

November 3, 1936

Dr. D. S. Teters  
 Bryan, Ohio

Dear Brother Teters:

Replying to your letter of October 13 regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, I will say that Seventh-day Adventists do not and never have accepted the dark, mysterious Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. I refer to their doctrine in which they say that the Godhead consists of three personalities and one essence.

I was about to make a remark or comparison which would show up this idea of theirs. However, I want to acknowledge the supremacy, divinity and holiness of anything touching the Godhead. Therefore, anything I would say would be said with the utmost reverence and used only in order to help in understanding. In other words, the unacceptable Catholic doctrine of the Trinity would be something like the Siamese twins.

The early church was obliged to combat on the one hand the accusations of the pagans that they had three Gods -- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost -- and on the other hand to combat the Hellenizing and philosophical Platonic doctrine which of course later developed into the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity.

The Platonic doctrine was that all the attributes of God evolved into personalities such as His wisdom, His love, His power, His knowledge, and these evolved personalities were connected with the Godhead as a ray of light is connected with the sun, or a stream of water with the source, or heat with the furnace. These evolved personalities they called "demons". Of course in the later evolution of language the word "demon" has come to mean an evil spirit. This was not its first use, however. In its first use among the Greeks the word rightly meant "a son of God."

Now I will give the quotation in which Sister White expresses herself very clearly upon the Trinity. It is taken from Series B of Special Testimonies, #2 and 7, page 62:

"The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight.

"The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be 'the express image of His person.' 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Here is shown the personality of the Father.

"The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fulness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and those powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ."

Now to show you that we have never taken the position of Arius or the position with which the Catholics accuse him, namely, that Jesus Christ was created; nor have we taken the Catholic position on the other hand to the effect, that "there never was when Christ was not." Rather we have taken the Bible position in which Christ said: "I proceeded and came forth from the Father;" and again when Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I." To show you this I will now quote from Daniel and Revelation, by Uriah Smith, page 430:

"To the Lamb, equally with the Father who sits upon the throne, praise is ascribed in this song of adoration. Commentators, with great unanimity, have seized upon this as proof that Christ must be coeval with the Father; for otherwise, say they, here would be worship paid to the creature which belongs only to the Creator. But this does not seem to be a necessary conclusion. The Scriptures nowhere speak of Christ as a created being, but on the contrary plainly state that he was begotten of the Father. (See remarks on Rev. 3:14, where it is shown that Christ is not a created being.) But while as the Son he does not possess a

coeternity of past existence with the Father, the beginning of his existence, as the begotten of the Father, antedates the entire work of creation, in relation to which he stands as joint creator with God. John 1:5; Heb. 1:2. Could not the Father ordain that to such a being worship should be rendered equally with himself, without its being idolatry on the part of the worshiper? He has raised him to positions which make it proper that he should be worshiped, and has even commanded that worship should be rendered him, which would not have been necessary had he been equal with the Father in eternity of existence. Christ himself declares that 'as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.' John 5:26. The Father has 'highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.' Phil. 2:9. And the Father himself says, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' Heb. 1:6. These testimonies show that Christ is now an object of worship equally with the Father; but they do not prove that with him he holds an eternity of past existence."

I have many books to show the awful infinity of errors which afflicted Christians everywhere, and was an instrument in the hands of the Roman Catholic church in burning them at the stake and persecuting them because they did not believe this dark, mysterious Catholic doctrine. In fact, if we don't lock out the Catholic church will use this doctrine to come back on us in an indirect way on the Sabbath question.

I am taking the liberty to send copies of this letter to two or three brethren who are interested in this subject.

Very sincerely yours,

B. G. Wilkinson  
President  
Washington Missionary College

BGW:mod