

# THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

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*The Key to having  
“both the Father and the Son”*



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# Introduction

## "The Doctrine of Christ"

*"Any one who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9, RSV)*

"The doctrine of Christ" was clear in John's time. He was unwilling to receive any contrary thinking. John held uncompromisingly to this doctrine, saying, "If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work" (2 John 10, 11, RSV). In this booklet, we will discuss the false teaching John was addressing. Suffice it to say here, it did not include a defense of the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity concept was foreign to the early Church and did not emerge until the third and fourth centuries. Through time this "doctrine of Christ" has developed into a theology meaning something different from that which was held by John and the entire early Church.

The Christian Church started out exclusively Jewish and, as such, had a singular God. "The Lord our God is one Lord" is the basic concept of the Jewish faith (Deuteronomy 6:4). This was universally accepted and stressed by Jewish authorities from ancient times. They understood the Old Testament Scriptures to portray God as truly singular in being, and they consistently rejected any other characterization. With one voice, Jehovah was believed to be the only all-powerful, unoriginated, immutable, eternal and self-existing One—the one true God.

There is little doubt the Christian religion started out with this original concept of God. The Church of England, in the Book of Common Prayer, presents the Apostles' Creed as a Unitarian Creed, which it

affirms was the belief of the Church during the first two centuries. This Unitarian Creed is still quoted in many churches today. (We should distinguish between the Unitarian Creed, which presents God as a single being, and the Unitarian Church, which believes Jesus is not the son of God but only the son of Joseph and Mary.)

In the fourth century, under Constantine (A.D. 325), the Nicene, or Semi-Trinitarian concept, was forged making Jesus and God one in substance. Then in the fifth century, the Athanasian, or Trinitarian Creed, came along, adding the holy Spirit, to complete the Trinity doctrine. Though called the Athanasian Creed, it is now generally admitted to have been composed by some other person. It is noteworthy that the word Trinity nowhere appears in the Bible. More importantly, the early Church debates of the Apostolic Era were centered on keeping newly converted Gentiles from being brought under the Jewish law. There were no ongoing debates on whether Jesus and God were two persons in one. Yet since the early Christian Church was mostly Jewish, any deviation from the "Lord our God is one Lord" foundation would have taken enormous discussion and debate.

The formulators of the Athanasian Creed well knew they had to meet the singular requirement: "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). How could they make three persons into one? Some of the best minds forged this explanation—"There are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible." It was an explanation that did not explain. With such incantation of words, they presented their case and, apparently, prevailed. They claimed the One God was three persons, yet only One God. No wonder they said it was "incomprehensible."

There was subtlety here. God himself, in one sense, is

incomprehensible, in that He is above and beyond our grandest conceptions. (In another way, He is not incomprehensible, because we are created in His image with the ability to reason and think in the same mode, though vastly inferior to the divine.) Many people will grant that in one sense God is "incomprehensible," and therefore, by association, they propose that the doctrine about God is "incomprehensible." They shift the "incomprehensible" from the person of God to a doctrine made by men about God. Yet, "the doctrine of Christ" was clear and comprehensible in John's time.

### **Jesus Presented Himself to Israel Covertly**

Jesus did not go about declaring he was the "Christ" or the "Anointed One." He did not encourage his disciples to do so. Jesus inquired, "Who do men say that the son of man is" (Matthew 16:13-20)? The answers were: Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Nothing very dramatic, was it? Nobody guessed he was the "Christ"—much less God. No!—not even His disciples. Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter's answer pleased our Lord—"You are the Christ [Anointed], the Son of the living God." That was correct. Only by the aid of the holy Spirit was Peter able to speak thus.

But notice what the holy Spirit did not suggest: It did not imply Jesus was God—not even the vaguest hint of it. The holy Spirit owed us the truth, and it gave us the truth. "You are the Christ [Anointed], the Son of the living God." They were then charged, "Tell no one." If denied from presenting Jesus as the Christ, would they present Jesus as God? Did the holy Spirit tell Peter a half-truth about the Christ?

The "doctrine of Christ" is: Jesus is the "Anointed" One. The Jews knew only priests, kings and some prophets were anointed, and it was strictly forbidden to make or use the special "holy anointing oil" improperly (Exodus 30:31-33). Jesus was not a Levite and,

therefore, could not be of the Levitical Priesthood. He was, however, of David's line and could be anointed "King." Before his death, Jesus rode into Jerusalem saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you" (Matt. 21:5-16).

In Jesus' last encounter with the Pharisees, he asked: "What do you think of Christ? Whose son is he?" They knew Christ (Messiah, the Anointed) was spoken of as the Son of David and that David looked for a son he would call Lord. They answered: "The son of David." Jesus said, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord" (Matthew 22:42, 43, RSV)? We ask: Did David believe he would father a son who would be God himself? Would he father God? Certainly not! David, through the Spirit, was showing that the Messiah of promise would be born of David's royal line and, by faithfully laying down his life as the ransom price, would be raised as Lord of both the living and the dead. (See Romans 14:9.) This would be the Father's reward for His son Christ Jesus, to enable him to carry out his great future work as Judge and Mediator in the Millennial Kingdom.

If the doctrine of Christ meant Jesus was God, the holy Spirit failed to make this known. The title "Anointed" is never applied to God. That would be a sacrilege. The greater always anoints the lesser. God is above all. He anoints, but is not anointed—nor can He be. We repeat: God is never called anointed! Never ever! It would be a grave impropriety to do so.

### **We Have Found the Messiah (The Anointed)**

Andrew found his brother Simon and said, "We have found the Messiah [Christ, the Anointed]" (John 1:41). That is what they were looking for—the Anointed One of God—certainly not God. When they met Jesus, he did not tell them to take off their shoes because they were standing on holy ground, as Moses was instructed to do

(Ex. 3:5). Jesus simply said, "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas [Peter] (John 1:42)." We find no instance where they fell at Jesus' feet worshipping him, nor of Jesus looking for such worship. As a matter of fact, we are told "Even his brothers did not believe in him" (John 7:5, RSV). They did not believe Jesus was the Messiah, and certainly they did not believe he was the God of Moses. Could they be God's brothers? Surely not! (See Hebrews 2:11, 12.)

### **Jaroslav Pelikan's Observation**

Jaroslav Pelikan, sterling Professor of History at Yale University, who is called "The Doctrine Doctor," is quoted saying: "You are not entitled to the beliefs you cherish about such things as the Holy Trinity without a sense of what you owe to those who worked this out for you. . . . To circumvent St. Athanasius on the assumption that if you put me alone in a room with the New Testament, I will come up with the doctrine of the Trinity, is naive."<sup>1</sup> The renowned Doctor of Doctrine is telling us the Trinity cannot be found by open study of the New Testament. He is admitting that it is not a doctrine of clear Biblical statement. Rather, the Trinity is a doctrine of inference, not of statement. That is why the Trinity has such troubled acceptance. We could add to Dr. Pelikan's statement and say that if you placed 10,000 people in rooms with New Testaments, they would not find the Trinity. We also have not found it.

The churches have had consistent trouble with unbelief in the Trinity. We quote Larry Poston, writing for Christianity Today, who looked into why the average age of Christian conversion was 16 years old whereas the average age of Muslim conversion was 31. His explanation in part was: "The Muslim is not asked to give credence to allegedly 'irrational' concepts such as the Trinity, the Incarnation. . . . If one does consider it essential that concepts such as the Trinity



be explained before conversion, are the common presentations of these teachings adequate?"2

Can you have a rational explanation of an "irrational" concept? Mr. Poston cannot be a rational believer in the Trinity, and there are more like him. Such members within the church find themselves put upon to accept something that is inherently not understandable. The Athanasian Creed tried to present the Trinity not as "three incomprehensibles" but "one incomprehensible." As much as Mr. Poston would like to see a more adequate explanation of the Trinity, it is unlikely that anyone will come up with a clear explanation of it.

The early Christian Church converts were mostly adult men and women. Mr. Poston must believe the modern church attracts members in their teens because mature minds are less inclined to accept irrational tenets. We must not conclude that everyone who professes belief in the Trinity teaching is necessarily a wholehearted believer. Some are silent doubting Thomases or, even worse, it is mandatory they confess the Trinity in order to be a member of a church denomination or that they put down theologically programmed answers to become degreed ministers. Forced belief was the stock and trade of religious oppression, but it has proved ineffective in making true believers out of people. "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

### **For Those Who Have Doubts About the Trinity**

The purpose of this writing is not for those who have no doubts about the Trinity. That is their fixed belief. Nothing we could say would penetrate their patriotic zeal for the Trinity. However, if you are one with gnawing doubts about it, and wish to satisfy your reason and heart, then this message may be very helpful. You may be glad to know early Christians did not believe in the Trinity, so you have lots of company. Also, there are increasing numbers in the

churches today who sincerely doubt it, including some of the scholars as well.

Mr. Poston is not a lone voice crying in the wilderness on this subject. Quoting another source: "A fruitful cause of error in ancient and also modern times is owing to an attempt to explain or illustrate this [Trinity] doctrine, forgetting that it is a mystery to be received on faith, which cannot, from its own nature, be rendered intelligible to man's intellect."<sup>3</sup> We may also here quote H. M. S. Richards, in a Voice of Prophecy Radio Broadcast, who similarly said, "[Trinity] is basic in our faith. . . . None of us can understand it. It's a divine mystery, but gloriously true."<sup>4</sup> No wonder children are prepared to believe it more readily than adults.

### **Three Classes of Trinitarians**

The tendency is to group all Trinitarians into one group. Such is not the case. Actually, there are three groups in the Christian world professing belief in the Trinity.

(1) The Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church believe in Apostolic succession. They believe the Word of God is being developed on an ongoing basis through a continuous chain of apostles from our Lord's time until now. Hence, they are not embarrassed to accept the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed even though contradictory. They do not need a strong Biblical basis for their beliefs because they can accept a council of bishops' or a pope's statements as a basis for belief. They believe God invests his truth in an ongoing body of apostles to define and clarify the faith. Hence they accept the fact that the early Church had a Unitarian God concept which evolved into the Trinity. They believe the Trinity just developed over time as the outgrowth of continued apostolic revelation.

(2) Then there is the Protestant Modernist and those who believe in Contemporary Religion. Their belief is that man makes known his understanding of God on an ongoing basis. In each time and place, men have presented their concepts of God. They hold that the Bible was created by men who presented their opinions about God in their time and place, and men have a right to continue presenting their growing conceptions of God and truth. Such do not believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God but merely an attempt to define God in ancient times. Hence they do not waste too much effort trying to harmonize it or understand it. They feel man must continue writing his own Bible as he progresses. In this camp the range of belief is incredibly diverse, and the real question with many of these is not if they believe in the Trinity, but do they, in fact, believe in God. However, in that they do not openly oppose the Trinity or the Bible, but are quite permissive of both, they are acceptable in the Christian community.

(3) The last group are the Fundamentalists and the Evangelicals who believe the Bible is the Word of God and inerrant. To this we agree. This group is uncomfortable with the fact that the Nicene Creed was created in the fourth century and the Athanasian Creed in the fifth century. That is an embarrassment to them because they feel the Bible is their sole basis of belief. Hence, having accepted the Athanasian Creed, they become revisionists of history and try to rewrite it so they can teach the early Christian Church believed it. They also comb through the Bible looking for some support of Trinitarianism. Some of their assertions make the Catholics, the Modernists and Contemporary religionists a bit uncomfortable. As badly matched as these three groups are, they are amazingly tolerant of each other in this regard.

## **Two Witnesses**

In John 8:13-18 (RSV) the Pharisees were having a little skirmish with Jesus. They said, "You are bearing witness to yourself; your testimony is not true." Here you are, just a plain ordinary person, going about making claims. Why should anyone believe you? After all, we are learned and taught in rabbinical schools, and why should we be concerned with your testimony? Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true, for I know whence I have come and whither I am going. You judge according to the flesh, I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true. . . . In your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true; I bear witness to myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness to me." If they wanted two witnesses, Jesus gave them two witnesses—God and himself. We might ask, why didn't he give them three witnesses, as provided for in Deuteronomy 19:15, by adding the holy Spirit? Evidently because the holy Spirit was not a person. God and Jesus together make two, no more, no less:  $1 + 1 = 2$ . That is pure math as taught by Jesus.

### **"They Have Taken Away My Lord"**

Remember Mary, standing at the empty tomb. As she stood there weeping, two angels asked her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him" (John 20:13, RSV). Now, she was not looking for her deceased God. God does not and cannot die. She was looking for her Master or Teacher, or at least for his remains. Her only mistake was to look for the living Jesus among the dead after he was resurrected. We might say the same. The Trinitarians have taken away the living Lord and we do not know what they have done with him. If he is the God of Moses, then what has happened to our Lord Jesus? We would not have an elder brother. How could the Absolute God say, "I will proclaim thy name to my brethren" (Hebrews 2:11, 12, RSV)? Only Jesus could

speak of us as his brethren, and only he is privileged to thus proclaim the Father's name to us.

God never ever called anyone His brother. He has no brothers or sisters. Jesus taught us to address God as "our Father." Our resurrected Lord Jesus is not "ashamed to call us brethren." God has given us the "Spirit of Sonship"—that makes Him "our Father." God is not our "brother." The Trinity concept has taken away our Lord Jesus—our Elder Brother, and we do not know what they have done with him. We cannot find him in this doctrine. God's voice in two Gospels said, "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17; Mark 9:7). If Jesus is a Son and we are sons of God, then we are brethren. Why have they taken away our brother? What have they done with him?

### **Will a "Holy Quaternity" Replace the "Holy Trinity?"**

In 431, the Council of Ephesus issued the dogma that Mary was to be honored as Theotokos, the God-bearer or Mother of God. The Nicene, or semi-trinitarian creed, was formed in 325. A century later they declared Mary officially to be the Mother of God. Once Jesus was declared to be God, it is only logical to conclude Mary to be God's mother. If that be so, then King David was a great, great grandfather of God. Commenting on Mary's elevated position of worship, Kenneth L. Woodward in a *Newsweek* article wrote: "In place of the Holy Trinity, it would appear, there would be a kind of Holy Quartet, with Mary playing the multiple roles of daughter of the Father, mother of the Son and spouse of the Holy Spirit."<sup>5</sup> Dr. R. C. Wetzell says in his evaluation of the Council of Nicaea called by Constantine in 325: "The Trinity was established as: God the Father, the Virgin Mary, and Messiah their Son."<sup>6</sup> Strange that Mary should be replaced by the holy Spirit and now resurface again with a view of being part of a "Holy Quaternity."

Today, Mary is again on the minds of many Catholics. The Pope receives an average 100,000 requests a month requesting that he exercise the power of papal infallibility to proclaim that Mary is "Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix of All Graces and Advocate for the People of God." If the present pope yields to religion by polls and consensus, rather than by Scriptures, perhaps he will make such a proclamation. However, Catholic theologians wish this whole idea would just go away. It is Scripturally indefensible. In 1 Timothy 2:5 we are told: "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." That says it all. If the Pope makes Mary a "Co-Redemptrix" they will be equally hard pressed to defend it Scripturally.

Protestants know the Bible does not say that Mary is the mother of God, yet if they teach Jesus was God then Mary must be God's mother. They are uncomfortable with this. The best answer they have is that the Bible does not say Mary was God's mother. But then, the Bible does not say there is a Trinity. Note the insightful quote from Newsweek Magazine:

"Prof. Marguerite Shuster of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., analyzed more than 3,000 sermons. . . . Out of this huge sample, only 20 sermons focused on the Trinity itself. The sermons, Shuster says, reveal considerable confusion in the preachers' understanding of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Many preachers, she finds, confuse the work of the Holy Spirit with that of Jesus. Others collapse the Trinity into one God who operates in different modes—an ancient Christian heresy. Still others preach as if Christians worshiped three gods, not one—a heresy that the stringently monotheistic Muslims have always accused Christianity of teaching. As particularly egregious examples, Shuster cites such sermon titles as 'You Need Three Gods in One' and 'God Speaks Through Many Voices.' In one sermon, Billy Graham himself

confesses that while he believes in the Trinity, 'Don't ask me to explain it. I can't.'"7

If the trinity teaching is so important, why is it that so many preachers can't seem to get it right? If the preachers seemed to be confused, what about the congregations? What if the Pope adds Mary as the "Co-Redemptrix?" How will this affect Protestants? This is fallout from the trinity theology. Can anything so complicated and incomprehensible be true?

# Chapter I

## Let Us Reason Together

*"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." (Isa. 1:18, KJV)*

John 1:1 is the rallying point of Trinitarians. But in defense of the Bible Students' non-Trinitarian reading of this verse, we quote from *The Bible Translator*, a periodical sent to Trinitarian scholars:

"If the translation were a matter of substituting words, a possible translation . . . would be, 'The Word was a god.' As a word-for-word translation it cannot be faulted, and to pagan Greeks who heard early Christian language, *Theos en o Logos*, might have seemed a perfectly sensible statement. . . . The reason why it is unacceptable is that it runs counter to the current of Johannine thought, and indeed of Christian thought as a whole."<sup>1</sup>

Please note their observation that, as a word-for-word translation, "it cannot be faulted." As a matter of fact, in Acts 12:22 (Herod's voice is *a* god's voice) and Acts 28:6 (Paul is called *a* god), the translators supplied the article "*a*" to the word *theos* in both instances. They just happen to think this would be contrary to John's thought in John 1:1. That is a very subjective conclusion.

John 1:1, 2 reads: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with [*ton*, the] God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with [*ton*, the] God." A word-for-word Greek rendering of John 1:1, 2 is: "In [*a*] beginning [*arche*] was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and [*a*] God was the Word. This was in [*a*] beginning with the God." Trinitarians tried to level the field by leaving out the article (*ton*) "the." In the King James, as in many other translations, all references to God are equal to the English



reader. You do not get the contrast between the emphasized God spoken of twice and the unemphasized God referring to the Logos.

Yet consider how later in this chapter (John 1:18), in the same context, a clear distinction is drawn between these Gods apart from mere grammatical emphasis: "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten god, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." (*New American Standard Bible, Marshall Interlinear*, etc.) Clearly, there is a "begotten God" and a begetter "God." Hence, John 1:1 must be understood in a manner that harmonizes with this verse.

To be convincing, the Trinitarian must prove that "God" in John 1:1 has supreme signification in all three of its uses. We quote from an orthodox Trinitarian, Dr. G. C. Knapp: "It (the appellation *Logos*, here translated Word), signifies, among the Jews and other ancient people, when applied to God, every thing by which God reveals Himself to men, and makes known to them His will. In this passage the principal proof does not lie in the word *Logos* ('revealer of God'), nor even in the word *theos* ('God'), which, in a larger sense, is often applied to kings and earthly rulers, but to what is predicated of the *Logos*."2

Using such reasoning, is it possible to prove Jesus is the supreme God from this passage? Does the passage in fact say that the Logos God has parity with the God? Without parity, he cannot be the God, nor can he be one-third God. What beginning is John talking about? God has no beginning or end, for He is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psa. 90:2). So what "beginning" is the Logos identified with? Rev. 3:14 supplies the answer: "The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning [*arche*] of the creation of the [*ton*] God."

Some say that the word "beginning" (*arche*) is rendered "principality(ties), magistrates, at the first, first estate, corners," etc.

and that this gives Rev. 3:14 a different meaning. Whether our Lord was the beginning, first, or principal "creation of God," how would that change his being a created being before all others? In the King James, the Apostle John's use of the word *arche* is consistently translated "beginning." In the Appendix we submit every usage of *arche* in the New Testament by John and other New Testament writers as listed in The Englishman's Concordance. Please note its uses and how "beginning" is an appropriate translation. It is only because translators have seen the threat this poses to the Trinity that they have labored to change the intent of that word in this verse.

But, let us assume that the Trinitarians are correct on John 1:1. Let us presume the Logos was Jehovah (or Yahweh God). What is John then telling? If John believed the Logos was the God of Moses, why would John say the "Logos was with God, and the Logos was God"? ***What God was the Logos with?*** Why place a mark on eternity and say that was the beginning and the Logos was there? If he really wanted to prove the Logos was God, he should have said, "See this mark. It is the beginning. Now, the Logos was here before that beginning as the God, for He was the God." To place the Logos at the mark called beginning and not before the "beginning" weakens their whole position.

The following texts delineate this truth—that God always existed and that a beginning in time is associated only with the Logos:

*God "from everlasting to everlasting." Ps. 90:2*

*Christ Jesus "in the beginning was the Word . . ." John 1:1*

*"The Lord created me at the beginning of his work." Prov. 8:22, RSV*

Furthermore, John 1:1 could not be a proof of the Trinity, for no mention is made of the holy Spirit. That is most embarrassing when

the key scripture to the whole Trinity concept omits one-third of the Trinity. Therefore, whatever John 1:1 proves, it does not mention the holy Spirit, and it fails to provide the third part necessary to support the Trinity. Trinitarians have combed through the Bible using every possible text to prove their point. In the overwhelming majority of texts used, you find them doing the same thing as in John 1:1, using arguments that God and Jesus are one, hoping we will not notice that none of their proof verses include the third part necessary – the holy Spirit. The idea is to get people so involved in the discussion that they will forget the holy Spirit is not mentioned. Therefore, the debate lacks the third part needed for rational proof. In order to prove the Trinity doctrine, it is necessary to find Biblical statements of the oneness of being of Father, Son and holy Spirit. Even if we could prove the Father and Son were one being, would it give us a Trinity?

To call God "Christ" gives them a name but not a Christ [an Anointed One]! We ask again, "What have you done with Christ?" Where is he? You cannot have three absolute Gods and one absolute God. The moment you do, you must redefine absolute. The moment you define God as Christ, you replace Christ. God can never be less than God!

### **Why Must the Savior be a God-Man?**

The Trinity concept insists that Jesus had to be a God-man to be the Savior. If he was a mere man, they say, how could he take upon him the sin of the whole world? It sounds good to make such extravagant claims about Jesus. Generally, we cannot pay sufficient homage to our Savior for his great sacrifice, so why not go all out in our claims for him? To some extent that is how the Trinity was started, countering claims that Jesus was just a mere man. As the defense of our Savior was made, so the claims for him grew and

became exaggerated – from being a perfect man and Son of God, until at last the ultimate claim was made that he was in fact God. Then followed the super patriotism and the cry "To the fire" with those who dare claim Jesus someone less than God. History records John Calvin burned (roasted) Michael Servetus at the stake for not believing the Trinity. As they lit the flames, Michael Servetus cried out, "Oh thou Son of the eternal God have pity on me." One observer said, We might have had pity on him if he had said, "Oh Eternal Son of God." Why is church history so lacking in mercy and kindness and so mean?

"By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). If only God's people had served their God as well as they had their Church organizations, how much kinder Church history would be. In a Church bent on world conquest, there is little love or kindness to be found. Our country was born to provide refuge from religious persecution.

### **Jesus Christ the "Ransom for All"**

We read in 1 Tim. 2:5, 6: "The man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." What is the ransom? The Greek word for ransom is *antilutron* – defined by Dr. Young as "a corresponding price."<sup>3</sup> One perfect man was a substitutionary sacrifice for the perfect man Adam, who forfeited his life along with the human race in him. However, the Church fathers lost sight of the true meaning of the ransom. When this happened, there was no holding back the ground swell of extravagant claims about Christ. Anything less than calling Jesus God was considered demeaning.

For the sake of argument, let us go along with this exalted claim that Christ is God—a claim neither he nor Scripture makes. Let us accept their claim that he was God and, therefore, God died for us. May we ask, How could an immortal God die?

Did the Absolute God die? The creed maintains Christ was "very man." Hence, to call God "Christ" gives them a name, but not a Christ. It was the "very man" Christ who died. No matter how they define it, they have only a "very man" who died. How, then, did "very God" die? God is immortal, death-proof. God could not die; only some flesh form could die. Despite the semantics, they come away with only a perfect "human sacrifice." That is exactly what we believe and claim.

Dr. Adam Clark, a Trinitarian, says, "Two natures must ever be distinguished in Christ: the human nature, in reference to which he is the Son of God and inferior to him, and the Divine nature which was from eternity, and equal to God."<sup>4</sup> He also disallows that Jesus could be begotten from eternity, saying: "To say that he [Christ] was *begotten* from all *eternity*, is, in my opinion, absurd; and the phrase *eternal Son* is a positive self-contradiction. Eternity is that which has had no *beginning*, nor stands in any reference to time. Son supposes *time*, *generation*, and *father*."<sup>5</sup> In other words, it was only the human flesh of Christ that died. Hence, they do not have an infinite sacrifice, because it was the inferior Son who died. So where, oh where, is the infinite sacrifice of God?

Unless the complete Trinity died on the cross, Trinitarians have but a very man for their savior. While Trinitarians insist Jesus was wholly God and wholly man, their burden is to prove this and also to show that both God and man died on the cross. The Bible does not say this. Theologians have labored long and hard to compensate for what is not clearly stated in the Word. Did Jesus ever say he would give his flesh and deity for man as a ransom? No. He said, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51). Then could he take his flesh body back after giving it? What would have become of his ransom if taken back after it had been given?

Dr. Adam Clark renders Psalm 8:5: "Thou has made him little less than God." He refers to this verse in Heb. 2:7, and applies it to Jesus, saying, "For a short while, he was made lower than the angels, that he might be capable of suffering death."<sup>6</sup> If Dr. Clark's assertion were true, Jesus was less than God or lower than the angels. How could he be "less than God" and still be Absolute God? This presents a problem in logic.

### **A Mighty and Infinite Sacrifice With Small Results**

Let us allow that Christ's sacrifice was infinite as claimed. We are allowing this without a Scriptural basis, for nowhere does the Bible say Jesus' sacrifice was infinite. It does not say he suffered more than all mankind. It does not even say he suffered more than any man. Even Isaiah 52:14, which speaks of his "visage" and "form" being marred "more than any man," does not fulfill the infinite suffering assertion. It is not wise to say more than the Scriptures say. We are allowing such reasoning only to see where it leads.

Now, allowing for the most extravagant sacrifice for sin, we ask, How come so few are saved? How come, when salvation has been reduced to just making a "confession for Christ," the vast majority of mankind are not accepting Christ? The churches, for some 1500 years, have entreated the world. They have carried on bloody wars, imposed the "holy(?) inquisition," employed the powers of the state, threatening damnation and eternal fire on those slow to respond—torturing, killing, maiming—all in vain. The vast majority of the world is not Christian in any sense of the word, and the part called Christian is suspect of being mostly a field of "tares" (Matt. 13:24-30). Would God provide such a powerful salvation, requiring only the faintest acceptance, and still somehow fail to save the vast majority of those purchased?

Even when telling people that Christ has purchased their ticket to

heaven and all they have to do is accept it, still the world at large is unsaved. How come this mighty salvation fails? More than two-thirds of the world are without Christ. And the part that accepts Christ might have a goodly number of "tares" among them, who are the planting of the Wicked One. How could something so overpowering be so ineffective? With such an overwhelming salvation, how is it that most people are lost?

The claim that Jesus had to be God to pay for every man's sins, who, according to their theology, is to be tortured forever and ever if unsaved, means that Jesus would have endured the fires of theological hell for every man, woman and child that eternity would inflict upon them—a very sadistic concept. They claim he had to be God to do this. This whole claim is totally unscriptural. The Bible says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). Again we read: "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

This shedding of blood requires the death of the victim, not merely suffering. If people could atone for their sins by suffering, then the Hindu and Eastern religions, wherein people afflict themselves, laying on spikes, putting hooks in their flesh and staring at the sun until blind, would certainly commend themselves to God by buying remission for their sins. Even the pre-reformation Christian theology with its flagellations should not then have been discarded. The world already endures such great suffering because of sin. As we look out into the world, our hearts ache for humanity. How they need the hope of Christ's glorious Kingdom on earth, when all men will be lifted up and blessed as God pours out His "spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28). All of this will be possible by Christ's death on the cross. Let us see how.

### **Our Claim!**

Our understanding of Scripture is that Jesus died as a perfect man providing a "corresponding price" for father Adam. He died a substitutionary death for Adam. All who are in Adam, therefore, will be ransomed, released from the condemnation of death. It stands to reason that if Adam did not possess everlasting life (and he didn't because he died), then Christ's ransom sacrifice can restore to Adam and all men only what he lost before he sinned. Adam had an opportunity to live everlastingly if he obeyed God, but failing in this, he died. Christ's ransom sacrifice can only bring Adam, and all in him, another opportunity to attain everlasting life.

Two classes, the Church and the world, will be privileged to benefit from Christ's death. During the Gospel Age, the True Church receives justification to life and, upon "overcoming," will receive a heavenly reward. The world will be released from Adamic condemnation during the Millennium. Christ will be their Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5, 6). How can he mediate between God and man if he is God? A Mediator must always be a third party! When the world is nurtured back to human perfection and their reconciliation with God shall have been accomplished, they will then be delivered to God, the Father. When Christ's mediation is completed, then shall "The King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). The Mediator's work shall have been accomplished. See 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

Mankind, which had been driven from Eden, will return to an Edenic Paradise on earth. We have all that is required—the perfect man Christ Jesus as our Savior and tremendous results from two salvations—the Church now, and the world of mankind in Christ's kingdom here on earth. Therefore all men will be benefited from Christ's sacrifice. That is as it should be.



And in the final picture, the Divine Christ will be subject to the Father, with all "overcomers" of both the Gospel Age and the Millennium received back into favor with God (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). Then God will be all in all. What could be sweeter?

### **"Are You the Christ?"**

In Jesus' illegal trial at night, while Peter was still there, they asked Jesus—"Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am" (Mark 14:61, 62). If Jesus was truly the Absolute God, didn't Jesus owe them that information? The reason Jesus was crucified was because he was the "Christ, the Son of the Blessed." If Jesus proclaimed himself to be Absolute God, they would have had a perfect right to put him to death according to their understanding of the Mosaic Law: "You shall have no other Gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). Oddly, they crucified Jesus for claiming to be the "Son of God," exactly what he admitted being, while they themselves claimed, "We have one Father, even God" (John 8:41).

If the disciples believed Jesus was God, they would not have believed his death. How could they if they held any concept of his being God? God is eternal! Their immediate problem after his death was accepting the truth that God raised Jesus from the dead—Thomas being the last to believe. Later, they became witnesses to his resurrection, saying to the Jews, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead" (Acts 3:14, 15).

**"Christ who is above all, God for ever blessed! Amen."—The Jerusalem Bible**

The above quoted subhead is from Romans 9:5. Several interesting commentaries on this verse may be found in the literature. *A*

*Catholic Dictionary* states: "We have the strongest statement of Christ's divinity in St. Paul, and, indeed, in the N[ew] T[estament]." <sup>7</sup> But establishing Christ's divinity is not the same as establishing the Trinity. The King James reads, "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." No one would argue Jesus is not "God blessed." To argue that this statement makes him God the Father is pressuring this verse to say something more than it does.

*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* comments on this verse: "Even so, Christ would not be equated absolutely with God, but only described as being of divine nature, for the word *theos* [God] has no article. But this ascription of majesty does not occur anywhere else in Paul. The more probable explanation is that the statement is a doxology [praise] directed to God, stemming from Jewish tradition and adopted by Paul." <sup>8</sup> *A Catholic Dictionary* comments: "There is no reason in grammar or in the context which forbids us to translate 'God, who is over all, be blessed for ever, Amen.'" <sup>9</sup> *The Revised Standard Version* so renders it—"God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen." Hence, we see, there are rational thinkers who try to prevent the spread of hasty and unwarranted conclusions. Some Trinitarians are in constant and labored activity reading Trinity into verses so eagerly that it is needful for their fellow theologians to try to temper some of their excesses.

There is another strange fact of Trinitarian behavior. They seldom inform the laity of the host of criticisms and corrective evaluations from within the walls of religious academia. They vent most of their anger and frustration upon those who openly and honestly confess not believing the Trinity based on personal Bible study. They endeavor to malign these by calling them improper names or even failing to recognize such as Christians.

In Acts 11:26 we are told the disciples of Jesus were "called Christians first in Antioch." If this be so, how could they be called Christians who knew nothing of the theological Trinity which did not become defined until the fifth century? How is it that those who believe in the Father, the Son and the holy Spirit are not recognized as Christians today if they say they do not believe the "incomprehensible" Trinity? Perhaps the old desire to persecute and stigmatize those who differ still exists latently in the hearts of some. Insecurity can surely lead to unchristian behavior.

## Chapter II

### The Trinity Emerges Gradually

*"The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths." (2 Tim. 4:3, 4, NIV)*

After the Church lost the pristine vision which it held in the beginning, these last two creeds were formed. The Athanasian, or Trinitarian Creed, became the largest and most confusing creed of all. It became necessary for salvation to believe this creed—making this a threatening theological statement. Please notice the unitarian concept of God was a statement of belief without threatening overtones. Notice how the Creed becomes more foggy and "incomprehensible" as it endeavors to incorporate Trinity concepts. Additionally, as it swells to more than a statement of belief, it then threatens any not accepting this foggy concept with perishing "everlastingly."

When Jesus rendered his final report to his Father, it only required three words—"It is finished" (John 19:30). Nothing more needed to be said. Notice, however, when the one-talented, unfaithful servant rendered his report, it required 43 words, and he was just as much a failure after his explanation (Matt. 25:24, 25). The Unitarian Creed required only 115 words to make itself known; the Nicene Creed required 230 (twice as many words to make God and Christ one); and the Athanasian Creed required 702 words to explain the "incomprehensible" Trinity. If the number of words used proved the case, the latter is clearly the winner. But it is not by much speaking that we shall be heard.

*The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* states: "The word Trinity is not found in the Bible. . . . It did not find a place formally in the theology of the church till the fourth century. . . . Although Scripture does not give us a formulated doctrine of the Trinity, it contains all the elements out of which theology has constructed the doctrine."<sup>1</sup> That is partially correct. Theology indeed is responsible for constructing the doctrine. But we firmly believe that the "elements" of Scripture alluded to here were never intended to provide a framework for such a dogma.

The following is found in *The Book of Common Prayer* on **Three Creeds of the Church of England**:

#### **The Apostles' or Unitarian Creed**

Being the Creed of the first two Christian centuries.

"I believe in **God, the Father Almighty**, Maker of heaven and earth:

"And in Jesus Christ, his only son our Lord: who was conceived by the holy ghost (spirit), born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, he descended into hell (the grave); the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of **God, the Father Almighty**: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

"I believe in the holy ghost (spirit); the holy catholic (general) Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

#### **The Nicene, or Semi-trinitarian Creed:**

*Principally drawn up by the Council of Nice in A.D. 325, the clause concerning the Holy Ghost in brackets [ ] having been*

*affixed to it by the Council of Constantinople, in A.D. 381, except the words [and the son], which were afterwards introduced into it."*

"I believe in **One God, the Father Almighty**, Maker of heaven and earth; and of all things visible and invisible.

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; begotten of his Father before all worlds; God of (or from) **God**; Light of (or from) **Light**; Very God of (or from) **Very God**; begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven; and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin Mary; and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, he suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the **Father**: and he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

"And I believe in the Holy Ghost, [the Lord and Giver of life; who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the prophets].

"And I believe one catholic and apostolic church: I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins: and I look for the resurrection of the dead; and the life of the world to come. Amen."

### **The Athanasian, or Trinitarian Creed**

*Long ascribed to Athanasius, a theologian of the fourth century, but now generally allowed not to have been composed until the fifth century, by some other person.*

"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith; which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

"And the Catholic Faith is this: that we worship **One God in Trinity**, and **Trinity in Unity**; neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the **Father**, another of the **Son**, and another of the **Holy Ghost**. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost, the Father uncreate, the son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal; and yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty; and yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord; and yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say, There be 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 Ghost 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 Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore or after another, none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the **Unity in Trinity**, and the **Trinity in Unity**, is to be worshipped.

He, therefore, that will be saved, must thus think of the **Trinity**.

"Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly 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 be God and man, yet is he not two, but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of 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 sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead; at whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

*"The three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture."—Article VIII. of the Church of England: taken from the Book of Common Prayer. [In the Articles of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Article VIII. reads as follows:*



*"The Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Scripture." ]2*

## **Dual Natures**

Greek philosophy was a serious threat to the early Christian Church. Paul said, "Greeks seek wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:22, RSV). To counter this, Paul said, "I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:1, RSV). Apparently, there were those who did. Greek philosophy was kept out of the Bible, but not out of theology. As the church fathers strove for preeminence, they found the high-sounding wisdom of Greek philosophy a cutting edge for distinguishing themselves. When the religious debates spilled over before the Roman emperors, what better tool could be used than Hellenistic philosophy interwoven with Christian doctrine? Greek and Mid-eastern philosophies were pervasive, and when someone like Constantine listened to the controversy between Arius and Athanasius, the strong pagan influence was certain to have an effect.

Constantine had ostensibly converted to Christianity, and he intended to use the new religion to solidify the empire. Earlier he had raised a symbol of Christ seen in a vision ("P" fixed in the center of an "X"—the first two letters of "Christ" [ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ] in the Greek) as a new imperial standard and used it to gain victory in a key battle against pagan forces. He believed he had heard a voice from heaven saying, "In this sign conquer."3 If the symbol (also called a "Christogram") actually represented two gods, he might have thought it all the better. If Christ were really both man and God, flesh and spirit, that would be closer to Greek philosophy and the pagan trinity models. It would make the new religion all the more

attractive to the masses.

## The Nicaean Council

Quoting Bruce L. Shelley, a writer for *Christian History*, we read:

"The Council of Nicea, (was) summoned by Emperor Constantine and held in the imperial palace under his auspices. Constantine viewed the Arian teachings—that Jesus was a created being subordinate to God—as an ‘insignificant’ theological matter. But he wanted peace in the empire he had just united through force. When diplomatic letters failed to solve the dispute, he convened around 220 bishops, who met for two months to hammer out a universally acceptable definition of Jesus Christ.

"The expression *homo ousion*, ‘one substance,’ was probably introduced by Bishop Hosius of Cordova (in today’s Spain). Since he had great influence with Constantine, the imperial weight was thrown to that side of the scales. . . . As it turned out, however, Nicea alone settled little. For the next century the Nicene and the Arian views of Christ battled for supremacy. First Constantine and then his successors stepped in again and again to banish this churchman or exile that one. Control of church offices too often depended on control of the emperor’s favor."<sup>4</sup>

Why would anyone look to the fourth century for truth, particularly in view of our Lord’s great prophecy covering the period of his absence and return, saying, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matt. 24:4)? Without a doubt, this was where the Church had lost its way. It was shamelessly prostituted before the ambitious Roman emperor. It is important to know that while Constantine accepted Christianity and became the *Pontifex Maximus* of the Church, he also continued to function in all the pagan ceremonies, as paganism had deep roots in the Roman Empire and would not pass away

overnight. Julian succeeded Constantine to the throne, and he was a devout pagan, although a noble one. Rome became a melting pot of paganism and Christianity—not a good mix.

Wrong conclusions are easily reached about the Nicaean Council. It is easy to conjure up images of a united group of bishops with only two in dissent, endorsing wholeheartedly the Athanasian proposition uniting the Father and Son into two parts of one deity. Nothing could be further from the truth. We quote the following:

"They rejected the formulae of Arius, and declined to accept those of his opponents; that is to say, they were merely competent to establish negations, but lacked the capacity, as yet, to give their attitude of compromise a positive expression. . . . True, at Nicaea this majority eventually acquiesced in the ruling of the Alexandrians; yet this result was due, not to internal conviction, but partly to indifference, partly to the pressure of the imperial will—a fact which is mainly demonstrated by the subsequent history of the Arian conflicts. For if the Nicaean synod had arrived at its final decision by the conscientious agreement of all non-Arians, then the confession of faith there formulated might indeed have evoked the continued antagonism of the Arians, but must necessarily have been championed by all else. This, however, was not the case; in fact, the creed was assailed by those very bodies which had composed the *laissez-faire* centre at Nicaea; and we are compelled to the conclusion that, in this point the voting was no criterion of the inward convictions of the council. . . . For it was the proclamation of the Nicene Creed that first opened the eyes of many bishops to the significance of the problem there treated; and its explanation led the Church to force herself, by an arduous path of theological work, into compliance with those principles, enunciated at Nicaea, to which, in the year 325, she had pledged herself without genuine assent." [5](#)

This tells us, in effect, the body of bishops who voted for this Creed were not unanimously believers in it. Hence, the vote testified to weakness of character and the human tendency to get on the bandwagon for the sake of expediency. What else would make one vote for something not truly believed and which would later be assailed by them?

When the Nicean Council ended on August 25, 325 A.D., Emperor Constantine delayed the festivities of his twentieth anniversary until the close of this council. We quote the following:

"A magnificent entertainment was provided by that prince, 'for the ministers of God' . . . No one of the bishops was absent from the imperial banquet, which was more admirably conducted than can possibly be described. The guards and soldiers, disposed in a circle, were stationed at the entrance of the palace with drawn swords. The men of God passed through the midst of them without fear, and went into the most private apartments of the royal edifice. Some of them were then admitted to the table of the emperor, and others took the places assigned them on either side. It was a lively image of the kingdom of Christ(?), and appeared more like a dream than a reality."6

We cannot help but contrast this event with the occasion when Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of this world and their glory and then said, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:9, RSV). It seems the Devil had more success with these bishops than he did with our Lord. Yes, Constantine now had most of the bishops in his pocket, and from there we see the church merged with the kingdoms of this world, trying to make believe that this was the kingdom of God.

### **Pagan Models of Trinity**

The Trinity concept presented by Athanasius was essentially borrowed from other ancient religions. John Newton (*Origin of Triads and Trinities*) writes: "With the first glimpse of a distinct religion and worship among the most ancient races, we find them grouping their gods in triads." He then proceeds to trace the strong Trinitarian beliefs which were common in ancient India, Egypt, and Babylon as examples.

Regarding ancient India he states: "The threefold manifestations of the One Supreme Being as Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva was thus sung of by Kalidasa (55 B.C.):

"In these three persons the One God is shown,

Each first in place, each last, not one alone.

Of Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, each may be

First, second, third among the Blessed Three."

In speaking of ancient Egypt, Newton quotes Professor Sayce (*Gifford Lectures and Hibbert Lectures*) as follows: "The indebtedness of Christian theological theory to ancient Egyptian dogma is nowhere more striking than in the doctrine of the Trinity. The very same terms used of it by Christian theologians meet us again in the inscriptions and papyri of Egypt." Newton continues:

"And now we see some meaning in the strange phrases that have puzzled so many generations in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, such as 'Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten not Made, Being of one Substance with the Father.' These are all understandable enough if translated into the language of the Solar Trinity [worshipped in ancient Egypt], but without this clue to their meaning, they become sheer nonsense or contradictions. . . . The simplicity and symmetry of the old sun Trinities were utterly lost in

forming these new Christian Creeds on the old Pagan models. . . . The [pagan] trinities had all the prestige of a vast antiquity and universal adoption, and could not be ignored. The Gentile converts therefore eagerly accepted the Trinity compromise, and the Church baptized it. Now at length we know its origin."7

What a revelation—that portions of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds were plagiarized from pagan sources—word for word and exact phrases, lifted right off the papyri and inscriptions of ancient Egypt! Should this knowledge not leave a little chill among those subscribing to these creeds?

Edward Gibbon says, in his preface to *History of Christianity*: "If Paganism was conquered by Christianity, it is equally true that Christianity was corrupted by Paganism. The pure Deism of the first Christians . . . was changed, by the Church of Rome, into the incomprehensible dogma of the trinity. Many of the pagan tenets, invented by the Egyptians and idealized by Plato, were retained as being worthy of belief."8 Gibbon is an historian's historian. He would not speak so forthrightly without an enormous basis for his evaluations.

Commenting on the state of affairs in the early Church, H. G. Wells writes: "We shall see presently how, later on, all Christendom was torn by disputes about the Trinity. There is no clear evidence that the apostles of Jesus entertained that doctrine."9 The fact that the Trinity did not originate with the Apostles should be of grave concern to all Christians. The Church of England freely admits the Unitarian Creed was believed in the first two centuries. In view of all these facts, we cannot help but wonder why anyone would feel secure in accepting the doctrinal developments of the fourth and fifth centuries and forsake the pristine teachings of our Lord and the Apostles.

In Matthew 13:24, 25 we read: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men [the Apostles] slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." How can one leave the Apostolic Era to find truth without risking being contaminated and choked by "tares"? The "tares" sowed were the work of the enemy. The "tares" that sprouted and grew were results of false teachings that begat "tare" Christians. Hence, all Bible-believing Christians need to be aware of the risks involved in leaving the Apostolic Era of doctrinal purity and of coming under the influence of the "tare" seeds of error spread by the Adversary.

## Chapter III

### The Holy Spirit Misunderstood

*"When he [the truth-giving Spirit] comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak his own message—on his own authority—but he will tell whatever he hears [from the Father] . . . He will honor and glorify me, because he will draw upon what is mine and will reveal it to you." (John 16:13, 14, KJV and Amp.)*

Of the three components of the Trinity doctrine, the so-called holy Ghost (or Spirit) is certainly the least understood. The holy Spirit is assigned equality in relationship with the Father and the Son and is spoken of as "God the Holy Spirit." As such, it is necessary to conceive of this entity as a distinct person—the Third Person in the Trinity equation—with attendant powers and capabilities to distinguish it from the others. Yet such a concept is impossible to prove from the Scriptures and certainly was not held by early Christian believers for three hundred years after the death of Christ.

Jeremy Taylor has written: "That the Holy Ghost (Spirit) is God is nowhere said in Scripture; that Holy Ghost (Spirit) is to be invoked is nowhere commanded, nor any example of its being done recorded."<sup>1</sup> Well spoken. Who has a right to say what is not stated in Scripture? One clearly stated Scripture verse would have more weight than a mountain of theology. Until such a verse can be produced, Trinitarians have an impossible burden. An incantation of words and never-ending theology is no substitute for a weighty Bible text or a "thus saith the Lord."

#### **Biblical Designations of the Spirit**

In the Bible, there are various titles and definitions that are applied



to the holy Spirit. As these are carefully studied, it becomes evident that all of them describe characteristics that stem from God and Christ and do not necessitate an additional personality. Many are also reflected in the life of the Church. Note these examples.

*"The Spirit of God" (Matt. 3:16)*

*"The Spirit of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:11)*

*"The Spirit of Holiness" (Rom. 1:4)*

*"The Spirit of Truth" (John 14:17)*

*"The Spirit of a Sound Mind" (2 Tim. 1:7)*

*"The Holy Spirit of Promise" (Eph. 1:13)*

*"The Spirit of Meekness" (Gal. 6:1)*

*"The Spirit of Understanding" (Isa. 11:2)*

*"The Spirit of Wisdom" (Eph. 1:17)*

*"The Spirit of Glory" (1 Pet. 4:14)*

*"The Spirit of Counsel" (Isa. 11:2)*

*"The Spirit of Grace" (Heb. 10:29)*

*"The Spirit of Adoption" (Rom. 8:15)*

*"The Spirit of Prophecy" (Rev. 19:10)*

Even the most avid Trinitarian would find it necessary to define "Spirit" in most usages as an influence or power. Personhood of the Trinity just does not fit into these descriptions. So the Trinitarian must use two definitions when referring to "Spirit" in the Bible: one meaning the Third Person of the Trinity and the other as an influence or power. Unless the meaning is continually defined in each verse,

the reader is left uncertain as to what is meant.

There is another side to this matter which is very revealing. There is also an "unholy spirit" that is referred to frequently in the Scriptures. This spirit is described in opposite terms to that of the holy Spirit. Note the following:

*"The Spirit of Fear" (2 Tim. 1:7)*

*"The Spirit of Divination" (Acts 16:16)*

*"The Spirit of Bondage" (Rom. 8:15)*

*"The Spirit of Antichrist" (1 John 4:3)*

*"The Spirit of the World" (1 Cor. 2:12)*

*"The Spirit of Slumber" (Rom. 11:8)*

*"The Spirit of Error" (1 John 4:6)*

Would anyone propose to add personhood to these spirits or to suppose that these various designations, unitedly considered, prove there is another evil being apart from Satan, the adversary of God? Not very likely, because it is commonly recognized that these terms, which generally signify the wrong spirit, all have their chief exemplification in Satan. A separate personality is not required, nor are a host of personal spirits needed to justify the listings. We submit that for consistency a similar conclusion should be drawn in regard to the various references to the holy Spirit as well.

### **A Variety of Operations**

In Scriptural usage, various actions and operations of the holy Spirit are illustrated. Some were manifested from earliest times, such as in creation; others became evident in succeeding ages as God's plan of salvation unfolded. Yet all of them can be shown to emanate from

God Himself or from His Son Christ Jesus and do not require an additional personality.

Early in Genesis, this Spirit was evidenced in God's creative power, as He brought into existence the earth, the oceans teeming with life (Gen. 1:2), plants and animals, and finally man himself. In later times, the operation of God's Spirit expanded in various ways, especially as it was directed toward the Church. Believers in Christ were begotten of the Spirit as they entered their new consecrated life and were privileged to become the sons of God (John 3:3, 7; 1 John 5:4, 18). Other manifestations of the Spirit are seen in its thought-creating power (2 Pet. 1:21), its life-giving or quickening power (Rom. 8:11) and its transforming influence (1 Cor. 6:11). In none of these instances is a separate personality required to carry out these functions.

Other usages of the Spirit in Scripture are equally revealing. Joel 2:28 reads, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." This is a wonderful reference to that future day when God's Kingdom is fully established on earth and all mankind will have the opportunity of growing in the knowledge of God and His ways of righteousness. Does this mean that a person is to be poured out? If the Trinity is inseparable as an entity, does this mean that God and Christ and the holy Spirit are to be poured out on all flesh? Surely not! Such a usage helps us to grasp the correct meaning of the holy Spirit as the power or influence of God.

The believer is also admonished to be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). This is certainly commendable, and all of us should desire to have more and more of the Spirit that we may be drawn into a closer relationship with our Lord. But how could we be filled with another person? One might be filled with such qualities as wisdom and faith, but hardly with the Spirit if it were an actual person. Note

how the Scriptures treat all of these as qualities (not persons) and relate them to each other: "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost [Spirit] and wisdom . . . and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]" (Acts 6:3, 5). Joy is another quality with which the believer is to be filled, and it likewise is linked with the filling of the Spirit (Acts 13:52). To insist on the personality of the holy Spirit in these examples merely produces one paradox after another, all of which are wholly unreasonable and unnecessary in the light of Biblical truth.

We could also say that it is entirely proper to pray *for* the holy Spirit to operate in our lives (Luke 11:13), but not to pray *to* it! Never once in Scripture is an example given of someone praying to the holy Spirit, and never once is anyone urged to do so. Jesus taught clearly that prayer was to be directed to the Father in heaven, and he provided a model of such prayer for his disciples to follow. (See Luke 11:1-4.)

### **A Missing Factor in the Equation**

The efforts of Trinitarians to give personality to the holy Spirit has proved to be an extravagant and futile exercise. Most of their writings expend nearly all their energy in trying to prove that certain Bible texts equate God and Jesus. Very little can be found to defend the holy Spirit directly in their Trinity concept because it is nearly impossible to do.

By far, the one text most alluded to and thought to be a "Trinity fortress" was 1 John 5:7. However, even the most ardent Trinitarians must concede that the words "The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" are not truly the Word of God but are spurious—merely an interpolation. The Revised Version and all modern translations omit the verse, since it is not

contained in any Greek manuscript prior to the fifth century and is not quoted by any of the early Church fathers. Evidently it was added by an over-zealous scribe who thought the Trinity concept needed a substantial boost in the Scriptural record; but surely this attempt merely betrays the weakness of the argument.

Unless Trinity can be Scripturally established with all three persons in one entity—including the holy Spirit—the case simply sinks beneath the waves.

### **Use of the Personal Pronoun**

It is noted by some that there are abundant references in Scripture where the holy Spirit is referred to using the personal pronoun "he." Even our Lord Jesus, in alluding to the work of the holy Spirit, according to the King James Version, used these words: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that *he* may abide with you for ever. . . . But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost [Spirit], whom the Father will send in my name, *he* shall teach you all things" (John 14:16, 26, italics supplied by us). Does this not prove that the holy Spirit is a person? A study of the Greek text in this and other instances shows this not to be the case. Here the word for Comforter is *parakletos*, which in the Greek language is masculine in gender and, therefore, needs to be placed with a masculine pronoun for grammatical purposes only.

John 16:13 is another text which properly engages masculine pronouns to describe the holy Spirit. It reads: "Howbeit when *he*, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he* will guide you into all truth: for *he* shall not speak of *himself*; but whatsoever *he* shall hear, that shall *he* speak: and *he* will show you things to come" (italics supplied). Again, this gives the impression that the Spirit is a person, designated with "he" and "himself." But this is not the correct thought, for it is simply a follow-up of good Greek grammar

matching a masculine subject with equivalent pronouns. In again referring to the "comforter" or "helper" aspect of the Spirit, there was a consistency in using the masculine pronoun "he" rather than the neuter "it." This usage shows adherence to the rules of Greek grammar and provides no proof that the holy Spirit is a person.

On the other hand, when the word "spirit" is from the Greek *pneuma*, the grammatical application changes, and the neuter pronoun "it" is appropriately used. Whereas this rule is generally hidden by the translators, the Catholic *New American Bible* says, regarding John 14:17: "The Greek word for 'Spirit' is neuter, and while we use personal pronouns in English ('he,' 'his,' 'him'), most Greek MSS employ 'it'" (bold supplied). Note the following Scriptural examples where the Greek *pneuma* is used and is referred to by the neuter pronoun "it": John 1:32—"John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and *it* abode upon him." In Rom. 8:26 (if this passage is applied to the holy Spirit) —"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit *itself* maketh intercession for us."

Thus seen, the attempt to prove the "Spirit" is a person because masculine pronouns sometimes are used in referring to it is neither scholarly, consistent, nor honest.

### **Possible Personality Traits**

Finally, due to the wide-ranging applications of God's Spirit, there are some Bible texts that at first might be construed as endowing it with personality. The Spirit, for example, is portrayed as "speaking" in Heb. 3:7, and "bearing witness" in Heb. 10:15. Nonetheless, other Scriptures clarify the matter for us. Whereas the Spirit may be described in a loose sense as speaking, in reality it does this through actual persons, such as God or the believer. The warning against

provoking God through unbelief, which is ascribed to the holy Spirit in Heb. 3:7, is clearly shown in Ps. 95:6-11 to have been the voice of God originally raised as an expression of God's anger against the Israelites in their wilderness journey. Likewise, the lovely picture of the establishment of the New Covenant with the house of Israel, which is attributed to the witnessing of the holy Spirit in Heb. 10:15, is really shown to be a consequence of a direct "thus saith the Lord" in Jer. 31:31-33. Hence the holy Spirit has no personal voice of its own and must operate through other personalities, such as God, Christ and the believer.

An approach similar to this can be used in properly harmonizing other texts that in varying degree may appear to endow personhood to the Spirit. For example, compare "tempt the Spirit of the Lord" (Acts 5:9) with the clearer "tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7); and again, "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18) with the more understandable "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1 Cor. 3:16). It is only reasonable to expect that on a matter of such weighty consequence, bearing on the true nature and identity of the holy Spirit, the Scriptures themselves can be relied upon to furnish satisfying truth. And thus we actually perceive examples of God's Spirit at work, in so arranging the holy Scriptures and granting the needed guidance and help in properly understanding them, for which we are grateful.

### **Some Notable Admissions**

In summing up our case for the holy Spirit as the power or influence of God, we would like to quote from some Catholic authorities:

*A Catholic Dictionary*: "On the whole, the New Testament, like the Old, speaks of the spirit as a divine energy or power particularly in the heart of man."2

*The New Catholic Encyclopedia*: "The OT clearly does not envisage God's spirit as a person . . . God's spirit is simply God's power. If it is sometimes represented as being distinct from God, it is because the breath of Yahweh acts exteriorly. . . . The majority of NT texts reveal God's spirit as something, not someone; this is especially seen in the parallelism between the spirit and the power of God."3

*The Catholic Encyclopedia*: "Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find any clear indication of a Third Person."4

Catholic theologian Fortman: "The Jews never regarded the spirit as a person; nor is there any solid evidence that any Old Testament writer held this view. . . . The Holy Spirit is usually presented in the Synoptics [Gospels] and in Acts as a divine force or power."5

Placing these comments into the overall context of Catholic belief, we appreciate the sincerity of these admissions, while at the same time recognizing their acceptance of the Trinity doctrine, as based upon church authority and tradition. We quite agree that God's Spirit is "something, not someone." Our purpose in excerpting these quotations is to point out the candid admissions that are made in respect to the lack of Biblical evidence to support the personhood of the holy Spirit.



## Chapter IV

### Further Scriptural Harmony

*"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of God." (2 Tim. 2:16, NIV)*

#### God ('Elo-him') in Plural Form

The reasoning is presented that the Old Testament Hebrew word for God is often in plural form. To the Trinitarian mind, this is supposed to prove that God is a composite of three beings somehow congealed into one identity. It never had such a connotation to the Jewish writers of the Old Testament. They did not believe in a Trinity. It is an enigma to them that, after the fact, some Christians come along and prove the Trinity where none existed in the minds of the writers of the Old Testament. Trinity never was in their thinking, and therefore it was not in their ink quills.

Commenting on Gen. 1:1, where God is mentioned in the plural as '*elohim*,' Dr. Rotherham says: "It should be carefully observed that, although '*elohim*' is plural in form, yet when, as here, it is construed with a verb in the singular, it is naturally singular in sense; especially since the 'plural of quality' or 'excellence' abounds in Hebrew in cases where the reference is undeniably to something which must be understood in the singular."

Oxford scholar R. B. Girdlestone writes on this matter in his *Synonyms of the Old Testament*: "Many critics, however, of unimpeachable orthodoxy, think it wiser to rest where such divines as Cajetan [a theologian] in the Church of Rome and Calvin among Protestants were content to stand, and to take the plural form as a *plural of majesty*, and as indicating the greatness, the infinity, and

the incomprehensibility of the Deity."<sup>1</sup> The truth on this matter is clearly perceived by many scholars, but it is hard to restrain some hard-pressed Trinitarians from stretching the truth to prove the unprovable.

It should be mentioned also that the Hebrew "*elohim*" is used to describe pagan gods such as Dagon (1 Sam. 5:7) and Marduck (Dan. 1:2). These were singular gods. No one has claimed they were triune gods. Hence, it seems many Trinitarian scholars wince at excesses of their brethren. The higher ground for the Trinitarian is still that the Trinity is not understandable, nor explainable, and must simply be accepted as a theological mystery. This is especially difficult for fundamentalist Bible believers to accept. They find this an uncomfortable posture in which to be.

### **"Immanuel" and the "Mighty God"**

Isaiah 7:14 reads: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." We shall not enter the discussion as to whether this verse may have had a fulfillment other than to our Lord Jesus. Be that as it may, we have Matthew's application of this verse being fulfilled in Jesus' birth (Matt. 1:23). It is, therefore, on Apostolic authority, applied to our Lord, and that should be the end of all strife. However, when it came time to give our Lord a name, he was not called Immanuel, meaning "God with us," but Jesus, "Savior" (Matt. 1:25). Hence, the name is a title, very much as the Son of God or the Son of Man. If God was sending His only begotten Son to dwell with men, that surely would be a sign that God was with us, lifting up His countenance upon us and being gracious to us. Even today we use the expression, "God be with you." No more than this need be implied in Isaiah 7:14.

Isaiah 9:6 gives our Savior the title, "The mighty God." But the Jewish writers were not saying that the Messiah would literally be

Jehovah. If judges of Israel were called "gods," as in Ps. 82:1-7, what would be earthshaking about calling Jesus the "mighty God" (Hebrew, *'El Gib-bohr'*)? Notice, he is not called *'El Shad-dai'*, a term exclusively applied to Jehovah. Further, "God" in the Isaiah text is the Hebrew EL, defined by Dr. Strong as "strength; as adj[ective] mighty; espec[ially] the Almighty (but used also of any deity)." <sup>2</sup> The fact that the same word (EL) is used in Isa. 57:5 in describing idols shows indeed that it is a general term used to describe any mighty being and, hence, quite appropriately may be applied to our Savior, Jesus, in Isa. 9:6.

The following sources offer additional comments on Isa. 9:6 and Ps. 82:1-7: The Catholic Encyclopedia states: "Even these exalted titles did not lead the Jews to recognize that the Saviour to come was to be none other than God Himself." <sup>3</sup> And the *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, by McClintock and Strong, says: "Thus it appears that none of the passages cited from the Old Test[ament] in proof of the Trinity are conclusive. . . . We do not find in the Old Test[ament] clear or decided proof upon this subject." <sup>4</sup>

### **Scriptures with Groupings of Three Titles**

Some Bible texts mention three subjects in continuity and have been seized upon as proof of the Trinity. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 are found Spirit, Lord and God; 2 Corinthians 13:14 lists Christ, God and the Holy Ghost [Spirit]; Galatians 4:4-6 lists God, Son and Spirit of his Son; Ephesians 4:4-6 lists Spirit, Lord and God and 1 Peter 1:2 lists God, Spirit and Jesus Christ. If we were to accept such logic as proof of the Trinity, then we would be led to believe that Peter, James and John are a Trinity because they are listed together. (See Luke 9:28.) 1 Timothy 5:21 says: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels." Does

this make angels a part of the Trinity?

Then there is the great commission text, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]" (Matt. 28:19). However, sentiment is mounting that this text is a forgery. In every other instance where baptism is mentioned in the New Testament, it is shown to be in the name of Jesus. Further, many of the early Church fathers, in quoting this passage, leave out the Trinitarian formula and say simply "in my name"; that is, in the name of Jesus alone the baptism was to be carried out. In 1960, The British & Foreign Bible Society published a Greek Testament, and in Matt. 28:19 the phrase "in my name" is given as an alternative reading, with Eusebius cited as the early Church authority.

Let us note what some theologians have to say on this matter:

Dr. Adam Clark, a Trinitarian, in commenting on Matthew 28:19 as proof that the Father, Son and holy Spirit were three persons, says: "But this I can never believe.' I cannot help that—you shall not be persecuted by me for differing from my opinion. I cannot go over to you; I must abide by what I believe to be the meaning of the Scriptures." He then shows how the New Testament believers in Acts 2:38; 8:16 and 19:5 were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus alone.<sup>5</sup> Also, G. Kittel, in his *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, states forthrightly: "The N[ew] T[estament] does not actually speak of trinity. We seek this in vain in the triadic formulae of the NT."<sup>6</sup> Hence, there is such a thing as trying too hard to use Scriptures to infer meanings not intended, and some scholars refuse to do that.

### **"My Lord and My God"**

One verse often used in an attempt to prove the Trinity doctrine is

John 20:28. "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." First, let us notice Thomas did not mention the holy Spirit. He would have needed to do so for this verse to sustain any Trinity connotation. Failing in this, it becomes, at best, a stool with only two legs—not good to stand on. This verse reveals Thomas' happy response on finding his Master appearing before him. He was slow to believe in Jesus' resurrection, and it took this personal interchange with the Master to make a true believer out of him. He was the last of the Apostles to have been honored with a visit from the Master after his resurrection. This probably hurt his feelings to think that so many others had met with the resurrected Lord and he had not been so blessed.

Thomas resolved: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe [in his resurrection]" (John 20:25). Did Thomas believe that it was God the Father who was dead? Surely not. But if he believed Jesus was God, how could he believe that it was Jesus who was dead? Yet if anything at all is clear, it is that Thomas did believe Jesus was **dead** and was overjoyed to find him alive.

When Jesus offered to fulfill all the necessary conditions to make him believe his resurrection, Thomas cried out, "My [the] Lord and my [the] God" (John 20:28). God here is a translation of the Greek THEOS, which is defined by Dr. Young as "God, a god, object of worship."<sup>7</sup> It is a general term in the New Testament, used frequently to denote the Heavenly Father (such as in Matt. 27:46, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," and in many additional places). However, it is also used to depict other beings, whether good or bad. THEOS is used to describe Satan, "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), the saints, "gods, sons of the Most High" (John 10:34, 35, from Ps. 82:6, RSV), idols, or fabricated "gods

who will go before us" (Acts 7:40), and heathen gods, "the gods have come down to us in human form!" (Acts 14:11, 12). Hence, THEOS is quite general in its application in Scripture, and the fact that it is occasionally used of Jesus should not be taken as proof that he was God the Father. Such usage alone is not conclusive to warrant such a distinction.

The Jews had earlier accused Jesus of blasphemy because, being a man, he made himself "God"—but this was a false and exaggerated accusation against Jesus which he never is recorded as saying. Jesus' response was, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:34-36). Even to be called God was not earthshaking. Jesus pointed out that those to whom the Word of God came were called "gods." (The original early manuscripts were written with all capitals. Hence, translators must decide whether to capitalize or not.) But Jesus did clarify who he was. He said, "I am the Son of God."

Did Thomas now believe something different than Jesus claimed for himself? If those to whom the word of God came were called "gods," what would be extraordinary about Thomas calling Jesus "My Lord and my God"? Herod's voice was called "god's" voice, and Paul was called "god" (Acts 12:22; 28:6). This, undoubtedly, was a very emotional moment for Thomas and certainly not an attempt on his part to offer advanced theology. The fact that he says "the Lord" and "the God" seems appropriate to his emotional state wherein he accepts Jesus as his resurrected "the Lord" and "the God." His very Jewishness prohibits us from concluding he thought Jesus was "God the Father." He could not possibly have fused Jesus and God the Father into one. Jesus had been his "Lord" (or

"Master"), and now, believing his resurrection, he accepts him as his "God" (or "mighty one").

In addition to the foregoing, there is an alternative explanation that should be considered. This was an emotion-filled moment for Thomas, a moment about which he had spent much time in prayer to God. It may be that Thomas was merely crying out to God, his Father, "My Lord and my God" as an exclamation for answering his prayers. Today, people cry out "My God" in moments of overwhelming sorrow or joy. Jesus cried out, "My God, my God" on the cross. This may be what Thomas meant by his expression on this occasion. There is nothing to preclude this thought. One thing we know, his assertion did not include the holy Spirit, and therefore the Trinity cannot have been implied.

The Apostle John, who wrote his Gospel long years after Pentecost, likewise did not believe Jesus was God. John quotes Jesus' reminder to Mary, saying, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). Jesus had the same Father and God as Mary. Additionally, John sums up his lesson covering these momentous events, saying, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). The Apostle Thomas was a Jew who held to the view that the "Lord our God is one." To argue that he forsook his Jewish religious training at the moment in question and received Jesus as (the) God the Father is an unlikely scenario. John, who is aged and serene while writing his Gospel, summarizes this entire chapter saying, "Jesus is the Christ, the son of God." That's what he wanted us to believe—and that's what Thomas believed as well.

### **"In Three Days I Will Raise It Up"**

In John 2:19 we read: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will

raise it up." The argument is made that Jesus was God and that he raised himself from the dead. This is said in spite of the clear and oft repeated statement of Scripture that "God raised him from the dead." (Please see our Bible readings in Chapter VI.) The testimony of Scripture is so complete and overwhelming that God raised Jesus from the dead that there cannot be any shade of doubt about it.

Now let us examine some of our Lord's statements on this to see if they can be harmonized. In Matthew 17:22, 23, Jesus said, speaking of his approaching death: "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again." (See also Luke 9:22; Matt. 16:21.) The angels quoted our Lord's words to the women who witnessed his resurrection, saying: "Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee saying, the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words" (Luke 24:6-8). These verses fit in with the Bible testimony that God raised Jesus on the third day.

However, in John 2:19, Jesus said, in response to the Jews' request for a sign from him: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John quotes Jesus and then gives the proper understanding of Jesus' words. He says, "But he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2:21). Here the aged John is suggesting what Paul confirms: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12:12, 13, 27). Further insight is provided in 2 Cor. 4:14, which reads: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also **by** [with, through] Jesus, and shall present us with you." In John 6:44 we read a similar thought: "No



man can come to me, except the Father . . . draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." This shows that God's power would not be exercised independently but through Jesus in the resurrection of the Body of Christ.

Hence it is Jesus who will take an active role in raising his Church from the dead. John shows in 14:2, 3 when that will be. He says: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." So it is at Jesus' second advent that his faithful followers will be rewarded. Other Bible texts detail the timing of the Church's resurrection yet further. Peter declares that "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years" (2 Pet. 3:8). If we divide the time from man's creation into one-thousand year days, Jesus was crucified and resurrected on the fifth (thousand year) day. If he returns in three days to raise his body members, counting inclusively from the fifth day, we arrive at the seventh (thousand year) day, which is the grand Millennial Day of blessing.

Now let us examine John 2:19—"In three days I will raise it up"—from another standpoint. The disciples had come to regard Jesus' death and resurrection as a precursor of their own resurrection. They remembered his promise: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). Hence we read: "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (John 2:22). We must remember that before Pentecost, Jesus' disciples did not entertain a heavenly hope. The last thing they asked our risen Lord before he ascended was: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Subsequently, they came to realize they were to be a part of the body of Christ and that God would "raise up us also by Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:14). That is what they remembered Jesus' words to mean.

## Challenges of Interpretation

Some while back, a 31-page booklet entitled "*Should You Believe the Trinity?*" was circulated, which caused quite a stir in Trinitarian circles. Robert M. Bowman, Jr., rose to the occasion and wrote an entire book in reply entitled *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity*. His work enables one to see how a Trinitarian studies the Bible and how he comes to his conclusions. It demonstrates that an effort can be made to defend the Trinity and that Bible verses may be used in an endless array to justify said beliefs. Yet, despite a valiant overall effort, Mr. Bowman clearly falls short of the mark in at least one direction—and that is in clarifying the doctrine for us. After attempting at length to explain the unfathomable mystery of the Trinity, he finally admits in summary: "The choice is therefore between believing in the true God as he has revealed himself, mystery and all, or believing in a God who is relatively simple to understand but bears little resemblance to the true God. Trinitarians are willing to live with a God they can't fully comprehend."<sup>8</sup>

Most of his arguments pertain to Bible verses where God and Christ may be, with a little effort, fused into one Being. The hard part was in adding the holy Spirit to make Trinity complete. He says, to lay the foundation for his argument: "The Holy Spirit is nothing less than God himself. God is present everywhere, so he has no problem controlling his works. He needs no force outside himself to do his works, nor does he need to emanate some of his own energy to places far from his presence in order to 'be there.'"<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, he asserts God is "everywhere" without a Bible citation. One must suppose this is accepted in theology. However, our Lord Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). Jesus could have helped theology if he taught us to pray: "Our Father, which art everywhere," but he did not say this.

Such reasoning comes close to New Age theology which teaches that God is everywhere and in everything and if we identify with the earth, sun, water, etc., we become a part of God. The wise man said: "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Eccl. 5:2). When Moses wished to see God's glory, God caused a representation of Himself to pass before Moses. The restriction was that Moses would see God's "back parts" (Ex. 33:23). How could a God who is everywhere be represented by God's glory as it passed by? How long would it take for everywhere to pass before Moses? Also God is said to dwell in "light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. 6:16). If God is everywhere, he must also be in the dark holes of the universe. How could it be said: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5)?

If God is everywhere, then Jesus is everywhere and so also the holy Spirit. This raises a question in logic. In John 14:3, Jesus promises: "I will come again." How does someone who is everywhere come again to somewhere? Jesus also promised in John 15:26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you . . . he shall testify of me." How do you send someone who is everywhere? Why would you need to? How can everywhere be moved to somewhere?

Mr. Bowman asserts God "needs no force outside himself to do his works, nor does he need to emanate some of his energy to places." It is doubtful if many theologians would back such an extravagant assertion. This would seem to rule out any use of the holy Spirit as the mind, influence, power, etc., of God. For a case in point, God says: "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28). How could a God-person, who is everywhere, be poured out on "all flesh"? Logic and common sense require even Trinitarians to read certain verses with the same meaning as non-Trinitarians. That is the hard

part of arguing against the Trinity; it seems everyone defending it has some different ideas.

Greater minds than his have struggled to find the formula to merge three persons into one and have conceded that, after having done their best, their concepts were "incomprehensible." Mr. Bowman concludes the same, as we have observed: "Trinitarians are willing to live with a God they can't fully understand." The Trinity is a doctrine of inference—not of Biblical statement. We doubt that many theologians would support his position that it is unnecessary for the Spirit ever to be a power or influence or the mind of God. His position seems untenable here.

Finally, every Christian must realize that there is nothing they believe that cannot be assailed by someone somewhere. The Devil quoted the Bible trying to beguile our Lord. The Judaizing Jews quoted Scripture verses to bring Gentiles under the Law. Were they sincere? Probably, but misinformed. There is not a single doctrine believed by any Christian which is not assailed with vigor and even sometimes with forceful presentations. What do we do in such an event? We can close our mind to all discussion and retreat to our trenches. That is probably good if indeed our belief is well-founded in the Word. There definitely is a cloud over the Trinity which is very troubling to many, and we trust that such will be blessed by this presentation.

## Chapter V

### Confronting Gnostic Heresies

*"Turn away from godless philosophical discussions and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge[GNOSIS], which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith." (1 Tim. 6:20, NIV and NJB)*

When the Apostle John spoke of those who do not "abide in the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9), what false teaching was he refuting? We believe he was confronting a particular false teaching being advocated in his time and place. As mentioned earlier, the Trinity doctrine was not yet formulated, and John was not confronting it. It was not troubling the Church at that time. In Acts 15 the early Church did have a heated conference of elders and Apostles, but it addressed the issue of Gentiles coming into the Church and being pressured to keep the Jewish Law Covenant. The council ended with a very clearly-worded message: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost [Spirit], and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well" (Acts 15:28, 29).

Now, you would think if the Trinity was even faintly mentioned in Church teachings, it would need some clarification. Certainly, those of the Priesthood (Acts 6:7) who had become believers and who were trying to bring Gentiles under the Law would have raised eyebrows at any teaching beclouding the one-God concept of the Jewish Law. The leadership of the Church were all mainly Jews carried over from the Law arrangement. Yet not one word emerged about a tripersonal deity. How could the Trinity not have been mentioned in this conference, or in the Bible itself, if it was an

essential doctrine for Jews and Gentiles alike to believe?

John's Gospel, as well as his epistles, are believed to have been written toward the close of the first century. McClintock & Strong on "John," says:

"Ephesus and Patmos are the two places mentioned by early writers, and the weight of evidence seems to preponderate in favor of Ephesus. Irenaeus . . . states that John published his Gospel whilst he dwelt in Ephesus of Asia. Jerome . . . relates that John was in Asia . . . Theodore of Mopsuestia . . . relates that John was living at Ephesus when he was moved by his disciples to write his Gospel.

"The evidence in favor of Patmos comes from two anonymous writers. The author of the Synopsis of Scripture, printed in the works of Athanasius, states that the Gospel was dictated by John in Patmos, and published afterwards in Ephesus. . . . [Another] author . . . states that John was banished by Domitian to Patmos, where he wrote his Gospel."1

Quoting McClintock and Strong, on "John, First Epistle," we read:

"It has been conjectured by many interpreters, ancient and modern, that it was written at the same place as the Gospel. The more ancient tradition places the writing of the Gospel at Ephesus, and a less authentic report refers it to the island of Patmos . . . it was probably posterior to the Gospel, which seems to be referred to in 1 John 1:4. Some are of the opinion that the Epistle was an envelope or accompaniment to the Gospel, and that they were consequently written nearly simultaneously."2

These comments suggest John's writings were the writings of his old age. Having outlived the other Apostles, John could see the essential fabric of Christianity beginning to be subjected to intellectual Hellenistic philosophy and gnosticism. John was the last Apostolic

outpost defending the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). He was dearly loved by the brethren of that time, but not by all. "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not" (3 John 9). It is hard to believe anyone would not receive John in the Christian community. However, ambition and power-lust were running high, and hence even the beloved Apostle found himself put upon. This should make us wary of accepting beliefs not originating in Apostolic times.

### **Confessing Jesus Christ Is Come in the Flesh**

John, in his epistles, as well as in his gospel writings, was dealing with certain gnostic heresies that had started to trouble the early Church. In 1 John 4:3, we read: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist." What was John addressing here? For an answer we quote McClintock & Strong:

"Irenaeus says, 'Cerinthus taught that the world was not made by the supreme God, but by a certain power (Demiurge) separate from Him, and below Him, and ignorant of Him. Jesus he supposed not to be born of a virgin, but to be the son of Joseph and Mary, born altogether as other men are; but he excelled all men in virtue, knowledge, and wisdom. At His baptism, the Christ came down upon Him, from God who is over all, in the shape of a dove; and then He declared to the world the unknown Father, and wrought miracles. At the end, the Christ left Jesus, and Jesus suffered and rose again, but the Christ being spiritual, was impassible.'"<sup>3</sup>

This view presents Jesus as a mere man fathered by Joseph, who later became possessed by Christ at Jordan and deserted by Christ before Jesus was crucified. Hence, Christ did not come in the flesh, nor did he suffer in the flesh, but simply took possession of a man named Jesus from Jordan and left him before he was crucified.

Under this teaching, Christ neither suffered nor died. It was Jesus the man who suffered and died and was resurrected. This concept may have arisen from the practice of demons entering fleshly bodies to possess them, such as evidently was fairly commonplace in Jesus' day.

We refer again to McClintock & Strong on Cerinthus:

"The account of Irenaeus is that he [Cerinthus] appeared about the year 88, and was known to St. John, who wrote his Gospel in refutation of his errors. Irenaeus, on the authority of Polycarp, narrates that the Apostle John, when at Ephesus, going on a certain day to the bath, and finding Cerinthus within, fled from the building, saying 'Let us even be gone, lest the bath should fall to pieces, Cerinthus, that enemy of the truth, being within.'" [4](#)

This scrap of history would confirm John's unwillingness to have any interchange or contact with one who was introducing such mind-beguiling errors into the Churches. Yet, the point to be noted is that, even while the Apostle John still lived, various forms of gnostic errors affecting the nature of Christ were indeed infecting Christianity. What would happen when all the Apostles fell asleep? Surely, no one would logically expect truth to triumph.

Jesus taught—"While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way" (Matt. 13:24-30). What were the "tares" the enemy sowed? Errors or false teachings which would subvert true Christianity. Yes. Even before the Apostles fell asleep, the Devil was busy trying to infuse gnostic beliefs among the people of God. Paul confirms this, saying, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thess. 2:7). We must always remember, these false teachings were kept out of the Bible, but not out of the Church. What was to be a "wheat field" turned into a field of "tares," the planting of the Wicked One. The Parable of the Wheat and Tares



(Matt. 13:24-30) was given by the Master to foretell what would follow the death of the Apostles. For anyone to go to the fourth and fifth centuries to seek the truth is to ignore this clear warning of Jesus.

### **Docetae—Docetism**

Docetism appeared in the latter half of the second century. It was, in fact, only another form of gnosticism. McClintock & Strong, commenting on Docetae, say:

"In order to remove the author of all good from all contact with matter, which they conceived to be the same as evil, they called in the aid of Oriental philosophy in order to people the space between God and matter with a vast succession of superhuman beings as mediators between God and the world. These, emanating from the Deity, were called aeons; among these the highest rank was assigned to Christ. Here, however, they seem to have split. 'Many imagined that Jesus was a mere man, and maintained that the aeon Christ descended upon the man Jesus at his baptism, and left him immediately before his crucifixion, so that Christ was not, in fact, subjected to pain and death; while others held that the body, with which Christ appeared to be invested, was not really human and passable, but unsubstantial or etherial, or, at least immaterial: these last were called Docetae.' (*Waddington's History of the Church*, p. 74, 75). They denied the whole humanity of Christ, regarding it only as a deceptive show, a mere vision.

"Docetism was a most subtle element, which wrought variously before it had any discernible concentration in any leading men or sects, and it infused its unreal and fantastic leaven into various Gnostic sects, and other later ones which grew out of Gnosticism. It was a deep, natural, rationalistic, pseudo-spiritualistic, anti-incarnation element." [5](#)

The errors introduced by Cerinthus did not disappear, but infected the Church heavily in the second century. It was these errors that were leavening the lump, and to offset them, both truth and additional errors were used to put down these gnostic teachings. The hardest thing is to defend the truth without exaggerating matters. The Devil does not care which ditch one gets into, as long as one leaves the strait and narrow path of truth.

## **Gnosticism in the Church**

The early Christians did seek knowledge of spiritual things. Paul says some were given the "word of knowledge (*gnosis*) by the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:8). There was a proper knowledge that came to saints of that day, and then there were supposed superior knowledge and insights that were nothing more than heretical gnosticism. The Church was put upon by these claimants of superior knowledge. McClintock & Strong, on Gnosticism, say:

"The name Gnosticism has been applied to a variety of schools which had sometimes little in common except the assumption of a knowledge higher than that of ordinary believers. . . . They seldom pretended to demonstrate the principles on which their systems were founded by historical evidence or logical reasonings, since they rather boasted that these were discovered by the intuitional powers of more highly endowed minds, and that the materials thus obtained, whether through faith or divine revelation, were then worked up into ascientific form according to each one's natural power and culture. Their aim was to construct not merely a theory of redemption, but of the universe—a cosmogony. No subject was beyond their investigations. Whatever God could reveal to the finite intellect, they looked upon as within their range. What to others seemed only speculative ideas, were by them hypostatized or personified into real beings or historical facts. It was in this way that they constructed

systems of speculation on subjects entirely beyond the range of human knowledge, which startle us by their boldness and their apparent consciousness of reality."6

Most of the controversies of the early Church were Judaistic in nature, but evidence is found early on of heretical influences that affected the brotherhood. Quoting again from McClintock & Strong on Gnosticism:

"The heretical gnosis did not make its appearance with an uncovered head until after the death of the apostles, but . . . that it previously worked in secret. . . . While most of the heresies of that period were Judaistic, there was an obvious difference between those reprov'd in the Galatian churches and those noticed in the epistles to the Colossians and Timothy. The latter are treated much more mildly, and we readily perceive that they must have been much less developed and less subversive of the Christian system. They are expressly called (1 Tim. 6:20) a false *gnosis*, and were characterized by empty sounds without sense and subtle oppositions to the truth, a depreciation of the body, and a worship of angels (Col. 2:18, 23), and interminable genealogies and myths (1 Tim. 1:4). These seem more akin to Jewish than to heathen speculations, and imply not the completed Gnosticism of the second century, but the manifest germs of Docetic emanations and Gnostic dualism."7

It is easy to see how such forces at work within the early Church were like leaven that needed an incubation period before it "leavened the whole." While the leaven was rising, it induced a power struggle among the bishops, some for truth and some for error and, more often than not, a struggle for preeminence and power. To secure these, one needed some platform that played well and would seduce the largest numbers. Later, the seduction was directed toward the Emperor Constantine, for the imperial power

would make or break the bishops. Those who contended for the faith "once delivered unto the saints" became merely voices crying in the wilderness (Jude 3).

To believe that most Church leaders were the great preservers of the "faith once delivered to the saints" is to believe the unbelievable. The Great Wall of China was built to keep out invading enemy forces. However, the wall was breached three times within the first century of its construction—in each instance from within. Once we leave the Apostolic Era and the Word of God, it becomes stormy and treacherous.

### **What John Was Confronting**

The Apostle John, in his Gospel, was filling in details left out in other Gospel accounts as well as lightly addressing some subtle errors of that era. In John 1:1-18, we find John refuting gnostic heresies. He shows that Jesus was a spirit who was "with God" and who subsequently **became** flesh. He says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (vs. 14). This is a plain statement of fact. Jesus was "made flesh." He did not possess another's body or form, but he was, in fact, "flesh." Neither was he a mixture of natures—spirit and flesh. He was "flesh." Peter confirms this truth, saying, "Being put to death indeed in flesh, but made alive in spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18, *Rotherham*). The gnostic teaching that Christ was a composite of spirit and flesh did finally emerge. But the Bible is quite clear that Jesus was made "flesh." It does not say he assumed a fleshly body and then left it. He died on the cross and was raised from the dead by God on the third day (Matt. 28:7; Acts 2:31, 32).

John 1:18 reads, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten son [some authorities read God], which is in the bosom of

the Father, he hath declared him." Men did see Jesus. No man has ever seen God, nor can they and live. Jesus, then, is the revealer of God, the one through whom we may know the Father.

What did John mean when he said: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9)? Why didn't he add: "hath the Father and the Son and the holy Spirit"? Obviously, John was not dealing with any part of the Trinity when he wrote these words. He was meeting the errors of Cerinthus and gnosticism, which were beginning to surface in that very early era when the Apostles still lived. He was endeavoring to prevent Cerinthus and his deceived followers from bewitching the Church with their Satan-inspired, beguiling errors.

The battle did not cease after the Apostles fell asleep. The Church of God became infested with philosophy, gnostic dualisms, docetic emanations, etc. The stage was being set for the dualism of God and Christ to be fused into one substance, composed of spirit and flesh simultaneously. Because these earliest errors had to do with the nature of Jesus Christ in human flesh and his relationship to God, it became increasingly difficult to separate fact from fancy. A thick cloud of confusion settled upon Christians. As a result, theologians left the simplicity of the unitarian God of the first century and fused Jesus and God into one Being in the fourth century.

At last in the fifth century, the Trinity was born even while the Christian Church began its descent toward the Dark Ages. If at least we could see the Church moving toward more brotherly love and kindness after the Trinity concept took root, we could sense that something good had emerged. But such was not the case. The picture that emerges is of a Church steeped in worldliness, pomp and ceremony, leaving the purity and simplicity of its early faith far

behind. Even worse are centuries filled with bloodletting and ruthlessness that followed, with the Church bent on world conquest. All contrary religious thought was stifled as the Church grasped for total world-control.

## **Hellenistic Influences in the Church**

Hans Kung writes:

"If we take the New Testament as a criterion, we cannot deny that the Council of Nicaea certainly maintained the New Testament message and did not Hellenize it totally. But it is equally beyond dispute that the council remained utterly imprisoned in Hellenistic concepts, notions and thought-models which would have been completely alien to the Jew Jesus of Nazareth and the earliest community. Here in particular the shift from the Jewish Christian apocalyptic paradigm [beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community] to the early church Hellenistic paradigm had a massive effect."<sup>8</sup>

There is little doubt that after the Hellenization of the Church, it would have been unrecognizable to early Jewish Christians.

When the Church became Hellenized, it became a tool for Constantine. Hans Kung says:

"He not only convened the ecumenical council but directed it through a bishop whom he had commissioned, with the assistance of imperial commissioners; he adjourned it and concluded it; by his decision the resolutions of the council became imperial laws. Constantine used this first council not least to adapt the church organization to the state organization. . . . It was now clear to Constantine, the political strategist, that the imperial church needed more than just the more or less varied confessions of faith of the individual local or provincial churches. It needed a uniform

‘ecumenical creed,’ and this was to be the church law and imperial law for all the churches. He believed that only in this way could he ensure the unity of the empire under the slogan ‘one God—one emperor—one kingdom—one church—one faith.’<sup>9</sup>

While Constantine was using the Church for his own political agenda, it must be remembered that, although confessing to be a Christian, he was actually a ruthless opportunist. He still presided at all pagan festivities, commissioned many of the new Churches to be adorned with pagan artwork, and was responsible for murdering members of his own family. In 326 A.D., long after his "conversion," he had his wife, Fausta, and his eldest son, Crispus, put to death. When convinced that his own death was near, he received baptism from Eusebius of Nicomedia, in 337 A.D. He had delayed baptism to the end, since he felt he could not avoid committing "mortal" sin during his lifetime, and such sin after baptism was considered to be unforgivable.<sup>10</sup> This was the man who forced his will upon the Nicene Council, dictated the wording of its creed, and thereby directed the doctrinal course of the Church for centuries to come. But is this the kind of man to whom we should be entrusting our most sacred beliefs?

Hans Kung makes another observation:

"Nor did Paul want to replace Jewish belief in one God with a Christian belief in two Gods. Rather, he always regarded the Jesus who had been exalted by God's spirit to God as subordinate to this one God and Father: as the Messiah, Christ, image, Son, of the one God. So his christocentricity remains grounded in and culminates in a theocentricity: 'from God through Jesus Christ'—'through Jesus Christ to God.' To this degree Paul's christology is directly compatible with Jewish monotheism."<sup>11</sup>

We realize, too, that Paul was not opposed by his Judaizing Jewish

brethren because of his presentations of God. It was his opposition to bringing Gentile Christians under bondage to the Law arrangement that incurred their ire.

We quote again from Hans Kung:

"We should note that whereas the Council of Nicaea in 325 spoke of a single substance or hypostasis in God, the starting point in the 381 Council of Constantinople was three hypostases: Father, Son and Spirit. There has been much discussion in the history of dogma as to whether the transition from a one-hypostasis theology to a three-hypostasis theology is only a terminological change or—more probably (as the temporary schism in Antioch between old and new orthodox shows)—also involved an actual change in the conceptual model. At all events it is certain that we can speak of a dogma of the Trinity only after the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople."[12](#)

There is little doubt when Trinity became a Church dogma. For those willing to accept the Council of Constantinople as the basis of their faith, we wish them well, but our conviction is that Christians should be free to believe only what was taught by the Apostles.

### **Trinity a Recognized Stumbling Block**

When the Church united with the Roman powers, it seemed certain that the conquest of the world lay before it. Rome was the leading power of the world, and the Church was able to march under two banners—Christ and Rome. It was seemingly invincible. Why did it fail? Hans Kung says:

"A main cause of the failure of Christianity seems to have lain in the inadequate foundation of the dogmas of christology and the Trinity. The Catholic theologian Hermann Stieglecker, who gives an admirable account of the theological controversies between



Christians and Muslims in his book on *The Doctrines of Islam*, rightly regards this lack as one of the most serious causes of the collapse of Christianity, particularly in its homelands, in the Near East and North Africa. It was in fact simpler to believe in the One God and Muhammad, the Prophet after Jesus. In addition, however, there were also the lamentable internal divisions within Christianity."[13](#)

Christianity was born in the Middle East, and for the churches to have lost that whole area is most painful to them. While a few churches are now tolerated there, what hope is there in regaining what the Muslims have taken? The Trinity, which seemed a popular route to take in conquest of the world, has turned out instead to be a great impediment. That is why Hans Kung and a host of men like him are trying to break out from this "incomprehensible" Trinity concept. No matter how it is explained, no matter how it is qualified, no matter how it is propped up, its inherent weakness remains—it is unreasonable and consequently incomprehensible.

### **An Overview of the Controversies Concerning Christ**

Let no one come away thinking that only two views of Christ have existed. The controversies were many. We quote from *Christian History*:[14](#)

#### ***Those Believing Jesus Was Either Divine or Human***

**"Docetists, e.g., Gnostics:** The divine Christ would never stoop to touch flesh, which is evil. Jesus only seemed (*dokeo*, in Greek) human and only appeared to die, for God cannot die. Or, in other versions, "Christ" left "Jesus" before the Crucifixion.

**"Apollinarians:** Jesus is not equally human and divine but one person with one nature. In Jesus' human flesh resided a divine mind and will (he didn't have a human mind or spirit), and his divinity

controlled or sanctified his humanity.

**"Modalists, a.k.a. Sabellians:** God's names (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) change with his roles or 'modes of being' (like a chameleon). When God is the Son, he is not the Father. There is no permanent distinction between the three 'persons' of the Trinity, otherwise you have three gods."

### ***Those Believing Christ May Be Special, But Not Divine***

**"Ebionites:** For these conservative Jewish Christians, God is one, and Jesus must be understood in Old Testament categories. Jesus was merely a specially blessed prophet.

**"Adoptionists, a.k.a., dynamic monarchianists:** No denying Jesus was special, but what happened is this: at birth (not conception) or baptism, God 'adopted' the human Jesus as his special son and gave him an extra measure of divine power (dynamis, in Greek).

**"Arians:** The Son as Word, Logos, was created by God before time. He is not eternal or perfect like God, though he was God's agent in creating everything else."

### ***Those Believing Christ Has One Nature***

**"Monophysites, e.g., Eutychians:** Jesus cannot have two natures; his divinity swallowed up his humanity 'like a drop of wine in the sea.'

### ***Those Believing Christ Was Two Persons***

**"Nestorians:** If you dismiss Jesus' humanity like that, he cannot be the Savior of humankind. Better to say he has two natures and also two persons: the divine Christ and the human Christ lived together in Jesus."

## *The Orthodox View: (The Majority View, Right or Wrong)*

**"Trinitarians:** Jesus is fully human and fully divine, having two natures in one person—'without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.'"

Every inquirer for truth should know how widespread, divisive and confusing these controversies were before the Trinitarians were able to crush the opposition, taking over schools of learning much as evolutionists have done in our day. The law at work here might be likened to that of the Wild West, where the man with the fastest draw became the established authority. History records that the Church "was racked by feuding, recriminations, and downright treachery. . . . Bishops turned against one another, often mounting intricate intrigues to promote their theological viewpoints. To win the day, or just to survive, churchmen needed both a theologian's wisdom and a politician's savvy."[15](#)

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria and called a saint by his followers, is an outstanding example of a Trinitarian leader noted for his strong stand against Arianism. But consider the kind of man he was—ruthlessly and tenaciously opposing Arius, the kindly, intelligent and popular presbyter in Alexandria, who courageously defended the early Church view of Jesus as the only begotten Son of God. Athanasius, in contrast, staunchly upheld the Nicene Creed, "was incapable of compromise, and believed that anyone who disagreed with him was not only wrong but also evil." He was harsh and acrimonious in manner and was known for being "autocratic in his dealings with dissenters in his church." He was variously accused of employing black magic, attempting to levy improper taxes for priestly vestures, and even of rape and murder. Called before a full ecclesiastical council at Tyre in 335, just ten years after Nicea, he was deposed as bishop and thereafter was exiled no less than five

times. Yet, despite all this, he is considered one of the Fathers of the Church—solely because of upholding the "faith of Nicea."[16](#)

It is also common knowledge that the victor in the kind of strife that occurred here is the one who controls the history of the period. The evidence for the opposing view is methodically squelched or distorted. In this instance, an effort was made to give the impression that Trinity was the accepted Christian belief from the very beginning of the Church, rather than the labored product of centuries of theological squabble and fusion with pagan beliefs.

In retrospect, it seems odd that the one view which seems least understandable, and the least logical, would be the one that claims orthodoxy today. And yet we must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by what the Apostle Paul termed "the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge [Greek, GNOSIS], for by professing it, some have missed the mark as regards the faith" (1 Tim. 6:20, 21, RSV). What a hollow victory for Trinity to have carried the day with such an incomprehensible and mysterious teaching.

Finally, when we turn to artwork, we find that artists created other heresies when they tried to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity. Medieval art depicted God with three faces and one body, which really is modalism, which denies differences between the Father, Son and holy Spirit. Another medieval Hungarian portrait showed God on a throne with the holy Spirit as a dove resting upon Jesus, who is portrayed as a man. This shows God as three separate beings. Alas, nothing seems able to describe this mystery adequately, even in artwork! Yet Jesus confidently taught us, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4:11). And the Apostle Paul said, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the

world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew . . . but God hath revealed . . . unto us by his Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:7-10).

## Chapter VI

### Readings From the Inspired Word of God

*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for rebuking error, for correcting faults, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17, KJV and TEV)*

The following Scriptural references are a compilation of numerous Biblical texts which state Jesus was the SON of God—not God Himself. The fervent prayer is offered that this study will be a valuable aid to those seeking to know the true identity of our Lord and Master, Christ Jesus. Weigh the evidence with Bible in hand and a prayerful honest heart. By the Lord's grace, you may come to see the facts long hidden by controlled theology. We are no longer a "voice crying in the wilderness" on the "doctrine of Christ." Many voices are now being raised together with clear Bible readings to depict the harmony of the Bible on the nature of the man Christ Jesus.

Please notice that the verses cited also contain typical Trinitarian "proof" scriptures, as well as those of our own persuasion. Most of the quotations are self-explanatory when one realizes the simple truth, that Jesus was God's only begotten son—a Lord and a god—above all angels, who sits at the right hand of God. This should become obvious as one objectively reads the presentations below in their entirety.

Italicized words indicate the author's emphasis to help the reader "key in" on the main points. Sometimes a brief comment is supplied to emphasize the scriptural point of logic. "A good honest heart" is the prerequisite of every true Christian. (See Luke 8:15, RSV.) In

Jesus' time, many did not follow their hearts, because they asked, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" (John 7:48). Of yet another class we read, "Many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42, 43). We must be honest to God and to our own hearts be true.

**All the citations are from the King James Bible.**

**Exodus 33:20** "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: *for there shall no man see me*, and live." (Many saw Jesus' face and lived; therefore, how could Jesus be God?) Compare John 5:36.

**Psalms 110:1** "The Lord [Yahweh or Jehovah] *said unto my [David's] Lord, Sit thou at my right hand*, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (We note here that the instructions were given by the Father [Jehovah] to the Son [David's Lord]; this order is never reversed in Scripture, with the Father always preeminent. See p. 7 for comments on Matt. 22:42-43, wherein Jesus discourses with the Jews on the meaning of Ps. 110:1.)

**Proverbs 8:22-30** "The Lord possessed [created, see *Strong's*] me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, *I was there*: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

*then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."* See Rev. 3:14.

**Isaiah 9:6** "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God [*El, Strong's, #410, 'strength, mighty, Almighty,'* applicable 'to any deity'], The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Christ is appropriately called "Father" from the standpoint of his becoming the second Adam—lifegiver to the race—and "source of eternal salvation" (1 Cor. 15:47; Heb. 5:9). Christ is no longer a branch (receiver) but the "root" (giver of life) in the regeneration (Rev. 22:16; Matt. 19:28).

**Isaiah 42:8** "I am the Lord: that is my name: and *my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*" (God does not give His glory to another. In contrast, Jesus invites the saints to share his glory as a bride.) See Romans 6:3-6; 8:17, 18; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2.

**Dan. 7:13** "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one *like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*"

**Matt. 3:17** "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" (We note that it was the Father, speaking from heaven, who indicated His good pleasure in His Son upon the earth. Jesus always strove to be pleasing to his Father, to carry out His will, and to receive His commendation and approval. The Scriptures never reverse this relationship, always giving the Father the preeminence.)

**Matt. 4:1** "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness *to be tempted* of the devil." (James 1:13 states "God cannot be



tempted!") See Luke 4:1, 2, 13.

**Matt. 10:40** "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

**Matt. 16:16** "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, *the Son* of the living God."

**Matt 17:5** "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a *voice out of the cloud*, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

**Matt. 18:10** "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always *behold the face of my Father* which is in heaven."

**Matt. 20:23** "And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup . . . but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, *is not mine to give* but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." (Jesus lacked authority in this matter.)

**Matt. 24:36** "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, *but my Father only.*" (This demonstrates that God and Jesus are not equal in knowledge!) See also John 7:16; 12:50; 17:8.

**Matt. 26:39** "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless *not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" (This verse implies Jesus had one will and his Father had another. Two different wills imply two different beings!) See also Matt. 26:42; John 5:19-22.

**Matt. 27:46** "Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, La-ma sa-bach-tha-ni? that is to say, *My God, my God, why hast thou*

*forsaken me?"* (If Jesus were God . . . *had he forsaken himself?* Is this logical? Clearly, Jesus was speaking to another being, his Father.)

**Matt. 28:18** "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is *given unto me* in heaven and in earth." (Jesus was given power not previously possessed.)

**Mark 1:24** "What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, *the Holy One of God.*" (The unclean spirit knew Jesus was not God but rather the Holy One of God.)

**Mark 10:18** "And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is 'God.'" (Jesus here refuses to be considered coequal with God.)

**Mark 12:36** "For David himself said by the Holy Ghost [Spirit], The Lord [Jehovah] *said to my [David's] Lord*, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Hebrews 1:13 identifies the Lord Jesus as the one who sits on the right hand of the Lord God.)

**Luke 2:52** "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (How and *why* should Jesus increase in favor with himself?)

**John 1:18** "No man hath seen God at any time; *the only begotten Son* [many manuscripts read "only begotten God"], which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

**John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that *he gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (The following verses confirm that *Jesus* died for our sins! Rom. 5:10; Romans 14:9; Acts 3:15; Col. 1:15,

18; Rev. 1:5, 18; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 4:9, 14; Rev. 5:9)

**John 3:34, 35** "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*"

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

**John 5:30** "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because *I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*" (Jesus was seeking another being's will—not his own!)

**John 5:37** "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. *Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.*"

**John 6:38** "For I came down from heaven, *not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*" (Two wills—two beings.)

**John 7:16-18** "*My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.* If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, *whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."

**John 8:17-19** "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, *and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.* Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, *Ye neither know me, nor my Father:* if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." (Note there was no third witness—only the Father and the Son. Jesus omits the holy Spirit. Why?)

**John 8:42-44** "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye

would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; *neither came I of myself*, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

**John 10:29** "My Father, which gave them me, *is greater than all*; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. (Note John 17:21, 22.) Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, *Ye are gods*? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because *I said, I am the Son of God*?" (This would have been the perfect place to state that he was, indeed, God the Father.)

**John 14:1** "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." (An unnecessary injunction for those who believe in the Trinity.)

**John 14:20** "At that day ye shall know that *I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you*." (Would this make Jesus' disciples a part of the Trinity? Shown here is the oneness of the family of God—not a oneness of person, but oneness of purpose and will.) Compare John 17:21-22.

**John 14:28** "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: *for my Father is greater than I*." (How can the Father be greater than Jesus, if Jesus and his Father are equal? Admittedly, some Trinitarians recognize Christ was inferior in

flesh. Even so, then his sacrifice on the cross was less than God. How could Jesus in flesh be "co-equal" with God?) See 1 Cor. 3:23; 11:3.

**John 17:3** "And this is life eternal, *that they might know thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ, *whom thou hast sent.*"

**John 17:11** "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one, as we are.*" (If Christ's true followers are to be "one" as are God and Jesus, could that oneness be anything more than "oneness" of purpose and will? Could we be a part of the Trinity? See also John 17:21-23.)

**John 20:17** "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to *my brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." (Jesus had a God and brethren. God has no God and no brethren!) See Eph. 1:17; Rev. 3:12; Mark 15:34; 1 Cor. 15:24 (*Rotherham's*).

**Acts 3:15** "And killed the Prince of life, *whom God hath raised from the dead*; whereof we are witnesses." (Isn't it logical to conclude the one that was dead is separate from the One who raised him from the dead?) See 1 Cor. 15:12-21; Acts 2:24; 5:30; 7:56; 13:34 and Col. 2:12.

**Acts 7:55, 56** "But he [Stephen], being full of the Holy Ghost [Spirit], looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (God and Jesus are twice depicted separately. Stephen was "full of the Holy Spirit" but did not see the holy Spirit. God and

Jesus were not everywhere either, but Jesus was "standing on the right hand of God" in heaven.)

**Acts 12:22** "And the people gave a shout, saying, *It is the voice of a god [theos]*, and not of a man." (King Herod was referred to as "[a] god"—"a" is supplied by translators and is not in the text. This is the same Greek word for god [theos] which in other places is used of Christ. It is defined as "gods, objects of worship, judges," and is used variously to depict Jehovah, Satan, the saints, and idols, as well as Christ.) See also Acts 28:6—in reference to Paul.

**Acts 20:28** "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost [Spirit] hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, *which he hath purchased with his own blood.*" (God is a Spirit and Spirits do not have flesh and blood [Luke 24:39]. *Rotherham* reads: "With the blood of his own [son]"; *Revised Standard Version*, footnote: "With the blood of his own son"; *Barclay*: "At the price of the blood of his own One.") See also *Marshall's Diaglott* and *Concordant*.

**Rom. 8:11** "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." See Rom 4:24; 7:4.

**Rom. 8:17** "And if children, *then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.*" (Could Christ be his own heir? How, then, could we be joint-heirs with him?)

**Rom. 8:29** "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be *the firstborn* among many brethren."

**Rom. 10:9** "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that *God hath raised him*

*from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

**1 Cor. 8:5, 6** "For though there be that are *called gods*, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be *gods many*, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, *of whom* are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom* are all things, and we by him." (All things are OF the Father and BY the son. Jesus is the agent of God.) Compare Heb. 1:1, 2; John 1:2, 3; Col. 1:16, 17; Gen. 1:26.

**1 Cor. 11:3** "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.*" (God, Christ, man and woman are all separate entities.)

**1 Cor. 15:27, 28** "For he [God] hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he [God] is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, *then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [God] that put all things under him*, that God may be all in all." (These verses distinguish two separate beings: namely, the Father and His son. How could God place all things under His feet to subdue all things, and then later become subject to Himself? This defies reason.)

**Eph. 1:20-22** "Which he wrought in Christ, when *he raised him from the dead*, and set him at *his own right hand* in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: *and hath put all things under his feet*, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church."

**Eph. 3:9, 10** "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in

God, *who created all things by Jesus Christ*: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (If Jesus was God incarnate, what possible reason would God have had to create all things from the beginning of time by Jesus Christ?)

**Eph. 4:6** "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, *and in you all*." (One God and Father of "all"—the "all" includes Jesus.)

**Philip. 2:5, 6** "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (*Revised Standard Version*: "Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped." Can anyone try to be equal with himself? Rather, Jesus did not strive by vainglory to grasp God's preeminence.)

**Philip. 2:8** "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and *became obedient* unto death." (If Jesus were God, who would God have to become obedient to? No one! Therefore, this must be another entity, namely, his only begotten Son, clearly distinguishable from the Heavenly Father.)

**Col. 1:13-17** "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, *the first born* of every creature: *for by him were all things created*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: *all things were created by him, and for him*: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

**1 Tim. 2:5-6** "For there is one God, and one *mediator* between



God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself *a ransom for all*, to be testified in due time." (A mediator is one who endeavors to reconcile two opposing parties. Could Christ be God and still mediate between God and men? Ransom here means a "corresponding price." How could a God-man be the exact equivalent of the perfect man Adam?)

**1 Tim. 3:16** "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God [*hos*, who] was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (Nearly all ancient MSS, and all the versions have "*He who*," [referring to Christ] instead of "God," in this passage. Sir Isaac Newton wrote a paper stating that this verse is a false reading. The *Concordant Bible*, p.18: "In the Sinaitic there can be no doubt that it originally read 'who.' A late corrector has added 'God' above the line.")

**Heb. 1:2-5** "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, *whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds*; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; *being made so much better than the angels*, as he hath *by inheritance* obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?*" (If Jesus was God, how could he have "by inheritance obtain[ed] a more excellent name?" Clearly, one does not inherit that which he already possesses!)

**Heb. 1:8, 9** "But unto the Son he [the Father] saith, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the*

*sceptre of thy kingdom.* Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy [Jesus'] God, *hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*" (What "fellows" was Jesus anointed above? Two Gods are involved here—the greater, Yahweh, anointing the lesser, Jesus. This exaltation of Jesus takes place after he demonstrates he "loved righteousness" and "hated iniquity." No one contests that Jesus is a God. Remember, the greater always anoints the lesser, as is here demonstrated.)

**Heb. 2:10** "For it became him, *for whom are all things, and by whom are all things,* in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (God the Father has always been perfect and did not require the experience of suffering to crystallize His character. Jesus, by way of contrast, did require this development.)

**Heb. 5:7, 8** "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, *yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered.*" (Again, Father vs. Son, clear-cut distinctions are very evident. The Father did not need to learn obedience; His Son did. In his distress, Jesus prayed to his Father for strength and grace; it is never the other way around.)

**Heb. 9:14** "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit *offered himself without spot to God,* purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (If Christ was God incarnate, is it reasonable that he should offer himself to himself?)

**Heb. 9:24** "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now *to appear in the presence of God for us.*" (Jesus functions as our

Advocate before the Father.)

**Heb. 11:17-19** "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it is said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: *accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*" (In this scenario, Abraham was a type of God, and Isaac represented Christ. Abraham thus pictured God's willingness to sacrifice His Son, Christ, to provide the ransom (John 3:16). Just as in the figure Isaac was not Abraham, so Christ must be distinguished from God as a separate being.) See Gal. 3:29; 4:28.

**James 1:13** "Let no man say when he is tempted, *I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.*" (If Jesus was tempted, as in Matthew 4:1, and God cannot be tempted, clearly they must be two distinct and separate entities.)

**1 Pet. 1:19-21** "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in *God, that raised him up from the dead,* and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

**2 Pet. 1:17** "For *he received from God the Father* honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, *This is my beloved Son,* in whom I am well pleased." (Whose voice was this? Was God pleased with Himself or His Son?)

**1 John 3:1** "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called *the sons* of God: therefore the

world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." (We are sons of God, NOT the sons of Jesus. Note carefully this distinction. We are brothers of Jesus, NOT of God. The Church is never referred to as God's brethren! Hebrews 2:11, 12; Romans 8:29).

**1 John 4:2, 3** "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come *in the flesh is of God*: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." (Could Christ in the flesh be half-human and half-divine? This is what Cerinthus, a heretical teacher in the early Church, taught! Does the Trinity come dangerously close to this teaching? Isn't this a strong basis for doubt of the Trinity?)

**1 John 4:12-16** "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us*, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God*, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (Men did see Jesus, but not God. Those who love one another in Christ are privileged to share a similar relationship with God as does Jesus. Do you confess Jesus was *God* or the *Son* of God?)

**1 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." (Words in brackets are spurious! They are not retained by any manuscripts of

earlier date than the seventh century and are not in the Revised Version. One hundred and twelve of the oldest manuscripts do not retain them. Trinity thus loses its supposed main Scriptural support.)

**Rev. 1:1** "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, *which God gave unto him* [Jesus Christ], to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."

**Rev. 1:5, 6** "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto *God and his Father.*"

**Rev. 2:27** "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as *I received* of my Father." (Jesus' kingdom authority is received from the Father.)

**Rev. 3:12** "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple *of my God*, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name *of my God*, and the name of the city *of my God*, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven *from my God*: and I will write upon him my new name." (Jesus, in resurrected glory, retains his relationship to his God and Father, highly honored but always subordinate.)

**Rev. 3:14** "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, *the beginning* of the creation of God." (Could God be the beginning of his own creation? Clearly, you cannot create yourself! Refer to Col. 1:15 and then compare God not having a beginning. Ps. 41:13; 90:1-2.)

**Rev. 3:21** "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me *in my*

*throne*, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father *in his throne*." (Jesus did not have a throne co-eternal with the Father. Only after overcoming was he enthroned, and thus also will it be with his followers.)

**Rev. 5:12** "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain *to receive* power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (You receive power, etc., from another, not from yourself! Why or how could you give yourself something you already possess?)

## Chapter VII

### Views of the Early Church Fathers

*"To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and for whom we live; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and through whom we live." (1 Cor. 8:6, KJV and NIV)*

If Jesus taught and revealed himself to be an uncreated "God the Son" rather than the Son of God, it should have been universally accepted by our early Church brethren. Their writings should show the Trinity to be understood and developed from the very start of the Apostolic Era. The fundamental doctrines of the Church were not to be originated by those following the Apostles. God did not give further revelations after their passing. (See Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 4:6; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 John 9, NAS.)

The doctrine of the Trinity, defined over a 264-year period from The Council of Nice in A.D. 325 to The Third Synod at Toledo in A.D. 589, states that there are three distinct persons of the same spiritual nature—The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. It is claimed that all three persons are uncreated and share in omnipotence, making them one. Therefore, the Trinity fails once it can be established that (1) There was a time when the uncreated Father was alone, (2) The Son, Jesus, was produced from the first creative act of God, and (3) The holy Spirit is not a person, but the power, the energy or force used by God (and in this sense is also uncreated).

Let's examine what the students of the Apostles, their friends, peers and subsequent students had to say between A.D. 96–A.D. 320. We present these historical readings, not as a foundation for Truth, but simply to show that these early Christians had not come to

believe in the Trinity. To those who feel comfortable going to the fourth and fifth centuries to establish this doctrine, we wish them well, but we cannot leave the Apostolic Era to come over to them. Biblically and historically, this early period is just too important to abandon. We submit the following:

**Clement of Rome:** according to many Christian writers before the Nicene Council, he is the Clement of Philippians 4:3. He was an elder in the Rome congregation from about A.D. 92-101. His Corinthian Epistle, written about A.D. 96, was held in high esteem, considered by many to be equal to the writings of the Apostles and was frequently used in their Sunday meetings. He was born about A.D. 30 and died about A.D. 100.

"We know you alone are 'highest among highest' . . . You have chosen those who love you through Jesus Christ, your beloved son, through whom you have instructed, sanctified and honored us. . . . Let all nations know that you are the only God, that Jesus Christ is your son and that we are your people." *To The Corinthians*, Chap. 59, vs. 3, 4.

**Ignatius of Antioch:** was surnamed "Theophorus," meaning "God-bearer," because of his gentle, kindly nature. He was an elder at the Antioch, Syria, congregation and was a student of the Apostle John. His authentic writings, being the short version of his seven epistles, were written about A.D. 110. He was born about A.D. 50 and was martyred A.D. 116.

"There is one God, who manifested Himself through Jesus Christ, His son, who being His Word, came forth out of the silence into the world and won full approval of Him whose ambassador he was." *To the Magnesians*, Chap. 8, vs. 2.

". . . who also really rose from the dead, since his Father raised him



up,—his Father who will likewise raise us also who believe in Him through Jesus Christ, apart from whom we have no real life." *To The Trallians*, Chap. 9, vs. 2.

"You are well established in love through the Blood of Christ and firmly believe in our Lord. He is really 'of the line of David according to the flesh' and the son of God by the will and power of God." *To The Smyrnaeans*, Chap. 1, vs. 1.

**Polycarp:** born about A.D. 69, was also a student of the Apostle John, as well as a close friend of Ignatius of Antioch. He was an elder at the congregation in Smyrna, Asia Minor, and wrote his Philippian epistle before A.D. 140. He was burned at the stake February 23, 155.

"Now, may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Eternal Priest himself, Jesus Christ, the son of God, build you up in faith and truth." *To The Philippians*, Chap. 12, vs. 2.

". . . to Him who is able to bring us all in His grace and bounty, to His Heavenly Kingdom, by His only-begotten child, Jesus Christ, be glory, honor, might and majesty forever." *Martyrdom*, Chap. 20, vs. 2.

**Justin:** called "Martyr" because of his martyrdom in A.D. 166, was born about A.D. 107 in Rome. He was a heathen philosopher converted to Christianity about A.D. 130. His first work, *Dialogue with Trypho*, was written in A.D. 135 as Trypho, a Jew, was fleeing Jerusalem after the Bar Kochba revolt. He wrote between A.D. 135 until just before his beheading.

"God begat before all creatures a Beginning who was a certain rational power proceeding from Himself, who is called by the holy spirit now 'The Glory of the Lord,' now 'The Son,' again 'Wisdom,' again 'an Angel,' then 'God,' then 'Lord' and 'Logos;'

and on another occasion he calls himself 'Captain.'" *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chap. 61.

"We follow the only unbegotten God through His Son." *First Apology*, Chap. 14.

"We assert that the Word of God was born of God in a peculiar manner, different from ordinary generation, let this, as said above, be no extraordinary thing to you who say that Mercury is the angelic word of God." *First Apology*, Chap. 22.

"The Father of all is unbegotten . . . And His Son, who alone is properly called Son, the Word . . . was with Him and was begotten before the world. . . ." *Second Apology*, Chap. 6.

**Tatian:** born in Assyria about A.D. 110, was a student of Justin Martyr. He wrote the earliest Bible commentary of the four Gospels known to exist. Sometime he became the leader of the Encratite sect of the Gnostics. Despite this, his writings give a semi-fair view of Christian doctrines. He wrote between A.D. 161-170 and died about A.D. 172.

"The Lord of the Universe, who is Himself the necessary ground of all being, inasmuch as no creature was yet in existence, was alone. . . . And by His simple will the Logos springs forth; and the Logos, not coming forth in vain becomes the first-begotten work of the Father and was the beginning of the world." *To The Greeks*, Chap. 5.

**Melito:** born about A.D. 110, was an elder at Sardis, Asia Minor, from about A.D. 160-170 and a friend of Ignatius of Antioch as a young child. He wrote between A.D. 165-70 and was martyred A.D. 177. Only small fragments exist.

"There is that which really exists and it is called God . . . This being

is in no sense made, nor did He come into being, but has existed from eternity." *Apology 1: To Antonius Caesar.*

"Jesus Christ . . . is perfect Reason, the Word of God, he who was begotten before the light, he who is creator together with the Father." *Apology 4: On Faith.*

Theophilus of Antioch: was born about A.D. 130 and was an elder at Antioch, Syria, around A.D. 170-180. He wrote before A.D. 175 and died A.D. 181.

"God, then, having His own Word internal within His own womb begat him, emitting him along with His own Wisdom before all things. He had this Word as a helper in the things that were created by Him, and by him He created all things." *To Autolychus, Chap. 10.*

**Athenagoras:** born in Athens of heathen parents in A.D. 134 wrote his work "Defense for the Christians" in A.D. 176 and presented it to the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, a fierce persecutor of Christians, in A.D. 177. He died A.D. 190.

"We acknowledge one God uncreated, eternal, invisible, impassable, incomprehensible, illimitable . . . by whom the universe has been created through His Logos and set in order . . . I say 'His Logos' for we acknowledge also a Son of God . . . He is the first product of the Father, not as having been brought into existence, for from the beginning, God, who is the eternal mind, had the Logos in Himself, being from eternity endowed with spiritual reason, coming forth as the idea and energy of all material things." *Defense for the Christians, Chap. 10.*

**Irenaeus:** one of the most recognized early Christians, was born A.D. 140 and was a student of Polycarp. He was an elder at the Lyons, France, congregation from A.D. 178. He was well known

throughout the Western world of the time. He died in France A.D. 202. His writings can be dated from about A.D. 180.

"If anyone, therefore, says to us, 'How, then, was the Son produced by the Father?' we reply to him, that no one understands that production, or generation . . . no powers possess this knowledge but the Father only who begat and the Son who was begotten." *Against Heresies*, Book 2, Chap. 28, vs. 6.

**Clement of Alexandria:** born Titus Flavius Clemens A.D. 150, was born, raised and became an elder at Alexandria, Egypt. He wrote between A.D. 190-195 and died about A.D. 220. His writings are valuable because once he was converted to Christianity, he traveled throughout the Roman Empire to learn pure Christianity from the oldest and most respected Christians alive.

"The best thing on earth is the most pious: perfect man; and the best thing in heaven, the next and purer in place, is an angel, the partaker of the eternal and blessed life. But the nature of the Son, which is next to Him who is alone the Almighty One, is the most perfect." *Miscellanies*, Book 7, Chap. 2.

"He [Jesus] commences his teaching with this: turning the pupil to God, the good, and first and only dispenser of eternal life, which the Son, who received it of Him, gives to us." *Salvation Of The Rich Man*, Chap. 6.

**Tertullian:** was born in Carthage, Tunisia A.D. 160, of Libyan descent and a distant relative of Arius. His writings began about A.D. 190, about 10 years before he joined the Montanist sect of Christianity, who believed in continuing revelation [speaking in tongues, healing, etc.] and a life of asceticism. He continued writing until about A.D. 210 and died A.D. 230 in Carthage, where he was also an elder.

"Before all things God was alone—being in Himself and for Himself . . . the Word was in the beginning with God although it would be more suitable to regard Reason as the more ancient . . . For although God had not yet delivered His Word, He still had him within Himself . . . Now, while He was actually thus planning and arranging with His own reason, He was actually bringing forth the Word." *Against Praxeas*, Chap. 5.

"The Word, no doubt, was before all things. 'In the beginning was the Word'; and in that beginning he was sent forth by the Father. The father, however, has no beginning, as proceeding from none; nor can He be seen since He was not begotten. He who has always been alone could never have order or rank." *Against Praxeas*, Chap. 5.

**Hippolytus:** born about A.D. 160, was a student of Irenaeus. He wrote about A.D. 220, dying August 13, 235, after being banished to the Mediterranean island of Sardinia.

"If therefore, all things are put under him [Jesus] with the exception of Him [God] who put them under him, he is the Lord of all and the Father is Lord of him . . . And this indeed is said by Christ himself, as when in the Gospel he confessed Him to be his Father and his God. . . . He [Jesus] did not say, 'I and the Father am one,' but 'are one.' For the word 'are' is not said of one person, but refers to two persons and one power. He has himself made this clear when he spoke to his Father concerning his disciples [in John 17:22-3] . . . For Christ had spoken of himself and showed himself among all to be as the Son . . . And as the author and fellow-counsellor and framer of the things that are in formation He begat the Word . . . He sent him forth to the world as Lord . . . And thus, there appeared another beside himself . . . For there is but one power, which is from

the All; and the Father is the All, from whom comes this power, the Word . . . and was manifested as the Son of God. All things, then, are by Him and He alone is the Father." *Against The Heresy Of One Noetus*, Chaps. 6, 7, 10, 11.

**Origen:** born of Christian parents A.D. 185 in Alexandria, Egypt, Origen was the most prolific of all early Christian writers. Trained by Clement of Alexandria, he was elected elder at the age of 18 when Clement had to flee for his life. He was a friend of Hippolytus and is distinguished for the first complete Bible commentary. In A.D. 253, at age 70, he was captured, tortured and one week later died for his faith.

"We next notice John's usage of the article in these sentences. He does not write without care in this respect, nor is he unfamiliar with the niceties of the Greek tongue . . . He uses the article when the name of 'God' refers to the uncreated of all things, and omits it when the Logos is named 'God' . . . The God who is over all is God with the article . . . all beyond the Only God is made god by participation in His divinity, and is not to be called simply 'The God' but rather 'god' . . . The true God, then, is 'The God,' and those who are formed after Him are gods, images as it were, of Him, the prototype." *Commentary on John's Gospel*, Book 2, Chap. 2.

**Novatian:** who was born about A.D. 200 is known for his work that was posthumously titled *Commentary on the Trinity*. It was written about A.D. 240, 18 years before his death in 258.

"God the Father and Creator of all things, who only knows no beginning . . . when He willed it, the Son, the Word, was born . . . But now, whatever he is, he is not of himself because he is not unborn, but he is of the Father, because he is begotten . . . he owes his existence to the Father . . . He therefore is god, but begotten for this special result, that he should be god. He is also the Lord, but

born for this very purpose of the Father, that he might be Lord. He is also an Angel, but he was destined of the Father as an Angel to announce the great counsel of God . . . God the Father is God of all, and the source also of His son himself whom He begot."

*Commentary on the Trinity*, Chap 31.

**Arnobius:** born A.D. 253 in Sicca, Algeria, was first an enemy of Christianity. When converted, he became a teacher to many new Christians in the West. He wrote *Against the Heathen* about A.D. 300 and died about A.D. 327.

"We Christians are nothing else than worshippers of the Supreme King and Head, under our master, Christ . . . O greatest, O Supreme Creator of all things invisible . . . You are illimitable, unbegotten, immortal, enduring for age, God yourself alone, whom no bodily shape may represent, no outline delineate . . . 'Is that Christ of yours a god, then?' some raving, wrathful and excited man will say. A god, we will reply, and a god of the powers of heaven, and—what may still further torture unbelievers with the most bitter pains—he was sent to us by the King Supreme for a purpose of the very highest order." *Against The Heathen*, Book 1, Chaps. 27, 31, 42.

**Lactantius:** Lucius Coelius Firmianus Lactantius, born in Rome A.D. 260, was a student of Arnobius. He was the teacher of Emperor Constantine's oldest son, Crispus. His work entitled *The Divine Institutes* was written about A.D. 320. Eventually moving to France, he died about A.D. 330.

"God, therefore, the contriver and founder of all things, as we have said in the second book, before He commenced this excellent work of the world, begat a pure and incorruptible Spirit whom He called His Son. And although He had afterwards created by Himself innumerable other beings, whom we call angels, this first-begotten,

however, was the only one whom He considered worthy of being called by the divine name." *The Divine Institutes*, Book 4, Chap. 6

## Summary and Conclusions

Some 1600 years have passed since the Trinity was forged. In all that time, no one has been able to provide a clear and logical statement of it. It has begged an explanation in every age. Oddly enough, no scholar or groups of scholars have been able to coin a clear and workable formula that is an acceptable standard for all time. Every explanation is flawed and needs more theology to clarify it. Endeavors at clarification, more often than not, lead into a labyrinth of words with the fog-level index going out of sight. And there we would be left—hopelessly lost and struggling for truth.

The Trinitarians paradoxically operate on two levels. When reading or quoting the Bible, both Trinitarians and non-Trinitarians sound alike. Both refer to the same verses, and their readings are similar. As long as the Bible is adhered to, they are hard to tell apart. But when the Bible is departed from and philosophical arguments are introduced, a wide gap soon appears. Because the Trinity is a doctrine of inference, and not of statement, it can be sustained only as long as it is continually inferred from the Bible. Whenever the Scriptures are merely read and quoted, the Trinity loses ground. Hence, every so often, the doctrine must be "injected" into the consciousness of the hearers lest they forget. The Trinity has to be piped into Scripture before it can be piped out.

Everyone knows you do not get cider from cotton. Yet, in fact, you can squeeze cider from cotton. However, you must first soak the cotton with cider, and then, lo, and behold, you can squeeze cider from cotton. That is how you may extract the Trinity doctrine from the Bible. First, saturate the Bible texts to be used with the concept;



then squeeze it out. That is why Dr. Pelikan, who has been called "perhaps the foremost living student of Church history," said, in effect, no one could find the Trinity by just reading the New Testament (see p. 8). You need the theologians to superimpose their theology upon the Word before you can find it there.

In our brief consideration of this subject, we have found the Scriptures unequivocally teach that "to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor. 8:6). These are the two great personalities of the Bible, with the holy Spirit an expression of their power and influence. The Father, always supreme and preeminent, exists "from everlasting to everlasting." The Son, the direct creation of the Father, was highly exalted for his faithfulness in becoming the world's redeemer; yet he always remains in harmony with and in submission to his Father's will.

It was also shown that Trinity as a concept was an integral part of heathen religions many centuries prior to Christianity. The idea was borrowed by some later theologians, who, during the third to the fifth centuries, developed it into a basic dogma of the Christian religion. The gradual emergence of the Trinity doctrine is freely acknowledged by most historians, attested by its lack of Scriptural support and demonstrated by the evolving sequence of the basic creeds of the faith.

Hence, rather than being pure truth taught by Jesus and his Apostles, the Trinity turns out to be Church dogma arising gradually from the philosophy of men who attempted to fuse certain heathen and Christian ideas together. It required many years to fashion and shape it against the objections of many of the outstanding leaders of the early Church, as we have noted. In the end, the effort prevailed, a doctrinal theory was created, and it was given the blessing of

orthodoxy by official Church councils. Yet all of this does not make it valid, for eternal truth is not the handiwork of man but stems only from our immortal and all-wise God.

We opened this treatise with a discussion of the "doctrine of Christ." We found this to mean that Jesus had come in the flesh and died in the flesh. It holds that he was the "Anointed" of God, anointed King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and also the abiding Melchizedek priest. He is the glorious Bridegroom for whom the Heavenly Father is selecting a bride during this Gospel age. As Christians, we hope to be joined with our Master in the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb. No Christian can anticipate marriage to God, but only to God's dear Son. In another figure, he is the vine and we are the branches (John 15:5). And in yet another, he is the head of the body of Christ of which the faithful believers are members (Col. 1:18). In contrast, God is spoken of as being "the head of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:3).

Repeating our opening text, 2 John 9 (RSV)—"Any one who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son." The lesson is clear. We cannot have access to the Father apart from the doctrine of Christ—that he is the Anointed One of God. When we accept the singular personhood of Jesus as God's Anointed, then by addition, we have two—both the Father and the Son. Let us then abide in the doctrine of Christ. In so doing we shall have the extravagant blessing of having both the "Father and the Son"—and that is everything!

The Trinity was a theological attempt at fusion. Somehow, with the incantation of words, the effort was made to fuse God, Jesus and the holy Spirit into one. We get the feeling, sometimes, that many scholars wish they had not done this, but like the leaning Tower of

Pisa, it will just have to remain a religious wonder until it falls of its own weight and imbalance due to an unscriptural foundation.

## Appendix

Translations of the Greek αρχη (*arkee, arche*) in italics.

(from *Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament*)

*Here are the complete uses of the Greek word αρχη mentioned in Chapter I. The reader may see how the word is used throughout the New Testament. Please note how John 1:1 and Rev. 3:14 use the word "beginning" in common usage. By studying the various uses of the Greek word αρχη, the reader may be properly informed.*

Mat. 19: 4 which made (them) at the *beginning*

8 from the *beginning* it was not so.

24: 8 these (are) the *beginning* of sorrows.

21 since the *beginning* of the world

Mark 1: 1 The *beginning* of the gospel of

10: 6 from *the beginning* of the creation

13: 8 these (are) the *beginnings* of sorrows.

19 as was not from the *beginning*

Luke 1: 2 from the *beginning* were eyewitnesses,

12:11 unto the synagogues, and (unto) *magistrates*,

20:20 might deliver him unto the *power* and authority of the governor.

John 1: 1 In the *beginning* was the Word,

2 The same was in the *beginning*

2:11 This *beginning* of miracles

6:64 Jesus knew from the *beginning* who

8:25 I said unto you from the *beginning*.

44 was a murderer from the *beginning*,

15:27 with me from the *beginning*.

16: 4 not unto you at the *beginning*,

Acts 10:11 knit at the four *corners*, and let

11: 5 down from heaven by four *corners*,

15 as on us at the *beginning*.

26: 4 which was at the *first* among

Ro. 8:38 nor *principalities*, nor powers, nor

1Cor.15:24 have put down all *rule* and all

Eph. 1:21 above all *principality*, and power,

3:10 now unto the *principalities*

6:12 against *principalities*, against powers,

Phil. 4:15 that in the *beginning* of the gospel,

Col. 1:16 dominions, or *principalities*,

18 who is the *beginning*, the

2:10 the head of all *principality*,

15 having spoiled *principalities*

2Th. 2:13 God hath from the *beginning* chosen

Tit. 3: 1 subject to *principalities* and powers

Heb. 1:10 Thou, Lord, in the *beginning*

2: 3 which *at the first* began to

3:14 if we hold the *beginning* of

5:12 the *first* principles of the oracles

6: 1 leaving the *principles* of the doctrine

7: 3 having neither *beginning* of days

2 Pet. 3: 4 from the *beginning* of the creation

1 John 1: 1 which was from the *beginning*,

2: 7 which ye had from the *beginning*.

-- ye have heard from the *beginning*.

13 him (that is) from the *beginning*.

14 known him (that is) from the *beginning*.

24 have heard from the *beginning*.

-- ye have heard from the *beginning*

3: 8 the devil sinneth from the *beginning*.

11 that ye heard from the *beginning*,

2 John 5 which we had from the *beginning*,

6 as ye have heard from the *beginning*,

Jude 6 angels which kept not their *first estate*,

Rev. 1: 8 the *beginning* and the ending,

3:14 the *beginning* of the creation of God;

21: 6 the *beginning* and the end. I will

22:13 Alpha and Omega, the *beginning* and the end.

## **Endnotes**

### **Introduction**

1. *Christianity Today*, Mark A. Noll, "The Doctrine Doctor," Sep. 10, 1990, p. 26.

2. *Ibid.*, Larry Poston, "The Adult Gospel," Aug. 20, 1990, p. 24.

3. *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology*, p. 765.

4. The Voice of Prophecy radio broadcast, H. M. S. Richards, speaker, Los Angeles, Dec. 20, 1958.

5. *Newsweek*, Aug. 25, 1997, p. 49

6. *A Chronology of Biblical Christianity*, Dr. R. C. Wetzel, p. 84

7. *Newsweek*, Apr. 13, 1998, p.58

## Chapter I

1. *The Bible Translator*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Jan. 1977.
2. *Beach vs. Hickey on the Trinity*, W. B. Beach and Y. Hickey, quoting G. C. Knapp, pp. 60, 61.
3. *Young's Concordance*, "Ransom," #3, p. 794.
4. *Clarke's Commentary* on Luke 1:35, p. 360.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 361.
6. *Ibid.*, on Heb. 2:7, p. 696.
7. *A Catholic Dictionary*, on Rom. 9:5, p. 809.
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2. *Some Account of the Origin and Progress of Trinitarian Theology*, James Forest, p. 9.
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4. *Christian History*, Bruce L. Shelley, "The First Council of Nicea," Issue 28 (Vol. IX, No. 4), 1990, p. 11.
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7. *Origin of Triads and Trinities*, John Newton, pp. 20-21, 25-27.
8. *History of Christianity*, Edward Gibbon, preface.
9. *Outline of History*, H. G. Wells, p. 421.



### Chapter III

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2. *A Catholic Dictionary*, p. 810.
3. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 13, pp. 574, 575.
4. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XV, p. 49.
5. *The Triune God*, Edward J. Fortman, pp. 6, 15.

## Chapter IV

1. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, R. B. Girdlestone, p. 22.
2. *Strong's Concordance*, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary, #410.
3. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XV, p. 49.
4. *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, McClintock and Strong, Vol. IV, "John," pp. 551-2.
5. *Clarke's Commentary* on Matt. 28:19, p. 284.
6. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, G. Kittel, p. 108.
7. *Young's Concordance*, "God," #8, p. 419.
8. *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity*, Robert M. Bowman, Jr., back cover.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

## Chapter V

1. *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, McClintock and Strong, Vol. IV, "John," p. 949.
2. *Ibid.*, "John, First Epistle," Vol. IV, pp. 951-2.
3. *Ibid.*, "Cerinthus," Vol. II, p. 191.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, "Docetae," Vol. II, p. 844-5.
6. *Ibid.*, "Gnosticism," Vol. III, p. 891.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 893.
8. *Christianity: Essence, History and Future*, Hans Kung, p. 182.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-1.
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## "Adding up the Trinity"

In *Christianity Today*, April 28, 1997, p. 26, in an article entitled, "Adding Up the Trinity," Immanuel Kant and Thomas Jefferson are quoted on the subject of the logic and practical value of the doctrine of the Trinity. "Kant, for example, argued the doctrine had no practical significance. 'The doctrine of the Trinity provides nothing, absolutely nothing, of practical value, even if one claims to understand it; still less when one is convinced that it far surpasses our understanding. It costs the student nothing to accept that we adore three or ten persons in the divinity. . . . Furthermore, this distinction offers absolutely no guidance for his conduct.'"

"Jefferson seems particularly irritated by the complexities of 'Trinitarian arithmetic,' as he called it, a theological mathematics that only served to blur our vision of who Jesus truly was: 'When we shall have done away with the incomprehensible jargon of the Trinitarian arithmetic, that three are one, and one is three; when we shall have knocked down the artificial scaffolding, reared to mask from view the very simple structure of Jesus; when, in short, we shall have unlearned everything which has been taught since his day, and got back to the pure and simple doctrines he inculcated, we shall then be truly and worthily his disciples.'"

The same article quotes Roderick T. Leupp on his book, *Knowing the Name of God: A Trinitarian Tapestry of Grace, Faith and Community*. "For most people and, sadly, for most Christians also, the Trinity is the great unknown. The Trinity, to use a familiar equation is viewed as a riddle wrapped up inside a puzzle and buried in an enigma. A riddle, for how can any entity be at the same time multiple (three) yet singular (one)? A puzzle, for the Trinity is so clearly contrary to any rational thought as not to warrant a second thought from sensible people. An enigma, for even if the Trinity

could be understood, of what practical value, even what religious value, would it have for ordinary people?"

The article continues: "Not much, many of us might be tempted to say. As Karl Rahner notes, 'Despite their orthodox confession of the Trinity, Christians are, in their practical life, almost mere monotheists.'" So we find the Trinitarians very much in the same posture as the evolutionists. The evolutionists control the schools, the media and all the mind programming areas, but when all is said and done, most students go to Church on Sunday and sing, "How great Thou art." They are not true believers in the evolution theory. So with the Trinity, people are programmed to believe the Trinity, but worship God in a monotheistic way and praise Him for sending His son to be our Redeemer.

ONCE in all history we meet a being who never did an injury, and never resented one done to him, never uttered an untruth, never practiced a deception, never lost an opportunity of doing good; generous in the midst of the selfish, upright in the midst of the sensual, and wise far above the wisest of earth's sages and prophets, loving and gentle, yet immovably resolute; and whose illimitable meekness and patience never once forsook him in a vexatious, ungrateful and cruel world. —Selected



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