

Historical Reflections on Early Adventist Anti-Trinitarianism

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Abstract

The prevalence of anti-Trinitarianism in early Seventh-day Adventism has been well documented. The purpose of this essay is to look for reasons, the historical background for the Adventist views. It discusses two unrelated historical perspectives: The Restorationist movement of the 19th century America which contributed to the Adventist rejection of the Trinity, and the historical interpretation of the prophecies which further convinced them that doctrines that were slow in development represent apostasy.

Two of the leading Adventists pioneers came from an anti-Trinitarian Restorationist background but all of them lived in a theological climate permeated with doubts concerning the Trinity. While Arianism never was an official doctrine of the movement it was taught in numerous articles until, after about three decades, the church gradually moved closer to mainline Protestantism.

Historicist prophetic interpretation was the foundation on which the young Adventist church was building its doctrines. The identification of papacy or Roman Catholicism as the antichrist was central for the early Adventist hermeneutic. Their views on the Trinity were further confirmed by the fact that Trinitarianism took several centuries to develop and the early Adventists identified it as a Roman Catholic doctrine.

The last part of this essay seeks to stimulating discussion and debate on the Trinity and on the important formative years of Adventism. It includes some reflections and questions on the Trinitarian creeds as well as on the related Biblical data. The latter, rather than historical considerations, must in the end be the Adventist paradigm for understanding the Godhead.

The prevalence of anti-Trinitarianism in early Seventh-day Adventism has been well documented since Erwin Gane's ground-breaking research on the topic more than four decades ago.ⁱ Russell Holt, LeRoy Edwin Froom, Merlin Burt, Jerry Moon, and others built on and substantiated Erwin Gane's conclusions.ⁱⁱ It is now understood that that not only Joseph Bates, James White, or the well known case of Uriah Smith, represent Adventist anti-Trinitarian sentiments but that virtually all key Adventist pioneers including J.N. Andrews, Daniel Bourdeau, D. M. Canright, Hiram Edson, D. W. Hull, J. N. Loughborough, E.J. Waggoner, J.H. Waggoner, and S. B. Whitney, held views varying from mildly Arian (Christ not eternal but born at a point of time) to a full rejection of Trinitarianism. The one notable exception was Ellen G. White and even her orthodoxy during the pre-1888 phase of Adventism has been questioned at times.ⁱⁱⁱ

The first part of this exploration discusses the Restorationist movement which was an important part of the intellectual and theological climate of 19th century America. This is followed by a short overview of the historical development of Trinitarianism to provide further background for early SDA comments on the Trinity. Both sections are interspersed with samples of Adventist pioneers' comments, in particular ones which reflect historical reasons behind their rejection of the Trinity.

The final part is intended to stimulate discussion on Adventism and the Trinity. It presents the traditional creeds as the standard definitions of the Trinity and presents questions and reflections related to the Biblical data which, rather than historical considerations, must be the ultimate Adventist paradigm for understanding the Godhead.

The purpose of this research is to provide examples and illustrations and possible clues that may help understand the early Adventist position on the Trinity. They are not presented as a systematic and

comprehensive analysis of the topic but as insights or stimuli for discussion and debate on the important formative years of Sabbatarian Adventism.

Why Anti-Trinitarianism – Theological Restorationism

The America of the pioneers can be characterised as a time of reformatory idealism. “Men of seemingly sober judgment expressed repeatedly their confidence that Christians could remake society in the United States according to a pattern fashioned in heaven” is Timothy L. Smith’s assessment of the reformist culture that permeated Ante-Bellum America. Restorationism contributed to the rise of several churches and religious movements including Seventh-day Adventism.^{iv} While his description limits the reforms to restructuring the social order, banishing poverty, eliminating the curse of drunkenness, elevating womanhood, freeing the slaves or providing equal opportunities for education, the movement extended also well into the theological and religious sphere. Winthrop S. Hudson observes that this “reforming idealism” was so integral to the American religious ferment of the early 19th century that it did not leave theology untouched.^v

Restorationism, sometimes called Christian primitivism, is a descriptive title for any religious movement which believes that it represents the essence of what it would mean to bring Christianity back to its original form and ideals. In the context of North America the term is applied in particular to a widespread indigenous American phenomenon that started towards the end of the 18th century with the Second Great Awakening and culminated in the rise of a wide range of revivals and churches that represent the full spectrum of 19th century American religiosity. The so called Christian Churches or Connexionists are usually thought to represent the essence of Restorationism. Connexionism grew into thousands of independent churches and had by 1850s up to half a million supporters.^{vi} However, the full picture of Restorationism is much wider. It had a powerful effect on the established mainline churches and contributed to the rise of several religious groups that represented the wide spectrum of American 19th century religiosity. Unitarians, Millerites and Adventists, Latter day Saints, the Watchtower Society, and, a little later, the Pentecostals all represent the huge impact of Restorationism.^{vii}

Interestingly, many supporters of the Christian Connexion endorsed Millerism.^{viii} This is no surprise because William Miller’s teachings, though a Baptist, reflect Restorationist ideals. For example his *Rules of Interpretation*^{ix} are a good example of a typical Restorationist do-it-yourself approach to the Scriptures and his hermeneutic shows a deep distrust in established church-endorsed views.^x

The Restorationist movement’s unwritten ambition was to do to Protestantism what the Reformation had done to Catholicism. Restorationists were distrustful of church organisations and of creeds and while, in general, they did not go for clear-cut doctrinal definitions, they had over the early part of the 19th century increasingly turned against Trinitarianism.^{xi} Joshua V. Himes, a Christian Church minister, became William Miller’s key associate, publisher, travel organiser and congress manager, and his role in Millerism may have been an added attraction that led Connexionists to join Millerite ranks.^{xii} Furthermore, significantly for the topic, two founding fathers of Sabbatarian Adventism, Joseph Bates and James White were both Connexionists.^{xiii} Joseph Bates had joined his wife’s New Bedford Christian Church in 1827^{xiv} and James White was baptised in his parents Palmyra Christian Church at the age of 15 or 16.

While secondary to the topic, it is interesting to note that Adventist historians frequently suggest that the events of 1842, when the established churches rejected Millerism, contributed to the anti-creedal and anti-organisational spirit of early Sabbatarian Adventism.^{xv} However, it is equally logical to suggest that these views match squarely the credophobic and organisation-shunning Connexionist background of the two leading Adventist pioneers. In fact, it is possible to postulate that the overall

doctrinal development of Adventism, including their endorsement of, for example, the Sabbath, conditional immortality, or health reform, grew out of the general Restorationist spirit of the times.^{xvi}

The Present Truth Concept

“Present Truth”, a favourite theological concept in early Sabbatarian Adventism, represents the heart of the Restorationist spirit in Adventism. It was no accident that James White chose *Present Truth* as the title of one of his pioneering publications. The concept implies two ideas. First of all, they believed, that what is taught must be timely, absolutely relevant. “It is clear that we have reached the time when a flood of light is shining from God’s word on the path of the just, and that this light relates to that great event which is immediately impending—the coming of the Lord, and to a preparation to meet it. This we denominate present truth, because it applies to the present time, and is adapted to the wants of the present generation; and it is through this truth that the last church will be sanctified.”^{xvii}

This relevancy was based on theological discovery and dependant on prophecy to show what was important in the last days. Faith in the nearness of the Second Coming underlined the need to proclaim the Sabbath, the state of the dead, or the Sanctuary. However, Adventist pioneers accepted the possibility that there may be Biblical truths that were important at an earlier point in history but not part of the “Present Truth” today. This implies a hierarchy of Biblical teachings. James White stated that there is a truth for each epoch in World history, one for Peter’s time and one for the last days.^{xviii}

However, a further important meaning of the “Present Truth” concept was that only genuine and original Biblical teachings represent truth and therefore nothing but an authentic truth can be Present Truth. This is at the heart of Restorationism. The search was not only for what was relevant but also for what was authentic. A doctrine which had been formulated after the days of the apostles could never be Present Truth. Therefore, “Present Truth” implies a determination to reform the landscape of Christianity from the existing formality into what was original.

Falseness of a late doctrine was an important part of early Adventist argumentation for the Sabbath. The early church kept Saturday but “Romanism” converted the day of rest to Sunday.^{xix} Similarly they saw conditionalism as a clear Biblical doctrine which had been replaced by “pagan” immortality of the soul. Baptism was seen in the same light. The negative development of Christian teachings was, they believed, confirmed by Biblical prophecy. Church councils and creeds had no authority for them and they considered Trinitarianism a post-biblical doctrine which had received its inspiration from Rome.^{xx}

Creeds Considered Oppressive

Creedal development begins with simple Biblical confessions of faith. Over the centuries, due to pressures from the Greek rather than the Hebrew mindset, basic confessions of faith grew into intricate carefully worded creeds. The more carefully the Christian doctrines were defined the more suitable they were for causing damage when used as tools of persecution.

As a simple example, one may claim that all Christians of all centuries could probably endorse a broad statement like “Jesus is Lord” (Rom. 10.9). The Adventists clearly understood that issues became much more difficult when small details were brought into the equation. As a historical case in point, one may think of the Trinitarian or Christological word debates centering on words like *hypostasis*, *homoousios*, *homoiousios*, *ousia*, *logos asarkos* vs. *logos ensarkos* which were central in the development of Trinitarianism. Not all church fathers understood these words in the same way, and they were frequently tools of repression and persecution instead of salvation.^{xxi} Because he used the wrong word to express Christ’s nature Apollinaris of Laodicea, a staunch supporter of the Nicene Creed, ended up anathema. Nestorius made the mistake of refusing to use the word “*theotokos*” and his whole

history might have been different had he sooner come across the term “*christotokos*” which he used later.^{xxii}

It is uncertain how well the early Adventists knew the details of this historical development. It is clear, however, that for a Restorationist (Connexionist) frame of mind minutely defined Christianity was totally unacceptable, and what they knew only strengthened them in their conviction that creedal definitions reflected apostasy. They were convinced that the Bible needs to be interpreted individually within a framework of freedom with the broadest possible formal definitions of doctrine – if any at all.

John Loughborough stated this rather bluntly: “The first step of apostasy is set up a creed...”^{xxiii} While this comment was done in the context of church organisation it still reflects the spirit of the times. James White agreed. “Now I take the ground that creeds stand in a direct opposition to the gifts.”^{xxiv} “Let us suppose a case: We set up a creed, stating just what we shall believe on this point and the other, and just what we shall do in reference to this thing and that, and say that we will believe the gifts, too.”^{xxv} Creeds were thought of as the end of the pursuit for genuine, original faith.

Walter Scragg explains the early Adventist attitude: “...they felt [Christian churches] had calcified their beliefs in ... creedal statements, and [had] fought to defend those statements rather than embark on fresh searches for biblical understanding and truth. The Reformation remained incomplete because it was held back by creeds.”^{xxvi}

At this point one may ask again the question what the Adventist pioneers knew about Church history, in particular, concerning the development of Trinitarianism. There are good reasons to assume that they were not totally ignorant because, as will be shown later, their views on prophetic interpretation had, since the days of William Miller, inspired them to study the rise and impact and meaning of the papacy. Furthermore, their Sabbatarian convictions made them research church history for evidence on the change from Sabbath to Sunday. Their comments on creeds also imply some awareness of the Trinitarian struggles of the first Christians centuries. The simplest evidence for this is John Loughborough’s comments above on creeds as a tool of persecution, and a good historical example is found in the history of Athanasius and Arius. The former was banished 5 times for his views and he spent 17 out of 45 years in exile as the patriarch of Alexandria,^{xxvii} while his main opponent, Arius, was banished two or three times.^{xxviii} Of course, history is full of further examples.

The culture and spirit of early Adventists (including those pioneers who had no Connexionist background) was so resolute against creeds that it was hard for James White to gain support even for the most basic and simple statement of faith needed at the time when the movement took its first organisational steps. If a confessional statement, “Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus,” was too much for many of the early Adventists, it is no surprise that the long Trinitarian creeds were symbols of apostasy and spiritual repression for them.^{xxix}

Restorationism and General Theological Trend

One more question needs to be asked. Many Adventist pioneers came from traditionally Trinitarian backgrounds but they appear to have given up their Trinitarianism easily. Why? The reason might, of course, lie in the persuasiveness of Joseph Bates and James White, but a further possible reason can be seen in the general spirit of the times.

Traditionally, there had been a fairly strong Unitarian base in Boston.^{xxx} Unitarians (like Connexionists and Millerites) had a distaste for organised churches and established creeds.^{xxxi} In 1819 William Channing was catapulted to prominence for expressing Unitarian views in a sermon in Baltimore. His articles and speeches appealed to those with a somewhat liberal but at the same time reformatory bent. Many Congregationalist churches split off from their mother church to become Unitarian. Ralph Waldo Emerson added interest to this Unitarian opposition to the Trinity by his speech

at the graduation of Harvard Divinity School in 1838. Further examples could be cited but it is obvious that Restorationist anti-Trinitarianism was affecting even traditional churches and a critical anti-orthodox mindset was fashionable and modern.^{xxxii}

John W. Gaston III describes how the “liberal” doctrine of Unitarianism was attractive to many Anglicans and Methodists in New England.^{xxxiii} This means that just at the time when Sabbatarian Adventism was formulating its beliefs Arianism was exceptionally strong in American traditionally Trinitarian churches. It is no surprise that even those pioneers who came from a Baptist, Methodist, or Congregationalist background also shifted to anti-Trinitarian positions.

The theological ambience of the early 19th century reflected a reaction against the old Puritan conservatism. Whether it stemmed from the Restorationist movement or simply from people getting tired of the carefully worded and argued dogmas of Protestant Orthodoxy, there was a strong reaction against the old theology, and American Christians were ready to break new ground. It probably indicates a result of this trend rather than its cause, but it has been claimed that the least known and most important theological development of the turn of the century was the discontinuance of the more than one hundred year old tradition of using Turretin’s massive three volume *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* as the main textbook for Systematic Theology in most ivy league and other respectable American seminaries. Many questioned the old theology and it can be argued that while the Adventist pioneers may well have been wrong in their approach to the doctrine of the Trinity, it seems they sensed well the spirit of their times. It was not necessary to come from an Arian group to turn against Trinitarianism.

Survey of the development of Trinitarianism

Anyone looking at the development of Trinitarianism recognises its long and tumultuous history. It took about three centuries before the doctrine of Trinity was formulated and a further three centuries were needed to iron out the details and conclude the major Christological controversies. The development and expressions of the Trinity were slightly different in the eastern and the western parts of the empire because, as Rodney Stark persuasively argues, there were more Christians with a Jewish background in the east and they, coming from a passionately monotheistic background, had a harder time in coming to terms with a concept like the Trinity.^{xxxiv}

In the struggle to define the Trinity the Bible frequently played a secondary role. As soon as the Romans had stopped persecuting Christians, the Christian started persecuting or excommunicating each other, and people who, while claiming Biblical support for their ideas, somehow ended up using the wrong expressions about the Godhead. For example, St. Hippolytos, one of the most learned Christian teachers of early 3rd Century, expositor of prophecy and defender of Trinitarian ideas against Monarchianism, was accused by Kallistos, bishop of Rome, of being a worshipper of two gods.^{xxxv} It was not easy for the Church to move out of the Palestinian realm and translate Biblical thought into a form intelligible to a Greek mindset. Many of the Trinitarian conflicts were clashes between the Jewish and the Greek modes of thinking.^{xxxvi}

Those involved with church history know how complex the struggle for Trinitarianism was. Students frequently find overwhelming the large number of people, church councils, heresies, creeds, or key words related to the various stages of Trinitarian development. In this complex history some who are now credited for their significant contributions towards a fully fledged doctrine of the Trinity, have also been accused of heresy. For example, Irenaeus was blamed for *Modalism* because he in some of his statements implied that the one God appears in the form of the Son and the Spirit. God, he states, “is both the Father and the Son.”^{xxxvii} However, he does in some other statements make a clear distinction between God and Jesus. But, as this illustration shows, it is often very difficult to decipher the full picture of the historical situation.^{xxxviii}

One may take another example, Tertullian, the apologist and church father who first introduced the term *Trinity*.^{xxxix} He was also the first of the Latin Fathers and thus originator of Latin theology. This, of course, was extremely significant for the Adventist pioneers who identified Rome with apostasy as well as with the persecuting horn of Daniel and the beast and Babylon of Revelation. While they do not mention Tertullian by name, the principal is very clear. As far as they were concerned the Trinity and apostasy came from the same source. The terms Tertullian used are significant: “substance” and “person”, and his logic to support the unity of the Godhead through expressions like *una substantia* and *una dominatio* are decisive in the developing understanding of God.^{xl} What Trinitarians think of as significant steps in the development of the doctrine probably appeared the very opposite to early Adventists who, as it appears, did not even want to consider the meaning of the basic Trinitarian definitions like: Three persons, one substance, and still there is but one God.^{xli}

In the east Origen developed the Logos doctrine much further than the Apologists and he was also responsible for authoring the first Christian book on dogmatics. Origen’s scholarship and work on a definition of God represent an important theological development. However, it has also been claimed that he paved the way for Arianism,^{xlii} because he defined God the Father as the source of the Deity. On the other hand, he also stated, “Nothing in the Trinity is to be called greater or less, since the fountain of one divinity holds all his parts by word and reason.”^{xliii}

The first serious threat to the evolving Trinitarianism developed in the East at first but spread quickly throughout the empire causing great excitement in the churches. Starting at the end of the second century, Modalistic Monarchianism engaged all the great doctors of Christianity in a battle against it. Tertullian, Origen, Novatian, and Hippolytos had to draw on their most persuasive logic to stem the rise of this perceived heresy.^{xliv}

The next significant development in the process took place at the School of Antioch where first highly revered Lucian of Samosata combined the Logos doctrine with *Adoptionism*. After his martyrdom many of his students were selected to important positions in the church and the best known among them, Arius, began his own fight for an Adoptionist form of Logos Christology in Alexandria. According to his view, the Son is a torch lighted at the torch of the Father.^{xlv} God alone, he claimed, is unbegotten, without beginning and eternal, inexpressible and incomprehensible. Jesus on the other hand is what he is by the grace and adoption of God.^{xlvi}

The struggle related to Arianism is among the roughest in early church history. Excommunications, political lobbying; anything but Biblical data swayed the events. In the midst of the Arian conflicts Apollinaris of Laodicea was the first to express the Trinitarian doctrine with reasonable accuracy. However, because he placed such heavy emphasis on the divine logos in Jesus, “God was made flesh” he in due course came to be considered a Docetist and ended up condemned of heresy. The formulation used by his students, the three great Cappadocians, represents the final eastern relational understanding of the Trinity: “We are to believe in one God, because we are to believe in one divine substance or essence (*ousia*) in three subjects or persons (*hypostasis*)”. With the work of the Cappadocians the Eastern Church had come to the end of its Trinitarian understanding, expressed first in the Nicene and finalized in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creeds.^{xlvii}

About the same time in the west, Hilary of Poitiers (A.D. 356) completed his book *On the Trinity* to be followed half a century later by Augustine’s masterly work on the same subject.^{xlviii} Augustine conveyed the doctrine in contrasts and paradoxes, typical of the western understanding, also reflected in the so-called Athanasian Creed (5th Century).

Adventist Views on Trinitarian History

One of the most substantial reasons for the Adventist pioneers' opposition to the Trinity was historical. James White stated that Trinity was based on the "old creed" and therefore not part of genuine original Christianity. The primary point in this is that he thought everything which was formulated after apostolic times was apostasy. He made references to Sunday, state of the dead, purgatory, and reverence to saints or other Catholic doctrines, and connected the Trinity to this same development because it took centuries before the doctrine was fully defined. This is understandable as Adventist pioneers were fully fledged Restorationists who believed in a return to genuinely original apostolic Christianity.^{xlix}

That the Trinity was identified as a Catholic doctrine is reflected in D. W. Hull's statement in the *Review* in 1859. His two-part article on the doctrine of divinity comments on the Nicene Creed in an interesting way. "The doctrine... was established by the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, and ever since that period, persons not believing this particular tenet, have been denounced by popes and priests, as dangerous heretics. It was for disbelief in this doctrine, that the Arians were anathematised in A.D. 513." He implies that what the papacy endorsed should be regarded unbiblical and what they condemned, the truth as he proceeds to connect the Trinity with papacy, the "man of sin" and deplores the persecution of those who taught more Biblically.ⁱ

Creeds, the Adventist pioneers thought, expressed the Catholic faith. Furthermore, creeds took time to develop and therefore could not represent genuine Biblical truths. Adventism started its gradual shift towards Trinitarianism late in 1870's and it took two or three decades. Many of the church's new converts came from Trinitarian Protestant churches and it is possible the change to Trinitarianism contributed to the rising growth rates of the Seventh-day Adventist church in late 19th Century.

Misunderstanding the Trinity

It is interesting that some of the Adventist pioneers make references to the Trinity that confuse Trinitarianism with three of the major heresies that relate to the development of the Trinity. This may be an indication that in the end their knowledge of what the Trinity means was not very well founded. Docetism was a Gnostic heresy and extremely popular because Gnosticism was so widespread. It taught that Christ was a spirit and his body was an illusion that people were made to see.^{li} Modalism presented one God appearing in three forms. This was an attractive heresy because it made God understandable and it spread like wildfire during the 3rd century. It also compelled Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytos and others to use all their persuasive powers to keep it at bay. Finally there was tritheism, popular in the eastern parts of the empire, around the time of and after the Trinity had been defined in Nicea (325) and Constantinople (371). John of Damascus and Johannes Piloponus are usually cited as prime examples.^{lii}

Docetism - J.B. Frisbie

J. B. Frisbie identifies what he calls the "Sabbath God" and the "Sunday God." The Biblical Sabbath God is not only a Spirit, but also a personal "Being" with a face, hand or other body parts. Referring to creedal expressions in the Catholic Catechism or Methodist literature, he then defines the (non-Biblical) "Sunday God" and suggests that this Trinitarian God is a spirit only and not real and concrete because He is based on ideas which "well accord with those heathen philosophers."^{liii} Admittedly, Frisbie's argument is anything but clear and to classify it under Docetism is doubtful. But if the "Sunday God" is spirit only, it is possible that he thought that for Trinitarians not only God the Father

but also Jesus was a somewhat unreal spirit being. In any case Frisbie's understanding of the ontological definition that relate to the Trinity are seriously flawed.

Modalistic Monarchianism - Joseph Bates

Frisbie was not the only Adventist pioneer who had totally misunderstood the Trinity. Joseph Bates wrote regarding his conversion in 1827, "Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was impossible for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same being."^{liv} In other words, he rejected the Trinity on the claim that it made the Father and the Son identical.

This is an important typical early Adventist anti-Trinitarian statement. However, Bates' argument is not against the Trinity but against the Monarchianist concept that the Father and the Son are one and the same person. The statement shows that Bates' understanding of the Trinity was faulty and he condemned what the ancient church and all Trinitarians already condemned as a heresy^{lv} because proper Trinitarianism specifically teaches that while the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one, they must also be distinguished as separate persons.

As a note related to the previous examples, one may observe that all Trinitarian heresies were based on an effort to make an incomprehensible and unexplainable Christian God understandable. Adventist pioneers who knew something of the struggles related to the doctrine of Trinity were clearly unaware of what Trinitarianism meant and gave preference to understandable but traditionally heretical versions of the concept of God.

Tritheism and John Loughborough

Another example of an Adventist pioneer rejecting as Trinitarianism what all Trinitarians would also reject as heresy was John Loughborough. In 1861 he wrote that he cannot believe in the Trinity because it implies the existence of three Gods. "If Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each God, it would be three Gods."^{lvi}

It is unlikely that Loughborough's comments are in any way related to Justin Martyr who was one of the first to try to explain the Christian God to a pagan audience. Justin Martyr's teaching was one of the important first steps towards the concept of the Trinity but he has also been accused of tritheism or even polytheism. In his *Apology* he does his best to refute the claim that Christians are atheists. He admits that Christians indeed reject false pagan gods and goes on to affirm that they instead believe in the true God who is the Father of all virtues. "Both him and the son who came forth from him... and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore..." While this sounds like a well thought statement, it has also been understood tritheistic. What is worse is, leaving the common translations of this text aside that in Greek angels are included as an object of worship and listed before the Holy Spirit.^{lvii} In another context he refers to Christ as a second God.^{lviii}

Justin may also serve as a good illustration on how difficult it was to explain the Christian God and how easy it was to choose one's words inappropriately. Justin Martyr is usually credited with initiating what is known as the *Logos* doctrine. Logos represented divine reason, consciousness and even essence, which dwelled in Christ. This teaching is often considered the first step towards Trinitarianism.^{lix} Justin Martyr is not the only church father with difficulties in portraying the Christian God in a culture permeated with Greek thought. One could easily create a list of a dozen fathers who had difficulties in finding the proper expressions.

Biblical Study - J.M. Stephenson

The final sample demonstrates the type of use that Adventist pioneers made of the Bible in connection with the Trinity. During the formative years of Sabbatarian Adventism (1854) J. M. Stephenson expressed the pioneer view on the Trinity with forceful vigor. Dealing with the creedal language he claims that Christ cannot have had “co-etaneous existence” with the father for the simple reasons that he is called the son and is “begotten.” If God is the “supreme ruler” it would “be impossible to have two Supreme Rulers at the same time.”^{lx} He clearly states his belief on Christ being created. Referring to Col. 1:15 he presents Christ as, “the first born of every creature.” Continuing his argument he claims that *creature* signifies creation and Christ cannot be the first born of every creature unless he is a created being.^{lxi}

The Creeds

One notes that while the Adventist pioneers frequently referred to the creeds their definitions and understanding of the Trinity was far from what is stated in the creeds. The creeds represent the final authoritative statements on the Trinity. While Christological struggles continued in particular in the Eastern churches the doctrine of Trinity was settled with the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed (A.D. 381).

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made. For us all, and for our salvation he came down from heaven; and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. On the third day he rose from the dead in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father. Who, with the Father and Son, is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

We confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come.

Amen.^{lxii}

The next stage in the Creedal development, the Chalcedonian Creed (A.D. 451) represents the growing confrontation between the theologies of the East and West, but because it relates more to Christology than to the Trinity it can be passed in this context. The Western view with its paradoxes is reflected in the Athanasian Creed (5th C, France).

Whoever will be saved shall, above all else, hold the catholic faith. Which faith, except everyone keeps whole and undefiled, without doubt he will perish eternally.

And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.

For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit.

The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet there are not three eternals but one eternal. As there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty. And yet they are not three almighties but one almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet there are not three gods; but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord. And yet they are not three lords but one Lord.

For as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every person by himself to be both God and Lord, So we cannot by the catholic faith say that there are three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created; but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another; But the whole three persons are coeternal together and coequal, so that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped.

He, therefore, that will be saved is compelled thus to think of the Trinity. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man; God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of the substance of his mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching his manhood; Who, although he is God and man, yet he is not two but one Christ.

One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God.

One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven; He sits at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and

the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies and will give an account of their own works. And they that have done good will go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the catholic faith which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

Amen.^{lxiii}

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Athanasian creeds stabilised the Christian definition of the Godhead and these expressions of the Trinity have held on through the centuries and been scrutinised by the geniuses of Church history, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Jean Calvin and others. They remain important in spite of the resurgences of Arianism and the onslaught of modern theology. For many Christians the creeds still represent what is a genuinely Christian definition of God and those who do not endorse their doctrines are often classified as being outside the flock or belonging to a cult.

A question worth asking is whether the Seventh-day Adventist Church could or should make more use of the creeds today? After all the church today openly teaches Trinitarianism. Most Adventists would not object to the formulations of the creeds and the church has made a clear turn against its pioneers' rejection of carefully worded and detailed doctrinal statements.

How Adventists may view the Trinity in the New Testament

Today most Seventh-day Adventists, like their church, are fully committed to Trinitarianism. Many Adventists are not only convinced that the Trinity is a fully provable Biblical doctrine but also that it gives them the right to be called Christian in the true and full sense of the word.

The following summary makes no effort to deduct the exegetical and theological correctness of Trinitarianism. The purpose is simply to demonstrate the complexity of the Biblical witness on the topic by listing examples of New Testament texts.

The following proposals may not be acceptable to everyone but each point can be defended with some degree of logic. One may also be a confessing Trinitarian and accept that there are Biblical texts which can be cited as:

1. *Evidence for the oneness of God.* The Christian church was born in the austere monotheistic environment of Judaism. Not only Jesus himself, but most of the New Testament writers who first articulated and shaped the Christian faith, were Jews and much of the New Testament was intended for a Jewish audience. Therefore it is not surprising to find New Testament texts that stress the oneness of God. The classic example is Mk 12.29ff where Jesus answers a question on the most important commandment by quoting the *shema*, Dt 6.4, "'The most important one', answered Jesus, is this: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'"
2. *Evidence for the uniqueness of Jesus.* From the beginning Christians believed not only in God but also in Jesus. Jesus was the Messiah, pre-existent, the creator, and even divine or God's "likeness" (2Cor 4.4; Col 1.15). Their life centered on Jesus Christ. The Gospel of John gives the clearest evidence: "The Word was with God and the Word was God... Through him all things were made..." (Jn 1.1,3). The book of Hebrews is equally emphatic in applying even Old Testament Yahweh texts on Jesus (E.g. Hb. 1.10 < Ps.102.25). However, in the final count, such texts are relatively few considering the numerous references New Testament writers make to

Christ.

3. *Evidence for the personhood of the Holy Spirit.* New Testament witness on the Holy Spirit is not nearly as univocal as that on Jesus. However, in particular the Johannine affirmations on the Spirit are far-reaching and communicate (or at least come very close to communicating) the Spirit in personal terms. For example "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you...." (Jn 14.26). Such clear texts, however, are very few.
4. *Evidence for threeness.* There are also several passages where the three, God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are mentioned together. One eager Internet theologian has located 58 such texts^{lxiv} but even if that is an overstatement there are several texts. The best known are Mathew's baptismal formula (Mt 28.19) and Paul's doxology. "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Cor 13.14; cf. Eph 4.4-6).^{lxv}
5. *Support for Christ being subordinate to the Father.* New Testament witness on the Godhead would be fairly simple if it were limited to texts in the categories above. However, the total picture is more complex as there are also several texts which imply, at least on superficial reading, that Christ or the Holy Spirit are subordinate to the Father or may have had a beginning. For example, "The Father is Greater than I" (Jn. 14.28). Or, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (1Cor 11.3)

A few additional notes are in place. The Bible has no clear Trinitarian texts that would in one passage name both the threeness and oneness of God.^{lxvi} But instead of Trinitarian texts there are clear pointers towards Trinitarianism in the Bible. The *triadic* passages are important as they present the three persons of the Godhead, and then these can be combined with other texts including some from the Old Testament background that point to the oneness of God.^{lxvii}

Actually, always when speaking about God one should observe that the Old Testament provides the essential foundation without which the full Christian doctrine of God could not exist. What is implicit in the Old Testament becomes explicit in the New. Against the backdrop of the OT it is easier to understand that Jesus is clearly distinct from the Father, and yet one with him. The OT also helps understand Christ as his role is at times presented through OT quotes.

The final point is, that throughout the New Testament, the uniqueness or the deity of Christ are explicitly affirmed (e.g. Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1). Because of this biblical testimony, Christians pray to Jesus, worship him, and sing praises to him as God. The church, however, cannot be blamed for understanding its respect for Jesus, as well as the presence of the Holy Spirit, within the boundaries of OT monotheism.^{lxviii}

One may, in fact claim that because NT writers did not themselves explore the full significance of their intricate, and at times conflicting statements, we should not do so either. The Bible, on this topic implies the answers rather than gives them explicitly. Bible writers do not dwell on ontological issues related to the Godhead. While it is possible to draw Trinitarian conclusions through delicate and meticulous exegesis, one may ask whether it is also appropriate to accept that different people may have minor differences in their emphasis and conclusions. Humility and tolerance are in place. Because the subject is so intricate, one should, first of all, never be overly dogmatic or judgmental on those whose views are not in line with one's own. The fact that the Bible is not univocal on its teaching on God

and the Godhead must also be a major cause for the long history behind Trinitarianism. And, finally, more emphasis could be placed on the functional side of worship and prayer than on the theoretical definitions of the doctrine.^{lxix}

Final Thought

Augustine concluded his great work *On the Trinity* with a prayer which represents one of the more profound historical statements on the topic.

“O Lord, the one God, God the Trinity, whatever I have said in these books that is of Thine, may they acknowledge who are Thine; if anything of my own, may it be pardoned both by Thee and by those who are Thine.”^{lxx}

ⁱ E.g. Gane, Erwin, *The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer*, 1963. <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/gane-thesis/e-gane03.htm#a01>, (April 27, 2008).

Moon Jerry, *Early Adventists Struggle with the Truth about Trinity*

http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/Trinity%20Review%20art.htm#N_12_ (April 26, 2008).

ⁱⁱ E.g. Moon Jerry, *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 113-129.

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ⁱⁱⁱ Jerry Moon observes that EGW's statements from the 1850's and early 1860's are ambiguous. According to Moon's research her earliest clearly Trinitarian statements are from 1869. Moon, Jerry, *The Role of Ellen G. White, The Adventist Trinity Debate*, Andrews University Seminary Studies, No. 2 (Autumn 2003), 275-292; <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/moon/moon-trinity2.htm> (April 29, 2008).

^{iv} Smith, Timothy L, *Social Reform: Some Reflections on Causation and Consequence*; Gaustad, Edwin S, ed. *Rise of Adventism*, New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London, 1974, p. 18.

^v Hudson, Winthrop S, *A Time of Religious Ferment*; Gaustad, Edwin S, ed. *Rise of Adventism*, New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London, 1974, p. 6f.

^{vi} Millard, David, *History of the Christians or the Christian Connexion*, in Vinebrenner, John, ed. *History of All the Religious Denominations in the United States*, Harrisburg, PA, 1848, pp. 164-170. <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/dmillard/HCCC.HTM> (April 15, 2008).

^{vii} *Restorationism*, Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restorationism> (Oct 10, 2008).

^{viii} See e.g. Knight, George R, *A Search for Identity*; Hagerstown, MD., 2000, pp 30-37.

^{ix} Miller William, *Rules of Interpretation*; Midnight Cry, Nov 17, 1842; *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology*; (Joshua V. Himes) Boston, 1842, pp 20-24. Miller's rules have been republished several times, frequently in later edited versions. Hale Apollos, *Second Advent Manual*, Boston 1843, 103-106; Bliss, Sylvester, *Memoirs of William Miller*, Boston, 1853, pp. 70-72; Damsteegt, P. Gerard, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, (Diss.) Grand Rapids, Mi., 1977, 299f; Harrison, John F.C., *The Second Coming*, London and Henley, New Brunswick, 1979, 200f; Judd, William Miller, *Disappointed Prophet*, in Numbers, Ronald L and Butler, Jonathan L. eds. *The Disappointed*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1987, 20f; Arasola Kai, *The End of Historicism*, (Diss.) Sigtuna Sweden, 1990, pp. 50-53.

^x See e.g. Arasola Kai, *The End of Historicism*, (Diss.) Sigtuna Sweden, 1990, pp. 53-59.

^{xi} Millard, David, *History of the Christians or the Christian Connexion*, in Vinebrenner, John, ed. *History of All the Religious Denominations in the United States*, Harrisburg, PA, 1848, pp. 164-170.
<http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/dmillard/HCCC.HTM> (April 15, 2008). Interestingly this thought pattern can still be seen in the work of some scholars. E.g. Adolf Harnacks massive *History of Dogma* implies that original Christianity had no doctrines and that doctrinal definitions watered down the genuine original Christian faith. See e.g. Harnack, Adolf, *History of Dogma*...

^{xii} Froom, LeRoy Edwin, *Movement of Destiny*, Washington DC, 19.... p. . Froom's comments reflect an apologetic agenda as he tries to show that only one in seven Millerite preachers were from an Anti-Trinitarian background. However, in the process he ignores the "Christian" background of some of the listed pastors. Considering the 19th C views one should also keep in mind that all in Connexionist churches were not necessarily Anti-Trinitarian and some in traditional churches may have had Arian or semi-Arian views (e.g. it would be worth checking Stetson's, Storrs, Wenham's views). Himes standing in Connexionism is reflected in his being called to write a description of *Christian Connexion or Christian Churches* into Edwards, B.B. ed., Fessenden & co's *Eyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Brattleborough, VT, 1838. <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/jvhimes/CC-ERK.HTM>, April 16, 2008.

^{xiii} Knight, George R, *A Search for Identity*; Hagerstown, MD., 2000, pp 31.

^{xiv} McGaughhey, Ken, *Seventh-day Adventist Roots VII*, *LandMarks Magazine*, December 1998.

http://www.stepstolife.org/php/view_article.php?article_id=1114 (April 20, 2008).

^{xv} E.g. Kastrati Julian, *Against Historical Adventists: The Whites and the Divinity of Christ*. © 2004, 2007.

http://juliankastrati.blogspot.com/2007_02_01_archive.html (April 15, 2008).

^{xvi} Millard, David, *History of the Christians or the Christian Connexion*, in Vinebrenner, John, ed. *History of All the Religious Denominations in the United States*, Harrisburg, PA, 1848, pp. 164-170.
<http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/dmillard/HCCC.HTM> (April 15, 2008).

^{xvii} Bourdeau, Daniel T. *Sanctification, or Living Holiness*, p. 13. Cf. "In every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation. The old truths are all essential; new truth is not independent of the old, but an unfolding of it. It is only as the old truths are understood that we can comprehend the new." White, Ellen G., *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 127.

^{xviii} White, James, Untitled introductory note *Present Truth* 1/1 July 1849. Guy, Fritz, *Mapping the Past: Exploring the Development of Adventist Theology, [Being Adventist in 21st Century Australia]*,
<http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/doctrines/au2002conference/guy/guy-past.htm>, (April 29, 2008).

^{xix} Bull, Malcolm, Lockhart, Keith, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, Indiana 1989, p. 42; (Google Book Search, Oct 9, 2008).

^{xx} "Seventh-day Adventist Eschatology," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh-day_Adventist_eschatology
 Wikipedia

^{xxi} Lohse, Bernhard, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, Philadelphia 1985, pp. 66-90.

^{xxii} Bromiley, Geoffrey W., *Historical Theology, An Introduction*. Edinburgh, 1978. P. 133.

^{xxiii} *Doings of the Battle Creek Conference, Oct. 5 & 6, 1861*, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 18 (8 Oct. 1861): 148.

^{xxiv} White, James S. *Biography* p. 454.

^{xxv} Cf. references to creeds in Guy, Fritz, *Uncovering the Origins of the Statement of Twenty-seven Fundamental Beliefs, Part I*, <http://www.goodnewsforadventists.com/home/skypage.php?keyid=235&parentkeyid=166> (April 10, 2008)

^{xxvi} Scragg, Walter R. L., *Doctrinal Statements and the Life and Witness of the Church*, unpublished paper presented at workers' meetings in Vasterång, Sweden and Manchester, England, between 24 Aug. and 4 Sept. 1981.

^{xxvii} *Athanasios*, *Christian History & Biography* (Christianity Today);

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/special/131christians/athanasius.html> (April 26, 2008).

^{xxviii} *Arius*, Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arius> (April 26, 2008).

^{xxix} Guy, Fritz, *Uncovering the Origins of the Statement of the Twenty-seven Fundamental Beliefs, Part 1*,

<http://www.goodnewsforadventists.com/home/skypage.php?keyid=235&parentkeyid=166>, (April 29, 2008).

^{xxx} Unitarianism refers to belief in the oneness of God, strict monotheism and opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity, and represented other somewhat liberal theological views. See e.g. *Unitarianism*, Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unitarianism> (Oct 14, 2008).

^{xxxix} Unitarians shared the Connexionist and Millerite distaste for creeds and Church organizations. *Unitarianism The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed. Questia, Columbia University, 2004.

<http://www.questia.com/library/encyclopedia/unitarianism.jsp> (April 27, 2008).

^{xxxix} Fischer, Chris, *A Brief History of Unitarian Christianity*. American Unitarian Conference.

<http://www.americanunitarian.org/fisherhistory.htm>. (April 27, 2008).

^{xxxix} Gaston, John W. III, *A Theological History of Unitarianism*. American Unitarian Conference, 2000.

<http://www.americanunitarian.org/gastonhistory.htm>, (April 28, 2008).

^{xxxix} Stark, Rodney, *The Rise of Christianity*, San Francisco, 1997, pp. 49ff.

^{xxxix} Hippolytos, *Refutation*, 9.11; Walker, Williston *A History of the Christian Church*, Edinburgh 1959, p 70.

^{xxxix} Stark, Rodney, *Rise of Christianity*, San Francisco, 1997, pp. 59ff.

^{xxxix} Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, ch 47. ACW 16, 78.

^{xxxix} Lohse, Bernhard, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, Philadelphia 1985, p.44.

^{xxxix} *Wikipedia*, *Tertullian*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tertullian>, (April 23.2008). Sometimes also Theophilus of Antioch is claimed as the first to use the term. However, his term is “triad” rather than “Trinity” when he compares the three first days of creation with God – first day for God, second for his Word and the third for his Wisdom.

^{xl} Harnack, Adolf, *History of Dogma II*, Eugene OR, 1997. Pp 231, 257.

^{xli} Tertullian,

^{xlii} Lohse, Bernhard, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, Philadelphia 1985.

^{xliii} Harnack, Adolf, *History of Dogma II*, Eugene OR, 1997. Pp 358.

^{xliiv} Harnack, Adolf, *History of Dogma III*, Eugene OR, 1997. Pp 51-73.

^{xliiv} Harnack, Adolf, *History of Dogma IV*, Eugene OR, 1997. Pp 2-13.

^{xliiv} Harnack, Adolf, *History of Dogma IV*, Eugene OR, 1997. Pp 18,19.

^{xliiv} Harnack, Adolf, *History of Dogma IV*, Eugene OR, 1997. Pp 120, 126.

^{xliiv} Bromiley, Geoffrey W., *Historical Theology, An Introduction*. Edinburgh 1978, Pp. 81-95.

^{xlix} See e.g. James White’s defence of Adventism as a turn to the true Bible message. *Bible Adventism, Introduction*, <http://dedication.www3.50megs.com/jswhite5.html>.

ⁱ Hull, D.W., *The Bible Doctrine of Divinity, Review and Herald* (November 10, 1859), Gane, Erwin, *The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer. Chapter III*. <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/gane-thesis/e-gane03.htm#a01>, (April 27, 2008).

ⁱⁱ E.g. *Docetism*, *Wikipedia*. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Docetism> (Oct 12, 2008)

ⁱⁱⁱ Kangas, Ron, *Modalism, Tritheism, or the Pure Revelation of the Triune God According to the Bible*. Contending for the Faith, <http://www.contendingforthefaith.org/responses/booklets/modalism.html>, (Oct 12, 2008)

ⁱⁱⁱ Frisbie, J.B., *The Seventh day-Sabbath Not Abolished. Review and Herald* (March 7, 1854). In Gane, Erwin, *The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer. Chapter III*. <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/gane-thesis/e-gane03.htm#a01>, (April 27, 2008).

^{liv} Moon, Jerry, *Early Adventists Struggle with the Truth about Trinity*.

http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/Trinity%20Review%20art.htm#N_12_ (April 26, 2008). The same view was also presented by Hull, D.W., *The Bible Doctrine of Divinity, Review and Herald* (November 17, 1859), Gane, Erwin, *The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer. Chapter III*. <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/gane-thesis/e-gane03.htm#a01>, (April 27, 2008).

^{iv} E.g. Expulsion of Sabellianians. Lohse, Bernhard, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, Philadelphia 1985, pp. 58f.

^{vi} Loughborough, J.H. *Questions for Bro. Loughborough. Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 18 (Nov 5, 1861), p. 184. Moon, Jerry, *Early Adventists Struggle with the Truth about Trinity*.

http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/Trinity%20Review%20art.htm#N_12_ (April 26, 2008).

^{lvii} ANF I, p. 164. E.g. Lohse translates his text in this way. Lohse, Bernhard, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, Philadelphia 1985, p. 43.

^{lviii} Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, ch 56, ANF I, 223ff. Cf. Harnack Adolf, *History of Dogma II*, Eugene OR, 1997. Pp 111f.

^{lix} Harnack, Adolf, *History of Dogma II*, Eugene OR, 1997. Pp 208-213.

^{ix} Stephenson, J.M., *The Atonement; Review and Herald*, Nov 14, 1854. In Gane, Erwin, *The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer. Chapter III*. <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/gane-thesis/e-gane03.htm#a01>, (April 27, 2008).

^{ixi} Stephenson, J.M., *The Atonement; Review and Herald*, Nov 14, 1854. In Gane, Erwin, *The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer. Chapter III*. <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/trinity/gane-thesis/e-gane03.htm#a01>, (April 27, 2008).

^{ixii} World Council of Churches website, <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/creed.html> (April 26, 2008).

^{ixiii} Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod website, <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=3357> (April 26, 2008).

^{ixiv} <http://www.bible.ca/trinity/trinity-text-triadic.htm> (April 23, 2008).

^{ixv} Lohse, Bernhard, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, Philadelphia 1985, p. 38-41.

^{ixvi} As a historical curiosity one may note that there was a Trinitarian text in some of the earlier editions of KJV, based on Erasmus' 1522 rendering of the so called *comma Johanneum*, John 5.7,8. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."^{ixvi} While this form of the text is known from as early as the 4th century, there is no early manuscript support for the section in italics.

^{ixvii} Lohse, Bernhard, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, Philadelphia 1985, p. 38.

^{ixviii} Mathison, Keith, *Book Review* May 26, 2008, *The Holy Trinity* by Robert Letham; <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/2008/05/book-review-the-holy-trinity.html> (Oct 12, 2008).

^{ixix} This might also suit better the postmodern mindset that usually shuns detailed and dogmatic definitions.

^{lxx} Augustine *On the Trinity* Bk XV, 28.51. *NPNF* 3, 228. Lohse Bernhard, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, Philadelphia 1985, pp. 70.

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