

Significant Letters from Adventist Leaders

LETTER FROM H. COTTRELL TO L.E. FROMM

Sept. 16, 1931.

Dear Brother Fromm, -

From my personal knowledge the doctrine of the "trinity-Godhead," was not taught by Seventh-day Adventists during the early days of my ministry. I have always been familiar with the teaching of Elder J. H. Waggoner as set forth in his book on the Atonement, which you referred me to in your recent letter. I recall statements made by Adventist and scriptures used to verify their position, that the "Trinity-Godhead" as used by other denominations at that time in the absence of scripture truth therefore was a man-made term.

Will cite a few scriptures used in support, at that time, in behalf of the nontrinity view. "Now the birth of Jesus - Christ was on this wise.... She was found with child of the Holy Ghost" Mat 1:18. "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

The conclusion draw at that time was that the Holy Spirit was not a person in the sense that God and Christ are person, if so, the same difficulty would be encountered with the Holy Spirit being everywhere present as is held by the Trinitarians concerning God and Christ as persons being everywhere present, and if it should be so conceded Christ would be the son of the Holy Spirit, rather that of God as the Bible declares him to be.

It was taught and presumably believed to be true that the terms God, Christ, Holy Spirit and Comforter were expressions frequently used in the Bible interchangeably as follows: [texts quoted in original letter, but for sake of space, will only give references] 2Cor. 3:17; Mat. 10:20; Rom 8: 9-12; phil 1:19; 2Pet. 1:21. The holy Ghost is defined in the following texts: 1Pet. 1:11; Jn. 14:18; Jn. 14:26; Mat. 28:20.

Elder Fromm, It has been several weeks since I received your letter concerning the "Trinity- the Godhead." I first thought best not to get mixed up in this or similar questions, so concluded not to write, but today there came to my mind a very strong impression that I ought to refer to a few of the Scriptures that were formerly used in favor the view then advocated, at least in the section of the country where I labored.

Sincerely yours in Christ.

H. Cottrell

LETTER FROM H.W. CARR TO W.C. WHITE

Jan. 24, 1935.

Dear Elder White:

Your recent reminder of the efficient provision for carrying forward Sr. White's work, and the gems of thought which accompanied your announcement is very much appreciated, "She being dead yet speaketh." God has lead this people on, and is still leading, through His chosen servant, for which we praise Him.

In the first pages of Great Controversy it is stated that the "Father had an associate - A co-worker...The only being that could enter into all the councils and purposes of God. "The Father wrought by His son in the creation of all heavenly beings..." He holds supremacy over them all. "Sin originated with Satan, who next to Christ had been most honored of God, and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven." Next to Christ he was first among the hosts of God. The Son of God had wrought the Fathers will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven. "The Son of God was exalted above Satan as one in power and authority with the Father." Christ created Satan. Ez. 28:15.

It is urged by some of our leaders now that The Holy Spirit is a third person of the same nature of the Father and son, a member of the heavenly trio, cooperative in creation and personally active with the Father and son. For many years I have used these statements of Sr. White in combating false teachings relative to defining the Holy Spirit.

Will you kindly tell me what you understand was your mother's position in reference to the personality of the Holy Spirit?...[questions asked on other topics].

I know Brother White you would not depart from your mother's teachings, and that you have as perfect an understanding of them as any one. I shall appreciate your opinion very much.

Assuring you of the high esteem and respect I have had from my childhood in your father, mother and family,

I am very truly yours in this blessed faith.

H.W. Carr

LETTER FROM WILLIE C. WHITE
(E.G. WHITE'S SON) TO H.W. CARR

April 30, 1935.

Dear brother Carr,

I hold in my hand your letter of January 24. For some months I have been so heavily pressed with work connected with manuscripts which we were preparing for the printer that my correspondence has had to wait.

In your letter you request me to tell you what I understand to be my mother's position in reference to the personality of the Holy Spirit.

This I cannot do because I never clearly understood her teachings on the matter. There always was in my mind some perplexity regarding the meaning of her utterances which to my superficial manner of thinking seemed to be somewhat confusing. I have often regretted that I did not possess that keenness of mind that could solve this and similar perplexities, and then remembering what Sister White wrote in "Acts of the Apostles," pages 51 and 52, "regarding such mysteries which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden," I have thought best to refrain from discussion and have endeavored to direct my mind to matters easy to be understood.

As I read the Bible, I find that the risen Saviour breathed on the disciples (John 20:22) "and saith unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' The conception received from this Scripture, seems to be in harmony with the statement in "Desire of Ages", page 669, also Gen. 1:2; with Luke 1:4; with Acts 2:4 and also 8:15 and 10:44. Many other texts might be referred to which seem to be in harmony with this statement in "Desire of Ages."

The statements and the arguments of some of our ministers in their effort to prove that the Holy Spirit was an individual as are God the Father and Christ, the eternal Son, have perplexed me and sometimes they have made me sad. One popular teacher said "We may regard Him, (the Holy Spirit) as the fellow who is down here running things."

My perplexities were lessened a little when I learned from the dictionary that one of the meanings of personality, was Characteristics. It is stated in such a way that I concluded that there might be personality without bodily form Which is possessed by the Father and the Son.

There are many Scriptures which speak of the Father and the Son and the absence of Scripture making similar reference to the united work of the Father and the Holy Spirit or of Christ and the Holy Spirit, has led me to believe that the spirit without individuality was the representative of the Father and the Son throughout the universe, and it was through the Holy Spirit that they dwell in our hearts and make us one with the Father and with the Son....[answers to other subjects]

With kind regards, I remain sincerely your brother,

W.C. White