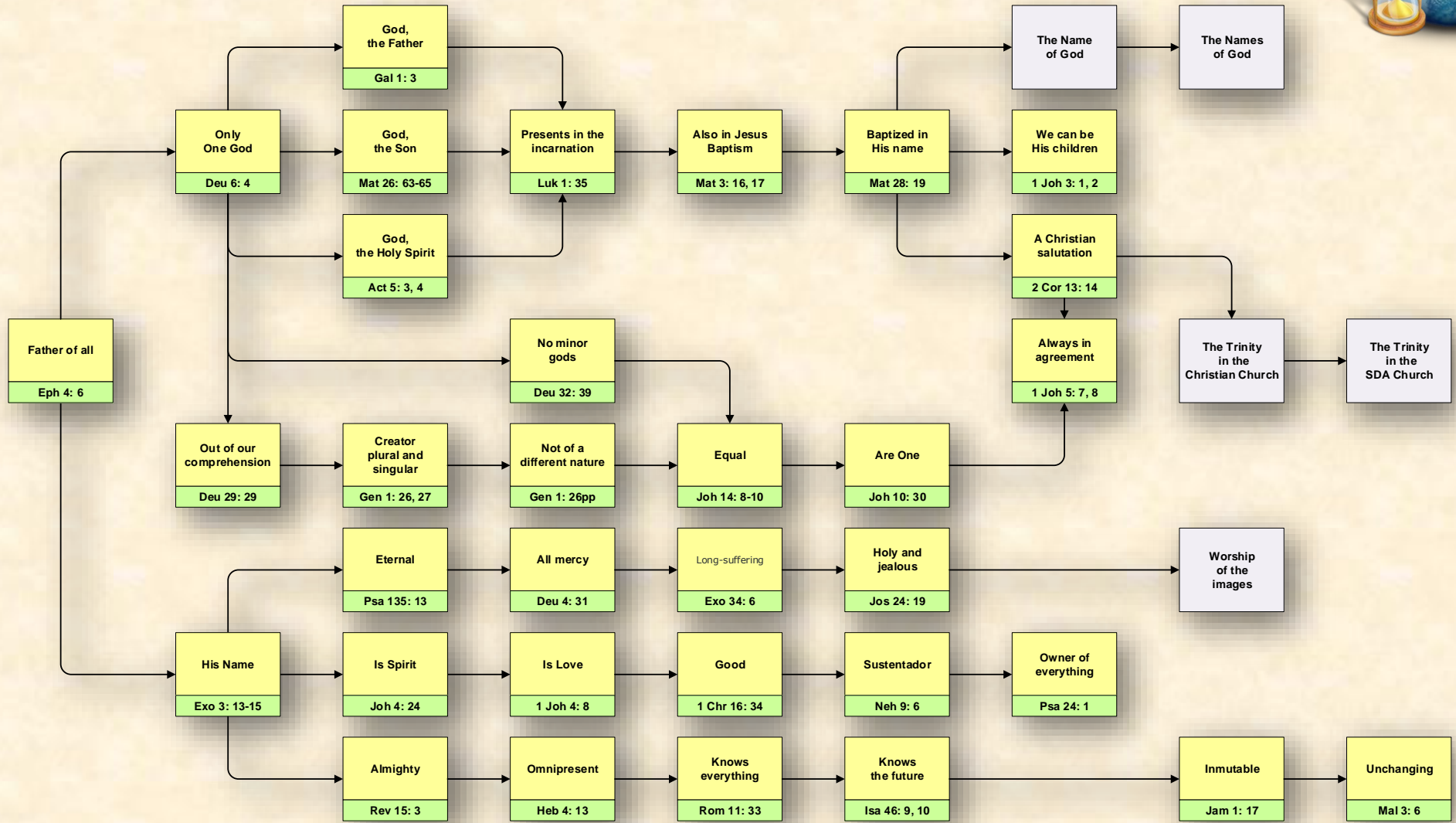


3. General Treatise Map





4. Treatise Map





5. Purpose of the Treatise

The purpose of the treatise is as follows:

- a. Try to understand God based on how He has revealed Himself in the Holy Bible.
- b. Establish the basis for understanding the Deity's participation in the plan of salvation.
- c. Studying the concept of the Trinity in the light of the Scriptures.
- d. Knowing God, as far as possible for our finite minds, to love and obey Him.
- e. Analyze the historical process of the Trinitarian concept.

6. Development of the theme

6.1. Introduction

We live in an age where a large proportion of people believe in God. There are relatively few (though sometimes very influential) who do not believe in the existence of a Supreme Being. The problem begins to be generated when each of us begins to hold his own opinion about what God is or is not.

In addition to the obvious discrepancies we would find (or expect to find) between Christians and Muslims, Buddhists or Shintoists (to mention just a few of the religions), we are also surprised to find great differences between the Christian churches, which supposedly share the same Holy Book, which all consider (with some differences as well) the revelation of God.

Besides, there is a minority within the mainstream Adventist environment with a markedly different opinion about the Godhead, which forces us to study this subject in-depth and find support for our position, the official position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

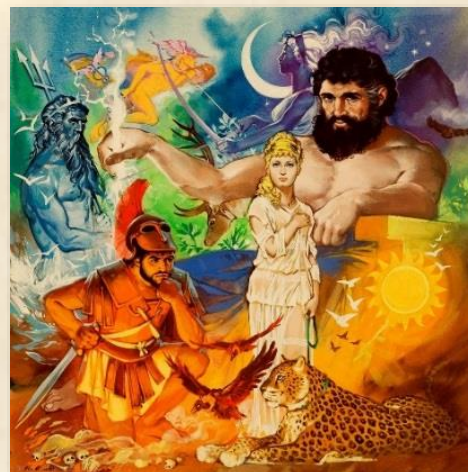
I would also like to say that I will only deal with the subject of the Trinity here since I hope to present more extensively what refers to each of the Persons of the Godhead in separate treatises. Please read them all to gain a more accurate understanding of this very, very exciting subject. I recognize in advance that it is a subject where our mind can scarcely extend to what God has revealed of Himself, and even that revelation is too great for our limited and mortal capacities.

With deep reverence, we will attempt to understand God...

6.2. The Nature of God

The nature of God is a subject that has attracted many people from all walks of life, from those who are militant in Christianity to the pagans and even some unbelievers. Men throughout history have identified the gods with the forces of nature and have clothed them with their own weaknesses, that is, they have made god (this god I do write it in small letters) in their image. This is especially true in pagan religions with a huge pantheon (pan=everything, theos=god) of competing gods, that show the worst of human degradation. They are promiscuous, dirty, violent, deceiving, lascivious gods... that is, very much in accordance with the characteristics of their worshippers.

For those who wish to know God, the God of the Holy Bible, with the purpose of worshipping him and of linking themselves to him, the nature of God seems to them fascinating and covered with a mystery that seems unfathomable. We can reverently delve into a sacred subject like this, understanding that our limited capacity can barely touch the shores of knowledge of the great I Am.



Paul points out in the letter to the Christians of Ephesus that there is a "God and Father" who is above all things. A simple statement but one that speaks of the magnificence of an incomparable God.

one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all.

Ephesians 4: 6

When Moses refers to God, he uses his name, Jehovah, and indicates that he is one. He uses the name Jehovah which is a transliteration of the so-called Tetragrammaton (four letters, in Greek or Hebrew).



Today the name would be written YHWH and its most likely pronunciation would be Yahweh or Yahveh. The uniqueness of God is also highlighted in this verse which seems to be proclaimed for all to understand. We will see this concerning other verses later. This is one of the verses used by those who try to deny the concept of the Trinity; but, as we always maintain in these tracts, the verses must be analyzed both in their text and context, and in relation to others that complement it.

Hear, O, Israel. Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.

Deuteronomy 6: 4

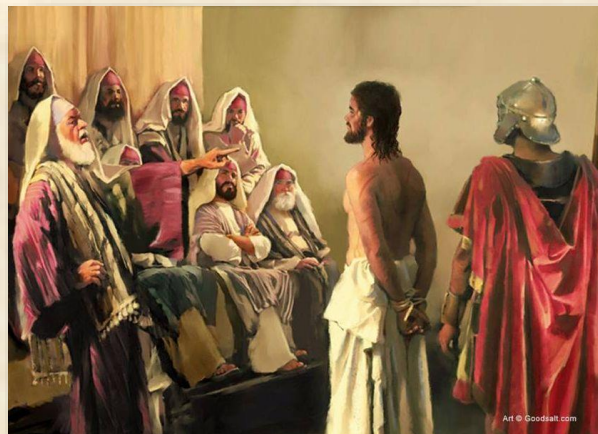
When the subject of the nature of God is dealt with in the Bible, one finds references to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We will look at three verses within many others and discuss them later.

Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

Galatians 1: 3

But Jesus was silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, I adjure you by the living God that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, you said it. I tell you more. From this time, you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of the heavens. Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard his blasphemy.

Matthew 26: 63-65



But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart for you to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own authority? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.

Acts 5: 3-4

In the first of these, God the Father and Jesus are mentioned as two different persons who are united in their desire for grace and peace. In the second verse, which narrates part of Jesus' trial in the Sanhedrin, it is evident that the high priest understood that what Jesus pointed out in His position regarding the Father made him equal to God, so he considered it blasphemy. On the other hand, the third verse, by comparison, denotes that the Holy Spirit, to whom Ananias had lied, is God.

Therefore, the concept of God applies to 3 perfectly distinguishable persons in the Godhead, who, however, are one in purpose and nature. This concept has come to be called the Trinity (from the Latin trinitas=trinity, or three in unity), a word that although not found in the Bible manages to establish the concept of 3 persons with one nature and constituents of one God.

Some people have assumed, in conflict with what the Word of God points out so clearly, that there is a hierarchy where there are one major god and one or more minor gods. This is refuted by the following quote:

See now that I, I am He, and there is no god with me. I kill, and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is no deliverer out of My hand.

Deuteronomy 32: 39

This is a key verse. On the one hand, God mentions his name "I am" and at the same time points out that there are no other lesser gods, who share some of his power. He reiterates that he is the master of life and death, who can hurt and also heal and that there is no one who can stand in his way. Unlike the pagan pantheons, where an endless number of gods of different levels and power competed for the worship of men, the Christian Divinity is one God with three persons perfectly united in purpose and equal in nature, so that their equality of power is evident, moreover, in pointing out the non-existence of second-order deities.

Those who hold that Jesus is a created being or a lesser god, or that the Holy Spirit is an energy, emanation, or influence cannot understand what God has revealed to us about His nature. It is clear that we



can only get a glimpse of His nature. Attempting to penetrate the arcana of God is not allowed. This does not mean that we should not investigate, as we are doing in this treatise, all that God has revealed of Himself, but that there will be a boundary that we must not cross... where we must not go into speculation.

The secret things belong to Jehovah our God, but the revealed things belong to us and to our sons forever, so that we may do all the words of this Law.

Deuteronomy 29: 29

Already from the account of creation, it is possible to find proof of these triune concepts and some by noting the plural with which God speaks.

And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creepers creeping on the earth. And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female.

Genesis 1: 26, 27

The sacred account tells us that God speaks in the plural of himself when he says "Let Us make" and "Our image, after Our likeness". By speaking of "Our" he also implies that they share an image and likeness which could not be so if there were a hierarchy or precedence in time between them. Another very interesting aspect is the use of the term Elohim, which is a word in the plural when the Divine refers to himself.

The Trinity is presented to us from the first chapter of the Bible. "In the beginning, God created..." The word used to refer to God, Elohim, is not singular, but plural, thus showing that God is a "composite" Being. The Spirit comes into play in the second verse by "moving" over the face of the waters. Later we hear the members of the Godhead speaking to each other, when one of them says to the others, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness".



Beatrice S. Neall, More on the Trinity, 1 (translated by the author)

The complex nature of God and his unity are basic to the existence of us and the universe. Please see the following quotes. It seems to me that it expresses well the concept of the need for the oneness of God even if it compares it to something extremely tiny (in relation to God) like the bond between the couple within marriage. Please note the use of the word "echad" in the Hebrew language that expresses the sense of unity of man and woman in marriage, even though it is clear that they are two distinct persons.

According to **Genesis 2: 24**, man and woman are to "become one ('echad) flesh", a union of two separate persons. In **Deuteronomy 6: 4** the same word is used of God, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one ('echad)". Millard J. Erickson says, "It seems that something is being affirmed here about the nature of God -he is an organism, that is, a unity of distinct parts". Moses could have used the word yachid (only one, unique) in **Deuteronomy 6: 4**, but the Holy Spirit chose not to do so.

Gerhard Pfandl, The Trinity in Scripture, 2

Would it not then be correct to say that we serve three gods? No, this would be a big mistake. We must hold on to the concept of the uniqueness of the Trinity. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (**Deuteronomy 6: 4**). Three Gods would mean three separate and rivaled beings. They would fight for supremacy over the universe. If they were equal in power, each would establish control over one-third of the territory. Immediately the universe would disappear, giving rise to a multi-universe, with each of its sections having different properties and laws. There would not be one Supreme Being, but three lesser gods with lesser domains. That's the state of all polytheistic religions. God is certainly one because he has only one character. The Hebrew word for one, which is "echad", comes from the verb "yachad", which means to make one, to unite. God said of the husband and wife, "...they shall be one flesh" (**Genesis 2: 24**) even though they are two. Love is the glue that holds



a marriage together, transforming two beings into one. Love holds the Trinity together, making three into one.

Beatrice S. Neall, More on the Trinity, 1(translated by the author)

I am made to smile by Philip's candor (so similar to ours in dealing with certain divine subjects) in asking for proof to see the Father, to believe all that Jesus taught. He didn't really know what he was asking for. But on that basis, Jesus clearly traces the relationship of equality between God the Father and God the Son.

Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you such a long time and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. And how do you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The Words that I speak to you I do not speak of Myself, but the Father who dwells in Me, He does the works.

John 14: 8-10

I and the Father are one!

John 10: 30

On the other hand, Jesus' succinct statement of his oneness with the Father is impressive when compared to what any of us could say about his relationship with God. The only One who is One in power, glory, majesty, etc., etc., can say something similar. Therefore, either in this statement, Jesus raises a tremendous sham or He is actually equal to God, there is no middle ground.

It is unfortunate, but real, to note that despite the clarity of the biblical evidence, there is a certain minority tendency within the Seventh-day Adventist Church that holds that the doctrine of the Trinity is proof of the fall of the church in Babylon. Furthermore, those who follow this way of thinking maintain that the Spirit of Prophecy does not support this doctrine. Besides, some hold that the Seventh-day Adventist Church implanted the doctrine after the death of Ellen G. White because of her opposition while she was alive. These are unhistorical versions and are for subordinate interests. Let us look at some very precise quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy on this subject.

There are three living persons of the heavenly trio.

Ellen G. White, Bible Teacher, 01 de Marzo de 1906 (translated by the author)

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

Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies Series B, Volume VII, 63

When you openly renounce sin and Satan, the Three Great Powers of Heaven are committed to helping you be an overcomer.

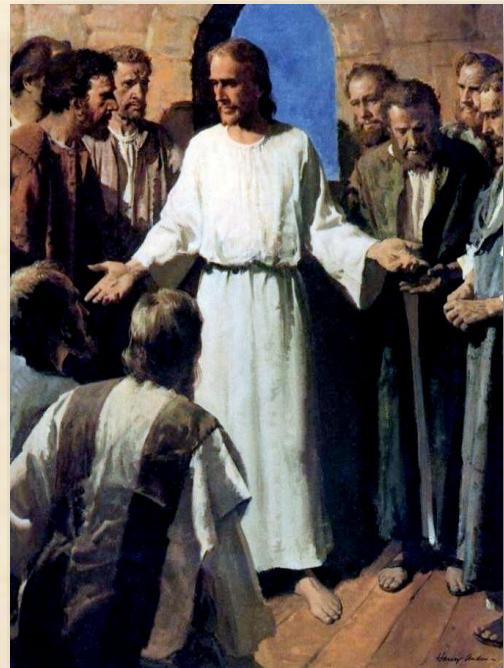
Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, February 12, 1902 (translated by the author)

The Three Great Powers of Heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, March 11, 1903

The eternal Deity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is engaged in the action required to give security to the human instrument and to unite all heaven in contributing to the exercise of human powers, in order to attain the fullness of the three powers to unite them in the great work appointed.

Ellen G. White, Raise Your Eyes, 146 (translated by the author)



There is no way to hesitate with statements as strict as these. I could quote you many more of them, but they would not add any more certainty to what has already been saying. As a Spanish friend says, you



can say it louder, but not clearer. It is self-evident that it sustains the presence of three persons, of equal nature and common purpose who make up the Deity.

When the following author explains the baptismal formula, given to the disciples after His resurrection, he makes the following important statement about the nature of the Triune God:

This is an extremely important statement, and totally incontrovertible. There are three Divine members in the Godhead. It says "and of the Holy Spirit", showing He is separate from, and equal to, the other two. We are not baptized in the name of angels, nor in the name of two members of the Godhead, but in the name of all three. All Three are individually named.

Those profoundly important words (which we call "the great commission") are recognized by all of us as our "marching orders." The passage clearly states that the Holy Spirit is (1) a person. He is separate from Christ and (2) on the same divine status with Christ and the Father. And (3) Christians are to be baptized into all three, not just one or two of Them. The phrase, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" would be meaningless if all three facts were not true. The phrase means we are to be baptized into submission and obedience to all three. To deny the Holy Spirit's existence is to deny your baptismal vows. Can God be pleased if we tell others they need not be baptized into all Three?

Vance Ferrell, Defending the Godhead, 39, 40

6.3. His participation in the plan of salvation

The Trinity has been united, as from eternity, in the plan designed (also from eternity) to rescue humanity from sin; a plan conceived, as we say, from the beginning. When this plan reached the stage of the incarnation, Luke the physician narrates it thus:

And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit shall come on you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you. Therefore, also that Holy One which will be born of you shall be called Son of God.

Luke 1: 35

The passage makes two persons in the Divinity actively participate and the other passively. Together in a plan, each in his task. You will find a little more detail about this when you read the studies of the 3 Persons of the Godhead. They are also present at the baptism of Jesus.

And Jesus, when He had been baptized, went up immediately out of the water. And lo, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. And lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 3: 16, 17

The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption.

Ellen G. White, God's Amazing Grace, 190

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have committed themselves to help him in his unselfish efforts to lead men from injustice to justice, from darkness to the light of truth.

Ellen G. White, Australasian Union Conference Record, June 1904 (translated by the author)

As Christians submit to the solemn rite of baptism, He registers the vow that they make to be true to Him. This vow is their oath of allegiance. They are baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus, they are united with the three great powers of heaven. They pledge themselves to renounce the world and to observe the laws of the kingdom of God. Henceforth they are to walk in newness of life. No longer are they to follow the traditions of men. No longer are they to follow dishonest methods. They are to obey the statutes of the kingdom of heaven. They are to seek God's honor. If they will be true to their vow, they will be furnished with grace and power that will enable them to fulfill all righteousness.

Ellen G. White, Evangelism, 307, 308



GOODSALT.COM

When Jesus enjoyed his last moments on earth with his disciples and gave them the Great Commission, he gave



them the baptismal formula. Note that although the three persons of the Godhead are mentioned, it is not "in the names" but "**in the name**", emphasizing the uniqueness of the Trinity as well as their participation in the purpose entrusted to the Church. Let me elaborate a bit more. The fact that the baptismal form includes the three Persons of the Godhead is proof that they are different persons but equal in hierarchy. If it were not so, a formula in the name of their principal (as some consider God the Father) would have sufficed, or it would not have included a manifestation of Him (as some consider the Holy Spirit). If the formula includes all of them, it is that it would be incomplete if any of them were missing, since the Divinity would not be complete.

Therefore, go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28: 19

I'm going to digress a little from the subject to advance something very important. It is through baptism, as we shall see in due course, that we are transformed into God's children, even if it does not yet seem so, at least on the outside. The great transformation, which will differentiate the children of God from those who are not, will be seen later on. Thank God that He has called you and me and all of us to be His children, let us behave as such.

Behold what manner of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God. Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that when He shall be revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

1 John 3: 1, 2

We are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these Three Great and Infinite Powers are unanimously committed to work on our behalf if we cooperate with them.

Ellen G. White, General Conference Bulletin, April 4, 1901 (translated by the author)

When through baptism we commit ourselves to Him, and receive ordination in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, these Three Great Powers of Heaven commit themselves to work on our behalf.

Ellen G. White, General Conference Bulletin, April 14, 1901 (translated by the author)

Read this commentary (about which we have already advanced some conclusions) on the connotation of the baptismal formula from the theological point of view about the Trinity and how inconsequential it can be to deny the equality of the Persons of the Trinity.

At the end of his ministry, Jesus tells his disciples that they should go "and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (**Matthew 28: 19**). In this, the initiatory rite of each believer into the Christian religion, the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly stated. First, we note that "in the name" (eis to onoma) is singular, not plural "in the names".

To be baptized in the name of the three persons of the Trinity means to identify oneself with everything the Trinity stands for; to commit oneself to the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Second, the union of these three names indicates that the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal with the Father. It would be rather strange, not to say blasphemous, to unite the name of the eternal God with a created being (whether eternally created or at some point of time), and a force or power in this baptismal formula. When the Holy Spirit is put in the same expression and on the same level as the two other persons, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is also viewed as a person and of equal standing with the Father and the Son.

Gerhard Pfandl, The Trinity in Scripture, 3

When Paul says goodbye in one of his letters, he does so by naming the 3 persons of the Deity, although in a different order. Note that since they are equal persons the order becomes completely irrelevant, however, he again refers to 3 different persons who contribute in a complementary way to the desire for the greeting.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

2 Corinthians 13: 14

Juan, the theologian, states that the three people are in perfect agreement. We do not have a triad of gods in conflict or fighting for supremacy but they give an unequivocal testimony, in which they all agree.

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on the earth: the Spirit, and the water, and



the blood; and the three are into the one.

1 John 5: 7, 8

I must tell you that some Bibles consider this text to be an interpolation. It is quite possible that in some versions you will find a note or that you will not yet find "in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness".

This is because it is absent in Greek manuscripts before the 16th century. New findings in the Vulgate would seem to confirm that the verses could have been added and actually be like the short version I have quoted, so we do not have total certainty about the text. Be careful not to hold the whole edifice of the truth of a doctrine in one text, it is not necessary. See the next paragraph, where it is held that interpolation can give the right meaning to the canonical version:

The only Greek manuscripts, in any form, which support the words, "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one: and there are three that bear witness in earth", are the Montfortianus of Dublin, copied from the modern Latin Vulgate; the Reavianus, copied from the Complutensian Polyglot; a manuscript at Naples, with the words added in the margin by a recent hand; Ottobonianus, 298, of the fifteenth century, the Greek of which is a translation of the accompanying Latin.

All the old versions omit the words. The oldest manuscripts of the Vulgate omit them, the earliest Vulgate manuscript which has them being Wizanburgensis, 99, of the eighth century. A scholium quoted in Matthaei shows that the words did not arise from fraud; for all Greek manuscripts ("there are three that bear record"), the Scholiast notices, have "three", masculine, because the three things (the Spirit, the water, and the blood) are SYMBOLS OF THE TRINITY. To this Cyprian, 196, refers: 'Of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is written, "And these three are one" (a unity). There must be some mystical truth implied in "three" [hoi treis] twice in the masculine, though the antecedents, 'Spirit, water, and blood', are neuter.

That THE TRINITY was meant is a natural inference: the triad specified pointing to a still higher Trinity; as is plain also from 1 John 5: 9, "the witness of God", referring to the Trinity, alluded to in 'the Spirit, water, and blood'. It was therefore first written as a marginal comment to complete the sense; then, as early, at least, as the eighth century, was introduced into the text of the Latin Vulgate. The testimony, however, could only be borne on earth to men, not in heaven. The marginal comment that inserted "in heaven" was inappropriate. It is on earth that the context requires the witness of the three-the Spirit, the water, and the blood-to be borne: mystically setting forth the divine triune witnesses-the Father, the Spirit, and the Son.

Luecke notices as internal evidence against the words, John never uses "the Father" and "the Word" as correlates, but, like other New Testament writers, associated 'the Son' with "the Father," and always refers "the Word" to 'God' as its correlate, not "the Father". Vigilius, at the end of the fifth century, first quotes the disputed words as in the text. The term 'Trinity' occurs first in the third century in Tertullian, Adversus Praxean, 3.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary, 1 John 5: 7

6.4. Characteristics of the Godhead

I would like you to note that I use the terms Divinity and Deity as equivalent to the use of the term Trinity to refer, as appropriate, to one or all three Persons. In the books of Ellen White in English (her native language) she often uses the term Godhead, which is equivalent to Deity.

Although there are many names for God in the sacred record, one of them seems to be the most relevant. See below for interesting supplemental material on the Names of God.

And Moses said to God, Behold, when I come to the sons of Israel, and shall say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they shall say to me, what is His name? What shall I say to them? And God said to Moses, I Am that I Am. And He said, so you shall say to the sons of Israel, I Am has sent me to you. And God said to Moses again, you shall say this to the





sons of Israel, Jehovah the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My title from generation to generation.

Exodus 3: 13-15

Moses was grazing his father-in-law's sheep in Midian and finds a burning bush that was not consumed. When God speaks to him from the bush, He utters His own name. This name denotes the eternity of God, so in some Bibles, it is translated as The Eternal. "I am" indicates a permanent existence that has no beginning or end, which points to a unique entity without parallel on earth or in heaven. Only God can be the great "I am". This can be confirmed by the following verse.

Your name, O Jehovah, endures forever, and Your memorial, O Jehovah, throughout all generations.

Psalms 135: 13

I must admit, probably like many others, that the concept of eternity is too big for me to understand. As finite creatures, who place our experiences or living things in time, where everything has a before and after, a beginning and an end, understanding the eternal nature of God is impossible.

If God ever created the first being, an angel, surely means that before that he was alone, only eternally backward, of course, he had the other people of the Deity, but still, it is incomprehensible to look back... when there is no starting point. I believe in an eternal God by faith, because my mind can hardly imagine or know the edges of what seems inaccessible to our limited nature.

Thanks to God and his revelation we can know him and know, as sinners, that we are in front of a merciful Being. I love that God says he will not leave me, despite my desperate condition, he loves me and he will not abandon me to the mercy of my unhappy destiny, death. How good it is to know that God is not like us who do not forgive, who hold a grudge for what happened years ago, or who say "I forgive, but... I do not forget". Thank you, Lord, for being the way you are.

For Jehovah your God is a merciful God; He will not forsake you, nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

Deuteronomy 4: 31

This God, whom you and I love and worship, is "long-suffering" and therefore has patience with my weaknesses, knowing that I am dust. It is interesting to mention that when God proclaims this, He says in the previous verse (**Exodus 34: 5**) that He is proclaiming His name, that is, His character.

And Jehovah passed by before him and proclaimed, Jehovah! Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

Exodus 34: 6

God is also holy, without the pollution of evil, perfect but also jealous. God tells me that He wants to have a unique relationship with me (and also with you and with everyone else, don't be jealous...), a relationship where nothing comes between us. How nice that someone wants this relationship with each of us! Note also that God's mercy will not protect the rebel. We'll see more of this in another study.

And Joshua said to the people, you cannot serve Jehovah, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

Joshua 24: 19



Expanding on the theme of the characteristics of God we must come to the statement that God is Spirit, made by Jesus Himself in the encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. To understand this, we must detach ourselves from what people today usually consider to mean spirit (ghost, a stark, intangible entity), because although the Bible does not define it, we can understand that it is different from our material nature and that it corresponds to a different state.

We can perceive that the angels are also spirits and they could have wielded swords, taken Lot and his daughters by the hand, and brought them out of Sodom or eaten with Abraham. Let us not pretend to explain what God has not explained,



God is not flesh and bones like us but his physical nature, to say it in a way, is far from being totally definable for man since it has not been revealed to us what characterizes the concept of spirit.

God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.

John 4: 24

Perhaps one of the most important statements about God is when the beloved disciple tells us about God's love. Unlike human beings who manifest love to those who love them, or who reciprocate the love by natural means, such as the relationship between spouses, parents, and children, siblings, grandparents, and grandchildren (I am enjoying the latter very much) among others; God manifests a wonderful love for all His creatures.



But also, John does not say that God has love, but that "God is love", that is, His nature is love, He does not have, He is. I marvel that with so few words something so exalted can be said. Of course, in addition to this monumental truth, John urges us to give this same kind of love. I feel that it is difficult to love those who hate or reject us, those who may have willingly harmed us, but I ask God to transform my heart so that I can be as loving as He is. Will you join me in this request?

The one who does not love has not known God. For God is love.

1 John 4: 8

I would like you to note what seems not to be included in this passage. If God were a single Person (not three Persons as we are arguing), how would He have manifested His love, which is part of His nature, before bringing the first creature into existence?

Remember that if God is Creator He should have been creating from Eternity, but if the first creature had a beginning, it means that from that point until the past this One-Person God would have been alone (for an eternity) and would have had no one to love. In order to love, we must have something or someone to direct this love towards... God, the Divinity that we propose here had the other Persons to love before the first created being existed. Therefore, this verse also proves the plurality of Persons of the Divinity.

David asks Asaph to direct a group song to Jehovah, and within this beautiful homage to God, a portion says that God "is good". Asaph says that we should acclaim Him for His goodness, for His mercy is like Him, eternal. I like to believe in a good God, who desires only the good for His creatures, who shows me throughout my existence His concern for my salvation. We tend to be kind to those we like or who manage to touch some sensitive fiber of our hard being. God is good, He is good to all, He is interested in your salvation, in mine and in that of all, even of whom could consider himself as the last of mortals.

O give thanks to Jehovah, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever.

1 Chronicles 16: 34

Something in which Christianity differs from pagan religions is that the gods of the latter possessed, sometimes to a superlative degree, everything that is most shameful and weakest in man; whereas Christianity shows us a God with desirable attributes, above, far above not only what man is, but what he could be. While the tendency to imitate pagan gods led man to degradation, imitating the God of the Holy Bible leads us to seek a character ever closer to that which Jesus Christ showed us on this earth.

Some people believe that God exists, but that He is no longer interested in His creatures, that He has left us in this sea of tears and pain to our fate. No, thousand times no. The mental image of a God who gave life to this world and then left His creatures at the mercy of the violent forces, of which we are witnesses today, that move this world; is very far from the image presented in the Sacred Scriptures. The Bible gives me many examples of a sustaining God, who not only created but sustains and vivifies everything with his power, always. A God who gives life and sustains it. Please note that I have quoted next.

You, even You, are Jehovah alone. You have made the heavens, heaven of the heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things on it, the seas, and all in them, and You preserve them all. And the host of the heavens worships You.

Nehemiah 9: 6

The earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness of it; the world, and those who dwell in it.

Psalms 24: 1

The psalmist says that God is the owner of everything, he owns it by the creation and we who accept Him will also belong to Him by redemption. Unlike man, who likes to retain his own, God wishes to share his



creation with us and to give us His blessings with full hands. Sin has prevented this, but when God restores all things, we will be able to enjoy them eternally. Some other characteristics of God are no less impressive. Look at these verses and identify them yourself. I will make some comments, although these verses are self-explanatory.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are Your ways, O King of saints.

Revelation 15: 3

A God with all unimaginable power, the ruler of the universe exalted by His creatures, is the image conveyed by this verse. Notice that the words "God Almighty" are used in a combination that the Lord's servant says is terrible (great).

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Hebrews 4: 13

I saw that God's holy name should be used with reverence and awe. The words God Almighty are coupled together and used by some in prayer in a careless, thoughtless manner, which is displeasing to Him. Such have no realizing sense of God or the truth, or they would not speak so irreverently of the great and dreadful God, who is soon to judge them in the last day. Said the angel, "Couple them not together; for fearful is His name." Those who realize the greatness and majesty of God, will take His name on their lips with holy awe. He dwelleth in light unapproachable; no man can see Him and live. I saw that these things will have to be understood and corrected before the church can prosper.

Ellen G. White, Early Writings, 122

Moreover, it is omnipresent, that is, it can be everywhere at the same time. Nothing can be hidden from His control and mastery. Many people can feel overwhelmed by this, I rather feel that it is a joy to know that God is by my side at all times, that I have nothing to fear because He always sees me.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

Romans 11: 33

Besides, He is an omniscient God, there is nothing that can be known that He does not know. The attributes of Deity are incomprehensible to us, beings of limited intelligence, unable to understand Him who has no limits. When the first computer was created, around 1950, some calculated that the entire Empire State, the tallest building in the world at the time, had to be filled with computers to be the equivalent of a man's mind. I don't even want to imagine if we tried to do the calculation for the One who rules the course of the constellations with his power.

Remember former things from forever; for I am God, and no other is God, even none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from the past things which were not done, saying, my purpose shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure;

Isaiah 46: 9, 10

I would like to know my future and that of my people, to be able to look beyond it, to have a vision that extends beyond my human limitations. What do you say? But what is limited for mortals is an attribute of the Divine.

Besides, God controls the future of this world and has established times for everything... but let's not get ahead of ourselves, we'll deal with that in another study.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

James 1: 17

God is the same today and always,





in addition to being a generous God willing, as a loving father, to give the best gifts to his children. It is thanks to this immutability of God, to the fact that his mercy is forever, that we have hope.

For I am Jehovah, I change not. Because of this, you sons of Jacob are not destroyed.

Malachi 3: 6

7. Complementary Material

7.1. The Name of God

Although we have discussed this in one of the previous sections, I would like to take a little more time and space to comment on a few things. While there are many names by which God is called, there is one special name (special because God himself asks to be called that way) that presents one of God's most important characteristics. Read the verses we quoted earlier:

And Moses said to God, Behold, when I come to the sons of Israel, and shall say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they shall say to me, what is His name? What shall I say to them? And God said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM. And He said, so you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you. And God said to Moses again, you shall say this to the sons of Israel, Jehovah the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My title from generation to generation.

Exodus 3: 13-15

When we studied in a treatise on the Holy Bible, we mentioned that when the scribes had to copy God's name (the four letters in both Hebrew and Greek), they prayed first to be in a spiritual condition that would enable them to reverently write God's name. Unfortunately, we live in an age where almost no one shows reverence for sacred things, especially the name of God. Jokes and pranks are common, some of them of a very high tone, using the Divinity, which is very regrettable. I would like to think that this only happens to people in the non-Christian world, but unfortunately, it is not so.

Holy angels have been displeased and disgusted with the irreverent manner in which many have used the name of God, the great Jehovah. Angels mention that sacred name with the greatest awe, ever veiling their faces when they speak the name of God; and the name of Christ is so sacred to them that they speak it with the greatest reverence.

True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence. With this sense of the Unseen, every heart should be deeply impressed. The hour and place of prayer are sacred, because God is there. And as reverence is manifested in attitude and demeanor, the feeling that inspires it will be deepened. "Holy and reverend is his name," the psalmist declares.

Ellen G. White, God's Amazing Grace, 93



On May 14, 1851, I saw the beauty and loveliness of Jesus. As I beheld His glory, the thought did not occur to me that I should ever be separated from His presence. I saw a light coming from the glory that encircled the Father, and as it approached near to me, my body trembled and shook like a leaf. I thought that if it should come near me, I would be struck out of existence, but the light passed me. Then could I have some sense of the great and terrible God with whom we have to do. I saw then what faint views some have of the holiness of God, and how much they take His holy and reverend name in vain, without realizing that it is God, the great and terrible God, of whom they are speaking. While praying, many use careless and irreverent expressions, which grieve the tender Spirit of the Lord and cause their petitions to be shut out of heaven.

Ellen G. White, Early Writings, 70

Please remember that one of the commandments commands us to keep in reverence the holy name of God and warns us of its misuse. I'll quote the command first, and then a commentary on an article I read on reverence for God's name in ancient Israel... that might give us a couple of lessons on these subjects.

You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain. For Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain.

Exodus 20: 7

The Jews did understand one thing. I believe that the ancient Jews had more reverence than God's people do today. When they were reading the Bible and they came to the name— (Hebrew



Characters) —they would never say it. That is why we do not know how it is pronounced. Nobody knows how it is pronounced because the Jews never, ever read this name out loud. This went on for hundreds and thousands of years. They wrote it, but they never spoke it; they never took this name on their lips because they considered this name holy. It is an interesting thing that today people want to say the very name that the Jews would never, under any condition, say.



In ancient times the people did not all have a Bible, so when they gathered together, one person who would read from the Scriptures would be upfront. When he came to this word— (Hebrew Characters) —what would he say? He would have to say something so the people would know who he was talking about, but he would never say the word transliterated “**Jehovah**” because they considered it a holy name. They never once took transliterated “**Jehovah**” because they considered it a holy name. They never once took it upon their lips. When they came to this word, they said the word Adonai. Adonai means Lord. The word transliterated “**Jehovah**” means “**I AM**”.

John J. Grosboll, The Sacred Name, 1, 2

To hallow the name of the Lord requires that the words in which we speak of the Supreme Being be uttered with reverence. “**Holy and reverend is His name**”. **Psalm 111: 9**. We are never in any manner to treat lightly the titles or appellations of the Deity. In prayer we enter the audience chamber of the Most High; and we should come before Him with holy awe. The angels veil their faces in His presence. The cherubim and the bright and holy seraphim approach His throne with solemn reverence. How much more should we, finite, sinful beings, come in a reverent manner before the Lord, our Maker!

Ellen G. White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 106

This commandment not only prohibits false oaths and common swearing, but it forbids us to use the name of God in a light or careless manner, without regard to its awful significance. By the thoughtless mention of God in common conversation, by appeals to Him in trivial matters, and by the frequent and thoughtless repetition of His name, we dishonor Him. “**Holy and reverend is His name**”. **Psalm 111: 9**. All should meditate upon His majesty, His purity, and holiness, that the heart may be impressed with a sense of His exalted character; and His holy name should be uttered with reverence and solemnity.

Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 306, 307

When I read these quotes, I get overwhelmed. I fear that I have once offended the name of God, the King of the Universe, by attaching his name to unsanctified thoughts or by using it carelessly. God forgive us for having, even in our prayers, used without reverence the name that the angels pronounce while veiling their faces.

I must, however, conclude with the reasoning of this section. Some people, unfortunately also in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, hold that the name of God (the four-letter name) is the only way we should call God. They believe that those who teach otherwise have apostatized. They have also assigned a single name to Jesus and express themselves in the same way regarding that name.

I believe that these people are in error. There are many names in which God calls Himself, names that are also used by the prophets to address Him respectfully, names that Jesus uses (as Father, for example) that denote some salient feature of the Godhead. I find no support in the Word of God, nor in the Spirit of Prophecy, for thinking in a different way, that is, for supposing that there is only one way of calling God. When you read the next section, it will surely become even clearer to you.

7.2. The Names of God

I will initially quote a Baptist source (sorry I don't have the author's full details) because it seems to me to be very brief but consistent.

In it appear the main names used in the Holy Scripture, (some of them are compound names that exalt the character of our wonderful God) recording some of the verses in which you can find them. For each case, its meaning is translated as understood by the specialists.

1. ELOHIM. Used 2,570 times, it speaks of God's strength and power. (**Genesis 1: 1; Psalm 19: 1**)
2. EL. We found four combinations of this name:
 - a. ELYON. God Almighty. (**Genesis 14: 17-20; Isaiah 14: 13, 14**)
 - b. ROI. The God who sees. (**Genesis 16: 13**)



- c. SHADDAI. Almighty, Omnipotent (used 48 times in the Old Testament, **Genesis 17: 1; Psalm 91: 1**)
 - d. OLAM. The eternal God. (**Isaiah 40: 28**)
3. ADONAI. Master, Lord. God is the master of his creation. (**Malachi 1: 6**)
4. JEHOVAH. The most common name [common in the sense of frequent] of all. It appears 6,823 times. It means "He who always lives", the one who has life in himself. He is the God of the covenant. (**Genesis 2: 4**) There are nine compositions of this name:
- a. JIREH. Jehovah will provide. (**Genesis 22: 13, 14**)
 - b. NISI. Jehovah is my banner. (**Exodus 17: 15**)
 - c. SHALOM. Jehovah is peace. (**Judges 6: 24**)
 - d. SABAOT. Jehovah of hosts. (**1 Samuel 1: 3; Isaiah 6: 1-3**)
 - e. MACCADDESHOM. Jehovah who sanctifies. (**Exodus 31: 13**)
 - f. ROHI (RAAH). Jehovah is my shepherd. (**Psalms 23: 1**)
 - g. TSIDKENU. Jehovah our justice. (**Jeremiah 23: 6**)
 - h. SAMA. Jehovah there, the God who is present. (**Ezekiel 48: 35**)
 - i. RAFA. Jehovah your healer. (**Exodus 15: 26**)

The Names of God, 1 (translated by the author)

It is interesting to note that Elohim (one of the most commonly used names) is a word in the plural, appropriate for a triune God. I would like to point out that there are authors who speak about 20, 72, and 99 different names (the numbers are only an example), so I do not pretend or try to decide who is right (while surely recognizing that they have studied the subject much more than I have) but we will try to link some of these names to characteristics that God wishes to emphasize about Himself and that He longs to imbue in our minds.

Speaking of Elohim, the following author helps us to reach certain conclusions:

This name is a plural noun and refers to the plurality of divinity, which we see illustrated in **Genesis 1: 26**: **Let us make man in our image, after our likeness**. Although "Elohim" is plural, he is One God...

There is another verse in the Scriptures that helps us understand the plurality of Elohim, which is found in **Deuteronomy 6: 4**: **"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God (Elohim) is one LORD"**. This verse declares that Elohim is one Lord; however, looking closely at this verse, "one" has a very interesting meaning, since the Hebrew word for "one" is "echad", whose meaning is not singular, but plural. It means "one component that is joined to another, remaining together". Here we see plurality in unity...

Brian J. Bailey, The Names of God, 15, 16 (translated by the author)

It is interesting to note the importance of the meaning of the words used in the Holy Book because sometimes our language has no equivalent to translate a word (which ultimately denotes an idea) a situation which may lead us to understand things imperfectly. I want you to notice that the verse of **Deuteronomy 6: 4** is used incorrectly by those who maintain that the Trinity does not exist or is a pagan concept or only Catholic.

The name "El" also appears in the Holy Scriptures. Let us look at some of its meaning, which as we shall see is associated with the strength of God:

With the Strong's concordance, we can understand the meaning and appreciation of the use of this name, so we quote:

- El - Strong's #410 - abbreviated from #352; strength; as an adjective, powerful; especially the Almighty (but also used with any deity), - God (god), good, great, idol, mighty, power, strong.
- Ayil - Strong's #352 - from the same as #193, strength, hence anything strong, specifically a chieftain; also a ram (for its strength); pilaster (as a strong support); an oak or other tree strong - oak, lintel, post, ram, brave, tree.

From the above definitions provided by the Strong's concordance, we see that the root meaning of "El" is "to be strong".

Brian J. Bailey, The Names of God, 25 (translated by the author)

To emphasize the greatness of God's power through His mighty acts in bringing Israel out of the land of Egypt and His judgments on the company of Korah, Moses says in **Deuteronomy 10: 17**: **"For the LORD your God (Elohim) is a God of gods (Elohim), and a Lord of lords (Adonai), a great**



God (or El), **mighty and terrible...**" Thus, "El" is clearly used differently from His other names to describe the strength of God.

Brian J. Bailey, The Names of God, 26 (translated by the author)

When we are faced with what seems to be something insurmountable, against a strong enemy, let us realize that our "El", our God of Strength, is stronger than our enemy and that He can defeat him by giving us victory. Glory to God! This is the God that Moses knew.

Joshua also knew God as "El", as it is evidenced when he addresses the children of Israel before crossing the Jordan: "**And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God (El) is in the midst of you, and that he will drive out from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites**" (**Joshua 3: 10**).

Brian J. Bailey, The Names of God, 28 (translated by the author)

Finally, we will deal a little with the term Adonai, which we explained was widely used by the ancient Jews to refer to God without using the sacred name. It is also very important because of the plural meaning "Lords" that the term has.

"Adonai" means "master, lord, or owner," and is the plural of the Hebrew word "Adon". When it refers to God it always has a plural meaning, "my Lords"; so, just like "Elohim", this name represents the Holy Trinity.

However, when the word is used to refer to men it is translated as "lord", "knight", or "master", although most of the time it is "lord". This is very well illustrated in **Genesis 24** when Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, speaks of "**my lord Abraham**".

The form Eliezer uses is the singular form of "Adon"; while, when addressing God, Abraham uses the plural form, "Adonai". We see in the name "Adonai" the truth of the beauty of God's character, when Abraham affectionately calls Him "**Lord**".

Brian J. Bailey, The Names of God, 69, 70 (translated by the author)

This brief review of some of the names used in the Holy Bible to refer to the Divine has two objectives: to demonstrate that there is no single name to refer to God and that each name has a teaching on the character and nature of our God, especially the Trinitarian one.

7.3. History of the Trinity in the Christian Church

Although this is a topic that would merit many treatises (probably much more voluminous than this one) I will try to make a summary of how it has been forged in time, from the early Christian church to our time; although I will dedicate a separate section to analyze what happened in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Not only is the concept of the Trinity complex, as it is impossible to understand it by reason, but men have tried over time to go beyond what is revealed and have racked their brains trying to do so. I present to you a story that I had once heard that reflects some of this:

A famous legend says that Augustine of Hippo was reflecting on the mystery of the Trinity while walking on the beach. In the comings and goings, I observe that a child brought water from the sea with a shell and poured it into a small well he had made in the sand. Out of curiosity, Augustine of Hippo asked him:

- What are you doing, little one?
- I am trying to put all the water from the sea into this well, replied the child.
- But don't you realize that this is impossible? All the water from the sea does not fit in that hole.

To which the boy replied:

- As impossible as it is to solve the problem you are trying to solve. You cannot understand the greatness of God and the Trinity: it is a mystery for the human being.

Having said that, the child disappeared because, the legend concludes, he was an angel sent by God.

The fact is that the legend reflects very well the depth of the problem. When we want to find easy, demonstrable, palpable solutions... to issues such as God, eternity, the Trinity... it is as



impossible for us to demonstrate as putting all the water of the sea into a little hole in the sand...

**Luis González Soriano,
The Forgotten Dimension of God, 2 (translated by the author)**

Of course, this is a legend, but it illustrates the complexity of the subject that the church has tried to unravel for almost two millennia and that has had its ups and downs, from support for the Trinitarian concept to total rejection, passing through a set of heresies, some very complex to understand.

7.3.1. Pre-Nicene position

In reality, the discussion of the nature of God (triune and one, or only one) did not take place in Judaism but Christianity, when different theologians tried to explain the nature of Christ before his incarnation. Some uninformed people have tried to argue that the early church (before the Council of Nicea, 325 AD, where the subject of Arianism was discussed) was not Trinitarian. Let us read a little.

The pre-Nicene fathers (before the Council of Nicea, 325 AD, where the subject of Arianism was addressed) were clear that as the Bible asserted, the testimony they had received from the apostles was monotheistic to the last degree and therefore they contended that there is only one God and only one, but at the same time, they also understood that Scripture testifies that God exists in three defined and identified persons. From the historical study of the pre-Christians, the claim that the doctrine of the Trinity was unknown to the early Christians is disqualified. There is ample testimony from Christians of the first four centuries that reflects this.

**Luis González Soriano,
The Forgotten Dimension of God, 2 (translated by the author)**

There is evidently a great deal of information in the patristics to support the contention that the early church largely recognized the Trinity as the correct conception of the nature of Deity. However, there were dissenting voices in this pre-Nicene period as there are today.

From the historical study of the pre-Christians, the claim that the doctrine of the Trinity was unknown to the early Christians is disqualified. There is ample testimony from Christians of the first four centuries that reflects this.

1. Polycarp of Smyrna (155 AD, disciple of John) confessed his faith in the Trinity; this is also found in the acts of martyrdom of Justin (165 AD), and in the profession of faith of Apollonius (180-192 AD); Irenaeus of Lyon (202 AD), in 'Adversus Hareses', testifies the same.
2. The list continues with Ignatius of Antioch (117 AD), in his letters to the Ephesians and the Magnesians (written at the time of the rise of all kinds of heresies denying the condition of Christ as the Son of God) in which one can read his affirmation of the Trinitarian doctrine.
3. It is interesting to note that even before Tertullian (180-240 AD) used the term 'Trinitas' to identify the Trinitarian formula 'God One and Trine', already Theophilus of Antioch (180 AD) used the Greek word "Trias" affirming "the Trinity of God, His Word, and His Wisdom".
4. Athenagoras in the 2nd century with his "Legation for Christians", will say: "Who, then, will not be surprised to hear those who admit one God the Father and one God the Son and one Holy Spirit, who show their power in unity and their distinction in order, called atheists?"
5. And similar quotes could be made of Irenaeus (115-190 AD). The written testimonies of the above-mentioned authors (well before Nicea) and the subsequent historical and theological development allow us to think that the doctrinal idea was present in the first Christian communities, which rules out any proposal of the sudden invention of the Council of Nicea or doctrine foreign to the first Christians.
6. The biblical and theological foundations support what history itself corroborates, the doctrine of the Trinity was recognized by the early Christians, clear and accurate testimony is the baptismal formulation based on **Matthew 28: 19**, which even with variations was present in every act of baptism, as well as doxologies in the style of **2 Peter 3: 18**, or texts such as **Revelation 5: 13** among others.
7. By the end of the second century we find elements of common faith for the church according to the writings of the time, and among the common and fundamental doctrinal features that we find we can affirm: that there is a just and good God who is the Creator and Savior of the world, but in turn, being One is not a "solitary" God and Seeberg here makes a reference to Irenaeus that leaves already established that it must recognize a triple Ego in God. Later Tertullian will explain this relationship through the concepts of substance and person.
8. The treatise of Novatian, De Trinitate, proves that Tertullian's doctrine had triumphed in Rome as early as 250 AD (Seeberg, Manual of the History of Doctrines, Volume I, 175).
9. The Christological dispute between Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, and Dionysius of Rome around 260 AD speaks clearly of the fact that the Trinitarian concept was already firmly established. When Dionysius of Alexandria moved away from Christian orthodoxy, affirming that the Son is a creation of the Father and with a different nature, he generated a response from Dionysius of Rome where he affirms that we must intimately relate the Son and the Spirit,



with the Father, as the Scriptures establish: "I say then, that it is very necessary that the divine Trinity be preserved in unity and summarized in one, in a kind of consummation, the one God, the Almighty. We cannot afford to divide the Divine Unity into three gods, but must believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Christ Jesus His Son, and in the Holy Spirit"; but the declaration must be unified in the God of all things, for thus the Divine Trinity will be preserved (Nicaea 26). To which Dionysius of Alexandria added and rectified, he affirmed: "For just as I do not believe that the Logos is a creature, neither do I affirm that God is his Creator, but his Father". "Without dividing the Monad, we expand it into the Trinity, and at the same time we combine the Trinity, without diminishing it, into the Monad".

10. Also, Methodius shortly before Nicaea in 311 AD affirms in his writings that Christ is with the Father and the Spirit and it is to Him that believers are welcomed (Seeberg).
11. The formula and concept of the Trinity appear constantly in the work of Clement of Alexandria.

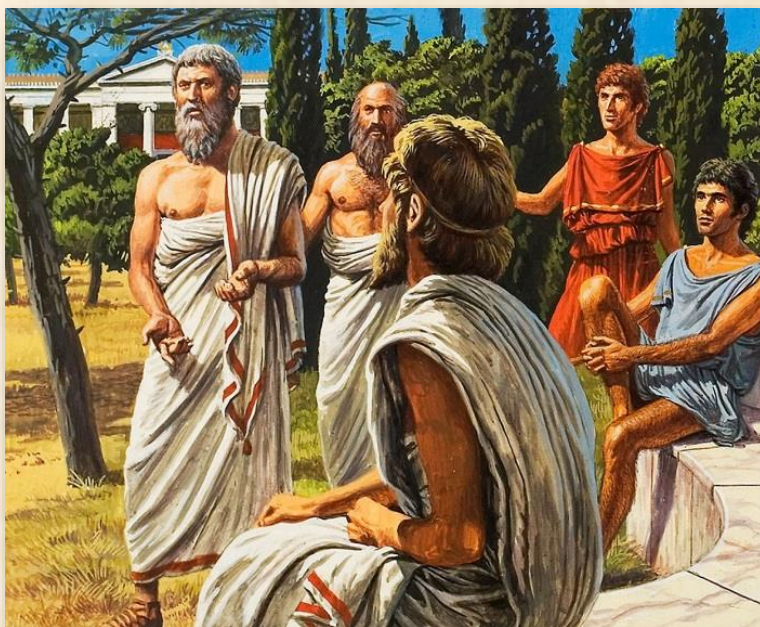
It is therefore inaccurate to claim that the origins of the Trinitarian doctrine are to be found in a philosophical and worldly source, based on the use of terms which, although taken from philosophy, are only intended to specify and clarify a purely biblical concept.

Luis González Soriano,
The Forgotten Dimension of God, 5, 6 (translated by the author)

Despite this, some erroneous conceptions about the nature of God arose, which today we qualify as heresy, but which arose when trying to link the Christian concept with a society with a Greek cultural background (with great influence on the religious). Let us look at Docetism.

Christians in the second century explored various ways of seeing Christ, some of them already addressed in the writings of the New Testament. "Docetism" -a word based on the Greek verb dokéo, meaning "to appear like" or "to appear as" comprised a wide range of beliefs that saw Christ as only apparently human. The basic tenets included a belief that Jesus was a human being completely separate from Christ, who was a divine being. This distinction allowed divinity to be separated from humanity and to avoid its subjection to human mortality, passions, and fickleness. Paul's admonition in **1 Corinthians 12: 3** against those who called Jesus "anathema", rather than calling Him "Jesus Lord", is simply a defense against such a teaching belief. Similarly, the admonition to test every spirit in **1 John 4: 1-3** identifies the spirit of the antichrist as a spirit of denial that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. **1 John 1: 1-3** describes Jesus Christ in two ways: as being eternally with God the Father and as being perceptible by the human senses; that is, as being both God and human.

Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon & John W. Reeve,
The Trinity, 137 (translated by the author)



Let me point out another interesting conception (because of the distorting influence of Greek philosophy and thought, distorting in the religious, please do not misunderstand me) which is the conception of Philo of Alexandria (15 BC-40 AD) where he perceives the Logos (God the Son for us) as a kind of demiurge, trying to create a syncretism with Platonic thought.

The concept related to the term demiurge is explained in one of the quotations below.

One prominent Jew who suggested that the agents did God's work was Philo of Alexandria. Philo was a Jewish intellectual who lived in the great Egyptian city of Alexandria in the time of Jesus and Paul. As a rich and educated Greek-speaking Jew, Philo found himself

absorbed in the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultural worlds. As a result, he often tried to harmonize Jewish and Greco-Roman philosophical concerns with monotheism. He was a prolific writer in various areas of Torah interpretation, and used a rich mixture of literal and allegorical interpretations in treatises on the lives of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. He was also very careful to point out that every physical description of God in the Torah is metaphorical. Thus, he protected the transcendent



God from assuming physical attributes. Beyond that, he described God's interactions with the physical world, or perceived by the senses, as being performed by various agents, such as Justice, Sophia (Wisdom) and, particularly, the Logos (Word).

**Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon & John W. Reeve,
The Trinity, 135 (translated by the author)**

The demiurge (in Greek: demiurgos), in the Gnostic philosophy, is the entity that without necessarily being a creator is the impeller of the universe. He is also considered a demiurge creator of the world and author of the universe in Plato's idealistic philosophy and in the mysticism of the Neoplatonists. Therefore, demiurge literally means: master, supreme craftsman, maker; although highlighting that in Greek would mean creator.

According to the myth of Plato, exposed in the Timaeus, a work in which he describes the disposition, based on reasoning founded on the theory of ideas and the cosmos. In the beginning in the universe there was only:

- Shapeless matter and chaos
- Ideas, which are perfect
- The demiurge, a divinity
- Space

Plato tells us that the demiurge takes pity on matter and copies ideas into it, thus obtaining the objects that make up our reality. In this way, he explained the separation between the world of ideas that are perfect and the real (material) world which, being imperfect, participates as a copy of perfection. This copy responds to the previous form of revising the essence in the being, which is indicated as failed and unsustainable.

Wikipedia, Demiurge (translated by the author)

As can be seen, the Greek tendency to consider the matter as intrinsically evil forces us to find ways to separate the Creator God from it, and these Greek concepts emerge within Christianity. This questioning of the nature of God, starting from an erroneous point of view would create some currents of thought that made some heretics very renowned or famous (so to speak). Let us look at Marcionism and its creator and promoter Marcion of Sinope (85-160 AD).

Marcion was a wealthy shipowner and shipbuilder who was born and raised in Pontus, below [to the south of] the Black Sea. In the mid-second century, he presented himself in Rome as a Christian believer; not an average Christian believer but an intensely rigorous one. He had apparently sold his ship business and donated the proceeds to the church in Rome, following the example of the early church described in Acts. Marcion managed to have a great influence on the church in Rome in two ways. As a patron, he helped the church through his wealth and influence, and as a fervently religious man, he was its leader.

Marcion's beliefs as a Christian were no more common than his conduct. He differentiated between Christ and the God of the Old Testament, describing the latter as a righteous but incompetent deity who acted as the Creator of the evil physical world. Marcion suggested that this lawgiving God, the God of rudimentary justice who took "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", was incapable of love or grace or of offering salvation. On the other hand, Christ was a superior deity. Marcion described Christ as the God of love and grace, capable of forgiveness and offering salvation. In short, Marcion believed that the Jewish God was a poor, inept deity, while Christ was a good, saving God, completely independent of the Old Testament God and superior to him.

**Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon & John W. Reeve,
The Trinity, 138 (translated by the author)**

Marcionism, believe it or not, is still (partially) in force in our time where some Christians question the God of the Old Testament as a different God in love, mercy, forgiveness... Jesus.

Another threat to Christian orthodoxy (at least as we understand it today, you and I, not everyone) was Gnosticism with ideas similar to Marcion.

Another important challenge to the Christian understanding of Jesus Christ came from many different Gnostic groups in and around Judaism and Christianity during the second century. We could, for our purposes, define Gnosticism as a religious philosophy that believed in a supreme God in the highest heaven and whose emanations were lesser gods living in lower levels of the heavens...

The Gnostics had essentially appeared in a new form to protect the one God from any connection with the material world. Instead of using agents of God, such as the Logos, Sophia and Justice described by Philo, or the Memra of the Lord represented by the Targum Neofiti, they described the Logos and Sophia, and a host of other quasi-divinities, as emanations of the one God



and with independent existence. In many ways, this was a return to the polytheism of the pagans, with a supreme God at the top of the hierarchy.

**Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon & John W. Reeve,
The Trinity, 140-142 (translated by the author)**

I do not wish you to lose sight, as a result of these quotations, of the intricate path taken by those who attribute to some members of the Divinity the characteristics of a lesser god.

Another concept that emerged in those times (somewhat tumultuous from the point of view of orthodoxy) was the so-called modalism or Sabellianism, named after Sibelius (early third century).

Sabellius developed his ideas in reaction to his struggle with tritheism, which regarded the Father, Son, and Spirit as three separate gods. He held that since there was only one God - one God described in the Scriptures in three different forms - then these three forms must be consecutive. In other words, Sabellius suggested that the Father, Son, and Spirit were three different modes of the same God at different times. According to that concept, God revealed himself as Father during the old covenant, as Son during his life on earth, and as Holy Spirit in church times, but all three were one person. Theologians called this concept Sabellianism or Modalism, because it denoted three modes of the one God. Most Christians have rejected modalism on the basis of Scripture. A myriad of texts reveals the independent personality of each member of the Godhead, and demonstrate that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit existed at the same time. In time theologians came to recognize modalism as another failed attempt to maintain a belief in one God while at the same time recognizing that there is a Father, a Son, and a Holy Spirit.

**Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon & John W. Reeve,
The Trinity, 142, 143 (translated by the author)**

Some Christians, without claiming to be followers of Sabellius, compare God and the Trinitarian concept (in an attempt to understand it) with water, a substance that comes in three different states: solid, liquid, and gaseous. As you will understand from what has been explained, this does not seem to be a good way of trying to understand God.

Returning to the subject, it was evident that even as we entered the third century, there was no adequate way to theologically sustain the nature of God. I must accept, by dint of sincerity and recognition of personal incapacity as well, that what these men intended was to understand God, something that has required much effort and time for us to get to where we are today and we can judge (technically speaking) those who fell by the wayside with their, now, incorrect interpretations.

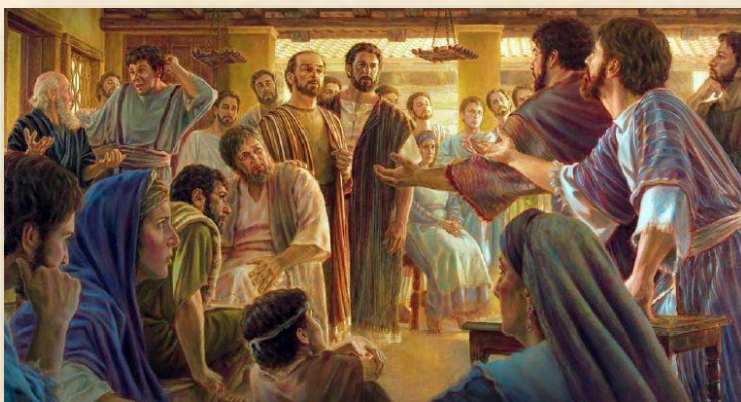
Not even Origen (185-254 AD), who was considered one of the most enlightened minds of that time, could escape the idea that the Son was proceeding or had some kind of dependence on the Father. This thought of Origen, even if he did not propose it, would lead to Arianism, one of the greatest struggles against Trinitarianism, a struggle that divided the church.

7.3.2. Emergence of anti-Trinitarianism

Anti-Trinitarianism originated with the emergence of Arianism in an environment where, despite the church's full acceptance of the Trinity, Trinitarian theology had not developed enough to successfully address these and other explainable questions. Even the best men of that time had trouble finding a way to put this puzzle together.

Arius (256-336 AD), a Libyan-born priest from Alexandria in Egypt, would be the one to trigger a controversy that occupied three councils and divided Christianity.

Arius, from whose name the term "Arianism" is derived, also placed the Son in an intermediate position. Like Origen, Arius' concept of monotheism did not permit him to assert anything other than that the transcendent Father was wholly God, but, unlike Origen, Arius is much more explicit in his comments on the origin of the Son as a





created being. While Origen used ambiguous language to describe the principle, insisting that when we first know of the Son being with the Father, Arius spoke boldly and clearly about a point in the principle at which the Father created the Son and before which the Son did not exist. One could claim that this was a positive improvement in accuracy, but in the end, the church understood that while this apparently fitted well with those Scriptures that suggested a principle for Christ, it contradicted other passages that spoke of the full divinity and eternity of the Son. Arius' attempt at precision proved to be a mistake.

**Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon & John W. Reeve,
The Trinity, 148 (translated by the author)**

The Council of Nicea (325 AD, in Asia Minor, today Turkey) brought together 300 bishops and other supporters and drew up the Nicene creed, which for centuries was considered valid to confront Arianism or any other tendency (which has always been called Arian, although that was not the central concept of Arius) that diminished the figure of God the Son before God the Father. Allow me to comment on the aforementioned book "**The Trinity**" without quoting a particular text.

If we read the conclusion of the Council, presided over by Emperor Constantine (as was the custom in those times, even though we are led to believe that they were always presided over and convoked by the Bishop of Rome, now Pope), we see that the central problem was not solved, since it was said that Christ was "born only of the Father", and elsewhere "begotten, not made", and the Holy Spirit was hardly mentioned without making any clarification about His divinity.

The creed did hold that the Father and the Son were "of one substance" with the Greek word "homooúsios" which later became the focus of future attacks. The trouble is that this term could be understood as two individuals of the same class, that is, gods, or as one individual divided into two parts, approaching the concept of Sabellian modalism. Either way, the Council of Nicea condemned Arianism. The church, meanwhile, and around this term, continued to argue until the Council of Constantinople (more than half a century later).

The Council of Constantinople (381 AD) convened and presided over by Emperor Theodosius sought to curb the problems arising from multiple interpretations of the famous term. At this council three tendencies were presented (besides the Nicene), one of them being fully Arian (in total four tendencies).

The good thing about this council was that it declared the Holy Spirit to be God (included in a creed called Nicene-Constantinople), but it did not clarify things, but it maintained the condemnation of Arianism. In reality, four tendencies emerged from Arianism:

In its beginnings, the Arian conflict produced four doctrinal currents:

- Anomeos: these are the Arians in the original sense. In turn, his disciples created various sub-schools: Aecians, Eunomians, Neo-Arianians, according to the personal currents (Aecio, Eunomio). They defended that Christ was created by the Father and that He was not of His own substance.
- Homoousians: It was the position that finally won out at the Council of Nicea which introduced into the final text the term homooúsios, which means "consubstantial", "of the same substance". They believed in the similarity between the Father and the Son. Athanasius was their great defender at that council.
- Homoiusians: They were also called Eusebians since it was defended by the three Eusebians (of Caesarea, of Emesa, and of Nicomedia). They sought an intermediate position between the two doctrines, and so they are called semi-Arians. For them, the Father and the Son were of like substance, but not of the same.
- Homoians. A compromise solution was sought, especially by political power, relegating it to theology. As a result, the term substance (ousia) and its derivatives homooúsios and homoióúsios were rejected, to simply declare that Jesus was homoiós (similar) to the Father.

**Luis González Soriano,
The Forgotten Dimension of God, 9 (translated by the author)**

These tendencies would remain in combat (except for the doomed Arianism, although its defenders continued) until the next council. The Council of Chalcedon, near Constantinople, (451 AD) would attempt to close the gap, seven decades after Constantinople.

It was presided over by the Empress Pulcheria and Emperor Martian after the death of Theodosius II in 450. It was held in Chalcedon, near Constantinople. It was attended by more than five hundred bishops, predominantly from the Eastern Churches.

After a long debate, a dogmatic text called the Chalcedonian Confession of Faith was proposed: "We all with one voice teach that we must confess to our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in



divinity and perfect in humanity. True God and true man, consubstantial ('homooúsios') with the Father as to divinity".

The council did not achieve peace either within the church or on the political level. To a large extent, the subject occupied the second half of the fifth century and the whole of the sixth century. The state did everything possible to impose the conciliar formulations but in vain.

**Luis González Soriano,
The Forgotten Dimension of God, 10 (translated by the author)**

7.3.3. The Catholic dogma

I have heard, in real amazement, some dissident Adventist Christians who claim that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has joined Babylon by accepting the dogma of the Trinity from the Catholic Church, a doctrine they assume is opposed to what the Word of God holds.

Such a statement, in addition to being inaccurate, demonstrates that the two positions, in my opinion, are not known to be very different concerning the Godhead. Although both churches hold a belief in the Trinity, it is evident from their own statements of doctrinal positions that only one of them is consistent with the Holy Scriptures.

I will quote the Adventist position:

There is only one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-wise, superior to all, and omnipresent. He is infinite and escapes human understanding, although he can be known through his self-revelation. He is worthy forever of reverence, worship, and service by all creation.

Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs, 23 (translated by the author)

God, the Eternal Father is the Creator, Originator, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers of the Father are also manifested in the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs, 31 (translated by the author)

God the Eternal Son incarnated in Jesus Christ. Through him all things were created, the character of God was revealed, the salvation of mankind was accomplished, and the world is judged. Although he is truly and eternally God, he also became truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but he perfectly exemplified the justice and love of God. Through his miracles, he manifested the power of God and these testified that he was the promised Messiah of God. He suffered and died willingly on the cross for our sins and in our place, rose from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary on our behalf. He will return in glory to deliver His people definitively and restore all things.

Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs, 41 (translated by the author)

God the Eternal Spirit played an active part with the Father and the Son in creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the authors of the Scriptures. He empowered the life of Christ. He draws and convicts human beings, and renews those who respond and transforms them into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts upon the church, enables it to bear witness for Christ, and, in harmony with the Scriptures, guides it into all truth.

Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs, 67 (translated by the author)

Although the Catholic Church holds that the 3 Persons of the Trinity are eternal (which we would fully agree with), when she tries to validate this position (the eternity of the Persons of the Godhead) with the tradition, she begins to establish dogmas that show that her understanding of the subject is not like the one we, as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, hold.

Notice what is said about the Son.

By these words we confess:

- that Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, equal in all things to the other two (**John 1: 1**);
- and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the true God, as is the Father who begets him from eternity. This divine birth of the Son of God is not like the earthly and mortal birth, and therefore, not being able to perceive or understand it perfectly through reason, we should believe it and adore it in admiration of the greatness of the mystery. The comparison that helps our reason most to explain this mystery is the following: just as the understanding, by knowing



itself, forms an idea of itself, called the "Word"; so, God the Father, by understanding Himself, engenders the eternal Word.

Begotten by the Father as God before all ages, Jesus Christ is begotten as a man in time by the Blessed Virgin Mary. Therefore, we must recognize in Jesus Christ two births, but only one filiation, the divine one, because only one is the person.

As far as the divine generation is concerned, Jesus Christ has no brothers, since he is the only-begotten Son of the Father; but as far as his human generation is concerned, he is the first-born of many brothers, who are those who, having received the faith, profess it in word and confirm it by works of charity.

**Roman Catechism promulgated by the Council of Trent,
Chapter III, Introduction, paragraphs 8-10 (translated by the author)**

Here the Son is mentioned as "begotten from eternity" and recognizes in its logic "two births". Obviously, the second is the incarnation and the first implies that he was created by the Father. This is totally contrary to the truth revealed by God in the Holy Scriptures. This doctrine of the "eternal generation of the Son" has no biblical basis and maintains a relationship of dependence on the Father.

Concerning the Holy Spirit, the declaration of the same council does not cease to amaze us, because of the human attempt to explain what God has solemnly declared in a much simpler way for human understanding.

If the third person of the Trinity is designated by this common name, and not by another name that is proper to it, it is because we are forced to borrow from created things the names that apply to God. Now, in created things we know no other way of communicating one's nature and essence than through generation. And so, we give this name of generation to the production of the second person by the first, and we call the person who is born Son, and the person from whom he is born Father. And so, since how God communicates Himself totally by virtue of love does not exist among us, we cannot express in our own words the production of the third person, and therefore neither can the person produced in this way; but we call this production "expiration," and the person "expired", "Holy Spirit".

**Roman Catechism promulgated by the Council of Trent,
Chapter IX, Introduction, paragraph 3 (translated by the author)**

In addition to reiterating that the Son has been a "production of the second person by the first" it is held that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person has been produced by the other two by a process called "expiration". How is this possible in the face of the clarity of the Scriptures?

Do not believe the reader, that this sixteenth-century council has been theologically overtaken and now the Roman church believes something different. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, issued during the pontificate of John Paul II, reiterates this with phrases such as the following:



...The Holy Spirit has his essence and his being at the same time from the Father and the Son and proceeds eternally from the One as well as from the Other as from one single Principle and by one single expiration...

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraph 246 (translated by the author)

...They are different from each other because of their relationships of origin: "It is the Father who begets, the Son who is begotten and the Holy Spirit who proceeds"...

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraph 255 (translated by the author)

Therefore, in reality, although the Roman Church proclaims that this is one of its basic teachings, the reality is that they do not teach the existence of the Trinity, but of a God who generates others... Allow me to show a couple of quotes from a bishop, one of which is frankly deplorable.

The Father begat the Son, and the Son proceeds from the Father. The Father and the Son gave breath to the Holy Spirit, and He proceeds from them, as from a Source.

**Louis Laravoire Morrow, One God in Three Persons, My Catholic Faith:
A Handbook of Religion, 30 (translated by the author)**

God the Father knows Himself eternally, and continues to know Himself, and continues to know Himself, and thus continues to originate the Son in a continuous birth. God the Father and God



the Son continue to love each other, and their delight in each other originates from the Holy Spirit. Similarly, as fire possesses light and color. As long as there is fire, it will continue to produce light. As long as there are fire and light, it will continue to produce color.

Louis Laravoire Morrow, One God in Three Persons, My Catholic Faith: A Handbook of Religion, 31 (translated by the author)

I understand that this language may seem repulsive to you, as it does to me, but I think we must understand clearly that we do not share the same message about the Trinity with the Roman Church, whose doctrinal apostasy is more than evident.



Some other expositions, apparently more based on rationally treated topics, do not stop to point out the tendency to say that in reality there is only one God and that the others originate from the first one... therefore there is no Trinity, in the Catholic conception of course.

Obviously, there can only be one infinite Being, only one God. If several of them existed, none of them would be infinite, because, in order to have a plurality of natures, each one would have to possess a perfection not possessed by the others. This will be rapidly guaranteed by everyone who admits the infinite God, and there is no need to delay in developing what is perfectly clear... If by chance the question is asked: Why can there not be diverse self-existent beings? The only satisfactory answer, which seems to us, is this: because a self-existent being is necessarily infinite, and there cannot be diverse infinities. The unity of God as the First Cause can also be inductively inferred from the unity of the universe, as we know it, but the suggestion can also be made, and this cannot be disapproved of, that there may be another or even several universes of which we have no knowledge, and then this argument could not be absolutely conclusive.

Catholic Encyclopedia, 1914 Edition, Article: Nature and Attributes of God (translated by the author)

Impressive conclusion, isn't it? Not a single biblical quote, just human reasoning, earthly wisdom... Note that this is the Catholic Encyclopedia. But let's continue...

God is a simple being or substance excluding any kind of composition, physical or metaphysical... Nor can the accidental composition be attributed to the infinite, since even this would imply an increased capacity for perfection, with the very notion of the infinite excluded.

Catholic Encyclopedia, 1914 Edition, Article: Nature and Attributes of God (translated by the author)

A "simple being"... whom the Holy Scriptures say the heavens of the heavens cannot contain, who says of Himself that He cannot be likened to anything or anyone, this is the "simple being" whom Catholic theology says it worships.

He [the Holy Spirit] proceeds, not through one generation, but through one expiration, from the Father and the Son together, as from one principle. This is the belief that the Catholic faith demands...

The Son proceeds from the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Catholic Encyclopedia, 1914 Edition, Article: Holy Spirit (translated by the author)

7.4. Challenges to Trinity in the SDA Church

During the last few years in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, some have, I suppose, quite deliberately, presented negative observations to the doctrine of the Trinity adducing that:

1. Some of our pioneers were anti-Trinitarian and so formed the church.
2. Ellen G. White does not support Trinitarian doctrine.
3. The Church has adopted a spurious doctrine from the Roman church, having thus become corrupted and mixed with Babylon. All this, they say, is related to a so-called Omega Apostasy (of late times).

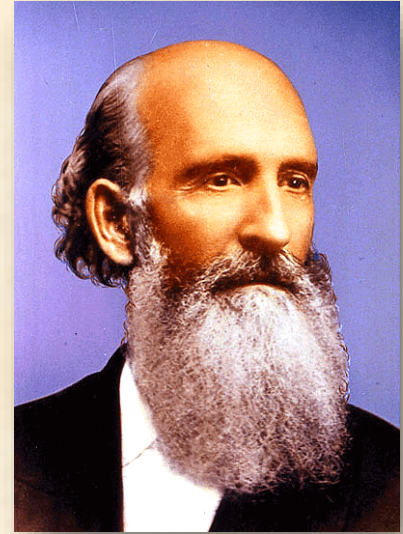
I must, also, to keep things in their dimension, point out that this group is relatively small and, in many cases, their visible heads (those who write with more or less virulence on the Internet) are people with little



theological training and who misuse many quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy. These people also call on church members worldwide to give up their membership and join this supposed movement of reform and return "to the origins of Adventism".

I will comment on the above points. The first is a decontextualization of reality, while the others are absolutely false.

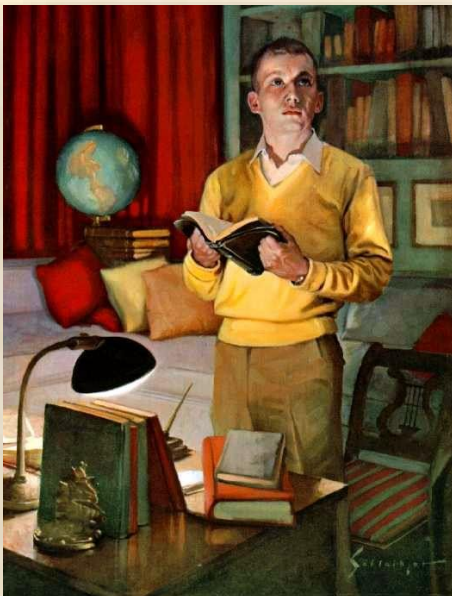
Some of our star pioneers, for example: James White and Joseph Bates, came from the Christian Connection Church with a body of doctrines that included anti-Trinitarianism (sets of doctrines of Christian origin that, in one way or another, deny the validity of the dogma of the Trinity, which affirms the existence of three distinct persons in the Christian God, usually by denying its biblical basis or by being contrary to reason). Clearly, some written statements made by these recognized church leaders early in their relationship with the Adventist movement should reflect their earlier doctrinal position.



To deny this reality would be to assume that what Hus, for example, or also Luther and Calvin, believed when they began their struggle for the Reformation was the pure and also complete truth. The fact is that the truth has been progressively recovered, just as the light of the sun increases to its fullness at midday.

It is also evident, when we study the subject of the Sabbath, that some of our pioneers refused to keep it until the biblical evidence was overwhelming. This does not mean that we should be invited to leave the church because we were told that our pioneers for many years after the beginning of the Adventist movement were still keeping Sunday. This is true of many of the doctrines that today make up the solid theological building of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; they accumulate under them many hours of study and prayer.

**But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day.
Proverbs 4: 18**



Truth is eternal, and conflict with error will only make its strength manifest. We should never refuse to examine the Scriptures with those who, we have reason to believe, desire to know what is true as we do. If the pillars of our faith do not stand the test of investigation, it is time that we knew; for it would be folly to settle down in our ideas, and to think that no one should interfere with our opinions. Let everything be brought into the Bible because it is the only rule of faith and doctrine.

**Ellen G. White, BEcho, October 15, 1892, 6
(translated by the author)**

We need to anoint our eyes to see the light of truth. We must not think, "well, we have all the truth, we understand the main pillars of our faith, and we can rest in this knowledge". The truth is a progressive truth, and we must walk in the growing light... We must have a living faith in our hearts, and reach out to broader knowledge and more advanced light.

**Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, March 25, 1890, 4
(translated by the author)**

The truth is an advancing truth, and we must walk in the increasing light.

Ellen G. White, Counsels to Writers and Editors, 33

God will not bless men in indolence, nor in jealous and stubborn opposition to the light He gives to His people.

**Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, February 25, 1890, 2
(translated by the author)**

I have found an article (containing the quotes from Ellen G. White that I have just mentioned) that I think is magnificent on this subject and I will quote it at length. I consider its author to be one of the luminaries



of Adventist theology today (although I am more than certain that he does not need my endorsement to be one) and I believe that he presents an accurate theological answer to these questions. The soundness of his arguments requires no further explanation.

While there is no quote from E. White that denies the Trinity, and which should be set aside, it is clear from reading his statements over time that his concept of Deity grew over the years. While some of her statements are ambiguous in her early years, in her later years they are more accurate and definite.



In other respects, however, she changed over time as God revealed the truth to her. For example, she kept Sunday for about two years after receiving her first vision in 1844 and did not accept Joseph Bates' exposition of the Sabbath until she received more light, which was later confirmed by a vision of the Most Holy place of the heavenly temple, with the two tables of the law inside the ark, with a light shining upon the fourth commandment. Yet the biblical light on the beginning of the Sabbath at sundown came through a study by John Andrews in 1855. She also did not accept that conclusion until she received a vision in that same year confirming that study by Andrews.

Until 1863, E. White and our pioneers ate sea oysters, pork, and all kinds of meat. Because of the visions she received, and the study of the Bible, as the church was organized, they eliminated these practices.

Alberto R. Treiyer, An Attack on Adventist Trinity Doctrine, 8 (translated by the author)

Our pioneers prayerfully understood many theological issues that in their time were hidden under a set of doctrines such as we had before we knew the truth.

I was a Catholic until I was 23 years old, although with some internal questions, and I did not know truths as important as the Sabbath, the sanctuary or justification by faith (to mention a few of the many that I now recognize as the truth). We could not pretend that my statements before knowing the truth were a basis for understanding what I now believe and hold. For the matter of the nature of the Godhead, the situation was no different in our nascent church.

Daniel D. Burt in his article **History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity** points out that Adventist theology went through 4 periods concerning the Trinity. I comment on some of what he argues, in great depth, in this article which I certainly recommend. I simply present a summary, in my own words, to keep us within the framework and dimension of this treatise.

The periods are as follows:

- a. Until 1890: mostly anti-Trinitarian.

Based primarily on the theology brought by the pioneers of their respective churches of origin. During this period, as recorded in many publications that reflected the visions of Ellen G. White, the Servant of the Lord made clear her Trinitarian position, without emphasizing this concept.

Remember, for example, that William Miller, as a good Baptist, was Trinitarian, while one of the great initiators of the early Adventist movement, Joshua V. Himes, who belonged to the Christian Connection, was anti-Trinitarian. Uriah Smith, another great pioneer, believed around 1860 that Jesus was a created being. By 1881 he had somewhat moderated his position, not accepting Jesus' divinity to the fullest.

Other prominent leaders such as John N. Loughborough, Roy F. Cottrell, John N. Andrews, and Joseph H. Waggoner, among many others, were also anti-Trinitarian.

- b. From 1890 to 1900: Trinitarian feelings emerge.

After the important Congress of Minneapolis 1888, Alonzo T. Jones was the first to use terminology that suggested the eternity of Christ, as well as that in Him dwelt the fullness of



the Godhead. Although Jones did not use the term Trinity, he can be considered (except for Ellen G. White) as the forerunner of Adventist Trinity thought. There is evidence, as we shall see below, that as early as 1878 the Spirit of Prophecy spoke of the divinity of Jesus, especially in **The Desire of Ages**.

- c. 1900-1931: The declaration of faith is published in the SDA Book of the Year, at the end of a period of transition and conflict.

It is a stage of conflict with opposing positions. W. W. Prescott becomes the first major leader to hold up the divinity of Jesus with the pen. At the 1919 Bible Conference in Takoma Park, Washington, D.C., Prescott presented eight devotionals on "The Person of Christ," although recognizing Jesus as eternal he said that his life "derived" from the Father. Some, like L. L. Caviness, were concerned that the church was moving toward Trinitarianism. Let us remember that by this time the Servant of the Lord was already at rest (she died in 1915).

The new ideas were promoted through the Review and Herald, reaching an increasing acceptance among the most prominent theologians and leaders. The revision of Ellen G. White's statements helped to set the new direction. In 1931 the Declaration of Faith was published, an unofficial document in the Book of the Year, where the word Trinity was mentioned. Despite this, it was not until the 1946 General Conference that the church's official position, doctrinally speaking, was published.

- d. From 1931 to 1957: Publication of Questions on Doctrine in 1957 and acceptance of the Trinitarian approach.

The influence of the Review and Herald, with its editor Francis M. Wilcox, continued to broaden the base of acceptance of the doctrine. Wilcox presented a set of studies demonstrating biblically the eternity and divinity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The publication of the book Questions on Doctrine in 1957 completed the work of upholding, with the biblical authority and support of quotes from Ellen G. White, the new Adventist orthodoxy.

Let us look at some other quotes from Alberto R. Treiyer's article.

The reaction of our pioneers against the Trinitarian creed of their day, most definitely the Methodist, had to do with the denial that God had a body. The Methodist Episcopal creed said that "there is but one true and living God, without body or parts". Our pioneers strongly rejected this spiritualizing concept with the following passages: **Exodus 24: 9-11; 33: 20-23; John 1: 18; Hebrews 1:1 -3**. Thus, in one of His first visions, E. White asked Jesus if His Father has a form like Him, and the answer was yes (**Early Writings, 54**). In another vision in 1850, He asked Jesus if His Father was a person, and He answered, "I am the express image of the person of My Father" (**Early Writings, 77**).

In 1858 E. White claimed to believe in the Holy Spirit because she connected Him with the Father and the Son in the account of the baptism (**Spiritual Gifts, Volume I, 28**). In 1869, she was ahead of the pioneers in declaring that Christ was equal to God (**Testimonies, Volume II, 200**). This led her husband to reflect further on the Trinity, without yet renouncing his rejection. He (her husband) recognized in 1877, in an article in the Review (**November 29, 1877**), that "Christ is equal with God," but he declared "The inexplicable Trinity that makes the Trinity three in one is really bad, but the ultra-Unitarianism that makes Christ inferior to the Father is worse".

In 1872, E. White contrasted Christ with the angels, saying that "Christ was not created" (**Review and Herald, December 17, 1872**), which led Uriah Smith also to change his belief that Christ was the first created being.

In 1878 E. White claimed that Christ was the "eternal Son" (**Review and Herald, August 8, 1878**).

Alberto R. Treiyer, An Attack on Adventist Trinity Doctrine, 8 (translated by the author)

Please observe how over the years, a matter that comes naturally to us (especially to those of us who come from the Roman church, like me, or the evangelical churches, like others), the eternity of Jesus must have gone through a process of understanding and acceptance of our pioneers who were creating a new body of doctrine, proper to a nascent organization called to recover the eternal gospel of God.

But in 1878 she affirmed that he is an "Eternal Son". In what way did his character as a Son become new with the incarnation? Among other things, in that through the incarnation, he had a beginning. But that didn't mean that he wasn't eternal. Indeed, E. White emphasized in 1887 and again in 1898 and 1905, that "for all eternity, Christ was united with the Father" (**Review and Herald, July 5, 1877; The Desire of Ages, Version 1898, 19; Signs of the Times, August 2, 1905**). And



by saying that He was infinite not in personality, He was referring to the same thing, to the time when He adopted the human personality to forge the righteousness that will enable us to overcome Satan.

in 1888, in the context of the famous debate on justification by faith at the Minneapolis congress, she affirmed that the full deity of Christ is necessary for a broader concept of justification by faith. "If men reject the testimony of the inspired Scriptures concerning the Deity of Christ, it is in vain to argue with them, for no argument, however convincing, can convince them" (**1 Corinthians 2: 15**, quoted). "no one who sustains this error can have a true conception of the character or mission of Christ, or of the great plan of God for the redemption of man".

**Alberto R. Treiyer,
An Attack on Adventist
Trinity Doctrine, 9
(translated by the author)**

I would like you to note that 44 years after the disappointment, the issue of Jesus' divinity and his incarnate nature was still under discussion. One cannot, therefore, speak of a historical position of the Church that has supposedly been abandoned.

Our contenders... assert that if the Son is Eternal, it is because He came forth from the bosom of the Father, and they imply with that expression that He was in the Father eternally until He gave birth to Him. But in **John 1: 18**, the expression is used concerning the time He came to earth to reveal Himself to mankind (**Review and Herald, July 9, 1895**). Furthermore, the Father's bosom is not His womb, not His inner self, but His closest or most intimate environment, as is also seen when Jesus spoke in a parable of "Abraham's bosom" (**Luke 16: 22, 23**). on the other hand, in the same year 1888, E. White declared that Christ is "one with the eternal father, one in nature, character, and purpose" (**The Great Controversy, Version 1888, 493**), "one in power and authority" (**The Great Controversy, Version 1888, 495**), yet in person, Christ was "distinct" from the father. He added in 1906 that "the Lord Jesus Christ... existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father" (**Review and Herald, April 5, 1906**), "the only being in all the universe who could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God" (**The Great Controversy, Version 1888, 493; Patriarchs and Prophets, Version 1890, 34**).

Alberto R. Treiyer, An Attack on Adventist Trinity Doctrine, 9 (translated by the author)

It is clear that if the process towards understanding the Trinity took more than 6 long decades, one cannot speak of a historical position of the church. Those who supposedly support "historical Adventism" do not really know what they are holding if they do not understand the progressive but sustained, no-return revelation that the church had under the leadership of Ellen G. White.

Our opponents highlight the fact that in this last statement of 1888 and 1890 there is no mention of the Holy Spirit. But that light was received later.

In 1890, E. White asserted that Christ is self-existent and that His divinity is not derived from the Father (**Patriarchs and Prophets, 36**). Our detractors explain the first with the statement of Christ, who said that the Father determined that He had life in Himself. But that statement was made in the context of His incarnation... when the Son stripped Himself of some attributes to become like us (**Philippians 2: 5**), but without abandoning that divine characteristic.

In 1897 He declared that the Holy Spirit is "the third person of the Godhead" (**Special Testimonies, Series A, 10, 37**). He is the second person of the Godhead, and the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. The Son is not the second and the third at the same time.

In 1898 the book **The Desire of Ages** was published in which it states that "in Christ there is life, original, unborrowed, and underived" (**The Desire of Ages, 530**), and again states that the Holy Spirit is the "Third Person of the Godhead" (**The Desire of Ages, 671**). And in 1901 and again in



1905, he noted that there are three "eternal heavenly dignitaries", "three higher powers in heaven", "three living persons of the heavenly trio", "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one in nature, character, and purpose, but not in person" (**Manuscript 145, 1901; Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7 (1905), 51, 62-63; The Ministry of Healing (1905), 422; quoted in The Evangelism, 614-617.**)
Alberto R. Treiyer, An Attack on Adventist Trinity Doctrine, 9 (translated by the author)

I believe I have sustained the point matter of this subtopic. Neither is there an abandonment of a historical position, nor was Ellen G. White anti-Trinitarian, nor has the church consequently fallen into apostasy by accepting a supposedly erroneous doctrine.

7.5. The worship of images

The world has distorted the concept of worship. In some cases, we say "I adore you" to the person we love, or we say that a creature is "adorable", without thinking that worship or adoration is a unique relationship with God.

On the other hand, the world, in general, worships the creature before the Creator. In the Catholic religion, for example, much greater reverence is given to crosses, images, tabernacles, or other objects than to the Creator. There are many more churches dedicated to the virgin or the saints than to Jesus. The second commandment that forbids images and their worship is not known and less accepted by millions of Catholics around the world.

You shall not make to yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them. For I Jehovah your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons to the third and fourth generation of those that hate me,

Exodus 20: 4, 5

Isaiah presents the absurdity of worship or veneration of images.

Those who make a graven image are all of them vanity; and the things in which they delight shall not help; and they are their own witnesses. They do not see nor know, that they may be ashamed. Who has formed a god, or melted a graven image that is good for nothing? Behold, all his companions shall be ashamed; and the craftsmen; they are from men. They shall assemble; all of them shall stand; they shall dread; they shall be ashamed together. He engraves iron with a tool. He works in the coals, and forms it with hammers, and works it with the strength of his arms. Then, he is hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water, and is weak. He fashions wood, and stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil; he shapes it with carving tools, and he marks it out with the compass, and makes it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, to sit in the house. He cuts down cedars, and takes cypress and oak, which he makes the trees of the forest strong for him; he plants a tree, and the rain makes it grow. And it shall be for a man to burn; for he will take some of it and warm himself. Yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; yes, he makes a god and worships; he makes it a graven image and falls down to it. He burns part of it in the fire; with part of it he eats flesh; he roasts roast and is satisfied; yea, he warms himself, and says, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire. And the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image; he falls down to it and worships, and prays to it, and says, deliver me! for you are my god. They have not known nor understood; for He has shut their eyes so that they cannot see; and their hearts so that they cannot understand. And none thinks within his heart, nor is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread on the coals of it; I have roasted flesh and eaten; and shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside, so that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?



Isaiah 44: 9-20

However, the worship of these human-made creatures is being given everywhere on the planet where the Roman religion has extended its boundaries. When one studies the Roman catechism, one finds that the church holds that the saints are to be venerated (dulia) and that the virgin is to be venerated to the highest degree (hyperdulia) which they say is different from the worship of God.

However, in practical terms, people pray to images, touch them, kiss them, make a sign of the cross before them, and consider them sacred. They ask for benefits, and when they get them, they make



pilgrimages to the places of worship and make vows or offerings to these images that they say are "miraculous". People take them out in processions, evidently encouraged by their priests, and present them for public worship. They spend their money on adorning them, while sometimes neglecting what they give to their children. Look at what the prophet himself says about this misguided worship.

They pour gold out of the bag, and weigh silver out of the measuring rod, and hire a goldsmith; and he makes it a god; they fall down, yea, they bow down. They carry it on the shoulder, they carry it and set it in its place, and it stands; it shall not move from its place. Yes, one shall cry to it, yet it cannot answer, nor save him out of his trouble.

Isaiah 46: 6, 7

It is the work of the arch-deceiver to have introduced into the cult, supposedly Christian, the worship of images. Its purpose is to divert the worship of the uninformed believer who prefers a short devotion to the image and not a life of subjection to the will of the Creator. See the image of the statue of Jupiter, supposedly representing Peter, crowned as a Pope, which is in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.



To afford converts from heathenism a substitute for the worship of idols, and thus to promote their nominal acceptance of Christianity, the adoration of images and relics was gradually introduced into the Christian worship. The decree of a general council... finally established this system of idolatry. To complete the sacrilegious work, Rome presumed to expunge from the law of God the second commandment, forbidding image worship, and to divide the tenth commandment, in order to preserve the number.

Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, 52

The cult of images... was one of those corruptions of Christianity that was introduced into the church furtively and almost unnoticed. This corruption did not develop in one fell swoop, as happened with other heresies, for in such a case it would have been censured and vigorously condemned, but, once it had been initiated in a disguised and plausible form, new practices were introduced one after another so gradually that the church became totally involved in idolatry not only without energetic opposition, but without even any determined protest; and when at last an effort was made to extirpate the evil, it turned out to be too ingrained for that purpose

The cause of such evil is to be sought in the idolatrous propensity of the human heart to worship the creature rather than the Creator...

The images and pictures were introduced into the church at first not to be worshipped, but to serve as books to facilitate the task of teaching those who could not read or awaken in others feelings of devotion. It is difficult to say to what extent this means corresponded to the proposed end; but even conceding that it did for some time, it did not last, and soon the pictures and images placed in the churches, instead of illustrating, obscured the minds of the ignorant and degraded the devotion of the believers instead of exalting it. So, however much it was intended to direct the spirits of men to God, they served only to draw them away from Him and to lead them to the worship of created things.

J. Mendham, The Seventh General Council, The Second of Nicea, Introduction, 3-6 (translated by the author)

Other idols and statues were "Christianized" and satanic-pagan idolatry now continued in disguise. Over the centuries, more and more statues have been adopted and venerated until there are now churches in Europe containing two, three and four thousand statues. Whether in the impressive cathedrals or small chapels or shrines built on the outskirts of large ancient cities, on the dashboards of cars or coldly smiling in images hung from a chain

The idols of Catholicism can be found in abundance in all these places. And the use of such idols and images clearly identifies the Roman Catholic Church as a continuation of paganism, not of the pure, uncontaminated Church of which the Holy Scriptures speak.

The use of idols - no matter what they are called - is Babylonian; for as Herodotus mentions, Babylon was the cradle from which every system of idolatry spread among the nations, even though God has repeatedly warned His people not to follow the practice of using idols in their worship.

The Bible says: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth"



(**Exodus 20: 4**). "You shall not make for yourselves idols or graven images, nor shall you set up a statue or put up a painted stone on your land to bow down to it" (**Leviticus 26: 1**). "Neither shall idolaters inherit the kingdom of God" (**1 Corinthians 6: 9-10**). "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (**1 John 5: 21**).

Clearly, the Scriptures are against the use of idols and images in church worship. The church of the beginning, the true church, never used them. But when the "apostasy" came and paganism and Christianity were mixed, there was a complete and free use of the old pagan idols which the "church" inherited. The apostatic leaders of the Church felt that since some of these statues were so valuable - some of them were covered with gold and silver - they should be rededicated and continue to use them. But what does God say about this reasoning? "Thou shalt burn the graven images of their gods in the fire: thou shalt not covet silver or gold thereof, to take it for thyself: for it is an abomination unto the Lord thy God" (**Deuteronomy 7: 25**).

The Israelites were not only to destroy the idols of the Gentile nations they conquered, but they were to "destroy all their pictures" (**Numbers 33: 52**). These were the paintings of the pagan deities. So not only is the use of idols condemned by the Scriptures but since the paintings are often superstitiously worshipped, they also have no virtue as a true cult. It is strange that some religions condemn the use of statues and yet make full use of paintings of them! But what is the difference? The statue is three-dimensional while the painting is a flat surface. But neither was used by the apostles or the New Testament Church. It was not until the fifth century that paintings of Mary, Christ, and the "saints" or icons or relief images began to be made and used as objects of worship.

Ralph Woodrow, Babylon, Religious Mystery, 54-56 (translated by the author)

Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, Himself the Source and Sustainer of all, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship. Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due to Him, of that do we make a god.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them".

The second commandment forbids the worship of the true God by images or similitudes. Many heathen nations claimed that their images were mere figures or symbols by which the Deity was worshiped, but God has declared such worship to be sin. The attempt to represent the Eternal One by material objects would lower man's conception of God. The mind, turned away from the infinite perfection of Jehovah, would be attracted to the creature rather than to the Creator. And as his conceptions of God were lowered, so would man become degraded.

"I the Lord thy God am a jealous God". The close and sacred relation of God to His people is represented under the figure of marriage. Idolatry being spiritual adultery, the displeasure of God against it is fitly called jealousy.

Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 305, 306



Some think that we can represent the true God, that these are representations, that God is really worshipped, but God does not understand it that way. The following verses present God's admonition not to make images even in representation of the Deity. It tells us that there was no figure that they saw on the mountain when God presented the Ten Commandments.

Therefore take good heed to yourselves, for you saw no kind of likeness on the day Jehovah spoke to you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make yourselves a graven image, the likeness of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish in the waters beneath the earth;

Deuteronomy 4: 15-18

True worship is due to God alone. The reason: He is our Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, Savior, is also due to his unique characteristics: love, perfection, holiness, eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, immanence (which remains), among many others. The natural relationship of the man who recognizes God is the adoration.

The duty to worship God lies in the fact that He is the Creator, and that all other beings owe their existence to Him. And whenever the Bible presents Jehovah's right to our reverence and worship



in preference to the gods of the heathen, it mentions the evidence of his creative power. "All the gods of the people are idols; but Jehovah made the heavens". (**Psalms 96: 5**) "To whom then will ye compare me, that I may be like unto him? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes, and see! who hath created those heavenly bodies?" "Thus, saith the Lord, the Creator of heaven (he alone is God), who hath formed the earth, and made it; ...I am Jehovah, and there is no other God!" (**Isaiah 40: 25, 26; 45: 18 MV**).

Ellen G. White, Exaltation to Jesus, 45 (translated by the author)

Through the goodness of God, we have been surrounded with innumerable blessings. There are tokens of His love on every hand. Nature seems to be rejoicing before us. The beautiful things in heaven and earth express the love and favor of the Lord of hosts toward the inhabitants of the world. The sunshine and the rain fall on the evil and the good. The hills and seas and plains are all speaking eloquently to the soul of man of the Creator's love. It is God who brings the bud to bloom, the flower to fruit, and it is He who supplies our daily needs. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice. Our minds should go up in gratitude and adoration to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

Ellen G. White, That I may know Him, 145

God bless you.